

A mystery adventure for Fudge Terra Incognita

DEAD SEA MURDER



by Amanda Dickerson

Dead Sea Murder

A mystery adventure for



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ABOUT FUDGE

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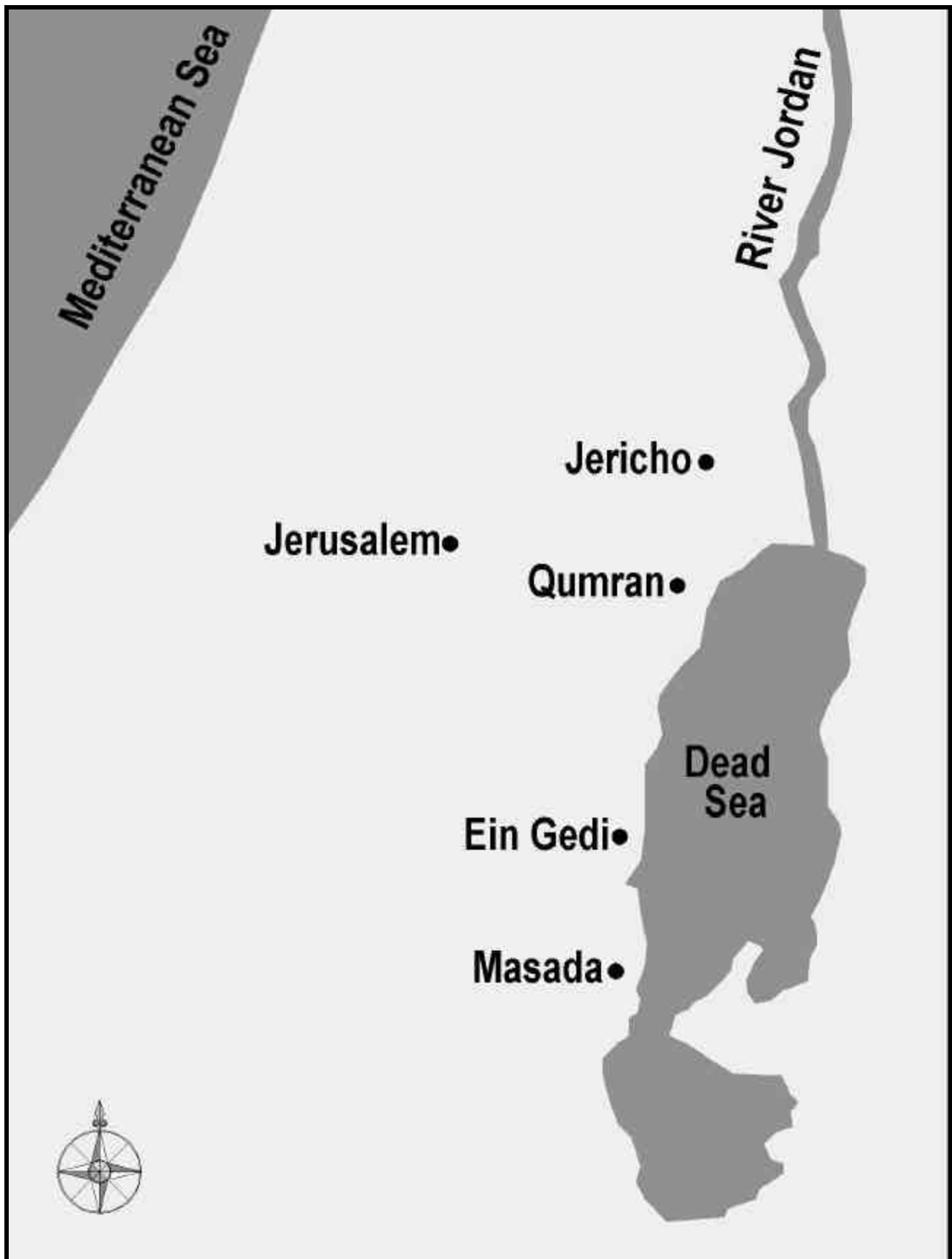


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Campaign Overview

In 1947 the world was stunned by the discovery of ancient scrolls hidden in caves not far from where the city of Qumran once thrived. These documents, some written as early as 250 B.C., were hailed as one of the most important archaeological discoveries of the 20th century. The Dead Sea Scrolls, as they were soon to be called, reportedly hadn't been seen by human eyes for two thousand years. The members of the National Archaeological, Geographic, and Submarine Society know better.

Sister Frances Agnes, cartographer and NAGS Society member, actually discovered the scrolls in the early 1930s while investigating a map of the western bank of the Dead Sea. When she returned from her expedition she contacted her friend and fellow Nag, Sister Mary Elizabeth. As an expert in paleography, Sister Mary would have been able to accurately determine when the scrolls were written based on the handwriting style used by the scribes.

Sister Frances was murdered under mysterious circumstances before she could reveal the hidden location of the scroll caves. Initial attempts by Sister Mary to discover the murderer and to track down the map to the secret caves have so far been fruitless. Societal restrictions on women in the Middle East are the least of her problems. Someone, possibly Sister Frances's murderer, has been following Sister Mary. Fearing for her life, and eager to solve two mysteries, Sister Mary has contacted the NAGS Society for help.

The Basics of this Campaign

This chapter provides the background information the GM will need to understand

the dynamics of the story; including a quick history lesson, overview of the current culture in the Middle East, an introduction to the NPCs, and variants for occult, magical, and paranormal adventures.

If the players don't yet have characters, or don't wish to use their characters, four pre-generated characters have been included. They are designed to work well with this campaign. The game master may use these characters as NPCs to aid player-created characters in their journey.

The adventure itself has been divided into three sections. "The Adventure Begins: The Scrollerly" sets up the campaign and introduces the main storylines. "The Investigation: Jerusalem" focuses on the murder mystery, including interviews and basic investigational information. "The Search: Qumran" centers on the search for the scrolls. The separation of these sections makes it easier for the GM to pick and choose what parts of the campaign she wishes to focus on, allows the players to find the scrolls before solving the murder, and provides a natural break if the adventure should take more than one session of play.

The "Outcomes" chapter covers how to resolve the murder investigation, while still allowing the GM the freedom to choose which of the NPCs did the ghastly deed. It also

Clues



At various points in the adventure you will see a "pointing" icon. This indicates an important clue that the GM should keep in mind when describing events, which may vary depending upon which suspect is chosen by the GM to be the guilty party.

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includes a detailed table regarding the contents of the various scroll caves and how the characters can document and preserve their discoveries in true NAGS Society style. There is no reason why the adventure should end just because the mysteries have been solved—this chapter also briefly discusses other possible adventures that might arise from the initial campaign.

The History of Qumran and the Scrolls

At the time Qumran was established as a monastery, in the second century B.C., disputes among the Jewish priesthood led to the rise of several different factions. The strictly male population sought to detach themselves from the world.

The group that founded Qumran did not believe in any doctrine that was handed down orally, unlike the majority of other Jewish communities, because they felt these teachings could not be clear in their relation to the laws of Moses. Written texts were so important, the priests copied the Torah and other sacred Jewish documents and composed lengthy laws to rule their community and stored them in hidden locations.

The inhabitants of Qumran believed in the “end of days,” when the Sons of Light would defeat the Sons of Darkness. To prepare for the coming of God they lived a life of poverty and chastity. By following the laws precisely, they expected to be rewarded with an eternal life of glory.

One of the reasons the Dead Sea Scrolls are so valuable historically is because the scrolls dated to the time of Christ. In the Temple Scroll, as in other Jewish texts, it declares cursing Israel or betraying Jewish secrets to Gentiles a crime punishable by crucifixion; the very charges of which Jesus was accused.

Twenty percent of the scrolls are biblical texts, including every book of the Hebrew Bible except Esther. Of the non-biblical texts the books of Enoch and Jubilees were previously known. The majority of the scrolls contain entirely unique material, such as wisdom literature, biblical commentary, hymns, and even a coded scroll with the designation of hidden treasures!

Qumran was conquered by the Romans in A.D. 68 and used as a lightly fortified military post. All along the priests had been secretly storing their scrolls in pottery jars in the caves nearby. Scrolls that had been kept in Qumran when the Romans invaded were hastily deposited in their network of caves with the expectation that they would soon return for them. There the scrolls remained until their discovery almost 2000 years later.

In A.D. 70, Romans destroyed Jerusalem and its temple. Until that time there were several varieties of Judaism, but only the rabbinic Judaism continued and is the form still followed to this day.

The ruins of the Qumran settlement were discovered in the 1880s, but it was not excavated until 1952.

Future “History” of the Scrolls’ Discovery

In 1947 a Bedouin shepherd followed a wayward goat up the cliffs near the Dead Sea. There he found a cave with an opening that was too small for him to slip through. Curious as to what the cave might contain, the shepherd tossed a rock into the opening and heard the shatter of pottery. Two days later his cousin, a smaller man nicknamed “The Wolf,” slipped feet first through the opening and discovered a number of narrow jars lining the wall. The first four jars contained nothing; the rest had cloth wrapped around leather scrolls.

A few months later the shepherds took their find into Jerusalem. After trying to sell

the scrolls to several antiquities dealers they finally found one willing to represent them. At the time Jerusalem was a very dangerous place. The British were preparing to pull out and leave the Jews and Arabs to solve their hostilities on their own. The King David Hotel had just been blown up with several fatalities.

Of the seven major manuscripts, four went to St. Mark's and three to the Hebrew University. Excitement over this find led to a full-scale search of the cliffs along the Dead Sea in 1952. Of the 273 caves they found eleven that contained written material.

A unique copper scroll was discovered in Cave 3. Scholars are still trying to decode its texts that detail the location of other hidden treasures.

For over four decades controversy raged over the 15,000 scroll fragments found in Cave 4. A handful of young scholars entrusted with sorting through the fragments and publishing their finds divided the stash amongst themselves and refused to even allow other researchers to view them. The squabbling finally ended when photographs of all the fragments were published. The origin of the photos remains a mystery.

To this day there are rumors of up to six scrolls that have never been revealed to scholars. According to reliable sources these scrolls were sold by the Bedouins to bankers in Jordan who keep them locked in their vaults and consider them investments.

Current Situation: Local Politics and Society

The following information can be used for a historically accurate campaign. The GM should feel free to adjust the social and political scene as she sees fit, especially if setting the adventure in a universe where magic or supernatural powers are commonplace.

Dead Sea Murder is set in the early to mid 1930s. If you wish to alter the year to fit into an existing campaign, suggestions are included as to additional conflicts you might introduce.

1517-1914: Ottoman Turks control Palestine. Although the Arabs want freedom from Turkey, the political scene is fairly stable.

1915-1917: Because Turkey has allied themselves with Germany and Austro-Hungary, Britain promises the Palestinian Arabs independence in all areas except that in the areas west of Damascus in Syria (which includes Jerusalem and Qumran) if they join the war against the Turks. The Arabs led by the British drive the Turks back and succeed in taking control of Jerusalem in 1917.

1918-1921: British and Arab military control the region. Jewish immigration has increased after promises from the British government of a Jewish homeland in the Holy Land. A few minor conflicts occur between the growing Jewish population and Arabs who don't want to lose their land to Jewish rule. Islamic customs still prevail, but the PCs won't be as pressured to comply with them.

1922-1932: A High Commissioner appointed by Great Britain rules Palestine in trust for an appropriate Jewish agency. Jewish population increases from 10% to 20%. The British control government agencies, including the police force.

1933: Hitler comes to power in Germany. Jewish immigration skyrockets. There now is the possibility that the NAGS Society team may encounter a Nazi spy.

1934-1936: Arab and Jewish violence increases. The characters may find themselves caught in the middle.

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1937: A British proposal to partition Palestine between the Jews and Arabs is rejected by both sides. The Arabs look to Nazi Germany as a counterpoint to the Jews' support in Britain. Arabs begin to buy weapons in large numbers and radical rebels compile a list of British citizens to assassinate. On June 13th an attempt is made on the life Roy Spicer, Inspector General of the Palestine Police. Officials travel with armed escorts. The characters may find themselves the targets of violence.

1938: The Arab revolt is in full force. In the absence of press coverage, the police exercise laws in a rough-and-ready manner. In March, Hitler invades Austria.

1939-1946: Violence continues to increase even as WWII rages in the rest of the world. In 1946 the King David Hotel is bombed, leveling the South West wing.

1947: The Dead Sea Scrolls are officially discovered.

The NPCs: Overview

This overview of the non-player characters is intended to provide the GM with ideas of how to use them either as allies or as villains. All the NPCs are skilled with firearms, at least enough so that any one of them could be the one who fires the warning shot at Sister Mary. They each have the means, motive, and opportunity to have murdered Sister Frances. For the sake of simplicity, the following adventure will assume that Muhammad is the guilty party, but see the "Outcomes" chapter about adjusting the story so that any one or more of the suspects could have done it. The identity of the murderer should be determined before beginning the adventure.

Inspector Calvin Davies had a grudge against Sister Frances for betraying his secret

Notable Persons

While traveling in Palestine, the adventurers may encounter a few historically significant persons. T. E. Lawrence, known popularly as Lawrence of Arabia, traveled the region extensively during the Arab Revolt between 1914 and 1918 and afterward continued to visit Palestine and other Arab countries, often in a diplomatic capacity.

