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DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

TO END ALL WARS & CHAOS IN CRETE



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PAUL 'WIGGY' WADE-WILLIAMS

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INTRODUCTION

THE CHARACTERS

This Savage Adventure contains two pulp tales based around the exploits of four pre-generated characters. The full character sheets are available for free at www.xxx.com.

The heroes have all their leveling opportunities from Seasoned (at which they begin) into Legendary mapped out in advance. Each published adventure in this line earns the heroes a fixed 5 Experience Points, guaranteeing them an advance every mission. All the players need do is tick the appropriate box and start making use of the new upgrade.

This means you can use the character sheets at conventions and run adventures of any Rank without having to create your own characters from scratch. It also means you can run these tales as pick-up games without any preparation!

Better yet, you'll know that when you buy one of our adventures, you can guarantee the adventurers will have all the skills and abilities they need to win the day!

PULP RULES

Pulp adventures require both a certain mindset from the GM and players and a few tweaks to the base rules.

The majority of these rules exist for one reason—to mimic pulp films. While player characters are virtually immortal and can face most challenges without fear of injury, the fun of pulp is playing up that fact by taking more extreme risks and performing daring stunts. GM's who want more risk should ignore whatever rules they wish.

ACTING BAD IS BAD

The heroes of our adventures are Heroes and should be played that way. Anytime one commits an evil or morally ambiguous act he loses a benny immediately. This benny counts as reducing his permanent pool for the rest of the session (it returns to full at the start of the next session). If he has run out of bennies, he can't earn anymore from any source for the remainder of the session.

The GM should always warn a player about to take a step onto the anti-hero road. If the GM is in doubt about an action, he should ask himself whether Indiana Jones, Doc Savage, the Rocketeer, or Rick O'Connell would ever perform such an act in the movies. If the answer is "no," then it's a bad act.

BENNIES

Bennies are a pulp hero's best friend. Give each Wild Card player character a benny at the start of every combat. This can't take a character above his permanent pool value, but it does mean the heroes can freely spend a single benny in every fight with the certain knowledge they'll get it back before the next encounter kicks off.

Pulp heroes will, thanks to the nature of these setting rules, generally end up with bennies left. The GM should not use the old rule that leftover bennies convert to Experience Points—the heroes get enough breaks.

CINEMATIC DEATH

In pulp stories, no one bleeds profusely despite being shot, stabbed, or punched, nor do their clothes necessarily show signs of these wounds. Anyone poisoned simply drops dead, rather than writhing while choking and gagging. People still die—it's just not a messy death (even when cut to pieces by a propeller it's just a brief spray of blood we see, not chunks of flesh being minced).

CONTACTS

In *Raiders of the Lost Ark*™ Indy gets in contact with his old friend Salah, who in turn leads him to the astrolo-

ger. In *The Mummy,*™ Rick O'Connell uses his friendship with Winston to get hold of an airplane. In a movie it's very easy for the writer to insert these allies and create a backstory of how the hero knows the person. In an RPG, having the GM create such characters takes a lot of creativity away from the players.

Although the Connections Edge could be used to represent such individuals, our pulp rules introduce a new concept just for these sorts of characters—Contacts.

Contacts, unlike Connections, are a unique individual who exists in a fixed location. Players who want allies with greater resources or who can be contacted anywhere should invest in the Connections Edge.

Limits: Once per adventure, *one* player may invent a Contact. An individual player may invent a new contact for his hero only once per character Rank. Thus, in a typical group of four players, every player gets chance to create a friend at each Rank. For smaller groups, the GM may alter or waive this rule.

The player should first seek his fellow players' approval, since they might have ideas for a Contact they wish to use as well. He must then come up with a name, a reason the hero knows the Contact, and why the contact is in the area. The GM has final approval and may tweak a few facts to better fit the adventure.

For instance, let's imagine the heroes are lost in the jungle and suffering from a lack of rations. Lady Amelia's player decides to use a Contact to get them out of trouble. She invents a missionary, Father Matthew, whose mission was funded by her father. She remembers he is currently working with a native tribe in the area.

Usage: As individuals, Contacts are not as resourceful as the Connection Edge. In general, they can provide small items (a few magazines for a gun, digging equipment, or a vehicle) or aid (information, or healing). What they never supply is an army of Extras—pulp adventures are all about the heroes. The player can ask his Contact for whatever he wants, but the GM makes the final decision on what is available.

Continuing our example, the heroes stumble in Father Matthew's mission. He provides the party with food. Since the adventurers are lost the GM wants to get the adventure back on track, he also knows the route to the ruined temple the group seeks. He might even provide a non-combatant guide.

In short, Contacts exist to provide a useful piece of gear or information, and to help parties who are struggling to solve clues.

HENCHMEN

Sometimes a Wild Card is too much of a threat and an Extra not threatening enough. In these instances, the GM should use a Henchman. Henchmen have three wound levels just like a Wild Card, but they don't have a Wild Die or get their own bennies.

HEROIC COMBAT

Did Doc Savage or Indiana Jones ever die or lose a limb? Of course not! They may get beaten to a within an inch of their lives, but they *always* come back for more. As such, several special rules apply in pulp games.

Extras' Damage: Wild Cards are expected to mow down swathes of Extras without pausing for breath. In order to make Extras less of a threat and the heroes more heroic, Extras' damage rolls *never* Ace. That's right, the best a Nazi soldier with an SMG (2d6) can do is cause 12 damage, which equates to a wound or two at most.

Soaking: Pulp characters are expected to risk life and limb and escape *virtually* unharmed. Whenever a player character Wild Card Soaks *all* the damage from an attack, his benny is instantly returned. While there are no guarantees in life, this rule helps encourage the heroes to remove single wounds as quickly as possible before they accumulate into bigger penalties and without worrying too much about benny expenditure.

The GM should work within the framework of the story to describe how these "wounds" were actually near-misses or left a hero's jacket with a new hole or his favorite hat badly crumpled.

Nonlethal: *All* damage inflicted on a player character Wild Card is treated as being nonlethal. Characters can die, but it requires a villain to perform a deliberate Finishing Move. Such dastardly curs deserve what is coming to them.

Rapid Recovery: Every Wild Card hero recovers one wound automatically at the start of each new Act. Unconscious heroes wake up with 2 wounds just before the Act begins. No one is ever left out of a new Act or carrying round crippling wound penalties from the beginning of the adventure.

Injuries: While characters still suffer injuries, they are never lasting ones. A hero only ever suffers the effects of rolls on the Injury Table until the wounds are healed, as if he rolled a success on the Incapacitation Table. In short, heroes are never left with injuries for long even if they roll a Failure or Critical Failure on the Incapacitation Table.

NEVER ENDING AMMO

At the end of every Scene, the heroes recover all their spent ammunition and Power Points. This means the heroes are never short of bullet and spells.

OBSTACLES IN CHASES

Rather than simply listing Obstacles as a category with a fixed modifier and having a collision as the only occurrence, many of our Chase scenes include a table of events. The text will tell you when these rules apply.

When a participant draws a Club as his first initiative card, you just check the card value against the table and run the mini-scene. The number in parentheses after the card value is a modifier to the driver's initial Trait roll that round.

Failure can lead to no additional effect beyond not gaining any ground due to the failed roll, cause a hero to lose Range Increments, being Shaken, or taking damage, depending on the nature of the Chase. Success and raises are generally handled as normal, though sometimes there are additional benefits.

This type of expansion to the Chase rules will be a recurring part of our pulp adventures and is something the GM can easily work into his own tales.

POLICE INTERFERENCE

No matter how much gunplay is involved, the cops never turn up. The same applies if they borrow a vehicle. OK, that's not entirely true. So long as the characters strive to foil the dastardly plot and aren't murdering innocent bystanders, the cops leave them alone. Pulp heroes rarely have to explain themselves to the police.

PULP FISTED

Pulp heroes often take on sword-wielding cultists or knife carrying thugs with their bare hands and win. To simulate this, Wild Card characters using their bare hands *never* count as Unarmed Defenders.

RECURRING VILLAINS

Pulp villains have a habit of coming back (though rarely more than once). In order to ensure a villain survives the GM can use a few tricks.

First, all villains the GM wants to return for a sequel are treated as having the Harder to Kill Edge with 100% chance of survival. Even a villain seen to fall into lava may survive and return, albeit with hideous scars and a terrible thirst for revenge.

Second, by spending a benny the villain may guarantee his escape. He doesn't suddenly vanish into thin air, but he ignores all die rolls and action limits. What he can't do during this time is perform actions he was normally incapable of taking (like running move than his Pace + running die) or make any attacks—it's escape or nothing. For example, Doctor Destructo might sprint his full Pace plus running die maximum, start his rocket-powered airplane, and blast off into the sky before the heroes can react. Heroes on Hold cannot interrupt this escape.

This second technique is especially useful during the early stages of an adventure, when the villain might make a brief appearance but *must* escape to fight the heroes in the climax.

SURRENDERING

To some gamers surrendering is a form of defeat. In pulp games, it's often a vital part of the plot and leads the story forward.

As such, anytime the heroes surrender at the dramatically appropriate spot and go along with the villains demands (it's usually obvious because of the number of Extras present or the villain holding a gun to someone's head and shouting, "Drop your weapons!"), they earn a benny.

WEIRD SCIENCE TWEAK

Rocket boots and jet packs are a staple of pulp adventures. As such, Doc Davenport has the *fly* power before reaching Veteran.

FEATURE 1: TO END ALL WARS

The date is 1936, and Europe stands on the brink of war. As the European superpowers struggle to find a peaceful solution to the escalating threat of Nazism, America quietly goes about her own business.

Doctor Henry Starkweather, a renowned chemical scientist, has recently being ridiculed by the scientific community and branded insane by the US Government because of his latest invention—an odorless and colorless nerve gas that kills in seconds. He had hoped his invention would be seen as a way to avert the coming war and make all future wars futile. Instead, he was branded a "madman" and "butcher." Infuriated at his treatment, Starkweather has vowed to show those who mocked him, the error of their ways.

The Nazis—who learned of his invention through agents in the American government—see the gas as the ultimate weapon in Hitler's coming war. Through subtle manipulation by a beautiful agent, they have persuaded the doctor to seek revenge against those who ridiculed him. The death of the entire US government at the hands one of its own scientists would likely result in the US staying neutral in the forthcoming war. The President and the whole of Congress will suffer their terrible fate when it next gathers, a day after the start of the adventure.

For ideas on how to run the zeppelin scene, take a look at the movie *The Rocketeer*, on which part of this adventure was loosely based.

Characters: 20 XP (use the basic sheets).

ACT 1: DEATH ON THE STREETS

The adventure begins in a smokey café in Boston. All the heroes know each other from previous exploits, though the player should spend a few minutes roleplaying their characters, so everyone gets into the mood. for the adventure which is about to unfold. Once the players have had a chance to settle into the setting and are ready to play out the adventure, read the following text to them all.

SCENE 1: AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE

Brent and his friends are sat in the window of Ma's Diner, a small café on the east side of town. Only an hour ago, Jim Black, an old college friend that Brent hadn't seen for years, telephoned to arrange the meeting. He said he had something important to tell, something he dare not say over the wires. Intrigued, you agreed to meet him.

Brent talked about Jim a lot, and all the heroes know Jim studied chemistry in college. A success on a Common Knowledge roll allows a hero to recall a company by the name of Starkweather Labs paid part of his tuition fees.

Carry on with the text.

As the waitress pours you all a third cup of hot java, you see Jim crossing the street. It looks like he gained a few pounds since Brent last saw him. He recognizes Brent, and waves, quickening his step.

Suddenly, there is the screech of tires and a car swerves round the corner. As it pulls level with Jim, it slows slightly. A back window opens, and a burst of automatic gunfire cuts Jim down. Without stopping, the car speeds away. People begin to scream and panic.

What happens next depends on the characters. Some may immediately go to give chase, while others may draw weapons and start shooting at the fleeing car.

The characters only have one chance to fire at the car before it turns the corner. The range depends on how quickly the characters open fire. The distance is 8" if they immediately declare they are rushing out and firing or 16" if they hesitate for a round or perform another quick action (such as checking Jim). Since it is driving directly away from the heroes, there is no movement penalty.

Either way, the car screeches round the next bend before they can fire again. The Innocent Bystander rules do not apply in this situation.

Whatever happens, the vehicle should get away (for now), to force the chase scene that follows. Should the characters hesitate at following, have them hear the sound of a car horn—something has slowed the murderers' escape.

No matter how fast they get to Jim, it's too late—several bullets from a Tommy gun hit him in the back. A successful Healing roll at +2 reveals that he will not survive more than a few minutes. Let the characters try to save him if they want—all attempts are futile, however.

Jim's eyes flutter open. He smiles at you in recognition. He tries to lean forward, coughing as he does. With his dying breath, he speaks two words to you, "Starkweather… Nazis." With that, Jim slumps back, dead. You hear screech of tires as the shooters' car turns the corner at the end of the street. Amelia's roadster is parked nearby.

SCENE 2: CHASE THROUGH BOSTON

Hopefully the heroes give chase to the fleeing villains. Stopping the thugs is important to the adventure, but regardless of this fact, the heroes shouldn't be willing to let them get away with the murder of a friend.

The only car available is Amelia's Roadster. A character can ride on the running board if he so wishes. Any time the driver makes a Driving roll, the hanger-on must make an Agility roll with the same modifier as the Driving roll or fall off. Use the standard rules for **Falling from Vehicles**.

Doc Davenport can use his rocket pack in the chase, but it's assumed he's flying at street level (because flying above the action is just not the way of pulp action.) If he moves at his regular Pace, he suffers a –1 penalty to Piloting rolls (because his Range Increment is only 1" compared to the thugs' 5"). Moving at twice his Pace negates this, but burns more Power Points.

Heroes who elect to give chase on foot have a –1 penalty to the Agility for the same reason as above.

This scene uses the **Chase** rules and our alternate Obstacles rules (page 6). The Range Increment is 5" and the chase begins at Medium Range.

The villains initially try to flee by increasing the distance from their pursuers. If this proves to be impossible, they instead try to wreck the heroes' car. Two thugs in the back, both armed with Tommy guns, take shots at the pursuers during the chase. Remember the penalty for firing from an unstable platform.

Eventually, the chase ends. While it is possible they will escape, the preferred solution is to have their badly shot up car screech to a halt, smoke pouring from under the hood, or the heroes force them to a halt. Any surviving villains leap from the car, using it as Medium Cover (–2, + 3 Armor), and continue the gun battle. Two of the thugs have Tommy guns—the two in the front have Colt pistols.

The scene ends when all of the thugs have been killed—they will not surrender—or if they escape.

Thugs (4): See page 13.

VILLAIN'S SEDAN

Acc/Top Speed: 10/20; **Toughness:** 12(3); **Crew:** 1+5

AMELIA'S ROADSTER

Acc/Top Speed: 15/30; **Toughness:** 10(3); **Crew:** 1+2

OBSTACLES

Since the vehicles are racing through crowded streets, assume they are moving at half their Top Speed for damage calculations in collisions.

Deuce (–4) A Parade: A street parade looms into view as the car turns a corner! Success means the car turns down a side street and emerges back in the chase. Failure causes the car to inch forward while the street clears, costing it 2 Range Increments.

Three (–2) Pot Hole: The vehicle must avoid a large pot hole in the road. With failure, the car takes 2d6 damage.

Four (–2) Slow Traffic: Slow-moving traffic forces the car to dodge and weave to make any progress. On a failure, the vehicle is blocked in and drops back one Range Increment.

Five (–2) Child in the Road: A young kid runs into the road, right in front of the car! A failed Driving roll means the car had to brake heavily to avoid the child, losing one Range Increment. Even the thugs try to avoid the child, though more by instinct than because they give a hoot.

Six (–2) No Brake Lights: The vehicle in front suddenly comes to a complete stop, forcing the car to swerve to avoid a collision. A failure leads to a collision with a hard obstacle.

Seven (–2) Newspaper Stand: In order to avoid a truck the car must mount the pavement. Doing so puts a newspaper stand right in its path! Failure causes a collision with a soft obstacle and scatters papers everywhere.

Eight (–1) Leaky Hydrant: A faulty hydrant has left a deep pool on the part of the road the car is driving along. A failed Driving roll causes the vehicle to go Out of Control as it skids on the standing water.

Nine (–1) Blocked Windshield: Part of a newspaper lands on the windshield, blocking the driver's view. A failed roll means the car drops back one Range Increment while the obstruction is cleared.

Ten (–1) Traffic Jam: Heavy traffic forces the car onto the pavement, scattering pedestrians. Failure has no additional effect beyond the vehicle making no progress.

Jack (–1) Window Washer: As the car stops at a junction a windshield washer makes his move. Unfortunately,

the car pulls away with him clutching the wipers and obscuring the driver's view. With failure, the car loses one Range Increment due to erratic maneuvers before the man leaps clear.

Queen (0/–2) Red Light: The traffic signal turns red. Characters have the choice of stopping or running the light. The thugs always try to run the light.

Stopping causes the car to drop back two Range Increments due to the delay. Running the light requires a Driving roll at –2. Failure leads to a collision with another vehicle. Since this is a "T-bone" collision, only the speed of the vehicle involved in the Chase counts.

King (0) Dangerous Overtaking: A truck pulls out to avoid a parked car right into the path of the oncoming vehicle! Failure leads to a head-on collision. The truck is moving 10" per round.

Ace (0/–2) A Ramp: A truck is parked with its rear tailgate down, forming a handy ramp. Ask the players whether they want to drive around it or aim for the ramp. The thugs always take the safe option.

Going around the truck gives no penalty and failure has no special effect beyond temporarily thwarting forward movement.

Trying to hit the ramp gives the driver a –2 penalty to his Driving roll, but if successful he gains an *extra* Range Increment. This bonus (and the penalty) stacks with the Push maneuver. Failure causes him to ram the truck, which is a stationary heavy obstacle.

ACT 2: WHAT A BRAVEHEART

Once the chase is over, the characters may search the thugs. This requires a Notice roll. On a success, they find a business card and a piece of paper with the Starkweather Labs header.

The business card belongs to Valerie Braveheart, a reporter at the Boston Herald. It lists the newspapers address and telephone number.

The paper has a handwritten note scrawled across it. It reads, *"Help load tanks at 4 p.m. Starkweather Labs."* There is no way of identifying who wrote the message.

SCENE 1: BACKGROUND CHECKS

STARKWEATHER LABS

Characters planning on checking out Starkweather Labs have several options open to them.

A character making a successful Common Knowledge check knows that Starkweather Labs is a big chemical company in the Boston area, but not where they are located.

Characters visiting the library, Hall of Records, or similar public building, may make an Investigation roll. Each roll takes four hours. A success reveals the company specializes in the manufacture of medical drugs. The owner is one Doctor Henry Starkweather. On a raise, the character learns the company uses plants and insects from the Amazon to make its drugs.

The address and telephone number can be found from the phone book, a suitable public office, or from the letterhead. Trying to phone the company elicits no response.

THE BOSTON HERALD

Driving to the Boston Herald takes 30 minutes through the traffic—telephoning takes only a few minutes. There is a call box in a nearby drug store and the number can be found on Miss Braveheart's business card.

Asking for Valerie Braveheart elicits only the answer, "She's on a job." Finding out more information requires an Intimidation or Persuade roll. If the characters have visited the offices, a bribe grants a bonus to Persuasion rolls equal to +1 per $20 (to a maximum of +4).

On a success, they are told she is visiting the Starkweather Labs building on some espionage story. On a raise, they are also told that she should have been back several hours ago.

SCENE 2: STARKWEATHER LABS

Starkweather Labs is on the main industrial estate and can be reached in an hour. When the heroes arrive, they see three trucks emblazoned with the Starkweather Labs' logo and a tan coupe in the car park. Six workers are loading crates onto the trucks. Regardless of how long the characters take to get here, it is ten past four.

The crates contain canisters of nerve gas. Any character passing a Notice roll can spot the label "Medical Supplies" stuck on the side. If approached, the workers (actually thugs rather than official employees) ignore them unless spoken to first. They know nothing of any Valerie Braveheart, nor do they know who owns the car. If asked if Mr Starkweather is present, they say he is away on business and is not due back for a week. They don't try to stop the heroes entering the building—they have to load the crates and meet their delivery schedule.

On the off chance the heroes start a fight, such as by trying to open a crate or drawing weapons, the thugs fight back with their guns, which are stowed in the trucks. Before the heroes can win the fight, they hear a woman's scream from inside the building (the trucks have to escape).

Any Shooting die that comes up 1, regardless of the Wild Die, hits a crate and shatters a gas canister, which releases the deadly contents. The gas immediately fills a Large Burst Template. Anyone inside the Template must make a Vigor roll at –2 penalty or take a wound. Any surviving thugs pull gasmasks from under their coats and don them—they then drive away in the confusion and panic.

If the heroes check the coupe, there is nothing identifiable from the outside. The characters can open the car with a Lockpicking check or simply smash a window. In the glove compartment, they find a notebook bearing the name Valerie Braveheart.

DRAMATIC INTERLUDE

On the fourth round of combat, a stray shot from a thug hits a sealed container, releasing a swarm of flesh hungry Amazonian bugs. Have a nearby thug attacked first to show the heroes how deadly the beasts are.

There are plenty of props around to use against the swarm, such as luring them toward a gas cylinder and blowing it up, or using a fire hose to disperse them. While this is going on, Adler makes good his escape (using the Recurring Villains rule if necessary), along with the trucks loaded with nerve gas. For good measure, he shoots the tires on the heroes' car. Whatever happens, Adler must escape.

Inside the building, the entrance leads straight up a flight of stairs to an office. The office is glass fronted and the heroes can see onto the shop floor below.

- **Thugs (6):** See page 13.