Famous mystery writer, Dame Agatha Christie, married archaeologist Sir Max Mallowan in 1930 and traveled with him on expeditions in the Middle East.

Other notable archaeologists who worked in Palestine during this time period are Sir William Petrie, who is famous for his surveys of Stonehenge, the pyramids and the temple at Giza, and Dorothy Garrod, the first woman to hold a professorial chair at Cambridge.

affair with an Arab woman. His beloved's family forced her to marry someone else and he hasn't seen or heard from her since. Now that Sister Frances has been murdered he has been dragging his feet on the investigation. He is not shy in his opinion that "the nun had it coming."

Calvin is a pivotal character for solving the murder. He can stand in the way of the PCs investigation or he can point out vital clues.

Muhammad Haddad accompanied Sister Frances on her last expedition and knows exactly where she found the cave containing the scrolls. At first he didn't think much of the discovery, but when the rumors sparked an interest from the mysterious Sons of Light, Muhammad has since come to believe that if the scrolls were to be made public that it will

somehow ignite the Armageddon that the Sons of Light are destined to fight.

Muhammad is extremely fearful of the occult. The team could attempt to convince him to lead them to the scroll cave, but he would most likely take their money and lead them to the wrong location, then claim that the scrolls were stolen since the last trip.

Larry Fitzpatrick is not above stealing Sister Frances's work. He tried to elbow his way in on the "fantastic new discovery" that she mentioned to Sister Mary, but neither nun would let him in on the secret. He may try to endear himself to the PC in hopes of being included in the expedition.

Whether or not he killed Sister Frances, he probably has been in her room both before and after her murder looking of anything that might indicate what she found and where she left it. If the group does not allow him to tag along he may try to follow them anyway.

Josef Solomon and the other Sons of Light consider themselves the descendants of the original Qumran monastery. As such, they believe the scrolls a part of their sacred heritage and therefore they have sole claim to the lost texts. He may be willing to help the adventurers discover the murderer and find the location of the scrolls, but he almost certainly wouldn't allow the PCs to keep the scrolls.

Bit Players

As the characters progress through the adventure they may encounter a variety of minor NPCs. For ease of play, a cross-section of people is provided below. Each entry includes a name, occupation, a brief description, trait levels, and a few pertinent skills. The GM is free to use as much or as little of the information as she wishes.

Adara Awad (Calvin Davies's lost love): Since her family discovered her intention to elope with Inspector Davies she has been sent away to live with relatives in Jordan. She is unemployed, but works hard on domestic duties to atone for the shame she brought on the family. Perception: Fair, Reasoning: Good, Resolve: Good, Strength: Fair, Dexterity: Fair, Vigor: Fair.

Riley Dugan (police officer): As a uniformed patrolman he is often one of the first officers on the scene. When he is not walking his beat he can be found loafing around the station house with his feet propped up and dreaming of bashing around London with his mates the next time gets home. Perception: Good, Reasoning: Good, Resolve: Mediocre, Strength: Good, Dexterity: Fair, Vigor: Fair. Firearm (Pistol): Good, Profession (Police): Fair, Surveillance: Fair.

Father Kendall MacKeon (Palestine Museum curator): Friend and colleague of Sister Frances. He's up on all the gossip in the tight academic community. Perception: Good, Reasoning: Good, Resolve: Fair, Strength: Fair, Dexterity: Fair, Vigor: Fair.

Matthew Frankel (Sister Frances's neighbor): He's a Jewish banker with aspirations for a political career in the soon-to-be established Jewish homeland. He was home at the time of the murder. Perception: Fair, Reasoning: Good, Resolve: Good, Strength: Mediocre, Dexterity: Fair, Vigor: Good.

Kuper Mussinger: (Superintendent of Sister Frances's building): He doesn't have much patience for the police who, in his opinion, are letting terrorism ruin the Holy Land. Perception: Fair, Reasoning: Fair, Resolve: Good, Strength: Good, Dexterity: Fair, Vigor: Fair.

Zahur Rasheed (Arabic merchant): He'll rent jeeps, trucks, or camels for a reasonable price

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to a skilled bargainer. If he doesn't have the supplies the adventurer's need in stock he can find it for them—for a fee. The advice is free. Perception: Good, Reasoning: Good, Resolve: Good, Strength: Good, Dexterity: Fair, Vigor: Mediocre.

Akili Nasser (Bedouin herder): He's typical of the rural desert dweller in Muhammad's native community. Muhammad may take refuge with Akili's family. Perception: Fair, Reasoning: Mediocre, Resolve: Fair, Strength: Good, Dexterity: Fair, Vigor: Great. Survival (Desert): Superb, Animal Handling: Great.

Manuel Diener (Son of Light): Manual is young, bright, and dedicated. Josef is grooming him for a leadership role. He's versed in archaeology and the history of Qumran and his gift to detect lies will make it difficult for the characters to mislead the Sons of Light. Perception: Fair, Reasoning: Good, Resolve: Good, Strength: Fair, Dexterity: Good, Vigor: Mediocre. Gifts: Detects Lies Easily, Loyal. Archaeology: Good, Firearm (Pistol): Great, History: Good, Occult Knowledge: Good, Persuade: Fair.

Caleb Schnall (Son of Light): Caleb is tough, powerful, and reliable. He's a strong arm for the Sons of Light and trusts their leadership without question. He is often brought on missions when trouble is expected and he is very businesslike when it comes to roughing up folks. Perception: Mediocre, Reasoning: Fair, Resolve: Fair, Strength: Great, Dexterity: Fair, Vigor: Good. Gifts: Tough Hide, Loyal. Climbing: Good, Firearms: Good, Mechanics: Good, Survival (Desert): Fair, Unarmed Combat: Great.

Campaign Angles

The GM has several options for orchestrating this campaign. She may choose to run

the adventure as written, or focus just on those aspects that interest her and her players.

Cozy murder mystery: The “tea at four” crowd tends to be very civilized, even when facing the untidiness of a murder. Like the cozy murder mysteries filling paperback novels, the search for Sister Frances' murderer could be a study in logical deduction that allows the characters to find clues and observe suspects until they are finally ready to collect everyone in the parlor and dramatically reveal their conclusions.

Alternate history/reality: Although much of the information provided in this supplement is based on fact, the GM should not feel bound by history. Several “what if” scenarios could be explored to heighten the danger, such as “what if Nazis controlled Palestine and were also interested in the scrolls?”

Secret Society: The secret society of the Sons of Light could play a more prominent role. Perhaps their members possess magical skills or hold positions in prominent government offices, further complicating the characters' lives.

Archæology/tomb raiding: If the action of a classic dungeon crawl thrills her players, then perhaps the GM would rather skip straight to the cliffs and caves near the Dead Sea. By including additional treasures and dangers she can produce a high-impact, adrenaline-soaked game.

Time Travel: If the players wish to use characters from a later or earlier era, then the GM can provide some means of time travel. This could also be used to impose a deadline on the characters for when they must return to their own time.

War: For a really bloodthirsty adventure, a war between the Sons of Light and the Sons of

Darkness could ignite with the discovery of the scrolls.

Variants

Suggested rules for handling these variants are dealt with in the *Fudge* rulebook. This section discusses some ways of integrating these skills with this adventure.

Occult: The Dead Sea Scrolls are fundamentally spiritual texts. In addition to whatever political and cultural influence the GM established for the Sons of Light, the members of that sect are also deeply religious. They are likely to pray for miracles to further their cause. The *Fudge* system allows for GMs to decide if deities can or will perform miracles which affect the campaign.

Miracles can range from seeming coincidence, like finding a boat when the characters need to cross a river, to the profound, such as the biblical account of the parting of the Red Sea. GMs can further decide if miracles can be petitioned only by the spiritually devout, or by all people.

While miracles may occur for the Sons of Light, Sister Mary may also pray for intervention on the part of the PCs—so miracles may go either way in this campaign.

Magical: Finding lost scrolls is an ideal adventure for magic using adventurers. The Dead Sea Scrolls could contain the spells and rituals to trigger or prevent the predicted Armageddon. The Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness could be rival wizard factions willing to crush anyone who gets in their way.

A sample magic system is provided in the *Fudge* rulebook if the GM wishes to incorporate magic into her *Terra Incognita* campaign. Magic rules from other game systems are also easily integrated into *Fudge*, and the GM is encouraged to use whichever system she is familiar with.

Supernatural/Paranormal: The GM may decide to include superpowers or psi ability in this campaign. In a more sedate adventure, gifts and skills that grant insight—such as telepathy or psychometry, which is the ability to know the history of an object just by holding it, could be useful in discovering the murderer and in finding the scrolls. To keep such powers from making the game too easy, the GM can give the suspects a natural shield against psi or the ability to block psi powers.

In a more robust game, super strength and mind over matter types of powers can elevate the play to epic comic book action. Whichever way the GM decides to go, to preserve the challenge for her players the opponents should have at least as much power as the PCs, if not more.

Just Fudge It

Dead Sea Mystery is a roleplaying adventure for the *Terra Incognita* game, which uses the *Fudge* gaming system. For the basic gaming rule, please refer to *Terra Incognita: The NAGS Society Handbook*. You'll find all the source material you'll need to run this adventure within this supplement.

Before launching into this campaign the GM should be familiar with the background information provided. Next, the GM should review the possible outcomes discussed in the “Outcomes” chapter. With this basic information the GM can decide what type of campaign she would like to run.

The benefit of using the *Fudge* system is that it gives the GM the freedom to tailor the adventure to suit herself and her players. If a particular rule or section of the story doesn't meet with that style, then just “fudge it.” Use as little or as much of the information as you like. The important thing is to have fun!

The Adventure Begins: The Scrollery

The adventure begins with the Nags having been dispatched to Jerusalem, in response to the following letter from Sister Mary Elizabeth to Dr. Sebek of the Cairo NAGS Campus:

Dear Dr. Sebek,

I wish I could be communicating with such a distinguished and accomplished person such as yourself under much better circumstances. It is with sadness that I report the untimely passing of our colleague, Sister Frances Agnes, under most unseemly and unnatural causes. Her valuable work in the field of cartography is but one of the many assets that will be missed. However, there is also another matter of some considerable archaeological import that is also at stake.

I urgently request assistance from the National Archaeological, Geographic, and Submarine Society. Enclosed, please find travel details and information regarding accommodations for their stay here in Palestine.

God bless you.

Yours sincerely,
Sister Mary Elizabeth

Setting: The Scrollery

The archives of the Palestine Archaeological Museum were nicknamed the Scrollery by British scholars inspired by the “The Wolery,” which was the name of Owl’s home in the Winnie the Pooh stories. The reason for the nickname was soon forgotten and the archives have been known as the Scrollery ever since.

Access to the Scrollery is very limited despite claims of free access for all interested scholars. Even with Sister Mary to guide them, the group will notice she has taken the liberty to prepare several carefully written recommendations on their behalf. As they pass under the disapproving glares of suspicious archivists, Sister Mary will make a point to murmur the correct pleasantries and nod politely at them. Clearly she has taken great pains to secure the group’s access and such

things do not go unnoticed by the establishment.

The Scrollery itself has the musty smell of hundreds of moldy old manuscripts and scrolls, some of which are the oldest known surviving texts. (The scrolls still hidden somewhere in the cliffs near the Dead Sea are far older than any of these.)

While the scrolls are protected from outsiders, there is a shocking disregard for their preservation. The morning sunlight streams through the tall windows. Some of the researchers smoke as they bend over the ancient texts, casually brushing aside the ash that accidentally falls on dried and cracked parchment. No attempts have been made to control the humidity or prevent drafts. Sister Mary has tried to change these practices, but because she is a foreigner and a woman her complaints have fallen on deaf ears.

Adventure at the Scrollery

Shortly after the characters arrive in Palestine a messenger delivers a note from Sister Mary Elizabeth inviting them to meet her at the Palestine Archæological Museum. She meets them in the front lobby and guides them through the Scrollery to a small meeting room where they can have tea while watching the scholars hunkering over their scrolls.

Sister Mary Elizabeth is in her thirties, far younger than the other scholars working in the museum. Once the party has settled and exchanged pleasantries, she apologizes for her vague letter and explains that she couldn't be sure that no one else would read it before it reached the team. She is certain she is being followed, which is why she brought the group to the Scrollery's conference room where no one would be able overhear the conversation.

Sister Mary's colleague and mentor, Sister Frances Agnes, was a talented cartographer and a member of NAGS Society. In her research she came across an old map of the caves along the Dead Sea near the site where Qumran once stood. A few months ago she left for an expedition to the site. When she returned she said she had exciting news.

Sister Frances only mentioned that it had to do with scrolls and that she would require Sister Mary's expertise in paleography. By comparing ancient handwriting styles Sister Mary can pinpoint the era when scrolls were written. Sister Mary exclaims, "If Sister Frances found ancient scrolls . . . well, it could be one of the most important archæological finds of the century!"

Before she could show Sister Mary the scrolls, Sister Frances was found dead. The inspector in charge of the case says they don't know exactly what caused her death, but he is certain it must have been murder. Apparently there are some unusual markings on her

Sister Mary Elizabeth

Sister Mary Elizabeth was born in London to a prosperous merchant in 1900. As the third and youngest daughter she was sent to a convent to study at a very early age, which was common practice at the time. Sister Mary became fascinated with ancient texts. Her specialty is paleography, which is the comparative study of forms of ancient handwriting. Encouraged by her mentor, Sister Francis Agnes, Sister Mary lobbied successfully to become one of the first women allowed access to the scrollery of the Palestine Archæological Museum. Not long afterward Sister Francis also recruited Sister Mary into the ranks of the NAGS Society. Neither woman went through the process of societal extraction because of their vows to the church.

While doing archæological research in the field she wears a lightweight tweed outfit and safari hat. All other times she wears her traditional nun's habit.

Great Perception, Fair Reasoning, Fair Resolve, Fair Strength, Mediocre Dexterity, Good Vigor

Gift: Contacts (Church)

Fault: Social Stigma (Female in Mideast)

Academic Study (Paleography): Great, Language (Aramaic): Fair, Language (Greek): Fair, Language (Hebrew): Good, Language (Latin): Fair, Religion (Judeo-Christian): Fair

body, but Sister Mary has not been permitted to see them because the inspector claims that it would be too shocking for a lady to witness.

"I know it is premature to draw any conclusions, but I am certain her death had something to do with those scrolls." Sister Mary explains that in ancient times scribes would often store their important scrolls in a

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genizah, or hideaway. Sister Frances might have found a genizah in one of those caves. The map she used is missing, and Sister Mary fears it may have been what the murderer was after.

Sister Mary takes a moment to compose herself. “First and foremost, I believe we should detect who murdered poor Sister Frances, God rest her soul. Secondly, we should search for whatever discovery was so important that someone would kill for it.”

Sister Mary points at a man with a full, red beard leaving the Scrollery. She tells the group that he is Professor Larry Fitzpatrick. He is fiercely competitive and viewed Sister Frances as his main rival. It infuriated him when she refused to rise to his challenges, preferring instead to ignore him. He’s been making discreet inquiries about that region of the Dead Sea recently. He was the first person Sister Mary suspected when she heard about Sister Frances’s murder.

Another person Sister Mary thinks might have killed her friend is Muhammad, the young Bedouin guide who traveled with Sister Frances. He has been spending a lot of money in the markets lately, far more than someone in his profession should have.

There are certain customs here regarding women, which have prevented Sister Mary from making preliminary inquiries on her own. She is not permitted to claim any belongings from, or even look through, Sister Frances’s apartment. Also, the inspector in charge feels no obligation to discuss the case with her. Now that the Nags have arrived, she hopes they can begin to find out what happened.

Just as Sister Mary leans forward to place her teacup on the table a gunshot sounds from outside, smashing the window and embedding a bullet where Sister Mary’s head was a moment before.



Game Master Information

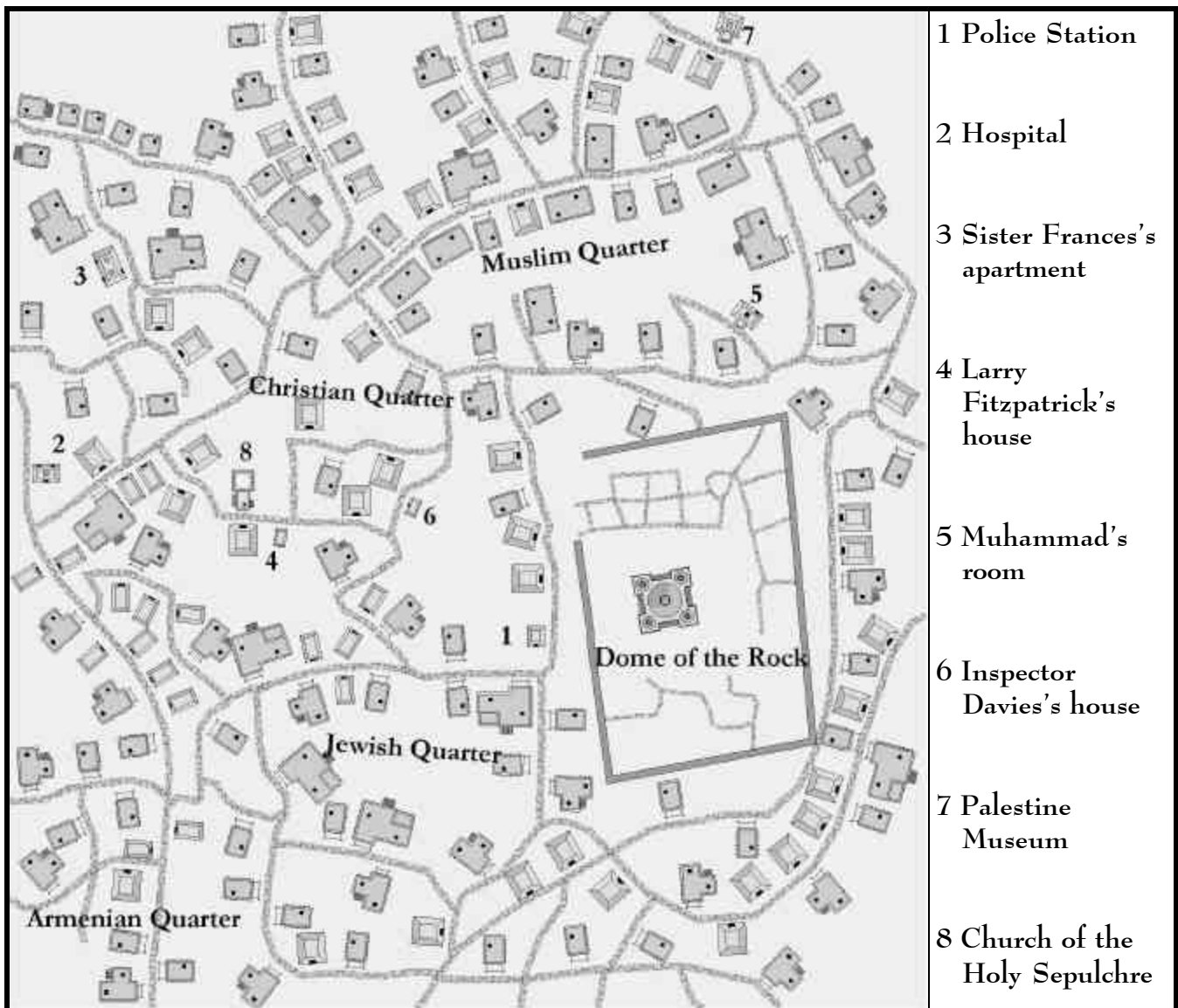
Sister Mary is shaken, but unharmed by the gunfire. The characters may try to go after the gunman, but he has already left the scene. The game master should have already chosen the identity of the murderer (see “Outcomes”), and it is that individual who fired the pistol.

At this point the players will decide on their course of action. Depending on their interests, some may choose to set aside the murder investigation for now and focus on the archaeological expedition. They won’t have much to go on, so they are likely still best served by at least searching Sister Frances’s apartment for clues first.

The next chapter covers the murder investigation. While the team ventures through Jerusalem they are being followed by

Muhammad, who was Sister Frances's Bedouin guide. The game master should make an opposed action roll against Muhammad's Good Stealth to determine if he is spotted. If he is caught, he will claim that he knows Sister Mary is a friend of his former employer and only wished to offer his services to guide her back to the cliffs near Qumran. If he is not discovered before the group prepares to set off for the caves, he will approach them with his story at that time.

When the PCs return to their hotel rooms they will discover that they have been searched. None of their belongings are missing, just obviously rearranged. If they question witnesses, no one will admit to having seen anyone entering their rooms. Nags with fingerprinting technology will need to make a roll against a relevant skill to find fingerprints. The intruder was Josef Solomon, but they must wait until they meet him later on to compare his prints and make the identification. His fingerprints will not be on file with the police.



The Investigation: Jerusalem

An examination of the bullet that narrowly missed Sister Mary in the Scrollery shows it was fired from a .22 caliber pistol. The police officers that arrived within minutes of the frantic phone call from the Palestine Museum officials are writing the incident off as a stray bullet probably fired by either a Jew or Arab radical. Since no one was hurt they are not planning to pursue the matter too vigorously.

The PCs may very well find themselves in the middle of the hostilities between the Jews, Arabs, and British forces. The game master can decide how these outside political issues will affect her campaign.

The adventure in Jerusalem will uncover clues that will be important in the Qumran expedition and subsequent cave searches. With those items in hand, solving the murder of Sister Frances may be set aside temporarily depending on the interest of the GM and her players.

Before embarking on the murder investigation, the game master should have read the section on solving the murder in the “Outcomes” chapter and have picked the culprit. At certain points in the following chapter clues will be identified as belonging to the murderer. In those cases the GM should state that it belongs the specific person and not clarify that that person was the killer.

Each of the sections that follow are organized for ease of play using the **Fudge** system and should be read carefully. In some cases there are clues that are found at a minimum level that are not repeated. For example, a Mediocre or better search of the apartment produces broken bits of pottery; if the PCs perform a Good search, and the GM only reads the Good section to them, the players won’t know about the pottery. Their Good search should yield not merely the broken

compass and other information imparted by a Good search, but also the pottery shards found by a Mediocre search, and the blood found by a Fair search. Of course, the game master has final say on how much information to provide to her players.

During the game the GM may decide to simply allow the characters to find clues at their level of Perception. The GM may also opt to make rolls against various traits to determine how successful they are at each task.

If the characters wish to question persons not listed, such as Sister Frances’s neighbors to see if they saw anyone entering or exiting the apartment on the day she was killed, the GM will decide whether or not to share additional information. This might be the perfect

The City of Jerusalem

Filled with sites which are sacred to Jews, Christians, and Muslims, Jerusalem has been called the Holy City. Many locations are valued by different religions for different reasons, like the Dome of the Rock, which has an Islamic temple built on top of the Jews’ Wailing Wall.

Differences in culture, language, and historical and theological views have created conflicts between the three major religious groups. As a result, Jerusalem has been divided into the “Jewish Quarter,” the “Christian Quarter,” and the “Muslim Quarter.” For the most part, people work and live within their own Quarter and venture rarely into the others. British citizens tend to live in the Christian or Jewish Quarters. The Palestine Museum is located in the Muslim Quarter.

opportunity to provide the background story of the NPC in question. The further away from the scene the characters search for informants, the less valuable the information should become.

Searches of the homes or offices of the suspects may allow the PCs to discover minor clues that might aid in the investigation. Some additional clues have been suggested in “Outcomes” for this purpose.

The game master may allow the players free access to the apartment, the victim’s body, and the murder investigation file. For a more interesting and challenging game, she may choose to make the team find their own way to gain access, such as sweet talking the manager into allowing them into the apartment or breaking into the police station to peek at the file.

In the GM section at the end of this chapter is a discussion on interpreting the sometimes cryptic clues. The story provided in the NPC’s character sheet and the discussion of the suspects in the Campaign Overview will help the GM to get a handle on the character’s motivation.

Setting: Sister Frances Agnes’s Apartment

As the Nags enter the apartment, it is apparent that it has been searched. The books from the low bookshelf under the window have been knocked to the floor. The bed linen has been stripped and piled in the center of the mattress. The drawers of her desk are still ajar and their contents in disarray.

The GM may wish to make a roll against Perception or the gift of Alertness to determine how many clues are discovered in a search of the apartment. By making a roll for each character more clues may be discovered. If the characters fail to find all the clues in the first trip, the game master may wish to suggest they try again.

In a Mediocre or better search they will discover broken bits of pottery on the floor. A Fair or better search reveals flakes of dried blood on the pottery. An archaeologist will be able to date the pottery to the time of Christ.

With a Good or better search they will discover a compass on the desk, which is broken so that the needle is stuck pointing in a southwest direction. Tied to the springs under Sister Frances’s bed is her Bible. Hair and fiber samples are recovered from the various people who have been in and out of the apartment. A Nag with skill in fingerprinting technology will find the fingerprints of several different people. (See the “Game Master Information” section at the end of this chapter to find out whose prints are recovered.)