A DAMSEL IN DISTRESS

Looking out the windows, you see a large floor space filled with vats, large canisters, pipes, tubes, and workbenches.

In the middle of the floor, you see an attractive woman tied to a chair. A brute, his biceps as wide as a man's thighs, is slapping her. Several other goons stand nearby, weapons clutched in their hands.

The woman is Miss Braveheart and her interrogator is a vicious Nazi thug by the name of Klaus Adler. Braveheart was caught snooping around and taking pictures. Adler is interrogating her to learn what she knows, which, unfortunately for her, isn't much. Adler doesn't believe her and suspects she is an American secret agent. The distance between the office and the group is 20". Firing from the office provides Medium Cover (–2) and +2 Armor because of the thin wooden wall.

If the heroes try to sneak up on the group, the defenders count as inactive. The machinery provides Medium Cover (+2) and grants a similar bonus to Stealth rolls, and the warehouse is in Dim Lighting (+1).

As soon as firing starts, the seven thugs dive behind crates and barrels for protection. Adler crouches behind Braveheart, using her as a human shield. She counts as Heavy Cover (–4). Any shot missing because of the cover modifier strikes Braveheart.

Whatever happens, there will be a fight at some point. If he characters are hesitant, prompt them into action by having Adler draw a gun and aim it at Miss Braveheart.

During the fight, any Shooting die that comes up a 1 hits the nearest gas cylinder to the target, which explodes for 4d6 damage in a Medium Burst Template.

- **Valerie Braveheart:** See page 13.
- **Klaus Adler:** See page 13.
- **Thugs (3 per hero):** See page 13.

Once the bugs have been dealt with, the remaining thugs realize they have been left behind and throw grenades (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 3d6, Medium Burst Template) to cover their escape. The resulting explosions set off a chain reaction. Characters still in the warehouse three rounds later are caught in a huge explosion and take 6d6 damage.

Once safely away from the burning warehouse, Braveheart thanks the heroes profusely. She explains that she was investigating reports leaked to her by an employee, Jim Black. He claimed Nazis had kidnapped Doctor Starkweather. She was caught snooping around the warehouse before she could learn anything of interest.

She has yet to locate Starkweather himself, but was planning on visiting his mansion next to search for clues. Now she needs to get back to the office and files her story before the deadline. She asks the characters to visit Starkweather Mansion and check things out, and promises to meet them in a few hours.

ACT 3: A VERY PRIVATE SECRETARY

The Starkweather mansion is located 40 miles from the warehouse, in a private and secluded part of town. Reaching it takes an hour. As the heroes approach, they notice lights on inside the house.

SCENE 1: STARKWEATHER MANSION

If the heroes snoop around and look in a window, read them the following.

You appear to be looking into a dining room. Aside from the furniture, the only thing of interest is an attractive though bookish woman.

She is wearing a black dress. She moves with an air of confidence and grace. She flicks her hair as she moves toward a large cabinet, where she selects a bottle of wine and places it on the table.

Having the heroes break in is certainly an option, but they have no proof that Starkweather has actually been kidnapped, regardless of what happened at the warehouse. If they decide to follow this course of action, do not try to stop them. Let them explore the house. Sooner or later they confront the woman—use the following section with whatever changes you deem necessary.

If they choose to ring the bell, the same woman answers the door a few moments later, after alerting her thugs—Adler warned her by telephone that there may be visitors.

The door opens to reveal an attractive woman.

She is wearing a black dress that clings to her figure and knee-high boots. She moves with an air of confidence and grace. She flicks her blonde hair, looking you up and down with her pale blue eyes.

"May I help you?" she says, her silky voice revealing her as a New York native.

You may need to remind the heroes that pointing guns in a woman's face is downright rude, not to mention against the Pulp tradition. If asked, she introduces herself as Claudia Knight, Doctor Starkweather's personal secretary. She politely enquires as to who the heroes are and what business they have at the house.

Heroes inquiring as to the whereabouts of the good doctor are informed that he is upstairs dressing for dinner. He has only recently returned from a trip to Brazil. She invites the heroes to join them for dinner, once she knows who they are.

SCENE 2: THE VILLAIN REVEALED

If the heroes accept the invitation to dinner, they are shown into the dining room.

A large table surrounded by a dozen chairs dominates the large dining room. Paintings adorn the walls, two suits of armour stand by a staircase leading to a gallery, and several cabinets hold fine china and bottles of wine.

Miss Knight gestures for you to be seated. She sits near the head of the table. Moments later, a white-haired man in a wheelchair rolls into the room. Miss Knight stands and introduces the stranger. "Ladies and gentlemen," she croons, "this is Doctor Starkweather, your host for the evening."

Starkweather draws his wheelchair to the head of the table and nods. "Forgive me for not standing," he says. "An industrial accident many years ago left me without use of my legs." He picks up a small silver bell and rings it. "I hope you like venison," he smiles.

With that, two servants emerge from the kitchen carrying your dinner. Miss Knight delicately sprays her slender neck from a small perfume bottle while winking at Brent.

The characters now have chance to talk with Doctor Starkweather. This is handled through a question and answer format, based on likely lines of enquiry.

Q: We heard you'd been kidnapped.

A: *"Indeed? As you can see, I am here in person and very much in good health. No, I had been out of the country on business."*

Q: We just had a fight with some thugs at your warehouse.

RAILROADING?

Hang on, the heroes are being incapacitated without a chance to resist? Why not allow a Vigor roll? Well, first because this is a pulp staple—heroes inevitably end up captured one way or another. While we could overwhelm the characters with thugs, it may also lead to a lot of injuries we don't want the adventurers carrying forward.

Second, the nuances of dice in Savage Worlds allow for any roll to succeed. Even slapping on a -6 penalty isn't necessarily going to produce the desired result.

A: *"What? At my warehouse? I shall have one of the servants call the police immediately. Thank you for whatever assistance you provided in apprehending them."*

Q: What are you working on?

A: *"A new form of chemical weapon designed to end all wars. Yes, that is right, a weapon that will* end *war. No one will dare to start a conflict once all nations are armed with my new weapon."*

Q: Who is funding this?

A: *"Not the American government! I offered them my services, but they mocked me, called me insane! No, this work of genius is privately funded from my own resources. But I shall demonstrate my work to the government. In a matter of hours, the world will see the results of my work. The American government will cease to exist once my zeppelin releases its cargo of nerve gas over the capital!"*

At this point, the heroes begin to feel decidedly woozy. Miss Knight's perfume (which she sprayed earlier, remember) is a neurotoxin designed to temporarily incapacitate victims. She and Starkweather are immune, having taken the antidote.

It's quite possible the characters will try to draw guns or make a lunge for the villains. Unfortunately, the drug is very potent and fast-acting. Limbs feel like lead and vision is heavily blurred. Within seconds, they are helpless, though conscious.

SCENE 3: BOOM

The section is the traditional "trap of doom and villain soliloquy" made famous in pulp stories. When the have been Incapacitated, read the following text.

You are stripped of your gear, dragged to the basement, and tied to chairs. Miss Knight moves over to Brent, stroking his face with a leather-gloved hand.

"I'm afraid this is where you meet your demise. I have a little surprise in store for you. I would like to say that you were worthy opponents, but sadly you were not." One of the servants brings

out a large, covered silver dish and sets it down on a crate situated in the center of the room. Miss Knight removes the lid to reveal a large bomb! The timer is rapidly ticking toward zero!

Starkweather stands at the top of the stairs. It seems he can walk! "Sorry for the ruse," he smirks, "but being helpless in a wheelchair is an excellent cover story. Do enjoy the explosion—it's likely to raise the roof!"

With that, the villains leave the room, locking the door behind them.

The characters have a mere 8 rounds to defuse the bomb. In order to do so, they must complete the following steps in strict order. Should the bomb detonate (or if someone tries to disarm it by shooting it), it causes 3d10 damage to everyone in house (this is Wild Card damage, so it likely hurts plenty.)

- They need to work free of their bonds. This requires an Agility or Strength roll at –2 (hero's choice). One roll can be made each round. Once a character is free, he may untie one other person in a round. This allows for no other actions.
- A character must determine whether the outer casing is booby trapped. This requires a Smarts roll at –4 or a Repair roll at –2. Success allows a character to detect and disarm the trap. With failure, the hero can progress, but he fails to spot the booby trap.
- The casing must be removed. There are four screws to remove. A successful Agility roll removes one screw. Until all four are removed, the adventurers cannot proceed to the next step. With four heroes and four screws, they make take one each.

If the booby trap went undetected, it automatically activates once the cover is released. Reduce the number of rounds until the bomb detonates by one as the clock mechanism speeds up.

- The adventurer must deduce the inner workings and figure out how to safely deactivate the device. Again, this requires a Smarts roll at –4 or a Repair roll at no penalty.
- He must make an Agility roll to reach into the mechanism, avoiding any potential booby traps, rip the right wire out.

An alternative escape plan is to bash down the door. This requires a Strength roll at –2 (once the characters have escaped their bonds). Success earns a hero a single token and a raise two tokens. Once 6 tokens have been gained, the door cracks open, allowing the characters to flee. Getting clear of the house takes two rounds and assumes the characters are running.

The villains, fully expecting their captives to die, have left the adventurers' gear on the dining hall table. Grabbing the equipments takes a round, though this is only important if the bomb is still ticking.

Once outside, the characters see the dastardly villains have let the air out of their car tires. Pumping them back up causes a lengthy delay (and allows the villains to proceed to the next phase of their operation unhindered).

Miss Braveheart doesn't keep her appointment. A call to the newspaper office reveals she left the building an hour ago. Should the party track down her home number (Persuasion via the office or Streetwise with access to a telephone directory) they get no reply. Poor Braveheart has been grabbed by the villains again, this time for use as a hostage!

Where do the heroes go from here? Hopefully they head straight to the local airfield, where Brent can borrow a plane large enough to seat everybody. A spare pilot comes along (he'll come in handy once everyone else jumps out, which they will).

Should the adventures try to call Washington and alert them to the menace, their story is disbelieved, despite assurances from the person on the other end that, "We'll look into it, pal."

ACT 4: AERIAL SHOWDOWN

Even flying at top speed, the heroes only catch up with the airship when it is already flying low over Washington. If they decide to just shoot it out of the air, have them spot the figure of Miss Braveheart through the gondola window. Shooting down innocent reporters, especially attractive ones, is not the pulp way. True heroes would launch a daring plan to rescue her.

SCENE 1: BOARDING THE ZEPPELIN

Getting aboard the zeppelin is relatively easy. It moves considerably slower than the airplane and has a flattish top surface. Of course, the plane can't land on the zeppelin, but it can fly low over the top and drop people off.

Jumping from the plane first requires the pilot to make a Piloting roll to fly in low and steady. Actually getting on top of the balloon requires an Agility roll at –2. There is a +2 bonus if the pilot scored a raise on his roll. A service hatch on the top allows access through the balloon into the gondola.

A failure means the jumper has misjudged his leap and is now slipping down the balloon. A second Agility roll, also at –2, allows them to grab onto a cable. Two attempts may be made before the jumper becomes a freefaller (see page 12). Once grabbed, a successful Strength roll hauls them back up to safety.

Once everyone is out, the plane heads home.

SCENE 2: CONFRONTING THE VILLAIN

Once atop the airship, the characters can enter the envelope through a service hatch. Unfortunately for them, this triggers an alarm in the gondola, so the villains aren't caught by surprise.

Once inside the zeppelin, the heroes quickly make their way to the gondola, the nerve centre (pardon the pun) of the airship.

Standing in the gondola is a number of people. Three are dressed in flight suits and attend the controls. Also present are Starkweather and the Nazi thug, Klaus Adler. The last person, her hands tied behind her back, is Valerie Braveheart! The gas-masked person is speaking, though the noise of the engines makes it impossible to hear what he is saying.



Adler and two of the thugs have weapons drawn and pointed at the stairwell. Don't deal action cards yet—dramatic pulp moments demand a villainous act at this point in time.

"Well, well," Starkweather sneers, "it looks like your rescuers have returned, Miss Braveheart. Let us see just how heroic they are!" With that, he shoves the plucky reporter out the door. Her scream drowns out the engines as she plummets toward the earth.

Deal action cards!

The gondola measures 3" wide by 8" long. The steering mechanism is at one end in the center, while the stairwell the heroes used in as the opposite end. Mark a 1" square on the tabletop near the controls as the open door.

Two of the thugs fire their pistols—the third, the pilot, is doomed to a quick death (see below). Adler uses every trick up his sleeve against the heroes, Starkweather draws a small can of stun gas from his coat pocket, and Miss Braveheart falls to certain death. Rescuing Miss Braveheart is handled as per the sidebar Freefall on page 12.

When Starkweather is Incapacitated (don't bother rolling on the Incapacitation Table), move immediately to the next scene, **Death of a Villain**.

DRAMATIC EVENTS

In order to ensure the fight is not merely a routine encounter, a number of events occur at the start of certain rounds, before any action cards are drawn.

Round Two: The pilot has misjudged his altitude and the gondola bounces across the roof of the Lincoln Memorial. Everyone must make an Agility roll or fall prone. The pilot automatically fails his roll and tumbles through the open door! Unbeknownst to the heroes, the accident rips open several gas cells and damages the steering controls.

Round Three: The zeppelin heads toward the towering obelisk of the Washington Monument. A hero who reaches the controls may make a Piloting roll at –2 to avoid collision. With failure, the airship continues on its collision course! Adler diverts his attention toward a heroic pilot in an attempt to stop him altering course.

Round Four: Unless a hero makes a Piloting roll at –4, the envelope scrapes across the top of the monument. A loud hissing can be heard as hydrogen escapes from ruptured cells. Whether the roll is made or not, the zeppelin now turns toward another Washington landmark…

Round Five: Starkweather lunges toward a large red lever. This is the nerve gas release button. Stopping him should be the characters' main priority. If he somehow manages to get to the lever without opposition, it releases nerve gas on the next round. Unless it is switched to the off position very quickly, thousands of people below die a horrible death.

Well, that's not quite the truth—the gas dispersal system is jammed, but neither Starkweather nor the heroes knows that (you didn't think we'd really let innocent people die, did you?)

Should a character try to turn the lever off, he must win an opposed Strength versus Strength roll with Starkweather and score a success.

Round Six: The jammed controls are taking the zep-

FREEFALL

There are several ways to save a free-falling character. First, Doc Davenport can use his rocket pack to swoop down and pick them up.

Rescuing a faller requires a series of rolls. First, the Doc must activate his rocket pack. This requires a Weird Science roll and an action. Second, he must maneuver to reach the hapless victim, which requires a Piloting roll. Third, he must make an Agility check to actually grab him or her.

Maneuvering into position beneath the faller takes 2 rounds, each grab attempt takes another full round (and is assumed to involve some repositioning after a failed catch), and getting back to the zeppelin takes 2 rounds plus one extra per failed Agility roll. Fuel is finite, so pray the Doc is quick!

Second, the pilot of the plane can attempt a daring maneuver—he can try to position the plane beneath the faller so they land inside. This requires a Piloting roll at –2. Even if successful, the faller suffers 2d6 damage and the pilot must make a Piloting roll or the plane goes Out of Control.

Third, the Earth will eventually stop the fall if no one else intervenes. This is not the most fitting end for a hero, who while he'll survive thanks to a handy hay cart or stretch of water is now out of the rest of the adventure.

pelin round in a slowly widening circle over the center of the city. The circle will soon bring it over the White House!

- **Doctor Starkweather:** See page 12.
- **Klaus Adler:** See page 13.
- **Thugs (3):** See page 13.

SCENE 3: DEATH OF A VILLAIN

"You fools!" Starkweather gasps, "You will never stop me! My nerve gas could end all wars and bring peace to the world. But no! Our beloved government did not want that! They mocked me, called me insane. I'll show them insanity! I was going to prove to the world that war is futile from now on!"

He pulls something from his coat! It's a flare pistol. Before you can react it squeezes the trigger. As if in slow motion, the flare flies out of the door and ignites in the hydrogen stream from the ripped envelope. A wave of heat washes over the gondola and a series of explosions can be heard from above!

"This ship is going to plummet straight into the White House and there is nothing you can do to stop it. You have failed." A brief smile passes crosses his face before he dies.

All is not lost, however. Have the heroes make a Common Knowledge roll. With success, they realize they can alter the zeppelin's course by venting gas from the remaining sections.

A successful Piloting roll at –2 (one chance only) changes the airship's course back toward the Potomac. Failure means it misses the White House by a fraction of an inch and crashes into Lincoln Park.

The zeppelin is low enough right now for the heroes can leap to safety without risk of severe injury, whether or not the airship is heading for the White House. They suffer 2d6 damage on landing (as if from an Extra).

END CREDITS

Talk about leaving things to the last second! As you get to your feet you see the flaming zeppelin crash. It begins to crumple, folding in on itself life a paper model.

Suddenly, there is an explosion, followed by another, and another. White-hot flames engulf the zeppelin. The heat from the blasts washes over you as a massive fireball fills the Washington sky. With any luck, the flames have vaporized the nerve gas. Washington is saved and democracy still reigns in America.

A loud tapping at a large window nearby causes you to look round. Standing there, flanked by men in dark suits, is the President of the United States. He raises a hand and salutes you!

It should be noted that Miss Knight is not onboard the zeppelin. She is thus able to return in the future as a recurring villain, should you wish to run your own adventures based around the characters presented here.

FEATURE 1 CAST OF CHARACTERS

DOCTOR HENRY STARKWEATHER

Starkweather sees a quick way of ending the war before it starts. Thus saving millions of lives—using his nerve gas to force a ceasefire. Ridiculed by the US government, he has gone mad and plans, with some Nazi prompting, to destroy the government, so opening the way to a new America.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Biology) d8, Knowledge (Chemistry) d10, Notice d6, Repair d10, Shooting d8, Taunt d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Delusional (Major: thinks his nerve gas can end all wars), Stubborn, Vengeful (Major)
Edges: Improved Dodge, Level Headed, Quick, Scholar
Gear: Colt M1911 (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, Shots 8, AP 2, Semi-auto), canister of stun gas (Everyone with a 3" line in the direction of the spray must make a Vigor roll at –2 or be Shaken. The canister contains enough gas for six shots)

CLAUDIA KNIGHT

Claudia Knight, an American Nazi sympathizer, heard of Starkweather's new gas through agents in the US government. She was duly sent to subvert Starkweather to their way of thinking. Through her seductive promptings, and his own rage, she has convinced him to use his gas on his own leaders. She is stunningly beautiful, and she knows it.
Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Taunt d8
Charisma: +6; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Cautious, Delusional (Minor: dedicated Nazi), Quirk (flicks her hair), Vengeful (Minor)
Edges: Acrobat, Charismatic, Connections, Quick, Quick Draw, Very Attractive
Gear: Walther PPK (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, Shots 7, AP 1, Semi-auto), knife (Str+d4)

KLAUS ADLER

Adler is actually working for Grüppenschtep, but has been acting as Starkweather's right hand man, leading his operation from a practical point of view. He is a violent thug, but one who has the advantage of being well-trained. He is actually the heroes' main nemesis as far as combat goes.
Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10
Skills: Climbing d6, Driving d6, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Throwing d8
Charisma: –8; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8
Hindrances: Arrogant, Bloodthirsty, Mean, Overconfident, Ugly (long scar down left cheek)
Edges: Brawny, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Frenzy, Improved Nerves of Steel, Level Headed
Gear: Luger P08 (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, Shots 8, AP 1, Semi-auto), large knife (Str+d4), two throwing knives (Range: 3/6/12, Str+d4)

MISS VALERIE BRAVEHEART

Miss Braveheart is a reporter for the Boston Herald. Young and inexperienced, she is very keen to make her name in the world of journalism, taking whatever risks she feels are necessary to get a good story. Her good looks often allow her access to information her male colleagues can't get.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d4, Investigation d6, Knowledge (Journalism) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Streetwise d6, Taunt d6
Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Curious, Stubborn
Edges: Attractive
Gear: Camera, film plates, notepad, pencil, press id

THUGS

Typical low intelligence thugs hired by Starkweather to do as they are told. None are independent thinkers.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Piloting d4, Shooting d6
Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Mean
Edges: Combat Reflexes
Gear: Colt M1911 (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, Shots 8, AP 2, Semi-auto) or Tommy gun (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, RoF 3, Shots 30, AP 1)

HUNGRY AMAZONIAN FLESH EATING INSECT SWARM

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10
Skills: Notice d6
Pace: 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7
Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** The swarm automatically hits for 2d4 damage to everyone within a Medium Burst Template.
- **Split:** When the swarm is first wounded, it splits into two Small Burst Template swarms. The Toughness of each swarm is lowered by –2 (i.e. to 5). When these swarms take a wound they are dispersed and become ineffective.
- **Swarm:** Parry +2. Because the swarm is composed of hundreds of tiny bugs, cutting, piercing, and energy weapons do no real damage. Area-effect weapons work normally. Stomping does Str damage each round.

FEATURE 2: CRISIS ON CRETE

GM OVERVIEW

The year is 1936. Hitler and his legions are slowly preparing for war while the European superpowers try to appease him. In America, however, life continues as normal, and for the Boston Metropolitan Museum that means funding archaeological research expeditions.

One such expedition was sent to Crete to investigate old ruins tentatively linked to the Labyrinth. The Palace of Knossos has already been discovered, but the team leader, Professor Harrison Munroe, believes the true Labyrinth lies elsewhere. Their latest report is almost a month overdue. Enter the heroes, who are hired by the Metro to investigate the mysterious silence.

The villain of the piece is a Cretan criminal mastermind, Stefan Andropolous, with delusions of grandeur. He knows that Daedalus, the creator of the maze, supposedly hid a book of wondrous inventions inside, where it could never be used for evil. Professor Munroe uncovered the book and was subsequently kidnapped by Andropolous, who had paid informers among the diggers. Andropolous intends to use the designs to make himself ruler of Crete.