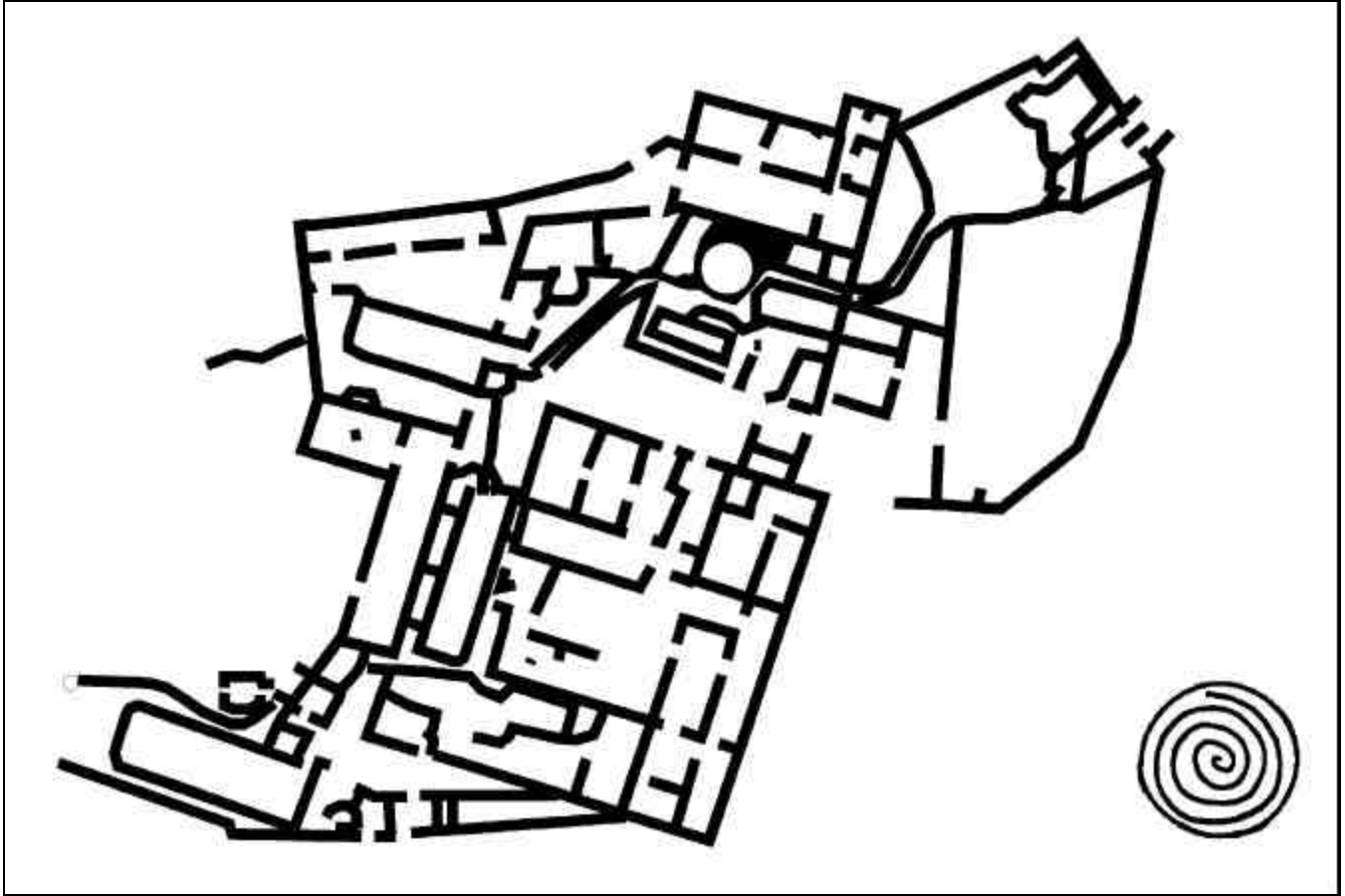
Great or better searches reveal a small hidden compartment in the back of the desk. Inside is Sister Frances’s journal. A small fragment of scroll is also found inside the Bible between the Old and New Testaments. Sister Mary can date the scroll fragment by the handwriting style to between 50 B.C. and A.D. 80.

With a Superb search the team is able to get a clear print off a fragment of pottery, which can be matched to the murderer. Alternately, the GM may allow them to discover a tiny hair or clothing fiber from the murderer, dried into the blood on the pottery.

Journal Entry

Sister Frances’s journal reveals that her original interest in Qumran and in the nearby cliffs was to check and verify maps of the area. She describes the multitude of caves along the cliffs and her plan to include the caves in an extremely detailed map that she plans to share only with the NAGS Society.

Below this entry is a simple map of the Qumran ruins. There is a circle beside the map with a small swirl inside.



The final entry is written in a shakier hand than before. Sister Frances had decided to cut her expedition short. She'd found scroll fragments that she was anxious to share with Sister Mary. She believed that they might be the oldest Jewish scrolls ever discovered. While there were hundreds, possibly thousands, of fragments in the cave, she was only taking one with her for now. She was hopeful of finding complete scrolls on a future expedition with a full NAGS Society team.

Her excitement turned to concern about her companion and guide Muhammad. She had refrained from telling him the truth about the discovery and she could tell he was aware she was keeping something from him. Muhammad is a simple man and he fears matters of the occult and if he were to suspect the importance of this find he might destroy it

rather than risk stirring up the wrath of God. On occasions in the past he had warned her against drawing the attention of the Sons of Light, whoever they are.

The last time he warned her was when she tried to help Calvin Davies marry a local Arab woman. Muhammad had betrayed her confidence to the woman's family, who then secreted her away.

While she is worried about Muhammad here in the desert, she knows Larry Fitzpatrick will be her greatest concern when she returns to Jerusalem. The jealous and competitive academic is always trying to elbow in on her research. Although she can't prove it, she believes he has a habit of going through her apartment while she is not there.

Inspector Calvin Davies

Calvin is a British citizen who first came to Palestine during his tour as an officer in the military police. After being discharged honorably he was offered a job on the Palestine Police force where he has served for the past two years. Recently he fell in love with a local Arab woman, but her family disapproved of the match. They had been meeting in secret and planned to elope. Calvin made arrangements with the church through Sister Frances for the private ceremony, but the nun let it slip to Muhammad and he reported the lovers' plans to the bride's family. Outraged, the bride's father forced her to marry a man of his choosing who then took her away from Jerusalem. Calvin doesn't know where his beloved has been taken or what's become of her.

Good Perception, Fair Reasoning, Mediocre Resolve, Good Strength, Fair Dexterity, Good Vigor

Gifts: Combat Reflexes, Reputation, Law Enforcement Powers

Fault: Stubborn

Firearm (Pistol): Good, Forensics: Fair, Profession (Police): Good, Surveillance: Good, Survival (Desert): Fair, Unarmed Combat: Fair

Equipment: Calvin has the resources of the Palestine Police at his disposal. He carries a service revolver in his shoulder holster and a .22 pistol on his ankle.



Calvin has blonde curly hair.

If Calvin is the murderer, observant PCs may notice a tiny bit of blood on the cuff of his uniform. (If confronted about it, he will pass it off as being from some police business.) Also, one of Sister Frances's neighbors, if questioned thoroughly, will remember seeing Inspector Davies in the area before the murder occurred.

Interview: Inspector Calvin Davies

There are several factors that the GM may decide to take into consideration with regards to the Nags' conversations with Inspector Davies. The PCs need to be very persuasive or eloquent in their questioning. A poorly handled interview with the stubborn inspector could blow the PCs' chance to access police records. Inspector Davies might be more willing to open up for someone who is a fellow law enforcement officer. An alert character may notice that the inspector is wearing a .22 caliber pistol in an ankle holster.

With a Poor interview the Inspector refuses to even speak with the Nags. A Mediocre interview only gets the PCs a gener-

ic remark about the increased crime rate and overworked police force. The Inspector says he'll get around to the case when he has time, but he seems to be writing it off as a case of random violence.

With a Fair interview, Inspector Davies will share a few tidbits about the case, such as cause of death and a list of suspects. If asked about his personal connection with Sister Frances he will deny that his personal feelings affect his handling of the case and claim that he had been working during the time of the murder.

During a Good interview the inspector will bring up his personal experience with Sister Frances, but continue to deny any involvement in her murder. He will allow the

Dead Sea Murder

characters to have supervised access to the body and police case file.

A Great interview nets the team free access to the body and police case file. The inspector will also give a detailed account of his personal experience with Sister Frances and provide a detailed alibi. During the time of the murder he claims to have been undercover following suspected terrorists and he has no witnesses to back up his claim. He will also grudgingly admit that his dislike of the nun has landed the case on the bottom of his case list and he doesn't plan on rushing to solve it.

If the inspector is the murderer he will act extremely suspicious during a Superb interview. If he did not kill her, he will name the suspect he thinks did it and give a detailed account of what led him to this conclusion. (Although this suspect may or may not be the actual murderer.)

The Palestine Police

The police headquarters is a low one story sandstone and concrete building. Of the twenty-five officers currently assigned to this precinct, there is rarely more than five or six present at a given time.

The majority of the officers on the Palestine police force are British citizens. About a third are Arabs or Jews who consider Palestine their home. Because of the underlying resentment against England and the Jewish immigrants the Arab officers are more likely to assist the Nags in accessing information that the other officers might have withheld, especially if Inspector Davies is uncooperative. The Arab officers will also be more likely to share the unsavory history between Davies and Sister Frances with the team, even revealing an overheard comment made by Davies in which he stated that he was glad Sister Frances was dead.

The Nags may encounter some of the criminal element that the police in general, and Davies in particular, are investigating. Religious and political extremists who are responsible for the semi-frequent terrorist attacks are usually small groups of three to five members with access to handheld weapons and small amounts of explosives. Other than small terrorist factions there isn't much in the way of organized crime in Jerusalem. Small-time hoodlums who tend to work alone might try to rob the Nags or, if paid by someone, they might take a pot shot at them.

Murder Investigation File

Allowing her players access to the police murder investigation file is one way for a GM to slip some overlooked clues to the characters and give meaning to those already found. In



the GM section at the end of this chapter is a discussion that will help with that.

The police arrived at the apartment after a neighbor reported hearing angry shouts. They found the place in disarray. Apparently it had been searched in a ramshackle way. The police are assuming the thief made off with Sister Frances's Bible and journal, because those items have not been found.

Smashed pottery on the floor, now housed in a box in the evidence storage room, is the apparent murder weapon. It appears Sister Frances was clobbered over the head with a single, deadly blow.

Inspector Davies has already made some preliminary inquiries. There are statements from several colleagues from the Palestine Museum about Larry Fitzpatrick's fierce competitive nature and his anger when Sister Frances didn't rise to his goading. No one seems to know why she returned so soon from her last expedition but there have been some wild speculations.

Larry Fitzpatrick casually denied any knowledge of the murder. He has made several formal requests for Sister Frances's papers and journal, claiming they were research partners and he is entitled to this material. He doesn't seem to believe it when the police assure him that no such property has been found.

In the course of several interviews with Muhammad the investigator has pieced together a basic account of the expedition. The interviewer noted he seemed extremely nervous and suspects Muhammad hasn't told all he knows.

Muhammad seems to have some connection with the mysterious Josef Solomon. Rumors from informants indicate that Josef is associated, and possibly a leader, in some previously unknown sect of Judaism. The group apparently calls themselves the Sons of Light. Any mention of the Sons of Light or Josef Solomon sends Muhammad into frantic denials and tearful prayers to Allah.

Muhammad Haddad (Bedouin Guide)

Muhammad was born and raised in a Bedouin community. Much of his youth was spent shepherding his family's goats. He has had no formal education and is illiterate. When he was old enough he was trained to be a guide by his uncle. He had heard rumors about the Sons of Light, and even saw Josef Solomon perform a "miracle" once. Such magical and strange workings frighten him.

Fair Perception, Fair Reasoning, Fair Resolve, Good Strength, Mediocre Dexterity, Great Vigor

Gifts: Absolute Direction, Alertness, Knack (For Finding Things)

Faults: Phobia (Occult)

Animal Handling: Fair, Bargaining: Fair, Firearm (Pistol): Fair, Stealth: Good, Survival (Desert): Superb, Thrown Weapons: Mediocre, Tracking: Fair

Equipment: Muhammad has desert survival equipment and can live off the land indefinitely, if need be. He has an old .22 pistol that was the gift from a hunter he once guided.



Muhammad has sleek black hair.

If Muhammad is the murderer, several people have heard him make the cryptic remark that he has prevented the end of the world.

Dead Sea Murder

Examining the Body

If the characters are squeamish, this information can be included in the police file. To preserve the body over the past month it has already been embalmed. Sister Frances has been simply wrapped in a white linen sheet and placed in a wooden casket. She appears to have been in her sixties and had short gray hair. The police intend to ship her body back to England on the next plane, so the Nags don't have much time for their evaluation.

A Mediocre or better examination of the body simply indicates that the cause of death was a crushing blow to the skull. A roll of Fair or better will allow the PCs to find bits of pottery in the wound that match the pottery from the apartment.



At the level of Good or better, the characters notice a small mark cut at the hairline on Sister Frances's forehead. The mark is about four centimeters high and looks like the Greek letter "pi" but the left leg of the letter

does not reach the crossing line. Sister Mary can identify it as the Hebrew letter "hei" and one of its meanings is "divine light."



A Great examination will determine whether the mark was made prior to death (if Josef is the culprit), or after death (if any of the other suspects is the killer), based upon the amount of bloodflow.

With a Superb examination they will find residue of frankincense oil on her hair, face, and hands.

The Bedouins

The Bedouins are one of the groups of native Arabs living in Palestine. For the most part, the Bedouins live in remote communities herding goats and living off the land much as their ancestors have for thousands of years. A Bedouin village may consist of a dozen or so families and they will defend their fellow villagers as voraciously as their own kin.

While the Bedouins are Islamic, they are aware of the Sons of Light and some fear that the secretive Jewish group may actually possess some supernatural ability to cause the much whispered about Armageddon. The Sons of Light have fostered this superstition as a way of ensuring Bedouin cooperation by performing magic tricks and calling them miracles. To the Bedouins the Sons of Light seem like evil sorcerers bent on bringing about the end of the world. The Bedouins have been quietly watching them, hoping to foil their doomsday magic whenever the Sons of Light seem to find whatever sign for which they have been watching.

While in the future the Bedouins are given credit for finding the scrolls, it will actually be the NAGS Society who are finally bringing the scrolls to the attention of the world.