On arriving, the heroes rescue an antiques dealer known to Munroe. In return, he gives them an envelope Munroe left with him for safekeeping. Inside is a clue to escaping the Labyrinth. During the journey to the expedition's camp, the characters are attacked by thugs and captured.

They are then thrown deep into the Labyrinth. Their only hope of escaping the maze is to avoid the traps and find the exit before the Labyrinth's sole inhabitant, the Minotaur, finds them. Contrary to the legends, the Minotaur isn't a creature of flesh and blood, but a mechanical construct created by Daedalus, the designer of the Labyrinth.

After escaping, the characters track down the villain's motor yacht and launch a daring rescue.

Characters: 25 XP.

ACT 1: WELCOME TO CRETE

This adventure takes place a few weeks after the end of the previous tale. Any wounds from the previous tale are fully healed.

SCENE 1: INVITE TO ADVENTURE

Yesterday Lady Amelia received a telegram from the Boston Metropolitan Museum, asking you all to attend a meeting. On arriving, you were led straight to the director's office, where you are now seated.

"Very good of you to attend, Lady Valentine," says the curator, a portly man in his mid-fifties. "Your recent donations have allowed us to extend our expeditions as far as Crete. In fact, that's why I've called you and your friends here.

"Our expedition hasn't reported in for several weeks and we're getting a bit concerned. Professor Munroe, the team leader, is usually very prompt with his communiqués. Since you have invested in the project, and because your more daring adventures are public knowledge, we wondered if you'd investigate the problem."

The director goes on to explain that Munroe was convinced the Palace of Knossos was not the legendary Labyrinth. By studying the ancient texts, he became convinced that the true site lay several miles from the palace. Such a discovery would make worldwide headlines, and the archaeological finds would make the museum rich, so it funded the trip.

Munroe telegraphed back every week for a month then, suddenly stopped communicating. His last telegram read simply, "Believe site discovered Stop Investigating

in morning Stop Munroe." The director recommends the group contact Andros Akretis, an antiques dealer the professor was acquainted with, as soon as they arrive.

The expedition consisted of Professor Munroe, his assistant, and niece, Miss Gloria Drake, and photographer Lance Armitage. The diggers were hired locally.

SCENE 2: AKRETIS'S ANTIQUES

Andros and the professor have been communicating for years and struck up a close friendship. Munroe would bring goods to Andros for evaluation, and sold small pieces to provide additional research funds. When the characters arrive, however, all is not well. As the characters approach the shop, they hear raised voices inside.

Voice 1: "Where is it, old man! We know Munroe gave it to you!"

Voice 2: "He gave me nothing! I swear! Ow! Please, stop beating me!"

Voice 3: "Shoot him. We can search the shop without him."

Unless the characters act quickly, they hear a single gun shot. The characters bursting in on the scene surprises the thugs—have them check for Surprise as normal. Three thugs, in the employ of the villain, are beating up Andros in the main shop while a fourth, armed with a Tommy gun, rifles through the back room.

Thugs (1 per hero): See page 21.

A GIFT

Once saved, Andros thanks the characters. If they delayed their entry until after the shot was fired, he has a flesh wound in the leg but is conscious. Andros asks the characters about their business and how he can repay them. Mentioning Professor Munroe's name makes him a little uneasy—he's unsure if the characters are rival thugs—but mentioning Lady Amelia or the Metro by name eases his fears.

"Ah, yes! Munroe spoke of the Metro often, and the lovely Lady Valentine, who sponsored his excavations here. Sadly I have not seen the professor for many weeks, but I have been away on the mainland on business. He came to my shop late one night, several weeks ago now, very excited about a recent discovery. He left something with me, an envelope. He said to keep it in case anything happened to him. Whatever is in there must be important—those thugs were after it."

The envelope contains a scrap of paper with the following words written on it… "Choose to start thoughtfully."

Don't worry too much at this stage if the characters can't make head or tail of the text. Its purpose only becomes clear later on. Andros is of no help—he never opened the envelope and doesn't recognize the words if shown the contents.

"Professor Munroe was excavating a few miles east of Knossos. We don't have many cars here—the land is very rugged. I can arrange for my cousin to lend you some horses or donkeys. Meet me back here tomorrow morning, and I will have provisions ready."

ACT 2: ENTER THE VILLAIN

Andros provides horses and mules (the characters choice), provisions for several days, torches, blankets, and rope. He also gives them directions to the site—he can't leave his shop, or he'd go with them.

SCENE 1: JOURNEY TO THE SITE

As the characters near the end of their long journey, they see a truck parked by the side of the track. The hood is up and a man is leant over the engine, apparently trying to fix it. Should the group stop to talk to him (or if they simply ride by), he draws a pistol and orders them to surrender. Goons appear from behind nearby boulders, also sporting pistols. The truck driver is the villain's chief assassin—a dangerous man known only as Mr. Scar.

Should a fight start, the goons use the boulders as cover while Mr Scar darts behind the truck. If the fight starts to go against the goons, Mr Scar flees, either in the truck or across country. His escape isn't vital to the plot, however, so don't worry if he is gunned down.

The characters are mounted, and may try to make a break. At this point, the thugs leap into the truck, which obviously isn't really broken, and give chase. Only one character can ride well, so this isn't the best option for them. Heading across country slow the truck to just half its normal Top Speed and gives the driver a –1 penalty to his Driving rolls.

Assuming the characters win, they can continue on their journey unmolested. They reach the camp in another two hours.

If the characters actually surrender, they are stripped of their gear, tied up, and shoved in the back of the truck. Mr Scar drives; the goons sit in the back with the characters. Go straight to Scene 3 (p.16).

Mr Scar: See page 21.

Thugs (3 per hero): See page 21.

SCENE 2: SEARCHING THE CAMP

Munroe's camp consists of several small tents and a large, central tent. The small tents are sleeping quarters for the Americans and contain cots, small travel trunks, fold up chairs, and personal belongings. The large tent

serves as a workshop for cleaning and conserving artifacts. It is currently empty of any finds save for a few pieces of pottery.

Every tent shows signs of having been ransacked, though the fine layer of sand reveals nothing has been disturbed for at least two weeks.

Shortly after the group finishes their exploration, twenty goons ride into camp on horses and surround the area. Half have pistols, half have Tommy Guns. They call on the group to surrender and drop their weapons. Should the heroes try to put up a fight, have more thugs turn up.

Thugs (unlimited): See page 21.

SCENE 3: VILLAINOUS PLANS

The group is disarmed, but the thugs do not remove small items, like lighters, or small, concealed weapons (like a knife or catapult). They are then led to the ruins of a small shrine just over the hill from the camp. Standing there is a well-dressed Greek man, Mr. Scar (if alive), and an attractive young woman of European stock.

"Greetings," says the Greek man. "My name is Stefan Andropolous. You are friends of Professor Munroe, yes? I am afraid the good professor is currently indisposed and can't be here to meet you. This, "he gestures to the woman, "is his niece. She has been my guest for these past few weeks.

"I expect you are wondering what is going on, yes? Put quite simply, Professor Munroe found the fabled Labyrinth of Crete. He also found something else, a scroll of cunning devices once belonging to the great architect Daedalus.

"Ah, if only you could see what wonders it beholds. Invincible mechanical men, flying machines, ray guns. It really does put Da Vinci to shame. The good professor is currently translating it for me, and when it s finished I shall rule Crete. Who knows, I may go on to rule the whole of Greece one day.

"A pity you won't be around to witness this, but your death will be poetic." He turns to his men and snarls, "Throw them in the Labyrinth."

With that, six of the goons lift a heavy stone flagstone to reveal a small set of steps leading into the darkness below. The characters and Gloria Drake are roughly shoved down the steps. Andropolous appears at the head of the stairs.

"It's very dark down there, but I'd hate for you to miss what lives there." With that, he throws two flaming torches at your feet. "Give my regards to the Minotaur." He laughs maniacally before giving his final order. "Seal them in."

The slab is moved back into place, and with a resounding thud seals the entrance. The narrow stairs prevent more than one character trying to lift the slab, which weighs over half a ton. It seems the only way is forward.

GLORIA DRAKE

Gloria, if asked, recounts the tale of how the expedition team were captured several weeks ago. Andropolous approached the professor shortly after the discovery of Daedalus' book and offered to buy it. When her uncle refused, they were kidnapped at gunpoint. They were taken to a motor yacht moored off the coast. She was brought back to the mainland a few days ago, after Andropolous received a telegram from the mainland informing him the characters were on their way. As far as she knows, her uncle and Lance are still aboard the yacht.

She doesn't know much about the Labyrinth outside of the legends—Munroe refused to allow her access on account of "hidden dangers." She does know, from an obscure legend, that Daedalus, the creator of the maze, supposedly built in a means of escape in case he was ever imprisoned there.

As for the piece of paper given to Andros, she has never seen it before. Later, when the situation gets more dangerous (and the characters need a clue), she remembers her uncle telling her, "Words are the secret." She has no idea what it means, however.

ACT 3: INTO THE LABYRINTH

The Labyrinth of Crete is very real, and so is the Minotaur. Actually, the beast is a mechanical construct created over two thousand years ago for the amusement of the mad king, who would throw prisoners into the maze. The beast is still operational and still follows its orders—to kill anything it encounters.

Disarmed, the heroes stand little chance of defeating the Minotaur in a fair fight. Fortunately, the adventurers were not the first explorers to brave the Labyrinth. Numerous skeletons in corroded ancient Greek armor lie around the maze, all missing their heads.

Allow the party to grab a variety of bronze weapons (typically spears, short swords, or long swords). These inflict one less point of damage than standard weapons. For instance, a bronze short sword causes Str+d6–1 damage. Before they encounter the Minotaur, every hero should be armed in some way.

SCENE 1: HIDE AND GO SEEK

This section covers the exploration of the Labyrinth, a vast, confusing array of passages and small chambers. Rather than use a map, it makes use of a variant of the Chase rules.

In order to escape, the heroes have to navigate to the exit. This is no easy task, and much of their time is spent following dead-end passages and retracing steps.

Each "round" (approximately ten minutes of exploring), the heroes get to make a Cooperative Smarts roll. This equates to their trying different plans and making group decisions. If individuals want to make the Smarts roll, the group must split up and try alternate routes. The downsides are that one group may find the exit before their comrades (which could be deadly) or, perhaps worse, encounter the Minotaur!

To locate the exit, they must advance to 11 increments (thus putting ten spaces between them and the entrance). Success advances them one increment and a raise two increments. Failure grants no increments as progress is minimal. A critical failure causes them to lose one increment as they walk round in circles.

Deal each separate group of explorers (not every individual in the party) a single card every round. A Joker acts as normal, giving +2 to the lead characters Smarts roll (and only his). The bonus perhaps indicates scratch marks pointing toward the exit, a trail of old coins left behind by some ancient explorer, and so on. A club suit indicates an encounter. Check the card value on the list below to see what the heroes bump into.

Passages: The passageways are all 4 yards wide (2") and 4 yards high (2").

Ambient Lighting: There is no light in the Labyrinth except the torches the party carries. The torches illuminate a Medium Burst Template (6" radius). Within a 12" radius the lighting penalty is –1, and within an 18" radius the penalty is as per Dark Lighting (–2). Beyond this is Pitch Darkness.



ENCOUNTERS

If the heroes have not encountered the Minotaur by the time they reach the exit, they encounter it there. Fate, and the rules of pulp, demands the Minotaur be faced in deadly combat. Check **The Exit** for an excellent point at which to launch his attack. If this event doesn't occur, make sure he arrives before the characters escape.

Although it makes no attempt at stealth, the echoes in the maze are confusing. The Minotaur can be heard more clearly when it gets within 20 yards (10") of the characters. Characters trying to detect which direction the clanking noise is coming from must score a raise on a Notice roll.

Since exploring a maze can be rather dull, the GM should not dally during this section. Keep the Smarts rolls and encounters coming thick and fast.

2–4: A LENGTH OF STRING

Lying on the floor is a length of string, which stretches off into the distance. The value of the card indicates how useless the string is to the party.

Deuce: The trail takes them deeper into the maze before it suddenly ends halfway down a passage. Their next Smarts roll is made at –2.

Three: The string ends suddenly in the hands of a long-dead, headless Greek warrior armed with a bronze weapon of the GM's choice.

Four: Following the string leads them nearer the exit, granting them a +2 bonus to their next Smarts roll! Again, the string then ends in the middle of a corridor.

5–10: TRAPS GALORE

The Labyrinth isn't just a maze of passages—it is also heavily trapped. Check the value of the card against the table below.

Detecting the traps is impossible—Daedalus was a master crafter and used finely weighted press plates rather than tripwires. If the characters state they are being careful, moving slowly, and checking for such devices they get +2 to their Notice rolls to avoid the trap.

When the trap activates, every hero in the group must make a Notice roll. A failure means the character is caught unawares and suffers damage as below. Those

THE CLUE

The piece of paper from Andros provides the method of escape from the Labyrinth, though the characters won't realize this yet. The secret exit is protected by a press-button combination lock.

To crack the code, the characters simply have to read the first Greek letter equivalent of each word and hit the right letter on the lock. In this case, the letters are CH, T, S, and TH.

who succeed must make an Agility roll opposed by the trap's Agility of d8 to avoid damage. Success means they take appropriate evasive action and are unharmed. Failure means they are affected by the device.

Traps are treated as Extras for the purpose of damage rolls.

Card	Trap
5	**Spear Trap:** Spears erupt from both walls. These generate one Fighting d6 attack against every character in the corridor. Each successful attack causes 1d6+1d4 damage.
6	**Pit:** A deep pits opens beneath the characters' feet. Those who avoid the trap manage to leap clear. Those who fail take 2d6 damage when they hit the bottom.
7	**Loose Ceiling:** Triggering the trap drops a pile of stones from the ceiling. The stones cause 2d8 damage to everyone in the corridor.
8	**Flesh Eating Beetles:** A swarm of flesh eating beetles drops from the ceiling. Use the statistics for the insect swarm on page 13. Torches inflict Str+1d6 fire damage against the swarm.
9	**Caustic Salts:** A blast of caustic salts sprays from both walls, inflicting 2d8 damage to everyone in the corridor who is caught by the trap.
10	**Greek Fire:** A pot of Greek fire, ignited by a flint striking a lump of iron ore, empties from the ceiling, causing 2d10 damage to the unlucky victim. Victims catch fire on a roll of 4-6.

JACK: SECRET DOOR

Daedalus, the wily old dog, included several secret doors in the maze as a way of ensuring he knew a quick and safe escape route should Minos ever decide to throw him into the maze.

Have each hero make a Notice roll at –2. With success, the character spots the outline of the door. It is opened simply by pushing hard (no roll required). Using the secret door might lead them nearer the exit or back toward the entrance!

If the Jack is red, they are in luck and make their next Smarts roll at +2. A black suit Jack means the roll is made at –2 instead.

QUEEN: TREASURE!

Minos stored some of his treasure in the Labyrinth. In a small chamber stand a dozen chests containing a small haul of treasure.

To keep things Fast, Furious, and Fun, any treasure the heroes take is measured solely in terms of whole Load Limits worth, rather than calculated as individual pounds. For instance, an unencumbered hero taking a full Load Limit worth of loot is treated as if he were carrying more than 5 x his Strength in pounds. If he takes two Load Limits, he is now carrying double that amount and suffers penalties accordingly. Thus, the most any hero can carry is three Load Limits of booty.

Each Load Limit is worth $2d6 x 100 back in the world. Taking less than a single Load Limit (so an adventurer is figured as not being encumbered) nets them $1d4 x 100 in loot.

Note that a character can't elect to take a Load Limit *and* a little extra beside. For these purposes he can take either a little treasure (no increased encumbrance penalty) *or* a whole Load Limit worth.

KING-ACE: THE MINOTAUR

The Minotaur doesn't sit around waiting for hapless victims to find him. Instead, he actively patrols the maze. The layout is "programmed" into him, so he can't get lost and he avoids the traps by jumping over them, even in pitch-black conditions.

Clockwork Minotaur: See page 20.

SCENE 2: THE EXIT

Two Doric pillars carved out of the wall mark the exit. Carved on the left hand pillar is a square divided into grid of 24 squares. Each square contains a single Greek letter. Give the players Handout #1 at this time.

Careful examination reveals the squares are actually buttons and can be depressed with little effort. Now the adventurers have to solve the mystery of the lock.

This is where the piece of paper they found earlier comes in to play. If they haven't solved the puzzle themselves, let them experiment with the lock for a bit. After a few wrong goes, let them make a Smarts roll. With a success, tell them the instructions on which buttons to press are based around the words and the number four. They should then be able to do the rest.

Once a button is pressed, it stays in that position until a fourth button is pressed. This indicates each button can only be used once in the sequence. What happens on pressing the fourth button depends on how many correct ones they have pressed. After any traps activate, the buttons click back into place, allowing them to be pressed again.

Daedalus, fearing that the king would imprison him in the Labyrinth after its creation so as to protect the secret, had the exit built in secret during construction. He placed the traps in case the king discovered its existence—Daedalus could claim it was merely another trap.

Four Wrong: Dozens of stones drop out of the ceiling through the Labyrinth. Sand pours through—thousands

and thousands of tons of sand. The characters have just ten rounds to escape to escape before they are buried alive. *This is an excellent time to have the Minotaur appear!*

Starting on round three, the sand reaches knee height—Pace is reduced by 2, and all Agility and linked skill rolls suffer a –2 penalty. On round six, it reaches chest height and the penalty increases to –4 (including Pace). On subsequent rounds, the characters must make a Strength roll each round or begin drowning.

The buttons are covered at the start of round seven. A character wishing to reach them must make a Strength roll to clear the sand, with a cumulative penalty of –1 per round (to a maximum of –4). With a success, the character clears enough sand to press the buttons. On a failure, the sand refills the hole too quickly.

Three Wrong: Poison gas sprays down from the ceiling, filling the corridor. The characters must make a Vigor roll at –2 penalty or suffer an automatic wound. The gas disperses after one round.

If all the heroes end up Incapacitated because of this trap, the Chase in the next scene begins at Very Long Range.

Two Wrong: A bell begins to sound, its deep tones echoing through the maze. If the Minotaur has yet to arrive, now is a good opportunity to bring it into play. Should the creature have already been defeated and the heroes still relatively undamaged, have an insect swarm (use the stats on page 13) respond to the summoning.

One Wrong: A pit opens up in front of the buttons. The character must make an Agility roll at –2 penalty or fall 20 feet, suffering 2d6 damage. The pit closes after ten rounds, trapping the victim in the cavity. Fortunately, it can easily be opened by characters on the surface, who need only repeat the same combination.

Although the heroes lack rope, they hopefully have a spear to hand to help a comrade escape the pit. Don't bother having them make Climbing rolls unless the Minotaur decides to appear on the scene, at which point escape should be imperative!

All Correct: The wall between the pillars slides across, revealing a flight of steps heading up. Once the last character is through the gap, it closes, crushing any objects left to wedge it open—there is no way to reenter the Labyrinth from this side. If the Minotaur has turned up, the beast follows them outside before the door seals shut.

Following the stairs leads to a short passage. This emerges on a scrubby slope a few hundred feet from the Labyrinth. Parked nearby is a battered old truck owned by a local shepherd. He is happy to lend it to the characters for a few drachmas.

As luck would have it, the villains have dumped the characters' gear on the side of the road leading to the docks. This enables them to head into the final fight with their firearms locked and loaded.

ACT 4: MOTORBOAT MAYHEM

No matter how long it takes the characters to reach the docks, Andropolous' motor yacht, *Icarus*, is just leaving port. A pair of unattended motorboats is tied up on the wharf.

THEY'VE ESCAPED!

What happens if the villains escape during the chase? Well, the adventurers have failed this mission, but all is not lost!

Andropolous spends a few months researching the book and then sets to work on building his crime empire. In short, it's the perfect chance for the Gm to write an exciting follow on adventure!

Since the villain has Daedalus' book, he should be given the Arcane Background (Weird Science) Edge, two gizmos of the GM's choice, 10 Power Points, and Weird Science d8 when encountered in the showdown.

SCENE 1: MARITIME CHASE

Run the chase as normal, with a Range Increment of 5" and beginning at Medium Range, the chase area has Light Obstacles. One thug uses each machinegun, though only one of them can fire each round due to the positions of the two craft. A further three thugs armed with Tommy guns stand on the rear diving platform and blast away at pursuers. The boats count as Unstable Platforms.

Doc Davenport can use his rocket pack in this chase. If he moves at his regular Pace, he suffers a –1 penalty to Piloting rolls (because his Range Increment is only 1" compared to the thugs' 5"). Moving at twice his Pace negates this, but burns more Power Points.

While the characters may be tempted to blast the yacht out of the water, Gloria reminds them that Professor Munroe and Lance are prisoners onboard.

Boarding the yacht requires the characters to draw level (i.e. be at the same range increment) and make a successful Force maneuver. With a success, the motorboat comes alongside, allowing the passengers, and driver with a multi action penalty, to jump across. Because of the swell, jumping requires an Agility roll.

A success means the character has made the jump, though he must spend the next round climbing over the railing. A raise allows the character to clear the railing and be ready for immediate action. With a failure, the character fails the jump and lands back in the motorboat. Only on a critical failure does he end up in the water.

Thugs (5): See page 21.

ICARUS

Andropolous' motor yacht is his permanent base of operations. Machineguns are mounted on swivels fore and aft, but are not displayed except under unusual circumstances. The crew are noncombatants (treat as Thugs with no Fighting or Shooting, but add Boating d6).

Acc/Top Speed: 3/9; **Toughness:** 15 (3); **Crew:** 10+10
Notes: —
Weapons:
2 x M1919 0.30 machinegun (bow and stern)

MOTORBOATS

Acc/Top Speed: 4/13; **Toughness:** 12 (2); **Crew:** 1+5
Notes: —

SCENE 2: BOARDING ACTION

There are a total of 3 thugs per hero onboard, less any killed in the chase. Spread the thugs out as you see fit, based on the current strength of the party but with one caveat—three of them must be in the lounge (see below).

If the characters are relatively unscathed (no character with two or more wounds), have them work in groups of two or three, using doors and other bits of scenery for cover. Half the thugs have Tommy guns, the rest use pistols.

A bad trip through the Labyrinth may have resulted in serious wounds, in which case be gentle and have the thugs operate alone or in pairs and with no tactical use of scenery. Only one in three thugs has a Tommy gun.

The prisoners are being held in the lounge, below decks. Andropolous, Mr Scar, and at least one thug per Wild Card are with the prisoners. If Mr Scar has been killed, replace him with a Wild Card thug (same stats, just he's a Wild Card). When the characters enter the lounge, continue with the next section.

- **Stefan Andropolous:** See page 21.
- **Mr. Scar/Thug:** See page 21.
- **Thugs (3 per hero):** See page 21.

EXPLODING PRISONERS

The professor and Lance are tied up and strapped with dynamite, the fuse of which is lit. Andropolous, in typical egomaniac fashion, gloats as the characters enter the lounge.

> *"So you escaped the Labyrinth?" he sneers. "No matter. As you can see, the good professor and his assistant are strapped with dynamite, the fuse of which is burning. By my reckoning, the fuse will take no longer than a minute or two to reach them.*
>
> *"Now, I want all of you to drop your weapon, go back upstairs, under guard of course, and jump overboard. Once you are in the water, I shall stop the fuse and sail away. You will have lost, as is to be expected, but you may be able to reach land before drowning."*

Of course, if the characters agree and actually jump overboard they have lost. Andropolous goes on to fulfill his dreams of kingship using a variety of powerful inventions.

More likely, the characters will try to overpower their foes and stop the fuse. They have ten rounds before the dynamite explodes. Trying to shoot the fuse is not easy—targeting the small taper requires a Shooting roll at –6 penalty. Trying to grab it requires a successful Fighting roll against Parry 4, but the thugs make reaching it difficult. Because of the cramped conditions and the existence of the prisoners, use the Innocent Bystander rules.

Should the characters not have defused the dynamite on round eight, the fight becomes a dramatic interlude and the characters get a benny. In the unlikely event the dynamite explodes, it causes 5d6 damage to everyone in a Medium Burst Template—and instantly kills both hostages.

Once Andropolous has been dealt with, the adventure is over. Professor Munroe and Lance are very grateful for the rescue. Munroe realizes Daedalus' book is too dangerous and decides to destroy it. He puts it in one of the motorboats along with the dynamite, lights the fuse, and sets it adrift. Moments later, it explodes. If the heroes try to stop him, he pleads with them to listen to reason—men have already died to find the book, and countless more will die if it ever falls into the wrong hands.

Is the ancient and priceless book really destroyed? Well, that depends if you want to run a sequel or not. A villain armed with a variety of Weird Science devices, perhaps using mechanical creatures like the Minotaur for thugs, would make a great follow on adventure.

FEATURE 2 CAST OF CHARACTERS

All the characters, villains and creatures featured in this adventure are listed here.

MINOTAUR

Greek legends tell us that Theseus slew the Minotaur—they were wrong. Well, sort of. Daedalus, the designer of the Labyrinth, was also a skilled artificer and created a true immortal creature—a bronze mechanical Minotaur! It's still just as deadly as the "real thing" and knows the maze like the back of its hand.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12
Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d12, Intimidation d12, Notice d10
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10
Gear: Great axe (Str+d10, AP 1, –1 Parry, requires two hands)
Special Abilities:

- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken. No additional damage from called shots. No wound penalties. Immune to poison and disease.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Fleet-Footed:** The Minotaur rolls a d10 as its running die.

- **Frenzy:** The Minotaur makes two attacks per round at –2 penalty. This cannot be used with Sweep.
- **Gore:** The Minotaur uses the Charge maneuver to gore its opponents with their long horns. If it can charge at least 6" before attacking, it adds +4 to its damage total.
- **Horns:** Str+d6.
- **Size +2:** The Minotaur stands over 7' tall.
- **Sweep:** The Minotaur may attack all adjacent characters at –2. This cannot be used with Frenzy.
- **Thermal Vision:** Halves penalties for darkness against living creatures.



STEFAN ANDROPOLOUS

Stefan Andropolous runs a criminal gang on Crete, but wants more power. Daedalus' book is the key to his future criminal empire.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8
Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Arrogant, Delusional (Minor: can be ruler of Crete), Stubborn
Edges: Combat Reflexes, Rich
Gear: Colt M1911 (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, Shots 8, AP 2, Semi-auto)



MR. SCAR

Mr. Scar is an assassin by trade, and very good at this job. He has no particular belief in his master's cause, but he is well paid and gets to do what he does best—kill people.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d10, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d10
Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Ugly (heavily scarred)
Edges: Combat Reflexes, Level Headed, Marksman, Quick Draw, Steady Hands
Gear: Colt M1911 (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, Shots 8, AP 2, Semi-auto)



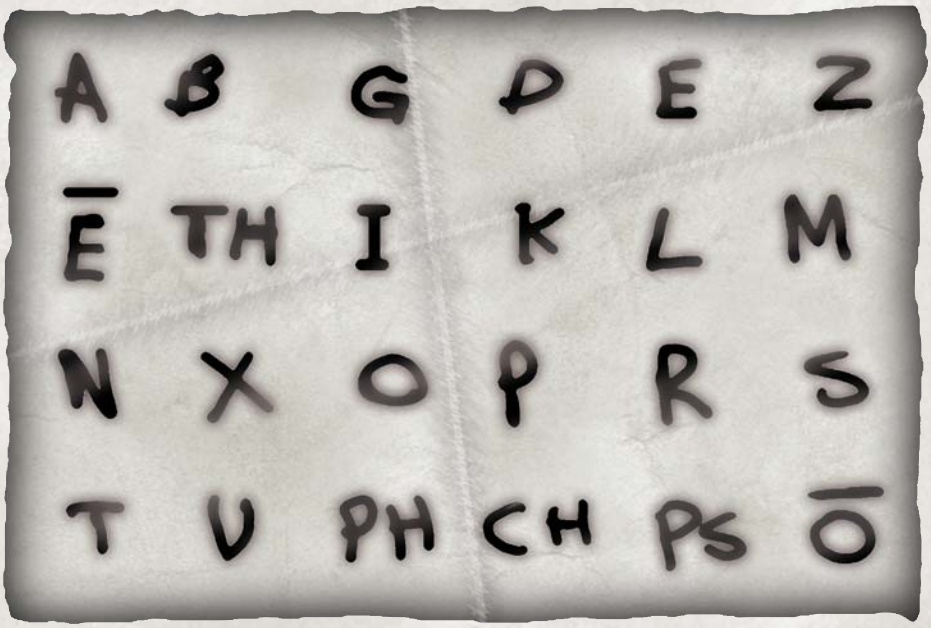
GLORIA DRAKE

Gloria works for her uncle as secretary and research assistant.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Boating d6, Driving d6, Fighting d4, Guts d6, Investigation d8, Knowledge (History) d8, Notice d8, Shooting d4, Streetwise d8
Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Yellow
Edges: Attractive, Investigator
Gear: None.

THUGS

Typical low intelligence thugs hired to do as they are told. None are independent thinkers.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Boating d6, Driving d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Piloting d4, Shooting d6
Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Mean
Edges: Combat Reflexes
Gear: Colt M1911 (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, Shots 8, AP 2, Semi-auto) or Tommy gun (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, RoF 3, Shots 30, AP 1)

PLAYER'S HANDOUT #1



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Daring Tales™ #01 marks the start of a new line of pulp adventures for Savage Worlds. Each adventure is designed for four characters with a wide-range of skills. Pre-generated characters designed for this adventure are available free online from the Triple Ace Games website.

This adventure also contains Triple Ace Games' unique pulp setting rules, designed to make two-fisted adventures more exciting and truer to the source than ever before!

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DARING TALES
OF ADVENTURE

WEB OF THE SPIDER CULT



OFFICIAL SAVAGE WORLDS LICENSED PRODUCT

PAUL 'WIGGY' WADE-WILLIAMS

DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

02

WEB OF THE SPIDER CULT

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WEB OF THE SPIDER CULT

The year is 1936, though our story begins long ago, back in the mists of time.

Many centuries ago, the Aztec Empire dominated central and southern Mexico. Among the many deities they worshipped was Tzitzimime, a minor goddess whose name means, "Monsters descending from above." Scholars believe Tzitzimime was a celestial god, whose name likely referred to meteors. In truth, Tzitzimime was a gigantic spider worshipped as a goddess.

The worshippers of Tzitzimime, like their brethren elsewhere in the Empire, practiced human sacrifice. Whereas the sun worshippers flayed victims alive and cut out their hearts, the followers of the spider goddess gave victims to their living god, who sucked out their vital fluids amid the victims' terrible screams.

When Cortez conquered the Empire, the spider cultists met a similar fate to the majority of Aztecs. Though they lived in remote areas they were hunted down and exterminated for "devil worship." For a century their pyramid complex remained silent. The goddess sank into torpor to conserve her energy reserves, and the jungle began to swallow up her home.

The bloody cult was shattered, but it was not totally destroyed. Years became decades, which in turn became centuries. All knowledge of the spider cult was lost, except to those descended from Tzitzimime's worshippers.

Slowly but surely, the cult rekindled their barbaric practices, returning to their former place of power only 50 years ago. Reinstating the age-old practice of human sacrifice, they awoke the spider-queen from her slumber to resume her position as a living god.

Since then the cult has grown larger, spreading its tendrils throughout Mexico and the southern USA. Operating in total secrecy, the cultists grow stronger each year.

Unfortunately, an archaeological expedition to southern Mexico stumbled across the cult's headquarters. While several members of the party were sacrificed to the spider goddess (and a few were eaten), the Aztecs kept the leader alive and tried to corrupt his mind with a special drug. Their plan was to send him back to the civilized world to dissuade other explorers from visiting the area.

The explorer proved resistant to the drug and escaped before he could be sacrificed. Informing their American members, the cult immediately prepared to hunt down the archaeologist before he could reveal their existence.

THE CHARACTERS

This Savage Adventure contains a pulp tale based around the exploits of four pre-generated characters. The full character sheets are available for free at **www.tripleacegames.com**.

The heroes have all their leveling opportunities from Seasoned (at which they begin) into Legendary mapped out in advance. Each published adventure in this line earns the heroes a fixed 5 Experience Points, guaranteeing them an advance every mission. All the players need do is tick the appropriate box and start making use of the new upgrade.

Characters: 30 XP.

The GM also needs 20 marker stones (15 of one color and 5 of a different color), and the pulp setting rules from the TAG website.

ACT 1: BOSTON BRAWLS

The heroes have been out of town for a few weeks and have just returned to America. Lady Amelia, who owns a large townhouse in Boston, has invited the adventurers back for a celebratory drink. The adventure begins as the characters approach her front door.

SCENE 1: FIVE FOR DRINKS

After time abroad you all look forward to a bit of rest and relaxation. Although her servants are away for a few more days, Amelia has invited you all to stay at her townhouse, an invitation you were keen to accept. But your rest may already be in jeopardy, for as you approach the front door, you notice it is ajar!

Any hero checking the lock can see it has been smashed open. Calling out elicits no response. After a quick search of the house, the characters discover the intruder in the study, slumped over a desk!

Sprawled across the study desk is a man dressed in rough clothing. From his facial expression it is obvious he died a painful death. One hand clutches at his neck, while the other is locked around something golden. The study window is open. A quick glance through reveals no signs of activity in the garden.

A cursory inspection reveals no signs of blood on the man, save for a few drops on the hand clutching his neck. His body is still very warm, and the blood has yet to congeal!

Have the characters make a Common Knowledge roll at this point. With success, they recognize the man as Doctor Ernest Brakespear, a notable explorer. Lady Amelia recalls funding one of his expeditions to Peru a few years ago, while the other characters recognize him from photos in Boston Museum and the local papers.

Checking his neck reveals a small dart, about an inch long. Though innocuous, it is the only injury to Brakespear. A hero who removes it and checks the end discovers a thin, sticky paste. A successful Healing roll identifies it as quick-acting poison, though the exact type cannot be determined.

In his other hand he clutches a golden disc about the size of a silver dollar. Eight semi-circular notches, spaced at regular intervals, cut into the rim. In the center is a series of Aztec glyphs.

Jimmy, if shown the amulet, identifies the glyphs as a name—Tzitzimime. A Knowledge (History) roll reveals the name relates to a minor celestial goddess of the ancient Aztecs. Jimmy doesn't know anything else about the deity. If you're not using the pre-generated characters, a Common Knowledge roll can be used, instead.

Checking Brakespear's jacket, the heroes find a weather-beaten diary. Many pages are ruined by water stains, but from what remains the characters quickly deduce the explorer had been in Mexico recently, working on behalf of the Boston Museum. A ticket stub, used as a bookmark, shows he arrived in Boston only this morning on a transfer flight from New York.

A successful Tracking roll made in the garden reveals some plants have been disturbed recently, but there are no clues as to the source.

With everything pointing to the Boston Museum, it should be a logical place for the heroes to visit.

Brakespear: Brakespear was captured by the Aztecs in Mexico, but managed to escape. As he fled he snatched the golden disc, figuring it was a way to prove the existence of the cultists. Knowing the museum was likely being watched, he made for the only address he knew—Lady Amelia's house. Alas, he was being tailed the moment he left the airport and was killed just minutes before the characters entered the scene.

SCENE 2: MUSEUM MAYHEM

Whether they phone ahead or turn up unexpectedly, Doctor Oswald Hibbert, the Curator of Aztec Exhibits, has time to see them. The museum is still open when the characters arrive.

Once they are shown to his office, Hibbert asks why the heroes, whom he knows by reputation, need to see him. If, in telling their story, the heroes don't mention the golden disc, prompt Jimmy's player to bring up the subject through his Big Mouth Hindrance.

After they have told their story, Hibbert sits back in his chair and bridges his fingers together in front of his nose.

"Poor Brakespear," he mutters. "A good man, both academically and in the field. He'll be sorely missed by the academic community.

"I must say, though, this isn't the first strange occurrence relating to Mexico we've had lately. Three nights ago, someone broke into the Aztec exhibits and stole some items. Nothing really valuable, though, which is all the more curious, don't you think? Security checked the building, but there was no sign of a break-in. It occurred the same day those packing creates arrived in the basement. Still, we'll open them soon enough.

"Anyway, may I see this golden disc? It's obviously important, perhaps important enough to kill for."

The instant the disc is in Hibbert's hands, the office door slams open with a loud bang. Bursting in through the door is a group of Aztec warriors armed with obsidian hand axes and blowguns! Have the heroes make Notice rolls to avoid Surprise.

Run the fight as normal. Hibbert sinks beneath his desk and stays there for the entire fight. The Aztecs want the golden disc, but it is imperative they fail in their attempt.

After the last Aztec is dispatched, the characters hear a noise of breaking glass from outside the office. Moving to the door, they spy a lone Aztec running away through the exhibit hall. Unfortunately, the

visitors assume he's part of some living exhibition and make no attempt to stop him fleeing. It's time to move to **Scene 3**.

Aztec Warriors (1 per hero): See page 10.

SCENE 3: NO RUNNING IN THE MUSEUM

The chase through the Museum uses Agility as the default trait. The Aztec has a head start and is at Medium Range. For these purposes, the Range Increment is 3". If necessary, warn the heroes that firing guns in a crowded public building is *not* a wise move! Any ranged attacks suffer a –2 penalty due to the pedestrians.

The Aztec can't escape the heroes, no matter what happens. If he moves more than 10 Range Increments away he enters the basement. Fortunately for the heroes, he is spotted by a passerby, who alerts them to his whereabouts. See **Scene 4** (page 5) for details.

A lot of interesting things can occur, and this scene should be played for fun. Always remember to portray events as you would as a film director of a big budget pulp movie. The players are both the actors and the audience, and they want to be thrilled, not given dull descriptions of movement through the museum. This Chase uses the alternate Obstacles rules (page 4).

OBSTACLES

Deuce (–4) School Party: A school party crosses the hero's path. On a failure, he is caught in the surge of children and swept back two Range Increments.

Three (–2/0) Falling Valuables: A valuable exhibit is bumped and begins to teeter. The character can either let it fall or try to catch it. Inform the player of his choices before he knows the modifiers and penalties for failure. (The Aztec suffers a –2 penalty as he stumbles into an exhibit.)

A hero wishing to save the priceless relic must make his Agility roll at –2. On a failure, it smashes into a thousand pieces and the hero drops back a Range Increment as he tries to explain to onlookers it wasn't his fault. Making no attempt to catch the artifact gives no penalty to the Agility roll, but it costs the hero a benny for being unheroic.

Four (–2) Tight Turn: The runner must attempt a tight turn at full speed. On a failure, he runs into the wall, crashes through a door, or slips down stairs opposite. All result in the hero being automatically Shaken.

Five (–2) Wet Floor: A janitor has just mopped the floor, and it's still wet. With a failure, the adventurer slips and falls. He is automatically Shaken.

Six (–2) Left or Right: A rotund gentleman blocks the hero's path. As the character goes left, so does the man. The same thing occurs when the adventurer ducks to the right. This could take a while! Failure means the hero drops back one Range Increment due to the added delay.

Seven (–2/0) Lost Child: A young girl has lost her mother and is wailing loudly. Ask the character if he wants to stop and help or ignore her. (The Aztec runs into a crowd and suffers a –2 penalty.)

Helping the girl gives a –2 penalty, as the character must locate the mother and reunite the pair. Failure means the task takes longer than anticipated and the hero drops back a Range Increment. Ignoring her gives no penalty, but it does cost the uncaring cad a benny.

Eight (–2/0) Spare Some Change: An elderly nun asks the hero for a donation. Ask the hero if he wants to donate to a worthy cause or ignore the nun. (The Aztec suffers a –2 penalty as he is accosted by the nun for his "lack of manners.")

If he stops and gives a few coins, he suffers the Agility penalty due to having to fumble around for some change. Failure means the coins scatter across the floor and the hero fails to gain any distance. Ignoring the nun gives no penalty, but it costs the character a benny for his uncharitable act.

Nine (–1) Mistaken Identity: The hero loses sight of the Aztec in the crowd and chases after a young boy before he notices his mistake (the Aztec gets momentarily lost and backtracks). Failure means the hero drops back one Range Increment.

Ten (–1) Door to Nowhere: A heavy door slams shut just as the hero tries to dart through. On a failure, he runs straight into it and is automatically Shaken.

Jack (–1) Crowds: A small crowd has gathered around an exhibit, blocking the only clear route. Failure causes the hero to drop back one Range Increment.

Queen (0) Excuse Me, Ma'am: A lady backs into the hero, threatening to block his path. Failure causes the hero to drop back one Range Increment.

King (0/–2) Leap for Glory: A ladder lying across a packing crate makes a great seesaw. Even better someone is about to sit on the far end! The character has two choices—trying to run around it or time his run to perfection so it catapults him forward as the man takes a seat. (The Aztec always tries to avoid the plank.)

If he tries to go around and fails the roll, he knocks his shin. He makes no progress as he clutches his bruised leg.

Should he try to make the jump and succeed, he gains an extra Range Increment. This does *not* stack with a Push maneuver, however. Failure causes the character to fly *backward* and land badly, costing him a Range Increment.

Ace (0/–2) Trolley Surfing: Porters are pushing a trolley through the gallery. Ask the hero whether he wants to run around the trolley or try to surf it down the hall.

Going around the trolley gives no penalty and failure has no special effect beyond temporarily thwarting forward movement.

Trying to use it as a giant roller skate gives the character a –2 penalty to his Agility roll, but if successful he gains an *extra* Range Increment. This bonus (and the penalty) stacks with the Push maneuver. Failure causes him to move out of control. He smashes into a wall and is Shaken. The trolley can be used for this round only.

CAPTURED AZTEC

If the adventurers manage to catch the Aztec alive, they quickly discover he doesn't speak English or Span-

ish. He jabbers on for a few moments, seemingly cursing them, before his face contorts in intense pain, and he drops dead. Crawling out from his clothing is a small spider! Killing it requires only a declaration of intent by a character. A successful Survival roll identifies the spider as a Mexican black widow, a very deadly species.

Aside from his weapons, the Aztec has only two items of interest. The first is a map of the museum from a tourist guide. A route is highlighted in red ink leading from the basement to the Aztec exhibition. The second is a spider tattoo on the back of his right hand. (All the Aztecs warriors have the same marking.)

SCENE 4: HIDDEN SURPRISES

If the fleeing Aztec escaped his pursuers, he is hiding in one of the crates. Increase the number of attackers by one when the little devils make their presence known.

The museum's basement is used to store exhibits awaiting display, old exhibits stored away for future use, and a few conservators' workbenches. Amid the jumble of artifacts are half a dozen large packing crates. All the crates carry the same sticker, indicating they were shipped from the Riverside Warehouse Company, New Orleans. The contents are listed as assorted pieces of pottery.

The crates don't contain any artifacts. The warehouse company is a front for the spider cult, and the Aztecs were shipped here in a hurry to steal small objects of interest to the cult and locate the golden disc (the villains knew it would end up in the museum sooner, rather than later).