Interview: Muhammad Haddad

Finding the elusive Muhammad will be the Nags' first challenge. Charming or bribing a local informant might be one way to track him down, or perhaps an alert PC will have noticed the young Bedouin man shadowing them. A search of his person will reveal the old beat-up .22 pistol in his shoulder pouch.

If the questioning goes Poorly, Muhammad will pretend he doesn't speak English and that the characters have the wrong person. In a Mediocre interview he'll speak English, but deny knowing anything and he'll lie about the location of the last expedition.

During a Fair questioning he will admit to having heard of the Sons of Light only if directly asked about them. He'll admit to having heard about the nun's death, but deny knowing anything about it. He won't volunteer any information about the expedition, but will admit to having visited Qumran with Sister Frances while denying they went anywhere else.

With a Good interview Muhammad will admit to having met Josef, the leader of the Sons of Light, but won't discuss their conversation. He'll claim to know nothing of the murder, but will point the finger at Larry Fitzpatrick as the one he suspects. He'll only admit to having been to Qumran and the nearby cliffs, but no useful details.

In a Great interview, Muhammad tells the PCs that Larry Fitzpatrick bribed him into telling him about the expedition's location and their find. He'll give the team a detailed account of the expedition and tell them about the Sons of Light, who were very interested in the scrolls. This time he'll admit that he sus-

Larry Fitzpatrick

The only child of a British Earl, Larry grew up in the lap of luxury. He prefers to be addressed as Lord, his official royal title, but few people outside the museum's political circle bother with the formality. He graduated a First from Cambridge and landed a prestigious position at the Palestine Museum. Since the local environment has grown steadily more hostile Larry is eager to leave the Holy Land, but before he goes he'd love to take the credit and acclaim of "discovering" whatever incredible find Sister Frances stumbled across and left in the desert.

Superb Perception, Fair Reasoning, Poor Resolve, Good Strength, Good Dexterity, Good Vigor

Gifts: Alertness, Contacts (Palestine Museum), Privileged Upbringing

Faults: Competitive, Stubborn

Academic Study (Cartography): Great, Etiquette: Mediocre, Firearm (Pistol): Fair, Gambling: Fair, Language (Arabic): Mediocre, Occult Knowledge: Fair, Religion (Judeo-Christian): Good

Equipment: He has an archaeologist's tool kit and desert survival supplies that he'd bring with him if he goes in the field. He carries a pocket notebook and pen with him most of the time, as well as a briefcase. He also carries a .22 pistol.



Larry's hair and beard are red.

If Larry is the murderer, a truly observant PC may notice small fragments of pottery embedded in the soles of his shoes. If searching his home, they will find a suit jacket with a small bloodstain on the cuff.

Larry has, in his briefcase, some papers belonging to Sister Frances Agnes, including a coded map stolen for him by Muhammad. If Larry is the murderer, there are small spatters of dried blood on some of the other papers.

Dead Sea Murder

pects the Sons of Light are behind the murder and anyone who goes near the caves are in danger of being killed as well.

If Muhammad is the murderer, he'll act extremely nervous and suspicious in a Superb interrogation. If he is not, he'll admit to telling the Sons of Light everything, including where Sister Frances lived. He'll confess to having stolen a coded map from Sister Frances for Larry Fitzpatrick.

Interview: Larry Fitzpatrick

Larry Fitzpatrick is a tough suspect to interrogate even in the best of circumstances. Having grown up in a privileged and wealthy family he believes answering the Nags' inquiries is beneath him and he feels no obligation to do so. His stubborn and competitive nature has not softened with the nun's death and he still wants to be the one to find and claim whatever prize she found in the desert. One of the PCs may notice that Larry carries a small .22 pistol in his jacket pocket, but if questioned about it he will insist everyone in Palestine should carry a weapon for self-defense in these turbulent times.

In a Poor interview Larry will threaten to report the team's harassment to the local police, the embassy, and Sister Mary's superiors in the church. A Mediocre questioning will only result in Larry refusing to speak to the team further.

With a Fair interrogation Larry will claim that Sister Frances was actually his partner and therefore he is entitled to any research she left behind, including her personal journal. He refuses to discuss the murder or investigation.

During a Good interview Larry will admit he was slightly competitive with Sister Frances, but that they were friends and shared information regularly. He'll offer a vague alibi about having been busy doing

research in the Scrollery during the time for the murder. He'll claim to have listed witnesses for the police, but that he won't name them for the team and risk dragging other innocent academics into this sordid business.

A Great interview produces an admission that he had been very competitive with Sister Frances. He'll still claim he was in the Scrollery during the murder, but admit that he has no witnesses. If questioned specifically about being in the apartment, he'll admit to having visited her earlier in the day and shuffling through things but will claim it had been with her permission. If the team brings up the map Muhammad sold to him, he will admit he bought a map, but that he didn't know where Muhammad got it.

If Larry is the murderer, he'll act extremely suspicious and guilty during a Superb interrogation. If he didn't do it, he will admit he had searched the apartment long before Sister Frances was killed, but that he found nothing. He'll also volunteer that he bought a coded map from her guide and he now suspects Muhammad may have killed her to get it.

Game Master Information

The clues alone are not enough to solve the murder and find the scrolls. The characters will also need to interpret their meaning. Rolls against the various attributes, gifts, and skills brought to the campaign by the different characters may be useful in determining how much to reveal. However the GM may decide that if her players uncover the clues they automatically comprehend their deeper meanings.

When Sister Frances returned to her apartment she knew Larry Fitzpatrick would eventually search for an indication of what she'd discovered and that is why she hid her Bible and journal. She placed the scroll frag-

ment between the Old and New Testament because she suspected that the scrolls dated to the time of Christ and he lived during the time between the writing of the two testaments.

The pottery jar she brought back from the cave had been left on her bookcase. Her murderer smashed the jar over her head, killing her. (The blood on the pottery shards is that of Sister Frances.) The police collected most of the fragments as evidence.

The prints on the pottery belong to the murderer, as do the hair and fiber samples. Fingerprints found in the other areas of the apartment are from various police officials, Sister Frances and Sister Mary, Larry Fitzpatrick, Muhammad, Detective Davies, and Josef Solomon. The PCs will have to find ways of collecting prints surreptitiously from the suspects to make the comparisons.

The journal entry names the suspects, in an around-about way for Josef. It also indicates possible motives. The doodle beside the Qumran map is a clue to finding the scroll cave. The circle is the same size as the compass that is stuck pointing southwest, the direction of the scroll cave from Qumran. The spiral represents the side view of a rolled up scroll.

Larry Fitzpatrick bought a coded map from Muhammad, who stole it from Sister Frances. This map is a red herring, and if the Nags find it they will discover it is only a NAGS map written in a NAGS code.

The murderer was the one who shot at Sister Mary in the Scollery. If the NAGS Society members have the resources they may be able to determine which gun shot the bullet.

Regardless of who actually murdered Sister Frances, Josef Solomon is the one who marked the body with the Hebrew letter and frankincense oil. After hearing about the scrolls from Muhammad, Josef went to search Sister Frances's apartment. If the GM has cho-

sen Josef as the murderer, then this is when he killed her. If he isn't the murderer, then he just marked the body as a sort of blessing and then checked through the already ransacked room.

The three interviews with the suspects may be riddled with lies, false claims, and misinformed suspicions. Even a Superb interview could contain misleading information because the NPCs don't possess all the facts either. Their answers may be colored with emotion or simply the desire to get the spotlight off themselves. The game master may share this insight with her players, or let them sift through the tangled web themselves. If an interview doesn't go well, the PCs may want to question the suspect again later.

Even if one of the suspects confesses to the murder that admission may not count if a police officer didn't overhear it. The murderer may deny the claim later, or worse, decide to kill the PCs before they can tell anyone else about it.

The police murder investigation file gives the GM an opportunity to drop hints and give some meaning to the clues already found. For the players who have not yet found the journal and Bible, it hints that they should still be looking for them. It also clarifies that Larry Fitzpatrick doesn't have those items, since he is petitioning the police to hand them over. Sister Mary should insist that the PCs need to find the journal before setting off for Qumran.

The file also provides information about the elusive Josef Solomon and the Sons of Light, both of which play a large role in the search of the caves and Qumran. Inspector Davies's past with Sister Frances is commented on in the journal and should tip off the PCs that he is also a suspect, if they have not yet discovered this from speaking with other officers at the police station.

The Search: Qumran

If the team has not spontaneously expressed an interest in going to Qumran to find and catalogue the scrolls, the GM may use Sister Mary to suggest this expedition. Locating and preserving archaeological treasures is one of the NAGS Society's specified goals, and the Dead Sea Scrolls certainly fall into this category.

The adventure in Qumran also includes elements of danger and the possibility of bare-knuckles conflict that are of interest to some players and game masters. While solving the murder of Sister Frances has a final solution, this section gives the GM the option to build on the story and take the campaign in whichever direction she chooses.

Setting: Qumran

The desert around the ruins of the Qumran settlement is rocky, dusty, and dry. Particles of sand easily find their way into sensitive Nag Tech equipment. Unprepared adventurers risk sunburn, heat stroke, and dehydration.

Wadi Qumran is a dried riverbed that occasionally floods during rare desert rain storms and feeds into the Dead Sea. This riverbed runs from west to east and is south of Qumran.

The remaining walls of Qumran stand only a foot high. An archaeologist will be able to identify the scroll writing room because of the discarded inkwells in the sand. There was also a metal-smithing area. The most impressive feature of the ancient settlement is the remains of a sophisticated water system of cisterns, baths, and aqueducts.

When the Nags reach the ruins they discover the evidence of a recent campsite. There is a fire pit, blankets, and packs con-

taining food, clothes, frankincense oil, and a knife with dried blood on the tip.

Meeting Josef Solomon

Shortly after the adventurers arrive in Qumran, discover the campsite, and examine the contents of the packs, Josef Solomon and two other Sons of Light will return to their camp. If Muhammad had accompanied the PCs this far he will abandon them now.

At this point the GM may choose to make a situation roll to decide how Josef approaches the team. (A situation roll is a die roll not based on any trait.) The GM may simply choose how she wishes Josef to present himself, or she can use the following roll results to



Josef Solomon (Leader of the Sons of Light)

Josef's family emigrated from Russia to Palestine when he was an infant. As a boy, his strict devotion soon came to the attention of the Sons of Light, a secret congregation of Jews who still follow the teachings passed down by the survivors of the Qumran monastery. Once initiated in the sect, Josef's charisma and powers of persuasion helped him rise in the ranks of the priesthood. To inspire fear and awe from the locals, Josef has mastered several simple magic tricks. Recently he became the congregation's leader and he firmly believes that the long predicted battle between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness is about to begin.

Good Perception, Fair Reasoning, Great Resolve, Fair Strength, Fair Dexterity, Good Vigor
Gifts: Attractive, Charisma

Faults: Obsession, Paranoia

Animal Training (Falconry): Good, Firearm (Pistol): Fair, Magic*: Good, Occult Knowledge: Great, Persuade: Good, Stealth: Good, Survival (Desert): Good

Equipment: Josef has all the survival supplies he would need to spend over a week alone in the desert. He has a trained Peregrine falcon, which he keeps with him except for when traveling incognito in Jerusalem. He carries the props for magic tricks and a .22 pistol.



Josef has brown hair.

Whether or not Josef is the murderer, he will have among his belongings at the campsite the knife with Sister Frances's blood on it. The real evidence as to his guilt lies with the examination of the body, determining whether the mark was made before her death.

*This may be stage magic or actual mystical ability, depending upon the type of campaign being run.

gauge his behavior. With a Poor or lower roll, Josef will simply order his men to seize the team, in which case the GM should continue to the section about fighting the Sons of Light. With a Mediocre roll he will come off as an unbalanced, radical leader of a cult. In that case when he tries to join the team they will probably decline his offer and Josef will then try to capture the group.

With a roll in the Fair through Superb range Josef will try to charm the team into being supporters, if not believers, in the Sons of Light. He will share the prediction of Armageddon in which the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness will battle over the fate of the world. He also explains that he believes that finding the scrolls is important for the

Sons of Light to succeed. If questioned about how he knows about the scrolls he will explain that Muhammad told him about it. How convincing this explanation is depends a lot on how the GM presents the information to the players. The GM should try to relate the information in a manner that reflects the roll results.

With a Superb roll, Josef will also perform a miracle, or what appears to be a miracle, depending on the GM's preference, to punctuate the "truth" of what he says.

Once the initial meeting is complete, Josef will inquire about joining the NAGS Society's expedition.

The Sons of Light

Depending on the point of view, the Sons of Light are either the inheritors of the Qumran monastery who have prepared and trained in secret for two thousand years to fulfill the prophecies in Revelations, or they are an insane cult secretly manipulating the peoples of Palestine for their own ends. Although the Sons of Light consider themselves the descendants of Qumran, they are actually Jews recruited into the all male secret society. They have trained for the “final battle” foretold in Revelations and they are on constant look out for signs that the “end times” have arrived. To that end the Sons of Light are scattered throughout the Holy Land, either individually or in small groups. They blend in with society and have prepared secret caches of equipment and weapons. Their leaders are constantly mobile, patrolling the cities with an entourage of only three or four lieutenants and checking in with their followers. If the battle cry were ever sounded, over four

thousand members of the Sons of Light are prepared to lay down their lives for the cause.