Inside the boxes are a number of Aztecs (hiding, since they only come out at night, normally), remnants of discarded meals, water gourds, and the stolen artifacts. Knots of wood attached to short bits of string allow the Aztecs to create air holes as required and plug up the hole to avoid detection.

Any hero who opens a box causes the occupants to let out a loud yell. Check for Surprise if the characters have made any noise above a whisper while in the basement or the pursued Aztec escaped (he has alerted his compatriots). Otherwise both sides are equally surprised and the GM deals initiative cards as normal. Run the fight as standard.

There are plenty of props the heroes and Aztecs can use to perform Tricks.

- **Aztec Henchman (1):** As Aztec warrior. He has 3 wound levels, but no Wild Die or bennies.
- **Aztec Warriors (1 per hero):** See page 10. The Aztecs are spread among the boxes and emerge at the same time.

NO HELP FROM HIBBERT

Hibbert remained in his office during the chase. Hopefully the heroes go back and inform him of events in the basement. The curator doesn't know much more about Tzitzimime beyond the basic facts the party already knows. His knowledge of the cult indicates it was very small and located somewhere in the southern jungle. He's sincerely apologetic that he can't help further.

Fortunately for our intrepid heroes they already have the next clue—the warehouse company in New Orleans.

ACT 2: NEW ORLEANS

How the heroes reach New Orleans is completely unimportant to the plot. Just grab an old atlas, draw a red line to indicate the party's travel, and then get straight back into the adventure.

SCENE 1: THE CULTISTS' LAIR

The Riverside Warehouse Company is actually based just outside New Orleans in a small industrial park on the banks of the bayou. A Streetwise roll reveals company is owned by Manuel Ortega, a Mexican businessman. On a raise, the character learns that all the employees are Mexican.

Regardless of when the characters reach the warehouse, it is shut. However, the heroes spot dim light coming from the grimy windows. Unfortunately, the dirt is on the inside, so the heroes can't get a clear view. A Notice roll (–2) picks up faint, indecipherable chanting coming from within. Searching around, the adventurers find an open window. Climbing through brings the party onto a metal catwalk 2" above the floor.

The warehouse measures 14" long by 10" wide. Boxes, crates, and barrels, all excellent Cover, are stacked around the edges. A small, glass-fronted office (3" by 3") occupies the northeast corner. In the outer wall next to the office is a single door (which leads to the bayou). A set of double doors (locked) is in the center of the north wall.

In the center of the floor is a large reed mat (the size of a Medium Burst Template) decorated with the image of a huge spider. Standing around it, is a group of Aztec cultists. One wears a large headdress and seems to be the leader.

An overhead crane holding a large crate hangs toward the south end of the warehouse. The control box is clearly visible across the other side of the building. Once a hero has reached the crane he can operate it as an action.

The crane moves 4" per round and can move in any direction. Using the emergency release handle (an action) causes the crate to drop. It shatters to cover a Medium Burst Template. Anyone beneath must make an Agility roll at –2 or suffer 3d6 damage. Picking up a new crate requires 2" of movement by the crane and requires an action by the operator.

There's a ladder nearby. Characters who want a quick descent can grip the sides and slide down as a free action. This requires an Agility roll to avoid landing heavily and being Shaken. Climbing down the traditional way



uses 4" of movement (as difficult ground) but carries no risk.

Ortega is not very brave. Once he takes a single wound he tries to dart through the backdoor and jump into a waiting airboat. To ensure this occurs, you may need to spend a benny and use the Recurring Villains rule (see the Triple Ace Games pulp rules availble free from our website).

- **Manuel Ortega, Cult Leader:** See page 10.
- **Aztec Warriors (2 per hero):** See page 10.

SCENE 2: RIVER RACING

Although he has fled the scene, Ortega can still be caught. All it requires is for the heroes to hop into an airboat and give chase! Whether they do this before or after dealing with the goons is up to them.

The initial distance is one Range Increment for each round that passes between the heroes hopping into their airboat and the villain's escape from the previous scene (to a maximum of 5 Increments).

Each Range Increment represents 10". There are Light Obstacles in the water. These work as per the standard *Savage Worlds* rules. Typically these are logs, alligators, and other boats on the water. This Chase also introduces a new rule—Event Stages (see below).

All the cult leader wants to do is escape, though he'll fire his SMG if the heroes get within Short Range. He hasn't got Steady Hands, so the Unstable Platform applies.

AIRBOAT

Acc/Top Speed: 5/15; **Toughness:** 10 (2); **Crew:** 1+8
Notes: —

EVENT STAGES

Unlike a regular Chase, this one has fixed encounters along the route as the airboats move through the bayou. Space 20 markers in a line along the table to present the bayou. Place a different color marker at the 6th, 9th, 12th, 15th, and 18th positions. These are the Event Stages. If the Chase carries on beyond the 20th position the GM may either elect to create his own events or assume the waterway is clear (except for regular Obstacles).

Move each airboat's playing piece along the track each time it moves one or more Range Increments. This way it is very easy to see where an individual airboat is in relation to the events.

When an airboat reaches a Stage it must deal with an event. These are detailed below. Modifiers to Boating rolls apply to the roll made at the start of each round. Unlike Triple Ace's standard Obstacles rules, these events affect all vehicles reaching the marker equally.

The stages form an abstract map. This system can be used equally well for Chases in urban areas, canyons, ancient ruins, and so forth—all the GM need do is create a few encounters for his Chase scene that all the vehicles must encounter.

6th Increment: A tight turn in a strong current faces the airboat. The pilot must attempt a Tight Turn. Failure means the airboat goes Out of Control.

9th Increment: A morass of logs and debris is floating in the bayou. The pilot must decide whether he wants to take things easy or stay at full throttle. He can also Push as normal. The cult leader uses the fast option only if the heroes are within three Range Increments. Otherwise, he goes slowly.

If he decides for the slow option, he makes his Boating roll at –1. Success avoids any collision but doesn't increase the Range Increment this round. A raise moves him one Range Increment. Failure means he suffers a collision with a soft obstacle at half his Top Speed.

The fast option roll is made at –2. Success and raises

work as normal. On a failure, the boat suffers a collision with a soft obstacle at its Top Speed.

12th Increment: A long bend in the river gives the pilot two choices—he can elect to follow the bayou or he can try to cut the corner by taking his airboat through people's gardens. The cult leader uses the shortcut only if the heroes are within three Range Increments. Otherwise, he takes the long route.

Taking the bayou route requires only a normal Boating roll. The shortcut requires a Boating roll at –2. With success, the airboat moves one extra Range Increment this round due to cutting the corner. Failure causes the airboat to plow into a shed or hedge. The crew must maneuver the boat out and around the obstacle, meaning they don't get to make a Boating roll next round.

15th Increment: Mixing currents from several bayous have formed a small whirlpool. The Boating roll is made at –2. With failure, the airboat goes Out of Control.

18th Increment: The route takes the airboats into a stretch of bayou crossed by a levy (the water flows through small channels). The pilot makes his Boating roll at –2. Success and raises work as normal. A failure means the airboat goes Out of Control as it lands badly. A critical failure causes a collision with a stationary hard object.

SCENE 3: CHECKING THINGS OUT

Once the cult leader has escaped or been killed, the heroes can return to the warehouse and search for clues. Any conscious goons left behind have fled the scene.

The biggest clue, a map detailing North and Central America, is found on the wall of the office. White string radiates out from a point in the Yucatan to cities across the region. Further lines link cities to other cities, resulting in what looks like a spider web spanning the continent! The center of the map marks the location of the cult's true headquarters—a ruined Aztec temple. This should be the adventurers' next port of call.

A notebook hidden in a filing cabinet contains names of cultists across America. Once the adventure is finished, it's assumed the heroes contact the FBI or local police and arrange to have the members arrested.

ACT 3: THE DANGERS OF MEXICO

Again, the nitty-gritty of arranging travel to Mexico should be swept aside in favor of continuing the action. If you've got your atlas handy, draw a red line to the city of Merida on the Yucatan Peninsula.

SCENE 1: BOARDING ACTION

The jungle in the area indicated on the cultists' map is too dense to allow a plane to land. In order to reach it, the heroes hire a riverboat at Merida.

The captain, Juan Santiago, knows the river systems well. Captain Santiago informs the heroes he can take them only so far. After that, the river branch they need to reach their destination is too shallow and narrow. However, he agrees to loan them a small motor launch for that leg of the journey.

After loading supplies, the riverboat steams off into the jungle. The first leg takes three days with the boat traveling day and night. Accommodation is basic, but the cook, Pablo, is excellent at making use of the ingredients he has on-hand.

During the third night, a particularly dark night due to heavy clouds, Aztec warriors, who learned of the heroes' arrival through cultists in Merida, launch an attack. After paddling canoes silently up alongside the riverboat, they clamber aboard to hunt down the interlopers.

Any character who specifically states he is on watch during the night can make a Notice roll opposed by the Aztecs Group Stealth roll to detect them as they begin to board. Otherwise, the explorers are alerted when one of the crew spots an Aztec and manages to fire a warning shot before he is cut down.

The riverboat deck is lit by storm lanterns, which negate darkness penalties. As well as making attacks, the heroes can make use of the ropes, chairs, lifebelts, and such on the deck to perform Tricks.

In the first round, one of the Aztecs smashes a lantern on the deck. A fire quickly ignites. Captain Santiago and his crew don't take part in the fight—they spend their time preparing two motor launches and hastily filling them with what supplies they can salvage.

On any round a Joker is drawn, the fire inflicts a wound on the riverboat. When it reaches Wrecked, it explodes, throwing everyone into the river and inflicting 3d6 damage as an Extra. Any remaining Aztecs are automatically slain. If the fight ends before this, inform the characters the vessel is about to blow. They have one round to declare they are abandoning ship before it goes up in flames as above.

Aztec Warriors (2 per hero): See page 10.

SCENE 2: IS THAT LIFE-SIZE?

Santiago and his crew haul the characters from the river. After provisions are switched between launches, the skipper tells the heroes the branch they need to take is only a few miles up stream. He and his men are heading back to Merida to make an insurance claim. Under no circumstances will they accompany the expedition.

Before he goes, Santiago warns the characters there are big insects, snakes, spiders, and crocodiles lurking in the deep jungle.

Don't worry about how much food and water the characters are carrying—this is a pulp game! Any spent magazines for guns are also refilled, bringing the heroes back to their starting amounts.

Sure enough, the river branch is exactly where Santiago said it would be. The launch is slow, but its obvious from the jungle scenery chugging by

that it's much faster than walking. The day passes quietly.

As the sun sink near to the horizon, you spy a stone jetty, perhaps centuries old, jutting out from the bank. Beyond, you can see the channel narrows to a width unsuitable for the launch. It looks like the rest of your journey has to be made on foot.

A hero who enters the jungle soon notices vine-covered buildings. These are long abandoned, but were once an outpost for the spider cult. Tonight they provide the characters shelter from the weather.

Further exploration requires a Notice roll. With a success, the character hacks away some vines to reveal part of a wall. Carved into it are images of Aztec warriors and what appear to be captives. Dangling over the captives is a gigantic spider. Assuming the images are all to the same scale, the spider would be at least three times as wide as a man is tall!

While the explorers might be wary of spending the night here, there is no danger. This scene serves to provide a big clue as to what they will face later on.

SCENE 3: THE CHILDREN OF TZITZIMIME

This scene comprises three linked areas. The first is a tangle of spider webs blocking the trail. Fleeing the swarms, which quickly appear, the characters then come across a "rope" bridge spanning a deep gorge. Finally, they must make their way up the sheer sides of a plateau.

Don't let the players pause for breath once the first spider makes an appearance. Keep the action cards flowing thick and fast until the adventures are at the top of the plateau!

BLOCKED TRAILS

After several miles, the trail widens into a small clearing. Three paths lead from here, but each is covered by a gigantic spider web. Looking round, you see the webs stretch across all the trees. The jungle, on either side is a knotted mass of dense undergrowth and tightly packed trees. It seems the only way forward involves hacking through a web.

The jungle to either side *is* impassable. No amount of hacking will open a trail.

Tampering with a web (whether with a hand, weapon, bullet, or lighting a fire beneath one) causes a giant spider to emerge from the canopy from that web. Check for Surprise even if the heroes are alert to the danger of an ambush.

At the start of subsequent rounds, one spider scuttles down from each outer web, while a swarm of tiny spiders comes down the central one. The giant spiders and swarms use separate action cards. There is an unlimited number of spiders—the aim is to force the heroes to flee through the webs!

The webs have Toughness 8 and split to leave a sizeable hole if dealt a single wound. A character using a melee weapon or his hands to hack through the webs finds his weapon or limb stuck fast if his Fighting die comes up 1, regardless of the Wild Die. A successful Wild Die still indicates a hit and damage should be rolled, but the object is stuck afterward. Freeing a weapon or limb requires a Strength roll as an action.

Once through any web, the explorers quickly realize the trails rejoin into a single path. The distance between the webs and the next obstacle is just 12". Any spiders still alive when the adventures decide to make a break for it follow them along the path, but no new spiders appear from the webs.

- **Giant Spiders (unlimited):** See page 12.
- **Spider Swarm (unlimited):** See page 12.

THAT'S NOT ROPE!

Charging through the undergrowth, you burst through the vegetation and quickly grind to a halt. You stand scant inches away from a dizzying drop to a dry valley floor below. A few yards to your left is what you at first assume to be a rope bridge. Only with a second glance do you realize the ropes are in fact strands of spider webbing! There's no other way across the valley.

The bridge is 12" long, 1" wide, and counts as difficult ground. Allied characters can pass through each other, but doing so costs an extra 2" of movement. The drop to the valley floor is 100 feet. Due to the swaying motion, it counts as an Unstable Platform as well.

When the first hero moves 6" across the bridge, his movements disturb a nest of giant spiders sleeping beneath the structure. They clamber up the webbing at the start of the next round. The GM should place one adjacent to each hero.

Remember, any spiders not slain in the previous area are following the characters! They move onto the bridge in an effort to stop the characters reaching the temple.

Once all the heroes safely reach the far side they can hack away the support ropes. Each supporting line has Toughness 8. Only when both lines are cut does the bridge fall, dooming the spiders to certain death. Until then, they move across the remaining strand as difficult ground.

SCALING THE PLATEAU

Across the far side of the bridge rise the sheer walls of a high plateau. A vast network of sticky webs covers the surface. Looking left and right, you see

the cliff merges with the valley walls. Looks like there's only one way up, and that's by climbing!

The open ground at the base of the plateau is 3" deep and a mere 6" wide. The cliff face is 24" high. Deal action cards every round as normal. Each time a Club suit is drawn one giant spider scuttles down from the top of the web. The spiders stop coming once someone reaches the top of the plateau.

Movement: The heroes' Pace while climbing the web is equal to half the character's Strength die and no running is permitted. Heroes want to increase their Pace may make a Strength roll as an action. Success allows the hero to move his full Strength die this round

On a critical failure, the victim's efforts cause him to slip. He must make an Agility roll (as a free action) to grab hold of something or fall back 2d4". Rather than hitting the floor, he becomes snared in the web, and so suffers no damage.

Spiders move their normal Pace and can even run on the webs.

Fighting: The web counts as an Unstable Platform. A character cannot use two-handed weapons or wield a weapon in both hands in the same round they move. If he remains stationary and the terrain allows, he can use a two handed ranged weapon (by looping one arm around a rope at the elbow to secure himself). However, he suffers a –2 penalty to attack rolls in addition to the Unstable Platform modifier.

Falling Off: Characters Shaken or wounded by an attack must make a Strength roll to retain their grip (after Soaking). With failure, the hero falls 2d4" before he is caught in the web.

ACT 4: LAIR OF THE SPIDER-GODDESS

The trail continues atop the plateau. Unlike before, the path is welltrodden and the vegetation freshly cut back. Progress through the steamy jungle is swift.

SCENE 1: TEMPLE OF BLOOD

Hacking through the dense vegetation, you are suddenly met with a wondrous site. The vegetation thins to scrub grass and the occasional tree as the valley finally reaches its end.

Before you runs a ceremonial pathway, its twin roads of cracked bricks and stones divided by a water channel. Beyond this is a low, three-tiered, stepped pyramid.

A set of stairs cuts through the stones, leading from the jungle floor to the top platform. A pair of Aztec warriors, similar to those you have encountered before, stand at the bottom like sentinels. On the corners, on each tier, is a brazier. Ghastly purple flames and thick smoke belch forth from each one.

Atop the pyramid stand five figures. Two are Aztec warriors of the sort you have faced before, judging by their garb. A third wears a shimmering black cloak and a small headdress of brightly-colored feathers, while the fourth has a large headdress and carries a long spear, which he is waving at the sky. The fifth person is a white woman. She struggles helplessly against the warriors holding her.

TERRAIN NOTES

Ceremonial Path: The processional way is 3" across. It comprises two cracked and overgrown stone paths (each 1" wide) with a shallow channel (also 1" wide) running between them.

Temple Overview: The temple comprises a low, stepped pyramid. The bottom step measures 16" across and is 1" above the ground. The second tier is 12" across, and the third tier, which forms the top, is 8" across. Each tier is 1" higher than the one below and 2" in width.

A set of steps is cut into the center of each face and leads from ground level to the top. Each set is 2" wide.

Top Platform: In the center of the top tier, invisible from ground level, is a wide hole (4" across). A stone shaft leads down into the earth to the lair of Tzitzimime.

Climbing: Avoiding the stairs and climbing the steep sides requires 3" of movement per tier. Characters cannot run while scaling the temple in this manner.

Braziers: At the corners on each tier stands a brazier filled with flame. Treat movement through a square containing one as difficult ground. The braziers can be tipped over with a Strength (–1) roll.

Place the thin end of a Cone Template on edge of the square containing the toppled brazier and rotate it to point in the direction the container was tipped. The area under the template is filled with burning oil, causing 2d10 damage to anyone who fails an Agility roll at –2. Victims also have a chance of catching fire.

The braziers cannot be tipped so as to affect higher tiers, but the oil obviously flows downhill. The Aztecs will use this tactic to prevent the heroes from reaching the top of the structure.

OTHER DETAILS

The distance between the heroes and the base of the pyramid is 24". Unfortunately, the jungle does not encroach any closer on any side of the structure.

The figures atop the low pyramid are Achelotl, an Aztec chieftain, and Quenunga, the shaman and true power in the tribe. Between them, bound at the wrists and ankles by rope, is Marion Darlington, the last survivor of Brakespear's expedition. Holding the captive by the elbows are two Aztec warriors. A pair of Aztec war-

riors stands at the base of the four staircases, their axes cradled in their arms.

The sooner the fight begins the better, at least for poor Miss Darlington. If the heroes delay more than a few rounds, Quenunga gestures at the pit with his spear. The following round, the poor girl is thrown in by the Aztec warriors.

She doesn't actually fall to her death, though she makes enough noise. Instead, the ropes on her wrists catch on a broken stone and leave her dangling. Time for a heroic rescue! Note that she is knocked clear by Tzitzimime in Scene 2 if she hasn't been rescued—the heroes shouldn't be directly responsible for her death.

Once the combat begins, Quenunga casts *deflection* as his first action (he knows about firearms). On the next round he launches one of his *bolt* spells. He follows up with *bolt, entangle*, and *fear* spells, assuming the attackers are within range. He casts *armor* when his *deflection* ends or the explorers reach the base of the pyramid, which ever comes first.

- **Achelotl, Aztec Chieftain:** See page 11.
- **Quenunga, Aztec Shaman:** See page 11.
- **Aztec Warriors (10):** See page 10.
- **Spider Swarm:** See page 12.

SCENE 2: THE GODDESS AWAKENS!

This scene occurs *immediately* after Quenunga is slain. Stop the fight, read the description, and carry on the initiative card count from where you left off. Tzitzimime acts as if on Hold.

A terrible noise fills the air, a mix between a human scream of anguish and something altogether unholy. Suddenly what appears to be a thick, hairy vine juts out from the hole atop the pyramid. Then comes another, and another, and another. Eight of them!

Rising slowly from the pit is a truly monstrous spider, three times as wide as a man is tall, with eight glittering eyes, and wickedly pointed pincers longer than a man's arm. This must be Tzitzimime!

With unholy malevolence, the creature casts its gaze in your direction, seemingly sizing you up, though you can't whether that is as a potential threat or a potential meal. Then, without warning it moves to strike, its pincers gnashing, venom dripping from the beast's vast maw.

Have everyone make their Spirit rolls to avoid Fear at this point. The character are not Surprised (though they may be shocked) at Tzitzimime's arrival.

If the party is exceptionally strong or unwounded, feel free to throw in a few giant spiders as well. As always, the aim is to produce a memorable fight, not massacre the party.

- **Tzitzimime, the Living Goddess:** See page 11.

AFTERMATH

Without their goddess to venerate and shaman to guide them, the cult quickly falls into ruin and the few survivors cease their worship. Like before, though, the cult is not totally destroyed. There is always a chance that one of Tzitzimime's surviving children might grow to monstrous size and become a focus of worship in the future.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

AZTECS

MANUEL ORTEGA, CULT LEADER

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Taunt d6
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Delusional (Major: believes Tzitzimime is a god)
Edges: Command, Combat Reflexes, Level Headed, Rock and Roll
Gear: SMG (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6), 3 magazines

AZTEC WARRIOR

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d8+2, Survival d6+2, Throwing d6
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: All Thumbs, Illiterate
Edges: Woodsman
Gear: Obsidian axe (Str+d6), blowgun (Range: 2/4/8, Damage: 1d6+1 plus poison)
Special Abilities:

* **Lethal Poison (0):** Anyone successfully hit, whether injured or not, must make a Vigor roll or suffer a wound. This is in addition to any damage inflicted by the dart and is treated as a separate injury for Soak rolls.
* **Paralysis Poison (0):** Anyone successfully hit, whether injured or not, must make a Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue for an hour (in addition to any damage the dart inflicted). This can cause Incapacitation, but not Death.