While Jewish immigrants and the British government are unaware of the existence of the Sons of Light, the native Arabs have been aware of the group for some time. Fear of the Sons of Light and distrust of the foreigners keep the Arabs from revealing the secret. The Sons of Light have further tried to ensure the Arabs silence by purposefully scaring them with “miraculous” magic tricks.

The Dead Sea Scrolls are the lost library of the Qumran monastery. While most of the information contained in the scrolls can be found in the Old Testament, some will be completely new to the Sons of Light. Most importantly, the War Scroll has detailed prophecies regarding Armageddon and the battle with the Sons of Darkness. To the Sons of Light, the discovery of the War Scroll will be the long awaited sign that the battle is imminent.

Interview: Josef Solomon

If the PCs have not yet solved Sister Frances’s murder they may wish to interrogate Josef. As before, a roll against a character’s Perception or a related gift or skill can be used to determine if the questioning is productive.

If the interview goes Poorly, Josef is insulted and turns on the team immediately. Josef will dismiss the murder as unimportant and refuse to discuss it if the interview is Mediocre.

With a role of Fair or better Josef admits to speaking with Muhammad and acknowledges being concerned. He states that he would have liked to have spoken with Sister Frances, but that he didn’t.

Josef admits he was in the apartment when the characters have a Good interview, but he won’t discuss the details. With a Great interrogation he tells the team he arrived in the apartment after the murder. He states he performed a blessing on the body, but touched nothing else.

If Josef is the murderer, he will act extremely suspicious in a Superb interview. If he was not the killer, then he saw the real murderer leave as he was arriving and will tell the PCs whom it was he saw.

Joining with the Sons of Light

The team may choose to allow the Sons of Light to join their expedition. The Sons of Light will remain helpful with the search for

the scrolls as long as the characters allow them to stay. If the Nags try to discontinue their association with the Sons of Light, then Josef will order his men to capture them. If the Nags allow the Sons of Light to assist them in the search for the caves, continue to that section later in this chapter.

Fighting the Sons of Light

Once the Sons of Light turn against the Nags, they will try to capture them. If the expedition team is captured, then they may try to escape again later or be rescued by teammates who evaded the Sons of Light.

While in the custody of the Sons of Light, the captured Nags will be pressured to help find the scroll caves. If the caves are located, the Sons of Light will take the scrolls and abandon their prisoners. If this happens, the group may continue to search for other scroll caves.

If the Sons of Light are defeated or killed, then the characters can continue with the search for the caves and cataloguing the scrolls. If even one Son of Light escapes without acquiring the scrolls, he will return with reinforcements in three days.

Searching for the Caves

With the broken compass that points in a southwest direction and the map of Qumran drawn in Sister Frances's journal, the PCs can discover the direction they should travel from Qumran to find the scroll cave she located. The cave Sister Frances had found was Cave 4. (See the table of cave contents in the "Outcomes" chapter.) This is not necessarily the cave the PCs will come across first.

If the characters found the compass and journal but have not figured out their significance, the GM may decide to let Sister Mary come up with this suggestion. Other options

The Sons of Darkness

Other than the name in the prophecies, there is no indication who the Sons of Darkness really are. While the Sons of Light are a group dedicated to fulfilling their prophesied roles, they have not been able to identify another group who seems to fit the role of their sworn enemy.

One speculation is that the Sons of Darkness are actually a demonic army that will rise up to destroy God's people. Most Sons of Light believe that the prophecies speak of a satanic cult. Throughout history they have debated if the Sons of Darkness will be the military of some tyrannical nation. With the information in the War Scroll, the Sons of Light hope to find out how to identify the Sons of Darkness and how to defeat them.

include allowing a character with Tracking skills to make a roll to see if he can find the path Sister Frances took from Qumran to the cave. If all else fails, the team may simply go to the cliffs and start exploring the caves one by one until they happen upon one that contains written material.

Once a Scroll Cave is Found

The Sons of Light will assist the team in finding the first scroll cave if the Nags have not yet tried to discontinue their association with them. Once the first scroll cave is discovered, Josef will order his men to capture the characters. See the "Fighting the Sons of Light" section of this chapter for details.

After the Sons of Light have been dealt with, the team should proceed to catalogue the contents of the cave. Photographs of the scrolls to be analyzed later is the quickest and easiest method, but it will be up to the team to

Dead Sea Murder

do their best to gather the information with the least disturbance to the site.

If the players don't think to check for other caves, the GM may have Sister Mary make this suggestion, especially if the game master wishes to continue play with one of the suggested routes presented in the next chapter. Otherwise, as soon as the group is satisfied that they have completed their archaeological expedition, then this part of the campaign is completed.

More Complications

The game master may decide that the nosy Larry Fitzpatrick followed the PCs to Qumran and the caves. He could be introduced at any time the GM wishes. If the characters are alert, they may have spotted him before they even reached Qumran. The Sons of Light may capture him when they try to capture the Nags. If Larry is clever enough to avoid detection, he may wait until the team finds then leaves the scroll cave. Once everyone is gone he could sneak in, take the scrolls, then unveil "his" discovery, to the adventurers' surprise, when he returns to Jerusalem.

Natural disasters are another possible complication. Sandstorms may sweep across the desert or a sudden downpour could cause the dried riverbed to flood. Earthquakes occur regularly in this region and could cause landslides or cave-ins.

Setting: Caves

From the dried riverbed the explorers will be able to see cave openings two-thirds of the way up the cliffs. It is possible to scramble up the cliffs without climbing gear in about two hours. With the hot, dry desert climate it is important for the adventurers to bring water. The GM may wish to roll against the unprepared characters' Vigor to see if they suffer from dehydration or heat stroke.

Some of the cave openings may be a tight squeeze, but once inside they open into wide chambers. Many of the caves are empty or contain common artifacts that are of little significance. Scroll caves will sometimes have jars lined along the wall while in others the jars rest on shelves carved into the cave walls. Refer to the next chapter to identify specific contents of each of the eleven scroll caves.

The jars are very simple and mostly unadorned. Many are long dried up water jars and will be empty. Industrious Nags who test the pottery will discover that the clay used in these jars matches the pottery shards found in Sister Frances's apartment.

Many of the scroll caves have passages leading deeper underground. During the past two centuries earthquakes have caused fractures in the cave walls and minor cave-ins. Some caves may be home to bats (see sidebar below).

Critters: Bats

Bats attack if they feel threatened. Most will simply flee when disturbed. With echolocation they can maneuver in total darkness. Bats bursting out of crevices might startle characters enough to make them fall or cry out and attract unwanted attention. An infection or disease from a bite could begin to show symptoms in 24 hours, causing -1 damage per day it is left untreated.

Combat: Mediocre

Damage Factors (Includes Scale):

Offensive: +1 (Fangs)

Defensive: -1 (Hollow Bones)

Wound Levels: 1 Hurt, 3 Out of Battle

Outcomes

The goals for the NAGS Society team in this adventure are to find Sister Frances's murderer and to find and catalogue the Dead Sea Scrolls. This chapter covers information the PCs need to discover to accomplish those goals.

Once the mission is achieved, the GM may wish to continue to build new adventures based on this storyline. Some possible campaign routes are suggested at the end of this chapter.

Solving the Murder

Before beginning the adventure, the GM should read this section and decide which of the suspects is Sister Frances's murderer. The choice of murderer can affect the difficulty level of this adventure. With Josef as the killer the characters may face a serious bloody-knuckles fight with the Sons of Light to bring their leader to justice. Inspector Davies is an unlikely suspect, one who the players may not even consider initially, but who could block the investigation every step of the way and force the PCs into tricky problem-solving challenges. Muhammad Haddad and Larry Fitzpatrick make good choices for an easier game or for campaigns that are focused mainly on the search for the scrolls.

Under the name of each NPC below is a clue list and a discussion of the benefits and challenges of using each of them. The definitive clues will be the fingerprints on the pottery jar and the hair and fiber sample found on the body and in the apartment. If the players accuse the wrong suspect of the murder, those clues will be used by the police to set the innocent person free and the Nags will have to continue their investigation.

Muhammad

Clue List:

- Fingerprints on the murder weapon (pottery jar).
- Clothing fibers and black hair on the body and in the apartment.
- Informant statement "Muhammad claims to have single-handedly stopped the end of the world."

Muhammad's fear and limited experience in worldly matters makes him the perfect henchman for one of the other suspects. With the right encouragement and a modest bribe Muhammad could be convinced to do someone else's dirty work. Faced with prosecution Muhammad would immediately implicate his co-conspirator.

Muhammad wouldn't need someone else to push him into committing the murder, though. His genuine fear of Armageddon could lead him to conclude that killing Sister Frances is a justifiable act. If the GM decides to use Muhammad it is her choice whether or not he acted alone.

The challenge for the characters would be tracking down Muhammad. Once he thinks he is going to be arrested he would flee into the desert where he would be very difficult to track. If he reaches his Bedouin tribe, the Nags may find themselves in for a real fight to apprehend him.

Larry Fitzpatrick

Clue List:

- Fingerprints on the murder weapon (pottery jar).
- Clothing fibers and red hair on the body and in the apartment.
- Bits of broken pottery stuck in the soles of his shoes.

Dead Sea Murder

- Small bloodstain on the cuff of his suit jacket (in closet at home).
- Papers belonging to Sister Frances are in his briefcase with a few small spatters of dried blood on them.

Larry is the classic suspect. He had the most to gain by Sister Frances's death, if only she hadn't hidden her journal. Stealing the scroll discovery is his last chance to have a success before leaving Jerusalem.

Unfortunately for the PCs, with money comes power. Larry can buy off witnesses, pay his way out of the charges, and hire thugs to rough up the team when they get too close.

Inspector Davies

Clue List:

- Fingerprints on the murder weapon (pottery jar).
- Clothing fibers and blonde hair on the body and in the apartment.
- Blood stain on the cuff of his uniform.
- Neighbor remembers seeing the detective in the building before the murder was reported.

The characters may learn from the inspector's co-workers of his obsession with his lost love and his hatred of the woman who betrayed them. Since the characters are likely to speak with Davies frequently, there is also more opportunity for him to let something slip.

The challenge for the characters is to handle the situation carefully. They would need to convince Inspector Davies's co-workers, who have come to know and trust him, that he is clearly the guilty party. The inspector is also in a position to have the PCs arrested and deported if he suspects they are getting too close to the truth. He may even try to silence the team permanently. Although he may attempt to kill them himself, he might send hoodlums or terrorists he is in contact with while undercover.

Josef Solomon

Clue List:

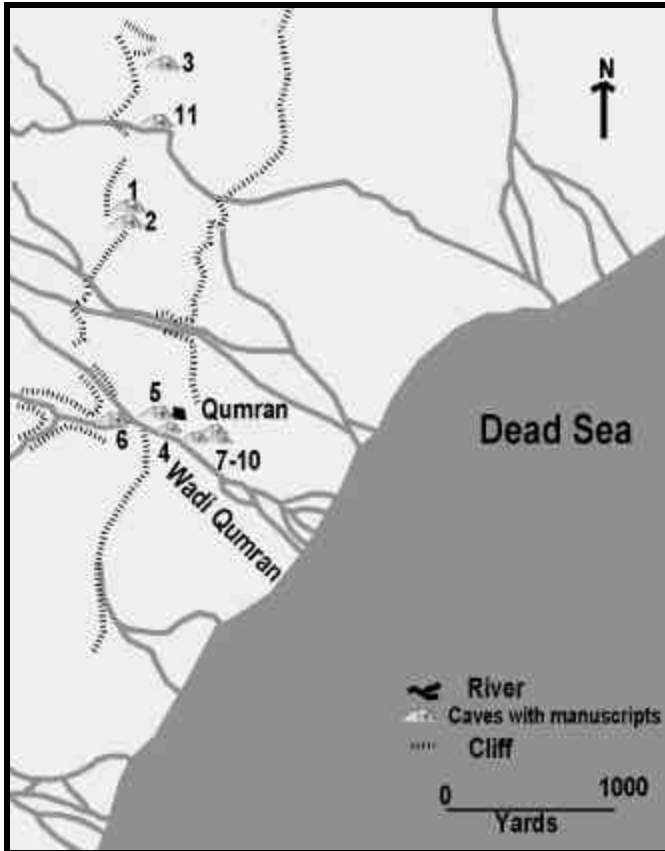
- Fingerprints on the murder weapon (pottery jar).
- Clothing fibers and brown hair on the body and in the apartment.
- "Hei" mark on victim's forehead was made while she was still alive.
- Knife in Josef's bag has victim's blood on it.*
- Frankincense found in Josef's bag.*

* These last two clues will be the case whether or not Josef is the murderer.

Josef makes the ideal formidable enemy for a more aggressive adventure. The Sons of Light will not allow the Nags to simply haul off their leader in handcuffs. Catching Josef and getting him back to face charges in Jerusalem could result in a number of shootouts. The challenge for both the players and game master is to mix the search for the scrolls and the murder investigation. With the other suspects, the murder can be solved and set aside before venturing into the desert.

Discovering and Cataloguing the Scrolls

In accordance with the precepts of the National Archaeological, Geographic, and Submarine Society, one of the Nags' goals on the expedition to the caves near Qumran should be to catalogue the scrolls while preserving the site for future "discovery." Unless the PCs have access to extremely advanced Nag Tech, the most logical way to quickly record the scrolls for further research and cataloguing is with photographs. This is especially useful with regard to the scroll fragments. The photos of the fragments can be pieced together later while leaving the originals in the caves.