ACHELOTL, AZTEC CHIEFTAIN



Achelotl is the nominal head of the cult, though he actually answers to Quenunga, the shaman. The chief knows he treads a dangerous path if he questions Quenunga's decisions openly, for the superstitious warriors fear the shaman and his dark powers. Achelotl is no less savage than his rival, but he is far more level headed.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Stealth d8+2, Survival d6+2, Swimming d6, Throwing d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: All Thumbs, Bloodthirsty, Illiterate

Edges: Brawny, Combat Reflexes, Command, Fervor, Frenzy, Level Headed, Woodsman

Gear: Obsidian battle axe (Str+d8), spider cloak (see below)

Special Abilities:

* **Spider Cloak:** The chief's cloak is actually a swarm of spiders clinging to his body. Releasing the swarm is a free action but must be done at the start of a round, before initiative cards are dealt. The spiders are dealt in immediately and begin adjacent to the chief. If the chief is slain, the swarm automatically activates at the start of the next round. Should the chief be hit by an area effect weapon, check for damage against the swarm as well—they may be killed before they even get into play!

QUENUNGA, AZTEC SHAMAN

Quenunga is the true power behind the cult of the spider god, and he knows it. Arrogant and savage, he views all those not of Aztec blood as weak, fit only to feed his monstrous mistress unholy appetite.

Special Rule: Rather than mess around tracking Power Points for the villain, Quenunga can cast each spell a certain number of times during the adventure. Once he's used his allotment he can't cast any more spells. *Armor*, *deflection*, and *obscure* last for three rounds each (track these by using gaming stones). His power list is the equivalent of 20 Power Points.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d4, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Spellcasting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Swimming d6, Throwing d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: All Thumbs, Arrogant, Bloodthirsty, Overconfident

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), Command, New Powers, Quick

Gear: Spear (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: Str+d6, +1 Parry)

Powers: 1 x *armor* (small spiders cover his body), 3 x *bolt* (two missiles for 2d6 damage each; launches small spiders), 1 x *deflection* (spidery arms block blows), 1 x *entangle* (Medium Burst Template; webs), 2 x *fear* (victims believe spiders are crawling over their skin), and 1 x *obscure* (bloated, ephemeral spider of darkest night).

SPIDERS

TZITZIMIME, THE SPIDER GODDESS

While not actually a deity, the bloated, bulbous spider is certainly a fearsome opponent. She has lived in the temple for countless centuries, and fed on Aztec sacrifices.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8(A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+2, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d8, Notice d10, Shooting d10 Stealth d8

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10
Special Abilities:
* **Bite:** Str+d6.
* **Combat Reflexes:** +2 to recover from being Shaken.
* **Fear (–2):** Characters make a Spirit roll at –2 or suffer a –1 penalty to all trait rolls during the scene.
* **Improved Frenzy:** Can make two Fighting attacks each round at no penalty.
* **Large:** Attackers are +2 to attack rolls.
* **Poison (0):** Anyone Shaken or wounded by her venomous bite must make a Vigor roll or suffer an additional wound. This is a separate injury for the purposes of Soak rolls.
* **Size +4:** 20' across.
* **Spawn:** Can release two Small Burst Template-sized spider swarms or a single Medium Burst Template swarm as an action at the start of any round. Deal in the swarm/s immediately. This is usable once during the adventure.
* **Wall Walking:** Can move at Pace and run up walls and over ceilings.
* **Webbing:** The goddess can cast webs from her thorax that are the size of Medium Burst Templates. This is a Shooting roll with a range of 5/10/20. Anything in the web must be cut or broken free (Toughness 7). Webbed characters can still fight, but all physical actions are at –4.

GIANT SPIDER

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d6
Skills: Climbing d12+2, Fighting d6, Notice d10, Shooting d6, Stealth d10
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4
Special Abilities:
* **Bite:** Str+d4.
* **Poison:** Anyone Shaken or wounded must make a Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue for an hour. This can cause Incapacitation, but not Death. One level of Fatigue is removed every hour of rest.
* **Size –1:** Giant spiders are the size of small dogs.
* **Webbing:** The spiders can cast webs from their thorax that are the size of Small Burst Templates. This is a Shooting roll with a range of 3/6/12. Anything in the web must be cut or broken free (Toughness 7). Webbed characters can still fight, but all physical actions are at –4.

SPIDER SWARM

A normal swarm fills a Medium Burst Template. Small Burst Template swarms are Toughness 5.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10
Skills: Notice d6
Pace: 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7/5
Special Abilities:
* **Bite:** Spider swarms inflict dozens of tiny bites every round to their victims, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone covered by the template.
* **Distracting:** Any hero attacked by a spider swarm must make a Spirit roll or be Shaken due to distraction as the spiders crawl over his body. This is a non-physical effect.
* **Swarm:** Parry +2; Cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Area-effect weapons work normally, and a character can stomp to inflict his damage in Strength each round.

CULTS & EVIL ORGANIZATIONS

Whether fanatical Thuggee cultist paying homage to Kali, followers of Apep, the Egyptian snake-demon, or deranged worshippers of Michtlantecuhtli, the Aztec god of death, cults are popular in pulp settings. While most cults are portrayed as evil, there's nothing to say you can't have a good cult, dedicated to similar goals to the heroes, make an appearance.

This section takes a brief look at cults (used in place of evil organization for brevity), and presents a quick cult generator using a few dice rolls. The final two sections discuss arcane matters.

1. ORIGINS

Cults don't appear from thin air. Whether they were formed in the last few years by a cabal of businessmen intent on dominating the global markets or carry on the worship of some ancient deity, all cults have an origin.

A cult's origins affect many things. How members dress, the weapons or spells they employ, their organizational structure and members' titles, and even the rituals they enact. Ancient cults operating in the "civilized" world tend to be adaptable. After all, they have existed for centuries or millennia.

One thing to remember is that the old pulps were written in a very different age. Cultural stereotypes were the norm, whereas today they are seen as offensive and politically incorrect. Care should always be taken not to offend your players while still keeping to the basic tenets of the pulp stories.

ORIGINS TABLE

2d6	Result
2	African
3	Arabic
4	Celtic
5–6	Egyptian
7	European
8	Fictional
9	Greco-Roman
10	Indian
11–12	Oriental

African: The Dark Continent, sub-Saharan Africa was long viewed as a wild and mysterious place. In most pulp games, large parts of Africa still remain unexplored, or at least unmapped. Voodoo has its origins here. Spellcasters, likely shamans or witchdoctors, draw their power from a variety of spirits, and thus the cults tend to be animistic.

Arabic: The Assassins are probably the most-widely known Arabic cult. Although they were wiped out in the Middle Ages, in a pulp game there is no reason they could not have survived. You could use pre-Islamic ideas, instead. A cult could spring up around the worship of the jinn (or genies as written in English). Typically associated with fire, the cult could be particularly destructive.

Celtic: Roman military might shattered the druidic faith around 61 AD, but it underwent a corrupted revival in the Victorian era. Roman historians accused the Celts of bloody sacrifices, which is perfect for a pulp game. Traditionally these sacrifices were to ensure good harvests, but a cabal of London gentry could well be invoking the old rites to ensure business success.

Egyptian: Egypt had a plethora of deities. Among those regarded at one point or another are Sobek, Set, and Apep. Sekhmet, goddess of destructive force, also makes a great pulp deity. Other cults may revolve around a central figure, perhaps a resurrected pharaoh seeking to replace the country's current government and culture with that of ancient Egypt.

European: Cults in Europe might draw their influence from witchcraft, but never forget the numerous secret societies which sprang up during and after the Renaissance. Freemasons, the Illuminati, and the Knights Templar (often linked in conspiracy theories) are clichéd villains, but clichés exist because the core idea remains popular.

If Nazis play a large part in your game, the Thule Society makes for a good adversary. You could even use the

Ahnenerbe. Historically, the organization was founded to "prove" German racial superiority, but a pulp game might see them as relic hunters, searching out occult artifacts for Hitler.

Fictional: Unless you intend to start selling your adventures, don't be afraid to use cults from other RPGs or works of fiction. The cults of the Cthulhu Mythos are perfect for pulp stories, and the names of the various deities and monsters are likely known to many players, which adds an instant element of recognition. Maybe Thoth-Amon, one of Conan's adversaries, makes an appearance as a villain.

Greco-Roman: Another culture with a wealth of gods, the Romans (who borrowed most of their deities from their Greek neighbors) has plenty of mystery cults. Both Mithras and Isis were mystery cults, allowing initiates to learn more of the cult's secrets as they advanced through the ranks.

Dionysus and Bacchus were popular cults, and their rituals were often described as depraved. Hades/Pluto, as god of the underworld, could form the basis of a cult seeking to animate the dead, while Morpheus or Hypnos, both Greek deities associated with sleep and dreams, might have worshippers who use subliminal implants or kill victims through intense nightmares.

Indian: The most popular Indian cult is, of course, the Thuggee. Historically, they ceased to operate during the later years of the 19th century, but their method of dispatching victims (strangling) ensured they stayed alive in the public imagination. Kali worship was part of their creed, but not every Thuggee was a fanatical worshipper.

Oriental: The Chinese civilization is thousands of years old, and in that time could have spawned countless cults. Pulp classics were figures like Fu Manchu, a criminal mastermind. He's a great example of a non-supernatural cult led by a powerful figure. Other possible cults include the Tongs, Triads, and Yakuza. For those who prefer more arcane villains, look no further than the character Lo-Pan from *Big Trouble in Little China*™

Oriental cults don't have to be limited to the Orient, of course. Limehouse in London had a large Chinese population, and "Chinatowns" exist in many US cities.

2. MOTIVE & METHOD

Cults don't operate in a vacuum, idly waiting for the heroes to come along and break them. They exist for a reason. Depending on their nature, a cult might have a universal goal shared by all members, or be nothing more than pawns for the leader's desires.

The pulps usually contain a twist. For instance, while a cult may be stealing valuable gemstones (indicating a lust for base material wealth), it actually transpires the gems are merely components required for a powerful death ray, through which they hope to achieve world domination.

MOTIVE TABLE

d6	Result
1	Power (Arcane)
2	Power (Economic)
3	Power (Political)
4	Power (Territorial)
5	Religious
6	Concealment

Concealment: Since we're dealing with evil cults, concealment doesn't cover hiding the organization's existence. Instead, the cult might be guardians of a powerful secret, a doomsday weapon, a supposedly mythical place, or an ancient relic. When someone discovers the nature of their ward, they take steps to ensure silence.

Power (Arcane): Magic is a powerful weapon, capable of destroying or controlling one's enemies. Such a cult might seek ancient relics, places of power, or simply details of ancient rituals.

Power (Economic): Achieving economic power requires more than robbing a few jewelry stores or swiping priceless artifacts from a museum. Villains might manipulate stock markets, destroy rivals' business concerns, or poison the world's grain supply, enduring only their crops are immune, and so on.

Power (Political): The cult seeks to dominate the local government, or maybe create a New World Order.

Power (Territorial): Villains seeking power may simply want to increase their territory, either to gain natural resources or subjugate neighboring populations. The Nazis had both in mind when they began World War 2 (these weren't their only motives, of course).

Religious: Religious cults exist, in most instances, purely to serve their deity. Sometimes this motive coincides with another one, like worshippers of Sekhmet wishing to rain destruction across the globe, but often keeping the faith it is its own reason for existence.

METHOD TABLE

d4	Result
1	Murder
2	Deception/Manipulation
3	Fear
4	Corruption

Corruption: Everyone has secret desires or urges. The cult is adept at manipulating them to achieve its results. Bribery, drugs, and prostitution are all weapons in their arsenal.

Deception/Manipulation: Deception and subtle manipulation are great weapons, for they allow a cult to operate in the shadows. Such organizations may even manipulate the heroes into helping achieve their goals without the party's knowledge.

Fear: Fear can be a powerful weapon. Overt threats are generally used by militant cults, whereas a more subtle one might prefer the threat of revealing a dark secret the victim would rather be kept under wraps. Their victims obey the cult's commands out of intimidation.

Murder: The cult gets what it wants through the permanent elimination of foes or their loved ones.

3. HIERARCHY

Cults require an organizational structure. At minimum, there should be a leader and followers. Larger or more organized cults might operate on many levels, with a leader, multiple henchmen, and numerous footsoldiers. Cults may be strictly organized, with named ranks or titles, operate in a cell structure, oblivious of the identity of their true masters, or fall somewhere in between.

Stats should be created for both important members, who should be Wild Cards, or Henchmen at the least, and the rank-and-file members.

Large, organized cults might have several layers of thugs. The first batch might average a d6 in their skills and be lacking many Edges, but elite troops could have a d8 or higher in key skills, and possess numerous Combat Edges to provide a challenge to the party.

For example, the Thuggee had a few ranks, though they were never strictly defined. A *jemadar* was the leader of a thug gang (a Henchman in *Daring Tales'* terms), and a *subadar* was a senior leader (a Wild Card). Both terms were borrowed from the ranks of the Indian army. Common members had no rank title, and were simply branded Thugs by the British. In a pulp game, you can add in an acolyte of Kali (Henchman) and priest of Kali (Wild Card), to provide arcane elements.

In historical terms, the Thuggee were not an organized brotherhood, but rather operated in independent gangs. Members could recognize each other through certain words or phrases, but there was no supreme leader or rigid organizational structure. For pulp, they should have a temple of Kali as their headquarters.

Obviously, villains should have abilities in keeping with the basics of the cult and the needs of the adventure. A cult might only use swords as weapons, but if the story requires a car chase, then make sure they have the Driving skill.

VILLAIN & HENCHMAN TABLE

d6	Villain	Henchman
1	Arcane	Arcane
2	Soldier	Soldier
3	Scientist	Brute
4	Zealot	Assassin
5	Mastermind	Femme Fatale
6	Warlord	Inquisitor

Arcane: Any of the five Arcane Backgrounds from Savage Worlds—magic, miracles, psionics, superpowers, and weird science—can be used to represent the villain's core abilities. Chief villains are always more powerful than their Henchmen, and the two may use different forms of arcane powers.

Assassin: Like soldiers, assassins are powerful combatants. They combine their martial abilities with cunning and subterfuge, often striking from the shadows and vanishing as quickly as they appeared. Unless cornered, they try to avoid stand-up fights.

Brute: The brute is a mountain of muscle, but usually with limited intellect. His role is to enforce his master's will and crush the cult's enemies. And he loves his job.

Femme Fatale: A pulp staple, the femme fatale is more dangerous than a loaded gun. Beautiful and seductive, she knows how to make her victims talk without resorting to crude methods. Some femme fatales may be romantically entwined with the villain, whereas others simply enjoy the thrill of chasing new victims.

Inquisitor: An inquisitor specializes in information retrieval. While he may be a bookish scholar, content to use libraries or his silver tongue to get answers, he could just as easily be the sort of thug who enjoys torture.

Mastermind: While he lacks combat or technical skills, the mastermind is still a genius. He plans several moves ahead, and always has a contingency plan. He covers his existence in a web of deceit, and rarely gets his hands dirty.

Scientist: A scientist uses his brains and skills, not his fists. Unlike weird scientists, this chap is very much rooted in the science of today. He might specialize in the destructive arts, crafting new poisons or weapons, or he could be an archaeologist, economist, or even a medical practitioner.

Soldier: Highly skilled in the use of weapons or martial arts, soldiers are not dumb thugs. They understand tactics and possess some leadership qualities.

Warlord: A warlord may not be an excellent soldier, but his leadership qualities are second to none. He may hold his position through charisma, wealth, or threats. While he may not stand and fight directly, he isn't afraid to send his vast horde of expendable footsoldiers into battle.

Zealot: Every villain has a cause, but this one is a fanatic. Whether political, ideological, or religious, he believes his views are the right ones, and therefore the only ones. Zealots can be unpredictable, and often all too willing to become martyrs to their cause.

4. LAIR

Every cult needs at least one lair. Lairs should make sense in relation to the cult and the story. A low-ranking gang of Triad gangsters might meet in a Chinese laundry, opium den, or restaurant, but there's little reason them to meet in Lincoln Park or inside a library. Likewise, their leaders should favor a Chinese temple or opium refining factory over a European castle.

Try to save the most notable lair for the last Act in your story. If the first fight takes place inside Alcatraz, having the final encounter occur in a warehouse full of fish is a bit of a letdown.

LAIR TABLE

2d6	Result
2–3	Religious
4–6	Exotic Structure
7–9	Business
10–11	Mobile
12	Famous Place

Business: This category includes country clubs, bars, casinos, warehouses, laundries, restaurants, shops, banks, builders' merchants, and so on. In general, a business is open to the public and lacks the grandeur of an exotic structure.

Where possible, always liven up the locale as much as possible. A warehouse storing teddy bears stuffed with drugs may fit James Bond, but pulp works better in say a fireworks factory, where the heroes can cause lots of explosions. In a restaurant, for instance, there should always be live crabs or lobsters for a character to use in a Trick, food-laden skewers to stab foes with, and plentiful crockery to smash and throw around.

A fight at a country club may sound a little dull, but what if there's a golf course and the heroes are battling it out on the driving range while having to avoid golf balls, or the goons are riding polo ponies and intend to crack skulls with their mallets? Now it's not quite so dull.

Exotic Structure: Covers both manmade locales (palace, mansion, military base, museum, castle, or lost city) and natural ones (inside a volcano, a labyrinthine cave system, or a lost valley).

Famous Place: The world has plenty of these. The monuments of Egypt or Rome, Empire State Building, Alcatraz, Great Wall of China, Eiffel Tower, Statue of Liberty, Kremlin, or Mount Rushmore.

Mobile: Having a cult based in a sedan isn't very exciting, but a zeppelin, submarine, train (surface or subway), battleship, or luxury liner makes for a great villain's lair.

Religious: This might be an ancient temple in the jungle or desert, a monastery high in the mountains, a mausoleum or tomb complex, or a well-known locale, like Stonehenge or the Parthenon. There is some crossover with Famous Places, but the site in this category should always have a religious them, and preferably related to the cult.

SPELL LISTS

Every cult which has access to arcane powers should have a fixed spell list. You don't need to detail the entire list, especially if a single NPC with a limited repertoire makes an appearance, but you should have a good idea of the type of spells he can invoke.

For instance, Thuggee priests of Kali are very unlikely to have *healing*, but given they strangle victims, *invisibility* is probably on their list, as it enables hem to sneak up on victims. As you're deciding which spells to hand out, think about the trappings as well.

It is possible for cultists to use spells like *healing* and *light*, but in pulp, you should really be concentrating on making your villainous spellcasters as nasty a possible.

SPELL TRAPPINGS

Not every pulp game needs a supernatural element to be enjoyable, but when magic is included it should be flavorsome. In Savage Worlds, trappings are how the default spell names come alive.

Generally, trappings don't have any game mechanics. A ray of energy, biting swarm of spiders, or flying dagger can all be trappings of the *bolt* spell and don't alter how the raw mechanics function. Of course, the system is flexible enough that you can tinker with the way spells function to produce new effects with ease.

Let's look at an example. The *blast* spell is a variable result area effect power. Let's assume the caster worships a rat god. He could just fire off the spell in its base form, with the trapping off a swarm of rats briefly appearing and savaging everyone under the template. Simple and yet flavorsome.

Alternatively, the trapping could change the way the spell actually functions. Instead of a brief appearance, the rat swarm is permanent until slain. In this case, 2 Power Points might equate to a Small Burst Template-sized swarm (Toughness 5), 4 Power Points a Medium Burst Template swarm (Toughness 7), and 6 Power Points a large Burst Template swam (Toughness 9).

Now instead of doing 2-3d6 damage in a flash, the spell produces a foe which causes 2d4 damage every round. It's a more powerful version, but NPCs should never be constrained by the rules.

A second option is to use the base rules, but give the spell a duration. Since *blast* is quite powerful, giving it Duration 3 (2/r) wouldn't be amiss. Again, it's still a big improvement over the original, but the template doesn't move, unlike with a swarm, so it can be avoided, and the caster can be disrupted.

At the end of the day, there is no right or wrong way to alter spells. Our NPC spellcasters already break the rules—most don't have any Power Points, instead having a fixed number of castings available in an encounter—and we'll be using variations of spells as best fits the adventure.

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MAYHEM IN MEXICO!
WILL YOUR HERO BE CAUGHT IN A WEB?

When you find a dead body in your house, especially one which belongs to a notable explorer, you know it's not going to be an ordinary day. *Web of the Spider Cult* takes the heroes from the corridors and galleries of the Boston Museum, to the bayou of Louisiana, and onto the dark jungles of Mexico. There, amid the ruins of a centuries old temple, the adventurers face their greatest enemy so far in their extraordinary adventures.



As well as a complete adventure designed for four characters (pregen characters are available from our website especially designed for the Daring Tales of Adventure), *Daring Tales #02 - Web of the Spider Cult* also includes a special appendix for the GM. Delving into cults and evil organizations, the appendix helps uncover the mysteries of these malevolent groups and provides a quick organization generator, allowing the GM to determine the origin of the cult, it's motive and methods, its leaders and their henchmen, and their lairs with just a few rolls of the dice.

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DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

TREASURE OF THE TEMPLARS



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PAUL 'WIGGY' WADE-WILLIAMS

DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

03

TREASURE OF THE TEMPLARS

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TREASURE OF THE TEMPLARS

The city of Alexandria, Egypt, was founded by Alexander the Great sometime around 331 BC. Its Lighthouse was one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world, while its fabled Library was one of the greatest centers of learning ever devised.