Most of the scrolls and fragments are significant finds simply because they are the oldest surviving copies of the books of the Old Testament. Among the scrolls that are completely unique are the Temple Scroll and the Community Scroll. These contain new rules and parables for daily and religious life, which will be extremely important theologically to the Sons of Light. The Copper Scroll is a coded description of where other treasures are hidden. The War Scroll is another text that has new information for the Sons of Light, including predictions regarding Armageddon, such as how the Sons of Light will be able to identify the Sons of Darkness and how to defeat them.

What follows is a guide to the contents of the eleven caves. The GM may wish to rearrange the contents. The caves are numbered as they will be discovered in the future and do not need to be explored in that order. The PCs may not even find all the caves. It all

depends on the players' and GM's interest in this task.

If the game master has decided to continue the campaign beyond the murder mystery and the scroll discovery she may wish to add other artifacts or clues to the cave list which will lead the characters down the right path. A few suggestions for additional adventure routes are discussed at the end of this chapter.

Contents of Caves 1-11

Cave 1: Seven major scrolls written on sheepskin and wrapped in linen and placed inside pottery jars. Among the scrolls are the War Scroll about the predicted war between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness, the Community Scroll, and hymns. There are several empty water jars, a jar filled with dirt, and broken pottery on the cave floor.

Cave 2: A few partial, minor scrolls in jars. Some old clothing now in tatters is piled in a corner.

Cave 3: The Copper Scroll is wrapped in linen and stored in a pottery jar in this cave. The Copper Scroll is a coded description of where other treasures are hidden. Other jars hold partial, minor scrolls.

Cave 4: Scattered in the dust and sand covering the cave floor are over 15,000 fragments of scrolls that were dumped there when the people of Qumran fled the attacking Romans in A.D. 68.

Cave 5: A large number of scroll fragments litter the cave floor. Pottery cups, water jars, and plates are strewn haphazardly about.

Cave 6: A few bits of broken pottery and a small number of scroll fragments are all that remain in this cave.

Dead Sea Murder

Cave 7: A few decaying scrolls are in open jars left on a natural rock outcrop near the mouth of the cave.

Cave 8: A small number of pottery dishes are scattered about. A single partial scroll is stored in a jar at the back of the cramped cave.

Cave 9: A few partially written scrolls are stored in jars lining the wall. An inkwell and other pottery items are left beside them.

Cave 10: A few partial scrolls still survive on a shelf carved into the cave wall. A rickety wooden stool is tossed in a corner.

Cave 11: In half-a-dozen pottery jars are several complete scrolls, including the Temple Scroll, Psalms, and the Book of Job. A pottery inkwell and a few articles of ancient clothing lay about partially covered in dust.

Other Possible Routes

War Between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness

The predicted war between the Sons of Light and Darkness may have been accurate. If the game master would like to pursue an epic battle between the forces of good and evil, the discovery of the scrolls could be the event that triggers it. Such a massive campaign requires some advanced planning on the GM's part. Some issues to consider before reaching this point in the adventure would be the size of the two armies; their respective strengths, weaknesses, and goals; and character templates for the average soldier and character sheets for the major players.

Bedouin Uprising

After Muhammad returns to his tribe he would share his fears that Armageddon is about to manifest in Qumran. His people might rally to try and prevent the end of the

world and storm Qumran. Not only would the Bedouins try to destroy the Sons of Light, but also they may attack the Nags as the "evil ones" who the Bedouins believe are trying to unleash hell on Earth.

Revival of Qumran

The Sons of Light, inspired by the discovery of the scrolls, may emerge out of hiding and rebuild their monastery over the ruins of Qumran. Depending on the relationship the Nags have with the Sons of Light, this could be good or bad for the players.

Secret Underground City

During the search for the scrolls the players could stumble upon a cave that leads deep underground. After braving the perils of underground rivers, sharp drops, and narrow passages, the group could locate a secret underground society where the descendants of Qumran have lived since the Romans drove them out of their homes in A.D. 68.

The city could be as primitive as those which existed during the reign of the Roman Empire, or ultra-advanced like a second Atlantis. The GM could take the story in any direction from here.

Copper Scroll Treasure Hunt

If the PCs discover the Copper Scroll the GM may allow them to decode it. The scroll could provide straightforward specifications leading to the hidden treasures, or perhaps a riddle or cryptic clues. The treasure could have been long ago taken by someone fortunate to stumble upon it. The exact nature of the treasure is also up to the GM, who could choose anything from a cave filled with gold to a library of ancient scrolls of wisdom.

Pregenerated Characters

For this adventure players can choose to use characters of their own design or select one or more from the PCs provided in this chapter. Each of the following four Nags have skills that will come in handy at different points in the adventure. With the GM's permission, the players can trade traits to further customize their characters.

The selection and customization of player characters should be completed and approved by the GM before beginning the game. A list of equipment and Nag Tech should also be compiled for each character, but remember that they can't carry an unlimited amount of weight.

The game master may opt to add one or more of the provided adventurers as non-player characters to round out a small team that lacks essential skills. However, she should allow her players first crack at finding clues and solving problems rather than using the NPCs to lead the way.

GM Overview of the PCs

Andrew Cromer: Andrew is the kind of fellow classic mystery writers loved to cast as their clever detective. Formerly of Scotland Yard, he has the skills to pick apart even the most tangled of murderous plots and track down the vile culprit. When the bullets and fists start flying, it is Andrew who jumps to the rescue.

Andrew has a few faults that may lead the team into even deeper trouble. The most dangerous is a long-standing nemesis. No information is provided about this enemy,

allowing the GM to decide who he is and if he will play a role in this adventure.

Avi Betz: Besides Avi's knowledge of cartography, which is important for finding the scroll caves, he is used to outdoor activity and his uncanny sense of direction makes him valuable for cave searching tasks.

Curiosity is Avi's major downfall. Being double-jointed and having some skill as an escape artist can sometimes get him out of a bad situation.

Elisha Levine: Her background in archæology is valuable in understanding the cultural and political significance of the scrolls. Her first aid skills may come in handy during the search of the caves, but her fear of bats could cause a problem.

During this campaign, Elisha suffers from the same social stigma as do all women in the Middle East, but she balances this by using her attractiveness to charm the chauvinistic men into underestimating her.

Lawrence De Vaux: In addition to being a superb photographer, Lawrence is a skilled Gadgeteer and is capable of making repairs or, given enough time, building from scratch needed equipment.

For all his talent, Lawrence isn't a fighter. Nor will he be much help in deducing and tracking down Sister Frances's murderer.



NAGS Society Character Record

Name

Player

Area of
Specialty

Attributes

Perception

Reasoning

Resolve

Strength

Dexterity

Vigor

Gifts and Faults

Alertness

Contacts

(Scotland Yard)

Nemesis

Overconfidence

Fudge Levels

Superb

Great

Good

Fair

Mediocre

Poor

Terrible

Background

During his stint at Scotland Yard, Andrew solved several high-profile cases. He became aware of the NAGS Society's true nature during one of his investigations and, impressed with their advancement in forensics, requested to join their ranks. Since then he has foiled the schemes of criminal masterminds all over the world, earning himself several sworn enemies.

Skills

Discern:

Disguise:

Dodge:

Find Hidden:

Firearm (Pistol):

Interrogate:

Lock Picking:

Quick Draw:

Profession (Police):

Stealth:

Surveillance:

Tracking:

Traps:

Unarmed Combat:

Fudge Points

Wounds

1, 2

3, 4

5, 6

7, 8

9+

Scratched

Hurt (-1)

Very Hurt (-2)

Incapacitated

Near Death

☐☐☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

Combat Factors

Offensive DF

Defensive DF

Standard Equipment

forensics evidence kit

lockpick set

small disguise kit

.38 pistol

Nag Tech Items



NAGS Society Character Record

Name

Player

Area of
Specialty

Attributes

Perception

Reasoning

Resolve

Strength

Dexterity

Vigor

Gifts and Faults

Fudge Levels

Background

The changing shape of the world around him has always fascinated Avi. He began making maps as a means of indulging his wanderlust. The NAGS Society recruited him after he discovered several lost Incan cities on an expedition to South America. This is his first official adventure as a member of the NAGS Society.

Skills

Fudge Points

Wounds

1, 2

3, 4

5, 6

7, 8

9+

Scratched

Hurt (-1)

Very Hurt (-2)

Incapacitated

Near Death

☐☐☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

Combat Factors

Offensive DF

Defensive DF

Standard Equipment

Nag Tech Items



NAGS Society Character Record

Name Elisha Levine (Archæologist)

Player

Area of
Specialty Preservationist

Attributes

Perception Good

Reasoning Fair

Resolve Fair

Strength Fair

Dexterity Fair

Vigor Good

Gifts and Faults

Acute Vision

Attractive

Phobia (Bats)

Stubborn

Fudge Levels

Superb

Great

Good

Fair

Mediocre

Poor

Terrible

Background

Her unusual heritage of Christian mother and Jewish father sparked Elisha's interest in religious history. On occasion she has used her understanding of artifacts and cultures to make forgeries when there is reason to suspect someone might try to steal the originals. She is not above using her feminine charm to get her way.

Skills

Academic (Archæology): Good

Acrobatics: Fair

Area Know. (Middle East): Good

First Aid: Fair

Forgery: Fair

History (Middle East): Great

Language (Arabic): Fair

Language (Hebrew): Fair

Language (Latin): Fair

Melee Weapon (Parasol): Fair

Religion (Judeo-Christian): Good

Research: Fair

Riding (Camel): Mediocre

Riding (Horse): Fair

Survival (Desert): Fair

Fudge Points

Wounds

1, 2

Scratched

□□□

3, 4

Hurt (-1)

□

5, 6

Very Hurt (-2)

□

7, 8

Incapacitated

□

9+

Near Death

□

Combat Factors

Offensive DF -1/+1

Defensive DF +1

Standard Equipment

archæologist's toolkit (picks, brushes, etc.)

Nag Tech Items

steel-reinforced parasol



NAGS Society Character Record

Name

Player

Area of
Specialty

Attributes

Perception

Reasoning

Resolve

Strength

Dexterity

Vigor

Gifts and Faults

Knack (Mechanical
items)

Luck

Reputation (Known
Photojournalist)

Vain

Fudge Levels

Superb

Great

Good

Fair

Mediocre

Poor

Terrible

Background

Lawrence's love of photography inspired him to tinker around with his equipment to produce better pictures. When he began to develop camera lenses that could capture images in near darkness he drew the attention of the NAGS Society. Many advancements in Nag Tech, especially in photography, are based on his designs. Lawrence is always ready to go on an adventure and test out his latest equipment.

Skills

Bargaining:

Communications:

Craftsman (Metal):

Driving (Automobile):

Electronics:

Gadgeteer:

Language (French):

Mechanic:

Navigation:

Parachute/Paraglider:

Photography:

Science (Chemistry):

Traps:

Fudge Points

Wounds

1, 2

3, 4

5, 6

7, 8

9+

Scratched

Hurt (-1)

Very Hurt (-2)

Incapacitated

Near Death

☐☐☐

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Combat Factors

Offensive DF

Defensive DF

Standard Equipment

tool set

photograph developing supplies

Nag Tech Items

a variety of seemingly standard photographic equipment, which is actually advanced Nag Tech



NAGS Society Character Record

Name

Player

Area of

Specialty

Attributes

Perception

Reasoning

Resolve

Strength

Dexterity

Vigor

Gifts and Faults

Fudge Levels

Superb

Great

Good

Fair

Mediocre

Poor

Terrible

Background

Skills

Fudge Points

Wounds

1, 2

Scratched

□□□

3, 4

Hurt (-1)

□

5, 6

Very Hurt (-2)

□

7, 8

Incapacitated

□

9+

Near Death

□

Combat Factors

Offensive DF

Defensive DF

Standard Equipment

Nag Tech Items

Facts in Brief: A Traveler's Advisory for Society Members in Palestine

Geological: The Dead Sea is 1,292 feet below sea level and is the lowest point on Earth. Most of Palestine is desert, with rocky hills and gorges. Wadis, or riverbeds that remain dry much of the year, are prone to floods during the rainy season.

Meteorological: In the summer months the average daily temperature climbs over 86 degrees Fahrenheit with over 12 hours of sunlight per day with clear skies. From May to October the temperatures generally top out over 75 degrees. In winter the lows drop to near freezing.

Virtually no rain falls between April and October. Frequent heavy rains in January and February can cause flash floods in the Wadis.

Biological: No life survives in the Dead Sea due to the high salinity and rapid evaporation. Wildlife is fairly sparse, however Egyptian vultures will tend to circle overhead of animals or people in trouble.

Medical: Due to the harsh direct sunlight, sunburns, and sunstrokes are a serious risk. Dehydration can come on suddenly and with little warning in the low humidity of the desert. The NAGS Society strongly recommends wearing sunscreen, hats, and sunglasses. Drink plenty of water and observe traveling companions for signs of heat related illness.

No shots are required, however the Society recommends inoculations against hepatitis A, hepatitis B, tetanus and typhoid. Mosquito bites can cause nausea, but there is no risk of Malaria. To avoid complications from contaminated food and drink: peel fruits, drink mineral water, don't use ice, avoid raw vegetables and food that appears to have been sitting around for a while, and carry diarrhea medication.