Founded by Pharaoh Ptolemy II, the Library quickly grew, gathering texts from across the known world. In 48 BC, Julius Caesar was forced to torch his own ships in the harbor at Alexandria. The fire spread through the docks and ravaged parts of the Library. Although history records the Library as surviving until the 8th century AD, it was a pale imitation of its former glory.

Fearful of further destruction and wary of some of the knowledge being stored falling into the wrong hands, a small group of scholars arranged for many of the most important and dangerous texts to be smuggled out of the city and placed in a secret location, deep in the desert. The Library suffered attacks by Christian Roman emperors (and later, Muslim invaders), before finally vanishing from history.

Only a handful of souls ever knew of the existence of the secret library, but as bloodlines thinned so, too, did its true location and secrets fade into mythology and hearsay.

During the First Crusade, a brotherhood of knights, known as the Knights Templar, uncovered documents in Jerusalem alluding to the secret library's existence. At great personal risk they journeyed into the deserts of Egypt in search of the fabled building. Their quest was successful, and the Templars dedicated their order to preserving the secret knowledge.

Unwilling to let the greatest treasure on Earth remain in Muslim lands, the documents were smuggled back to southern France and placed in a vault beneath a Templar stronghold. Here the texts remained until September, 1307.

King Philip IV of France, who had learned of the existence of "a great treasure (though he did not know its true nature)," sought to take possession of the Templar riches. In collusion with Pope Clement V, the king had the Templars charged with heresy and arrested *en masse*. Forewarned by a spy in the royal court, the Templars hurriedly moved the treasure to a new location, one far beyond the reach of the king or the Church. Thirteen knights were given the sacred task of guarding the ancient books.

Many legends regarding the fabled "treasure of the Templars" grew up as the centuries passed. Most told of a fabulous haul of gold and silver from the ancient world. A few even supposed the Templars were secret guardians of the Grail or the Ark of the Covenant. Few scholars in the 1930s take the stories seriously, however.

But one erudite academic, Professor Hamilton Dickinson, believed the stories must have had a kernel of truth. After decades of research, he is close to discovering the truth, but there are those who want the secret to remain hidden and those who want the treasure for their own vile purposes.

THE CHARACTERS

This Savage Adventure contains a pulp tale based around the exploits of four pre-generated characters. The full character sheets are available for free at **www.tripleacegames.com**.

The heroes have all their leveling opportunities from Seasoned (at which they begin) into Legendary mapped out in advance. Each published adventure in this line earns the heroes a fixed 5 Experience Points, guaranteeing them an advance every mission. All the players need do is tick the appropriate box and start making use of the new upgrade.

Characters: 35 XP.

The GM also needs the pulp setting rules from the TAG website.

ACT 1: WASHINGTON D.C.

Our fearless heroes have been invited by Professor Hamilton Dickinson, an old acquaintance, to attend a

lecture he is giving in Washington D.C. The adventure begins as the heroes maneuver their car through the Washington traffic.

SCENE 1: TWO WHEELED CHAOS

The decision to drive from Boston to Washington to attend the lecture of your old acquaintance, Professor Dickinson, was a bad one. A quick glance at your watches reveals the worst—you're very late.

The traffic clears enough for you to pull over toward the front of the hotel where the lecture is taking place. It seems the lecture is already over, for Professor Dickinson is standing on the sidewalk, looking up and down the road impatiently.

The old man's eyesight must have improved since you saw him last, for he spots the roadster. He waves frantically and smiles broadly. In his right hand he holds a small box, which he waves in your direction.

Your attempt to pull to a halt is rudely interrupted by a motorcyclist, screaming past on the inside. Helpless, you can only watch as he snatches the box from the startled professor and guns off down the street, weaving through the dense traffic.

Professor Dickinson, his face ashen, points after the bike and begins shouting, "Get the package! Get the package! Meet me back here with it!"

Run this scene as a Chase, using the additional Obstacles rules (p. 3). The motorbike begins at Medium Range. The Range Increment is 5". Using guns in a crowded street is a bad idea—the heroes should be wary of hitting innocent bystanders.

Doc Davenport can use his rocket pack in the chase, but it's assumed he's flying at street level (because flying above the action is just not the way of pulp action.) If he moves at his regular Pace, he suffers a –1 penalty to Piloting rolls (because his Range Increment is only 1" compared to the thugs' 5"). Moving at twice his Pace negates this, but burns more Power Points. Note that regardless of the actual distance a Chase covers, you pay Power Points per round of action, as normal.

Heroes who elect to give chase on foot have a –1 penalty to the Agility for the same reason as above.

The biker is a member of the modern Knights Templar. The organization had been keeping an eye on the professor, who was coming dangerously close to uncovering the secret they guard. An honorable group, they seek only to rob the scholar of his research, not harm innocents. As such, the Templar won't use his pistol, but he will draw his sword and have a go at the characters if they move onto the same Range Increment. This requires the use of the Parallel maneuver.

On round two, two more motorbikes join the Chase. These begin two Range Increments behind the characters' car. They draw separate action cards.

Unlike the first biker, these are Nazis and they're not afraid to use their pistols. They want the box for their own fell purposes. Although they'll take a few shots at the adventurers, they're more interested in stopping the Templar.

Whatever happens, the heroes *must* end up with the stolen package. This means any Out of Control rolls which would cause the character to go out of the Chase (Roll Over or Flip) should be altered to a Slip, Spin, or Skid. The players don't know if there are any modifiers to the roll, so just make one up if the need arises. Should the Templar be on the verge of getting away, simply have him lose control of his bike. He makes his escape, but he drops the package. Likewise, the Nazis cannot escape with the box.

The Templar, if caught, only knows that he has to deliver the box to a post office box. No amount of surveillance or information gathering will reveal the owner. The Nazis are simply under orders to acquire the box and wait for a phone call giving them further instructions. Of course, they're under covert surveillance, so the call never comes.

Templar Biker: As Modern Templar, page 18.
Nazi Bikers (2): As Nazi Pilot/Motorcyclist, page 19.

AMELIA'S ROADSTER

Acc/Top Speed: 15/30; **Toughness:** 10 (3); **Crew:** 1+2

MOTORBIKES

Acc/Top Speed: 20/36; **Toughness:** 8 (2); **Crew:** 1+1

OBSTACLES

Due to the Washington traffic, the vehicles are counted as moving half their Top Speed for the purposes of collisions. Collisions count as Extras, so damage rolls don't Ace against the heroes' car.

Deuce (–4) Fire Engine: A fire engine attending a blaze comes thundering up the street, weaving through the traffic right into the vehicle's path! A failed roll causes a collision with a hard obstacle moving 10" per round.

Three (–2) Road Works: Traffic forces the vehicle into a lane closed for road workers. The construction workers leap clear, but there's still the matter of the wooden fencing blocking off the site! A failed roll causes a collision with a soft obstacle.

Four (–2) Garbage Bins: Garbage bins line the sidewalk. The driver can elect to knock into them, scattering the bins and their contents behind his vehicle. This requires a Driving roll at –2. Both the Templar and the Nazis will use this tactic if ahead of the heroes' roadster.

Success forces the next vehicle behind to make an immediate Driving roll at –2 or collide with a soft obstacle.

On a failure, the vehicle striking the bins suffers damage with a soft obstacle, instead.

Five (–2) Dangerous Drivers: A car pulls out right into the path of the vehicle, forcing it to take evasive action. A failed Driving rolls means a collision with a soft obstacle and the loss of one Range Increment, as the vehicle reverses and maneuvers around the obstruction.

Six (–2) Manhole Cover: For some reason, a manhole cover elects to pop off, leaving a gaping hole in the street. A failed Driving roll causes the vehicle to go Out of Control.

Seven (–2) The White Stuff: A milk tanker has sprung a leak, making the road slippery. With a failed roll, the vehicle goes Out of Control.

Eight (–2) Laundry: A laundry line strung across the street snaps. A failed roll means the laundry lands on the windshield or driver's face, causing the vehicle to go Out of Control.

Nine or Ten (0) Traffic Jam: Heavy traffic forces the car onto the pavement, scattering pedestrians. Failure has no additional effect beyond the vehicle making no progress.

Jack (0/–2) Let's Off-Road: A nearby park makes the perfect opportunity to cut a corner. Ask the heroes if they want to stay on the road or take the shortcut. The Templar only tries the shortcut if the characters are within two Range Increments. The Nazis try the stunt if the nearest enemy is more than three Range Increments away.

Success while taking the shortcut gives the vehicle an extra Range Increment (so it gains 2 on a normal success). Failure causes the vehicle to go Out of Control.

Avoiding the park doesn't have any special effect.

Queen (0) Shoot Out: Washington is obviously a dangerous place—the Chase passes through a shoot out between cops and bank robbers! A failed roll indicates the vehicle drives through a barrage of hot lead. Roll three d6. Each roll of 1 indicates a stray bullet has struck the vehicle for 2d6 damage.

King (0/–2) Crushed: Two trucks, one on either side of the vehicle, decide to switch lanes toward each other without checking their mirrors. Ask the heroes if they want to brake hard or push forward. The Templar only tries to go through the closing gap if the characters are within two Range Increments. The Nazis try the stunt if the nearest enemy is more than three Range Increments away.

Success when braking hard avoids scratching the paintwork, but the vehicle drops automatically back two Range Increments (regardless of the die roll). Failure causes a collision with a soft obstacle.

Failure while attempting to go through the rapidly narrowing gap causes a collision with a hard obstacle.

In both instance, the trucks are moving at 5". Subtract this from the vehicle's speed in the event of a collision.

Ace (0/–2) This is Crazy: A semi has jackknifed across the road! Both the bikes and roadster can go under, but it requires precision driving. Ask the heroes if they want to go around or try to drive under. The Templar only tries to go under if the characters are within two Range Increments. The Nazis try the stunt if the nearest enemy is more than three Range Increments away.

Going around the truck doesn't give a penalty, but the vehicle moves one less Range Increment than normal. A failure means it loses one Range Increment due to the detour or waiting for the vehicle to move aside.

Failure to drive under causes a collision with a stationary hard obstacle. In the event of a Chassis Critical Hit to the roadster, the roof is ripped off! This should apply for cinematic reasons even if the damage is Soaked.

THE BOX RECOVERED

Curious characters have little choice but to open the box. Inside is a pair of stone fingers, carved as a single piece, representing an extended index and middle finger. At the base, before the knuckle joint, is a small, round, stone peg. It's obvious the fingers fit into something. There are no markings beyond natural weathering.

Returning to the hotel, the characters see no sign of Professor Dickinson. When they pull up, the hotel doorman immediately rushes over to open the doors, thinking the heroes are guests. If asked, he says he saw Professor Dickinson get into a car along with two men dressed in long, black coats who approached him on few seconds earlier. The car, a black sedan, drove away to the north (the opposite direction of the chase). There is no chance of catching it.

> *"Are you the Hardcastle party by any chance?" the doorman asks, scratching his chin. "You are! That's great. I was speaking to the professor after his lecture, when he came out to look for you. He said that if he missed you, you were to go to his house and remind yourself of the time you spent in Paris. Guess you folks go back a bit."*

As old friends of the eccentric scholar, the characters know the whereabouts of his Washington home.

SCENE 2: HIDDEN WORDS

Professor Dickinson lives in a small house outside the city. No one is home, nor is there any sign of a break-in.

Among the stacks of papers, books, and worthless artifacts inside is a photo of the heroes with the Professor. This was taken a few years ago, in France, when the party accompanied him on a research expedition. The doorman's clue should enable the characters to ask whether there are any souvenirs of that trip present. On the chance they fail, prompt them through a Common Knowledge roll.

The picture is nothing special. Hopefully the characters will dig deeper by removing it from its frame. Behind the photo is a folded piece of paper.

Dear friends,

After years of research I am close to uncovering the fabled treasure of the Templars. Some have called me mad or crazy, but I know I am close to the truth! Unfortunately, I feel my research has not gone unnoticed. I believe I am being followed, and my life is in danger. In the event anything untoward happens to me before I can speak with you, go to the auction house on Tuesday and bid on Lot 1307. I believe it holds a vital clue!

Your friend,

Professor Hamilton Dickinson

Today is Tuesday! A copy of the auction guide lies on a nearby table. Lot 1307 is ringed in red pen and listed as, "A small statuette of two knights onf a single horse, possibly of Templar origin." It has a starting bid of $50.

The heroes aren't exactly carrying a lot of money with them, but Lady Amelia has an excellent credit reference through her noble status. She'll be able to have funds wired to the auction house in the event the bidding gets high.

SCENE 3: THAT'S YOUR LOT

The auction house is located in downtown Washington. A popular place, the main auction room is crowded by the time the characters arrive. A few minutes after they take their seats Lot 1307 comes up for sale.

The auctioneer has only just finished announcing the lot when a voice from near the front calls out, "$200!" The accent is unmistakably German. Peering through the crowd, you spy a man with menacing features in a long, leather coat and wide-brimmed hat with his hand raised.

Run the auction for a few minutes, with the heroes bidding against the Nazis. The Nazis have beaten the poor professor into revealing the existence of the auction, hence they're here. The Templars, despite their contacts, failed to learn of the auction in time to make an appearance.

The German has only $1,500 at his disposal, whereas Lady Amelia can run as high as $2,500 by tapping into her next year's allowance.

The heroes must win the auction. Once they do, they are expected to approach the front desk and pay before receiving their item. As Lady Amelia arranges a credit transfer, the group notices burly men standing in front of every door out of the room, except one. Hopefully, they'll take the hint and head for the unguarded door. Any member of staff can inform the characters the door leads to the storage basement, but there is an emergency exit into the alley. Likewise, asking someone if there is any other way out of the building results in the same information.

The basement, actually a number of basements combined into one, is huge, measuring 24" to a side. Half the floor space is taken up with a maze of tall shelves holding valuable objects. These require the party to take a long route to reach the emergency door. Allow the characters to move their normal Pace and then read the text below.

Bursting through door come the goons you saw above! Without pausing to admire the artifacts, they raise their weapons and open fire!

Deal action cards and let mayhem commence!

Templemann is not a combatant, by nature. He'll fire a few shots while it's safe to do so, but he quickly makes a run for it (use the Recurring Villains rule if needed) as soon as he becomes a target.

Emergency Door: The rear door is locked. It can be battered down (Toughness 10), or the lock can be smashed (Toughness 8) or picked (Lockpicking at –2, due to the haste required).

Shelves: The shelves provide Medium Cover to targets on the other side. Firing through two or more shelves gives Heavy Cover. Any missed shots automatically destroy an artifact (see below). Each section of shelving is 2" wide and 1" high.

Shelves can be tipped over. This requires a Strength roll at –2. With success, the shelf falls either to the floor or lands against an adjacent shelf. Victims under the shelf suffer 2d6 damage. The squares it covers are now treated as difficult ground. On a raise, a shelf hitting another shelf causes a domino effect. Shelves keep falling into one another in a straight line, their contents smashing, until a shelf either hits a wall or there is only empty floor adjacent.

Props Galore: The storage room is stacked full of breakable objects, such as vases, furniture, and paintings. Any missed attack roll automatically destroys something. This is purely for cinematic effect, but the GM should take the time to add a little flavor text—just imagine the scene is in a movie!

Describe how a Ming vase shatters as a bullet hits home, how a wild sword swing cuts through an 18th century oil painting, splinters of wood fly from a Regency period wardrobe as an SMG burst rips into it, and so on.

There are a few objects which can be used as weapons. These cause Str+d4 damage, can be thrown 3/6/12, but give a –1 penalty to attack rolls.

The Statuette: The statuette of the knights should break during the fight. This may be the result of a Soak roll by the character carrying it (the figurine takes the hit instead of the hero) or perhaps the holder drops it if any physical trait die comes up a 1, regardless of the Wild Die. If all else fails, a missed shot smashes the artifact.

When the statuette breaks, a small glass ball the size of a marble rolls free and onto the floor. Strangely, and for cinematic purposes, it lands somewhere between the heroes and the Nazis (it can roll under the shelves)!

Detecting the tiny sphere requires a successful Notice

roll as a free action. Of course, for the plot to succeed, the characters have to be successful in retrieving it.

Grabbing the tiny ball during the fight requires a Fighting roll at –4. On a failure, the ball is knocked across the floor by fumbling fingers. Secretly roll 1d4" for the number of inches it travels and a d8 for the direction. Agree which direction is "1" and count clockwise from there. Again, don't reveal it's location until a Notice roll is made.

Herr Templemann: See page 19.

Nazis (2 + 2 per hero): See page 19. Two carry SMGs and two are armed with pistols (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6) and knives (Str+d4).

SCENE 4: IMAGES OF THE PAST

Upon reaching safety, the characters can study the glass ball. A character that looks into it sees a very fuzzy image inside. Placing the ball in front of a strong source of light, such as a flashlight or a cinema projector, causes the image to be projected onto the nearest wall.

"As if by magic, an image appears on the nearby wall. The image appears to be a photograph, though the statuette which contained the ball is obviously of medieval origin. What ancient knowledge could produce such an image?

Portrayed is an image of a great temple. A row of ibis-headed sphinxes stand on either side of a stone path, leading to the massive pylon gates. Between the pylons is the dark opening into the sacred interior. In the background, atop a high hill, are the ruins of a small tower.

A Common Knowledge roll reveals the temple is similar in design to those of Ptolemaic temples (the last dynasty of Egypt and of Greek descent). However, the character has never seen this particular edifice in any books. What he can identify, however, is the watchtower on the hill. This, he knows, is an old Pharaonic fort that lies far into the western desert of Egypt.

Should this roll fail, an Investigation roll made at the local library imparts the same information.

ACT 2: EGYPT

It's time to pack the sun cream and head across the Atlantic to the land of the pharaohs. As usual, don't worry about the travel arrangements. Assume the characters reload any weapons back to their starting ammunition levels before they leave.

SCENE 1: FRIENDS IN NEED

Egypt, ancient land of the pharaohs, a realm of towering pyramids and colossal statues. It's also a land of endless desert and blistering heat. But those dangers don't bother you, not flying over the sands in a hired plane. At least they didn't until a few moments ago!

A sudden sandstorm has arisen and blanketed out the horizon. It's impossible to tell the land from the sky. A red light begins blinking on the dashboard—the port engine has stalled—not a good sign. Brent wrestles with the controls, but the plane is harder to control than a bucking bronco.

A second red light begins flashing. From outside, all you can hear is the sound of the wind—both engines have stalled! She's going down!

The party has two choices—grab parachutes and bail out or try to land the plane in a howling wind and zero visibility.

Attempting a crash landing requires a Piloting roll at –4. Success brings the plane down with a jolting impact, but without any major harm to the passengers. Repairing the engines requires a major overhaul—they're choked with sand. Failure is treated as normal.

Parachuting requires an Agility roll to avoid taking 2d6 damage, as if from an Extra, due to a hard landing. As the last character touches down, the airplane, spinning wildly, impacts into the sand and explodes, sending a plume of smoke high into the sky.

Whether the plane landed or the heroes bailed out, they're short of water (the impact smashed the spare water bottles). They carry enough water in their personal canteens for a day each, and that's with strict rationing. Worse still, they don't have a radio (the plane didn't have one installed).

The only option is to head toward the temple, which the characters estimate is two days away, and pray they find an oasis or Bedouin camp.

WATER

Two days of relentless heat during the day and freezing nights have taken their toll on your bodies. Your lips are baked from lack of water, your skin is lobster-red, and your clothes are drenched with sweat.

Reaching the top of yet another sand dune, you are met by a wondrous sight—an oasis. The small pool glitters like a lake of diamonds, and a lone date palm, ripe with succulent fruit, sways gently in the breeze.

Give the heroes chance to drink, maybe grab a few dates, and enjoy the cool shade. Then carry on with the following text.

You aware you are not alone! Looking up, you spy a dozen camel-mounted nomads sat on the crest

of the nearest dune, their long rifles cradled in their arms. Long scarves cover their faces save for their eyes, which look rather menacing.

One of the riders, apparently a young man but one with authority, urges his camel forward. "You have not asked permission to drink our water," he snarls in Arabic. "You must come with us to meet our chief. He will decide your fate. Hand over your weapons."

The nomads don't want a fight. They are observant enough to spot the party's lack of water canteens and provisions. If the heroes refuse (even knowing Professor Dickinson's life may be in peril) to comply, the nomads simply ride off. They return each day there after and repeat the message. Sooner or later the heroes will decide facing the chief is the least of their problems and surrender.

THE CHIEF

The nomads escort the characters back to their camp. They don't offer camels to the strangers, but do share their food and water. Neither do the nomads have any desire to engage in small talk. Any questions are met with stony silence or the simple reply, "The chief will speak with you."

After a day's march, the troupe reaches a larger oasis. Brightly colored tents surround the water, pots of bubbling liquid hang over campfires, and all around the nomads watch silently as the characters are lead to the largest tent.

Inside, on a pile of silk cushions, sits a well-built man in his mid-40s. He wears traditional Bedouin dress and carries a scimitar in his belt. Knelt beside him is an attractive girl in her late teens, her face only partly covered by a thin veil. As you enter, the man dismisses the girl, who slinks off behind a partition, though not before giving a quick smile at someone in the party.

The nomad who led you here speaks with his chief, telling the story of how you were found at the oasis. After the nomad has finished, the chief orders him to sit at his right hand.

"Well," the chief says to you in perfect English, "it seems you've run into a spot of bother, what? Care for a cup of coffee while you tell me your side of the story? My brother, Jusef," he gestures to the nomad at his side, "can be a frightful bit rude. Please forgive him."

The chief, Ismail ibn-Gazi, was educated in English public schools from the age of five. As a result, he's more upper-class gent than Bedouin nomad. Play him with a posh English accent and slightly eccentric mannerisms.

Ismail orders refreshments for the group. Pots of thick, steaming coffee, plates of dates and honey-dipped nuts, bowls of rice, and slices of cold lamb wrapped in flatbread are soon arranged in front of the thirsty and hungry characters.