Health care is expensive. Check with your insurance provider to ensure they will cover expenses, or file for insurance through your local NAGS office. For NAGS with medical conditions bring a copy of your medical records and an adequate supply of medication for your stay.

Passports: Visitors from Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand do not require Visas, all other visitors do. Despite this, security within the country is tight. You may be subject to security searches. Identification (of some sort) should be carried at all times.

Transportation: Hitchhiking, called tremping, is common, however it is considered inappropriate for females traveling without male escorts. Buses and taxi are available in town. A car can be rented with a driver's license from the visitor's home country, however there are few petrol stations en route to the Dead Sea.

Driving is on the right side of the road, however most other road rules are open to interpretation. The right of way tends to go to the driver who hesitates the least. The official speed limit in town is 50 km/h (30 MPH) and 90 km/h (55 MPH) all other times.

Camels, horses, and mules may be rented for cross-country travel, however camels are generally less likely to suffer complications in the desert.

Monetary: Palestine under the British Mandate uses the British Pound.

Measurements: Palestine uses the metric system.

Power: Electrical power is available in the metropolitan areas and is 220V. Plugs are round and three pronged. Adaptors should be obtained prior to travel to Palestine, as they are difficult to find.

Time: Palestine is 2 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) and 7 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time (EST). Daylight saving time is in effect for all three time zones from March to September.

Language: English is the second language of Palestine. All signs are bilingual. It is rare to find someone who doesn't speak at least some English. Arabs appreciate even clumsy attempts to speak Arabic and will resort to a sort of "sign language" to make themselves understood. Jewish locals speak Hebrew, English, and the native language of the country from which they emigrated.

Etiquette: It is essential to dress modestly in religious and public places. Arms and legs should be fully covered. Shoes should be removed in mosques and a kippah, or skull-cap, should be worn at Jewish religious sites. Bargaining in city center shops is not socially acceptable, but in the markets it is expected. Intimate contact between males and females, even simple handholding, is considered taboo. Women are considered second-class citizens. Arab males in particular dislike women who do not "know their place" and may react indignantly or angrily if one tries to engage them in conversation. Conversely, men should not approach or speak with an Arab woman or they may risk a sharp out lash from her male escorts. If an arrangement is reached between the male NAGS and an Arab male regarding the protection of the females of the group, the Arab will defend the women as if they were members of their own family and expect the respect of that position.

Clothing: Arab women usually wear black veils and a long, loosely fitting dress. The chest panel, sleeves, and side panels may be embroidered.

Arab men wear a gray robe over a white cotton or silk shirt-dress. They wear sandals handmade from camel, cow, or sheep hides. The head covering includes a cap over the hair, a folded scarf-like ghutra, and a black cord that holds it in place.

Jewish locals dress conservatively and the males tend to cover their heads with a skull-cap or hat.

In case of emergency: Contact the NAGS Society immediately. If that is not practical, the Magen David Adom is the local equivalent to the Red Cross.

Appendix: Fudge and Terra Incognita

For those unfamiliar with *Terra Incognita* or the *Fudge* system, this overview provides the basic rules and setting information needed to play. The full *Fudge* rules include many alternate approaches and optional rules which can be incorporated into a *Fudge* game, for those who prefer more detail or structure. *Terra Incognita: The NAGS Society Handbook* gives helpful advice on running a full campaign in Victorian or pulp settings, including genre specific rules and equipment.

Game mechanics serve two broad purposes: to represent the outcome of the characters' actions, and to represent the characters themselves. The "Action Resolution" section demonstrates how character traits are used in play; the "Character Creation" section discusses how to design a character.

Action Resolution

The GM sets the difficulty of a task based on *Fudge's* adjective scale. This is a seven-word descriptive scale:

Superb
Great
Good
Fair
Mediocre
Poor
Terrible

An average task requires a Fair result; a difficult task might require a Great effort, while a simple task might require only a Mediocre effort.

A character's base ability to perform a task is stated in the same terms. If a character is a Good cook, he can be expected to successfully prepare a meal under normal circumstances. If the character is a Superb cook, he can prepare world-class meals. If the character is a Terrible cook, he'll probably be eating a lot of takeout. Unless a skill is being used in a high-pressure situation, the character's trait level serves as his "normal" ability.

When a situation arises where the character's performance is critical, however, it is often useful to apply a random modifier to the character's innate ability. A Good detective may be skilled at noticing clues, but he shouldn't always notice a clue which the GM assigns a difficulty of Good to, but always miss a clue which requires a Great difficulty to spot. Dice are used to give a random element which reflects the environmental conditions, mental state of the character, plain dumb luck, and other factors. Dice rolls should only be required by the GM when such randomness is deemed appropriate. A player needn't make a test on his character's driving skill every time the character drives to the supermarket. It might be appropriate to test against the driving skill to see if the character is able to make it in time to an important interview for which he's already running late, though.

The GM determines what result is needed to succeed at a task; the default is Fair for a normal task under normal circumstances. To successfully swim across a pond might take a



Fudge Dice

Fudge dice are six-sided dice: two sides with plus signs, two with minus signs, and two sides blank. Fudge dice can be easily homemade using normal six-sided dice and stickers, or by rolling six-sided dice and counting 1-2 as minus, 3-4 as blank, and 5-6 as plus.

Custom-made Fudge dice can be purchased in a variety of colors from Grey Ghost Games and can be found in many gaming stores. Alternate dice mechanics are offered in the free, downloadable rules.

Dead Sea Murder

Mediocre or Fair Swimming skill roll. To cross that same pond when there's a turbulent storm might require a Good or Great result.

To determine whether an action succeeds, roll four Fudge dice (4dF). This will provide a result between -4 and +4. Pluses and minuses cancel out, and blanks are ignored. Therefore, a roll of plus, plus, minus, and blank, would leave a result of one plus (+1).

The result of the die roll is added to whatever trait is being tested, moving the result up or down the trait scale. So, if Romeo has a Throw skill of Mediocre, and the player rolls +1, his result is Fair, and he is able to successfully hit the window above him with a pebble.

How successfully the character performed the action is sometimes also relevant. If the character needed to roll at least a Fair to hit a target, a Fair result indicates a hit to the outer ring. A Superb means he hit it dead center.

Opposed Actions

If a character is competing against someone or something, this is referred to as an opposed action. Combat, sneaking past a sentry, a half-dozen people all making a mad dash to grab the Mystical Widget—these are all examples of opposed actions.

As with normal action resolution, the player rolls 4dF to determine success at the action. However, instead of trying to beat a target set by the GM (or, sometimes, in addition to it), the player needs to get a better result than his opponent(s). Relative degree refers to the difference in performance between one character and another in an opposed action. The greater the difference, the greater the victory of the winner of the contest. A relative degree of +1 when haggling over a price signifies a deal struck which favors the winner. Winning by several levels (a relative degree of +3, for instance), indicates completely ripping off the other person.

The same method is used to determine the victor in a combat, with opponents each rolling their relevant combat skill, or comparing the offensive skill of one versus the defensive skill of the other.

Wounds

Wounding may be handled completely subjectively, with the GM declaring the outcome based upon the relative degree by which an attack succeeded and factoring in the weapon being used, the strength and skill of the attacker, the damage resistance of the defender, the tactics used by each, etc. A subjective method of determining wounds allows a much greater sense of verisimilitude and more character to the *type* of wound received—a GM could decide that a very successful (+4 relative degree) attack by a burly opponent wielding a club might break the defender's arm, or that the force of a blow was sufficient to unseat the knight from his horse, winding and bruising him but doing no significant damage.

Some people are more comfortable with firmly defined rules for wounds, however, and so an objective damage system is defined below.

If an attack is successful, the damage done is based upon: **Relative Degree + Offensive Damage Factor - Defensive Damage Factor**.

Relative Degree is the difference between the opposed skill rolls of the attacker and the defender.

Offensive Damage Factor is based upon the weapon being used, the strength of the attacker (if relevant to the type of attack), etc.

Defensive Damage Factor is based upon the defender's damage capacity (toughness, vigor, or similar attribute), armor worn, etc.

The resulting number determines the severity of the attack. Where that number falls on the wound scale determines the effect of the wound.

For example, Bill wins in combat with a Relative Degree of 2. He is using a sword, which gives him a +3 damage modifier, but he is relatively weak (Mediocre Strength), so his total Offensive Damage Factor (ODF) is +2. Ted is of average build (Fair Endurance) and unprotected, so has a Defensive Damage Factor (DDF) of 0. Bill's attack does 4 damage to Ted (2 + 2 - 0), making Ted Hurt.

Scratched: the character is grazed or winded, but took no significant damage.

Hurt: -1 to all traits which would logically be affected.

Very Hurt: -2 to all traits which would logically be affected.

Incapacitated: incapable of any actions, except (perhaps) slow, painful movement; any such exertion poses a risk of bringing the character to unconsciousness.

Near Death: unconscious and will die shortly unless medical attention is received.

Wounds are progressive. If a character receives several less-serious wounds, gradually they will wear him down. After taking three Scratches, the next Scratch will result in a Hurt box being checked. For example, a character receives a blow which does 5 damage, making him Very Hurt. He is then hit again for another 5 damage. The Very Hurt box is already filled, so he would instead fill in the next damage box, Incapacitated.

The number of check boxes, and even the numbers at which different wound levels occur, can vary based upon how deadly or cinematic combat is in a given game. The basic wound track does not allow for a character to be killed by a single unlucky strike; but for a more deadly game, one might make Near Death occur on a 9 or 10, and Instant Death on 11 or higher.

Scratches go away after ten minutes. More serious wounds require a week of rest per box of damage. Medical treatments can hasten recovery time.

Character Creation

Traits are a means of defining characters. Although there are no specific traits that are used for every game, there are several types of traits that are generally used: attributes, skills, gifts, and faults. Attributes and skills measure how good a character is at particular activities, and fall within the seven-step scale of Terrible, Poor, Mediocre, Fair, Good, Great, or Superb. Gifts and faults are qualities which don't fit into the Terrible . . . Superb scale.

Attributes are traits which everyone has, to varying degrees. These tend to be very broad categories, such as Perception, Agility, Strength, or Charisma. Attributes default to Fair. *Terra Incognita* uses six standardized attributes: Perception, Reasoning, Resolve, Strength, Dexterity, and Vigor.

Skills are more specialized traits, which generally require some practice or knowledge.

Sample wound progression chart:

1, 2	3, 4	5, 6	7, 8	9+
Scratched	Hurt (-1)	Very Hurt (-2)	Incapacitated	Near Death
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Dead Sea Murder

Examples of skills would be Swimming, Wrestling, Acting, or Nuclear Physics. Skills usually default to Poor, though some may default to Terrible or even non-existent.

Gifts are positive traits which are not defined on the Terrible . . . Superb scale, either because that level of detail is not needed or because it is a trait which one either has or does not have. Examples of gifts are Attractive Appearance, Direction Sense, Lucky, or Good Reputation. For some games, characters may possess a more potent form of gift—magical ability, superpowers, cybernetic enhancements—which costs more than a normal gift.

Faults, like gifts, are traits outside of the normal trait scale; but in this case, they are things which put the character at a disadvantage, imposing physical or psychological limitations on the character, or causing negative reactions to the character by others. Examples of faults are Irritating Voice, Faints at the Sight of Blood, Sense of Duty, or Addiction.

In *Terra Incognita*, each player is given two free levels of attributes and two gifts, with two faults required. Additionally, players choose skills at the following levels: one Superb, two Great, three Good, six Fair, and one Mediocre. Lowering trait levels gives additional points to spend elsewhere. Trading levels in traits can be done at the following rate:

1 gift = 2 attribute levels = 6 skill levels

A player may also take an additional fault, which will provide him with an extra trait level equal to one gift.

Terra Incognita

"Exploration, Adventure, and Tea at Four"

The National Archæological, Geographic, and Submarine Society is an organization of adventurer-scientists dedicated to exploring the mysteries of the Earth Unknown (TERRA INCOGNITA). Although their aim is to contribute to the store of human knowledge, they are acutely aware that mankind taken as a whole is not always ready for said knowledge. Changes in the way one views the world—such as learning that the continent of Atlantis does exist, its denizens doing quite well far below the surface of the Atlantic Ocean—can lead to divisiveness, public panic, even war. Often, the discoveries of the NAGS Society are kept under wraps for years afterward, being leaked to the public at large only when the time is deemed right.

The Society is comprised of members of diverse nationalities and backgrounds. Those invited to become Nags are individuals dedicated to their chosen field and possessing the ability to navigate oft-dangerous situations with poise and discretion. Members of the Society often present a public façade of dull, somewhat eccentric debutantes. They refer to themselves as “Nags” to seem thoroughly uninteresting to outside observers (hence the addition of “National” to their name, though the group is in fact international).

The Society is at the forefront of scientific and archæological discovery, but its public face ensures that its doings are ignored by traditional establishments. Most of the Society’s findings have been kept from circulation, but some are applied in prototypes and experimental (i.e. unreliable) devices provided to Nag operatives for use in achieving their missions. Such prototypes (Nag Tech) often perform functions ten to twenty years ahead of regular technology.

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These books, TV series, and movies may provide further information and inspiration for players and game masters of *Dead Sea Murder*.

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