The chief listens intently to their story. He'll ask a few pertinent questions as required, but it's assumed the heroes (being pulp heroes) tell the true story in detail—they have nothing to lose.

"On yes, I know the fort. I've never heard of a temple in that region, but the sands conceal many secrets. Still, probably best to warn you that my people believe the area is cursed—genies and that sort of thing.

"According to our legends, one of the Caliphs of Egypt sent an expedition of 1,000 men to these parts, but none ever returned. Napoleon, you know, that French general, sent 2,000 men to find some buried treasure. Tales have been passed down that the desert rose to swallow them without a trace.

"Bit too superstitious for my blood, but where there's smoke there's fire, eh? I do believe the local tribe is rather barbaric as well. No love of outsiders, especially Americans.

"Tell you what, you stay here for the night and get a good rest, and in the morning, I'll have Jusef and a few chappies guide you to the fort. It might help to have them around if the locals decide to make an appearance, as well. That okay with you?"

Characters who want to engage in a bit of small talk should feel free to do so. Ismail studied politics and Middle Eastern history at Oxford College, played rugby for the college, and met his wife there. She died of disease a few years ago. His daughter, Fatima, was the attractive girl present when the party entered the tent.

If you want to add a light-hearted interlude before the next scene, have Fatima make an appearance during the evening. She begins making eyes at Brent and asking questions about his life. That should stir up some inter-party roleplaying.

SCENE 2: STRANGERS IN THE NIGHT

After saying farewell to Ismail the next morning, the characters, Jusef, and half a dozen Bedouin head into the desert. Two days later, they reach the old fort, perched on a hill overlooking an endless expanse of barren sand. It's late afternoon when the party finally steps foot inside.

The Bedouin set up camp, giving the adventurers a chance for brief exploration. The fort shows signs of its Pharaonic origins, but much of the surviving structure dates from the early Muslim period. There are no hidden passages or secret rooms. The gatehouse has no gates, so

barring the entrance is impossible. Much of the interior is rubble-choked, making the courtyard the only viable spot for a camp.

LIGHTING UP THE SKY

In the middle of the night, the adventurers are awoken by the sounds of shouting. One of the Bedouin tents is on fire. A hero on guard duty spots the blaze, but it takes hold quickly and is soon lighting up the night sky. Fortunately, no one was in the tent, but most of the supplies are now crispy. None of the Bedouin know how it started.

Jusef is the culprit. Resentful of his brother's popularity, he struck a deal with Nazi agents several years ago. He feeds them information on lost temples and rumors of artifacts, and in return they have promised to help him become chief in the future. The sneaky fiends alerted all their agents across the globe after the auction house debacle.

Using a concealed radio, the traitorous Bedouin informed the local Gestapo about the Americans and their story of lost treasure. Jusef's tent fire, which is visible for miles, is a beacon to guide the Germans (who have an airplane) to the heroes.

RIDERS IN THE DARK

Unfortunately, the fire has also alerted the local Bedouin tribe to the presence of trespassers. Within the hour, a band of nomads, mounted on camels, thunders into the camp. Time to deal action cards!

The nomads begin by firing their muskets, but switch to scimitars afterward—they don't waste time reloading. The heroes supposed allies don't provide any support—as soon as the fighting begins, they mount up and ride off at full pelt. Jusef has done his bit for the Nazis and wants to live to become chief, and his men aren't very brave.

The courtyard measures 8" wide and 12" long. The gatehouse, through which the attackers ride, is 2" wide and located in the center of the eastern wall. The GM should place a few piles of stone and one or two pillars to give the characters some Cover and scenery they can use.



Two campfires provide good lighting in a Medium Burst Template. At double this distance the lighting is Dim (–1). Beyond this the lighting is Dark (–2) due to a clear sky.

Although dedicated to protecting the temple site, the Bedouin aren't suicidal. Once they are reduced to two riders, their morale fails, and they try to escape. Before they leave, one shouts back, "You shall be cursed, come morning!"

Hostile Bedouin (2 per hero): See page 19.

SCENE 3: HISTORY IS SILENT

The sun breaks the eastern horizon, its vast, shimmering globe marking the start of another day. Across the east you notice the sand has picked up into a miniature cloud, hovering just above the surface. Then the sand begins to bubble and boil!

Suddenly the top of a pillar emerges from beneath the surface, then another, and another! Walls, broken and cracked, become visible, seeming to shake off the grains as a waking sleeper shakes his head to clear it of the last residues of sleep.

As you watch in wonderment, an enormous, ruined temple surrounded by trees rises from the endless sand!

Reaching the temple takes an hour. The structure covers a large area, but there is

little of interest—the hieroglyphs are faded beyond recognition, and the few buildings are empty.

Have the characters make Notice rolls. Whoever rolls the highest (even if it's a failure) discovers a faint engraving resembling two men on a single mount scratched on one of the blocks. Templars scratched this many centuries ago to highlight the entrance to the secret library (it took more than one expedition to remove the contents).

Removing the stones reveals a staircase descending into eerie darkness. The sound of running water can be clearly heard.

After what seems like an eternity, the stairs end. As you step forward, a vast chamber is brilliantly illuminated, your torchlight reflecting off a highly polished golden ceiling and amplified by concave indentations of silver in the walls.

Before you, lies a huge chamber. A dozen wide pillars of Egyptian design stretch up like colossal fingers, supporting the gilded ceiling. Carved into the chamber walls, are many niches, each containing a plain stone sarcophagus.

Against the far wall is a towering statue of an ibis-headed man—Thoth, the Egyptian god of knowledge. At its feet, stands a small, golden box.

Running through the center of the chamber is a river, its dark, fast-running waters sparkling in the light.

Standing on both sides of the river are tall, stone shelves, dozens and dozens of them. It's hard to tell the ones on the far side of the chamber, but they appear empty. Perhaps the treasure has already been stolen?

Looking down, you see an inscription carved into the floor. Jimmy quickly translates it—it reads, "Let the Returned Eye be your passage to safety."

BATTLEFIELD TERRAIN

Chamber: The chamber measures 24" long and 16" wide. The stairs emerge in the southeast corner.

Gold Box: The gold box is not locked. Inside is a piece of parchment, the contents of which are revealed on page 10.

Pillars: A dozen pillars, each 1" wide, support the ceiling at irregular intervals. At least two stand in the river. Characters cannot move through squares containing a pillar.

River: Treat movement through it as difficult ground. The water is dark enough to conceal anything beneath the surface. Several shelves lie in the water, a clear indication the watercourse was not here when the chamber was carved.

Shelves: Each section of shelves is 2" wide and 3" high. These can be tipped over like the ones in the auction room basement (page 5). They also provide Cover (and are impenetrable to weapons). Climbing a bookshelf counts as difficult ground.

Sarcophagi: The stone sarcophagi cannot be opened, at least not from outside. For game purposes, they are immune to damage.

THE GUARDIAN AWAKES

The first adventurer to cross more than halfway across the river awakens an ancient guardian. Stop the game at this point and read the following text.

The water isn't particularly deep, but it's darn cold. Without warning the water nearby erupts in a seething, boiling plume. Shooting out from the dark surface is a gigantic serpent, its skin glittering like metal. Long, sharp spines protrude from its body. With horror, you see skeletons stuck to the spines—knights of old in rusted chain armor.

The serpent casts its baleful gaze upon you, its one eye a sickly shade of glowing green. The other socket is dark and empty.

With lightning reflexes it lunges toward you!

Have the heroes check for Surprise, then deal action cards as necessary. The guardian begins on Hold. The serpent does not have to be defeated in combat. Placing the glass ball in its vacant socket causes the creature to retreat back beneath the water. A character *on* the serpent's head can perform this with a Called Shot (–4) Fighting roll. The hard part is getting onto the head!

Leaping onto the serpent's back simply requires an adjacent hero to make a successful Fighting roll as an action. Jumping onto the head can be achieved one of three ways.

First, the character must go on Hold, wait until the serpent attacks him, successfully interrupt, and then succeed in a Called Shot to the head on a Fighting roll.

Second, the character can leap from a bookshelf. Again, this requires a Called Shot, but the character can be up to 2" away (although this distance requires a Strength roll as normal). Attacks made by the serpent against a rider are made at an additional –2.

Third, a hero on the beast's back can try to climb up to the head. This requires an Agility roll as an action.

The creature makes an opposed Strength roll each round as a free action. With success, the rider is dislodged. He lands on his feet adjacent to the beast. On a raise, the unfortunate jockey is prone and Shaken.

A hero on the ground must go on Hold as above. His Called Shot penalty is –6, since he doesn't have the luxury of being able to feel around for the socket. Alternately, the sphere can be thrown or fired from Jimmy's catapult (both at –6), but a missed shot causes it to scat-

ter as an area effect weapon. Should the ball land in the water, it requires an action and a Notice roll at –4 from an adjacent character to retrieve it.

Serpent of Set: See page 20.

THE GOLD BOX

The parchment reads as below.

Let it be known that in this, the 1214th year of our Lord, I, Raymond de Savoir, Knight Templar in good standing, oversaw the removal of the last treasure from this sacred place. In keeping with the instructions of my forbearers, it was deemed this treasure was too great for mankind and thus has been taken for safekeeping to the Castle of Our Lady of Mercy in the land of France. This testament I do swear, in the name of our Lord.

SCENE 4: NEW FOES, OLD FOES

While the characters are having fun with the giant snake, the Nazis, alerted by Jusef's fire, have arrived on the scene. They quickly locate the entrance to the stairwell.

They arrive at the base of the stairs immediately after the characters read the parchment or, if they decide to take the box without opening it, before the party crosses the river to escape. Being typical goons, they open fire on the characters without giving fair warning.

Deal action cards. The serpent doesn't make a return appearance, but some new guardians, alerted by the general nastiness of the Nazis, decide to join the fray.

At the start of round 2, the sarcophagus' lids explode outward at the beginning of the round (before action cards are dealt). Shambling out from eight of them are ibis-headed mummies! The mummies consider everyone in the temple an enemy. They head for the nearest living creature and attack.

Joker: The first time a Joker is drawn, the underground river running adjacent to the temple finally breaks through the wall. A torrent of water surges into the cavern from the eastern wall. Anyone standing in the river when the wall breaks must make a Strength roll at –2 or be swept 1d6" in the direction of the water and knocked prone.

The surge knocks down the two pillars in the watercourse, causing part of the ceiling to collapse. Place a Medium Burst Template centered on each pillar. Anyone beneath the template must make an Agility roll at –2 (–4 if prone) or suffer 2d6+2 damage from the masonry (as if from an Extra). Fallen masonry remains on the battlefield and is treated as difficult ground.

Crossing the river, as opposed to using the collapsed masonry or any toppled shelves as a bridge, requires a Strength roll (–2 if the person runs) to avoid being swept 1d6" and knocked prone.

Trying to stand in the deluge requires a Strength roll as a free action. A failure means the hero can only crawl this round (and it's still difficult ground).

Count the remaining pillars each time a Joker is drawn from hereon and roll the nearest available die. Place a Medium Burst Template over the indicated pillar as above. If both Jokers are drawn in the same round, two pillars collapse.

Herr Templemann: See page 19.

Nazis (3 per hero): See page 19.

Ibis-Headed Mummies (8): See page 19.

A WATERY GRAVE

Water laps at your heels as your rush headlong up the stairs. Sounds of bubbling water and crashing masonry echo up the stairwell as the ancient temple succumbs to the power of nature. A brief pause for breath at the top of the stairs is swiftly cut short—the water doesn't stop rising!

Your lungs burn as you sprint through the ruins, which are beginning to collapse. Finally you clear the temple area. Looking back, you see the desert sand is rapidly turning to bubbling quicksand. Walls, which have stood for millennia, begin to crumble, and pillars topple. Within minutes all that remains is a dark mass of rubble and swampland.

Luckily for the heroes, the Nazis parked their truck outside the temple. It's even got enough gas, water, and food to last the drive back to civilization!

Have the characters make Investigation or Knowledge (History) rolls (it's assumed these are made back in Cairo). Success reveals the location of the Templar castle in question. Otherwise, the characters learn of the location from a tourist book when they arrive in France.

ACT 3: SOUTHERN FRANCE

After escaping Nazis and a collapsing temple, the heroes head to Europe. Draw the red line on the map to any point in southern France. On arriving, the characters hire a car and quickly head off into the hills in search of treasure. Any spent ammunition is recovered.

SCENE 1: A TWO-FINGERED GESTURE

Badly damaged by the elements, war, and inept archaeologists, the castle nonetheless remains an imposing monument of older days. It seems hard to imagine that the fabled treasure of the Templars could lie here somewhere, in a castle now open to tourists, but the manuscript was quite specific.

After exploring the surface, you head down a flight of stairs into the sub-chambers.

Descending deeper, you suddenly reach a dead

end. Brushing away cobwebs and dust, you find an indentation in one of the stones—an indentation vaguely shaped like a pair of fingers.

The dead end is actually a secret door. Placing the stone fingers in the indentation causes part of the wall to swing inward, revealing a long, dark corridor.

Ahead, at the end of a long corridor flanked by badly defaced statues of knights, you spy a lone statue, possibly of a saint. Its right hand is raised, perhaps in blessing, three fingers curled inward and the index and middle finger…missing!

The unmistakable sound of stone grating on stone reverberates down the corridor. Four statues, their stone swords held aloft, stagger ungainly from the most distant alcoves and advance in formation!

The corridor is 14" long and 4" wide. The foot of the stairs is at one end and the fingerless statue at the other. Spaced every other inch along the walls are tall alcoves, each holding a statue of a knight. The guardians occupy the middle pairs of alcoves.

Animated Statues (1 per hero): See page 19.

THE BLESSING COMPLETE

Once the guardians are defeated, the heroes can approach the statue. A Latin inscription carved on the base reads: "My blessing will point the way."

The fingers easily insert into a small hole just above the knuckles, but nothing untoward happens. Careful inspection of the statue's hand reveals the two knuckles below the fingers are hinged. Pulling the fingers downward causes a section of wall to slide open. Behind the wall is another set of stairs.

Unfortunately, there is no way to shut the wall behind the party—removing the fingers from the statue causes the portal to seal shut before any hero can leap through.

SCENE 2: VOICES OF THE PAST AND PRESENT

The stairs emerge in a vaulted crypt. Rows of stone effigies mark the final resting place of fallen knights. Each effigy shows the knight, clad in armor, his sword by his side, with hands clasped together in prayer.

Let the party examine the graves as they wish. Three are slightly different from the others.

The first has the knight not with his hands in prayer, but grasping a stone cup (the Holy Grail). The second has the knight resting his head on a large box topped with two cherubim (the Ark of the Covenant). GMs are free to create their own clues within the sepulchers if they want to use these relics in a future adventure of their own devising. The third knight holds in his hand, a scroll engraved with an ibis—this is the one the heroes need.

Inside is a skeleton clad in rusted chain armor. Around its neck is a silver medallion engraved with the image of two knights on a single horse, against the backdrop of a mountain peak. Encourage the heroes to take this if they appear apprehensive. On the back of the disc, in Latin, is a message.

My brethren have gone to the land of fire and ice, but this secret I take to the grave. While my brethren sailed away, I was left to guard the key to the great secret. I have done my duty. May God accept me into his grace. Amen.

The "land of fire and ice" refers to Iceland, renowned for its volcanic activity and glaciers. Allow the characters a Common Knowledge roll to deduce this. On a failure, they can use Investigation once they get back to a town or city.

FRIEND OR FOE?

A single pistol shot rings out once the characters have finished reading the back of the medallion. Standing by the stairs are a dozen men armed with pistols.

One of the men steps forward. "Nazi devils!" he spits. "Always trying to steal what is not rightfully yours. Make peace with whatever gods you have, but prepare to face God's judgment."

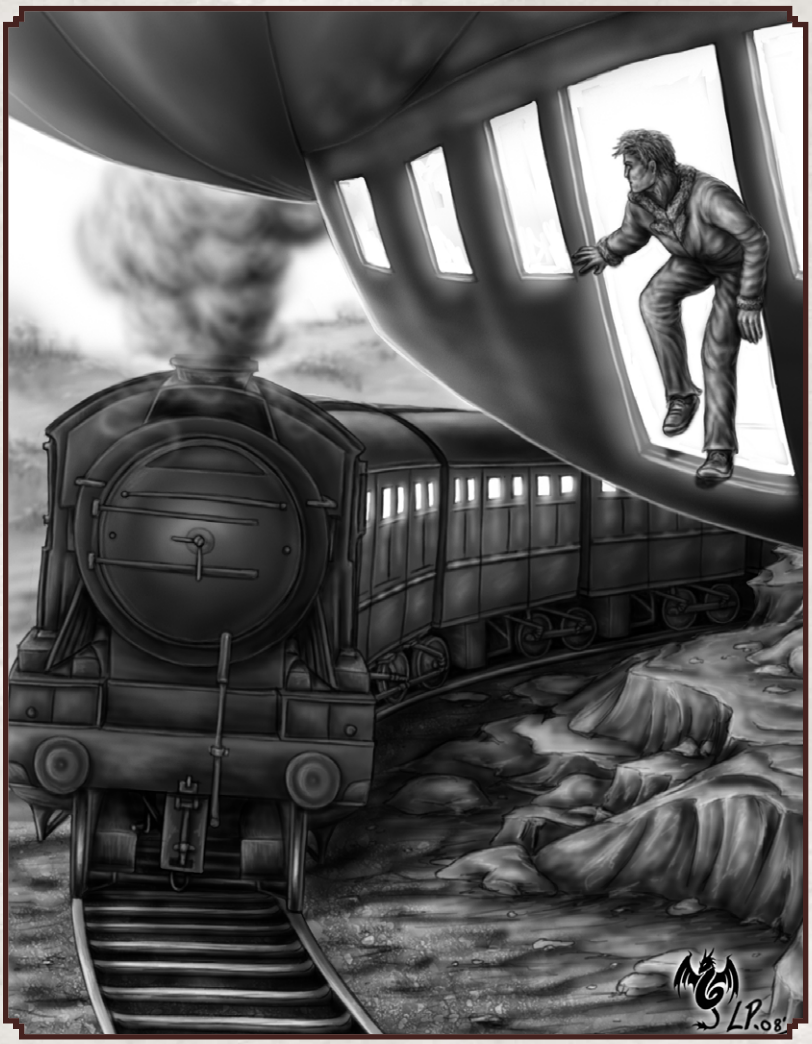
This is the characters cue not to start firing, but to parley with the man, Pierre de Molay, a commander in the modern Templars. Should the heroes decide fists and bullets are more powerful than words, the Templars will defend themselves with lethal force (as they assume the treasure seekers *are* Nazis).

De Molay listens to the characters' story in silence. He already knows about Professor Dickinson's kidnapping and has learned of the existence of the statuette. However, he is ignorant about the glass ball and temple in Egypt.

Assuming the heroes are honest and forthright, de Molay orders his men to holster their weapons. Any hint of deception, and he orders them to attack. His decision is all down to the characters.

"I apologize for threatening you," the man says, walking forward and extending a hand in friendship. "I am Pierre de Molay, a commander in the Templars. Yes, you heard right, the Knights Templar. History records my order as having been abolished, but there is much of the past that has never been recorded.

"The order is small, but our goal remains the same—to protect the Templar treasure from those who do not deserve to possess it. Alas, I cannot tell you what the treasure is, nor where it can



be found. Some secrets have a way of remaining secret.

"What I can tell you is this—the Nazis must never be allowed to find it. Your friend, Professor Dickinson, is at this very minute on a train bound for Berlin. The Nazis will not care if he does not know the location of the treasure—they will torture him regardless.

"I have no doubt you will continue in your quest to find the treasure. Perhaps the time has come for it to be found by men, and women, of good heart. I wish you luck and hope, when the time comes, you will make the right decision.

"Now we should leave. The Nazis have spies everywhere and our presence may already have been reported."

De Molay then gestures toward the exit. There's nothing left here for the characters, so hopefully they'll follow the Templars out.

Pierre de Molay, Templar Commander: See page 18.

Modern Templars (2 per hero): See page 18.

SCENE 3: MY BEAUTIFUL BALLOON

The castle courtyard is quiet, perhaps a little too quiet. That proves to be the case when a squad of Nazi soldiers appears atop the ruins, their guns pointed down at you. Floating into view, above the battlements to which it is tethered, is a zeppelin.

"Hello Americans!" an officer shouts. "The Third Reich thanks you for retrieving whatever clue was down in the cellars. Do not worry about surrendering. We'll take what we need from your corpses! Open fire!"

Deal action cards. Divide the Templars up among the players to control, and hand out Ally Sheets. Let the players decide who gets to run de Molay.

The courtyard measures 10" to a side and it littered with broken walls and archways the characters can use for Cover. The Nazis are 3" above the ground, standing on ruined walls. Any soldier Shaken must make an Agility roll or fall to his death.

The zeppelin plays no part in the fight. It can't escape because it's securely tethered to the battlements. Should the heroes start firing at it or attempt to cut the mooring lines, de Molay shouts out, *"Stop! Stop! We can use that to rescue the Professor! We'll board her after we finish with this lot!"*

Pierre de Molay, Templar Commander: See page 18.

Modern Templars (2 per hero): See page 18.

Nazis Officer: Henchman Nazi soldier (p. 19) but armed with a pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6)

Nazis (4 per hero): See page 19.

UP, UP, AND AWAY

The zeppelin crew begins waving white flags from the gondola windows once the soldiers are slain. They have no particular desire to follow their comrades to an early grave.

De Molay, assuming he survived, orders his men to take the Nazis prisoners and hold them for 48 hours. He plans to accompany the heroes and provide navigation information to ensure the zeppelin catches up with the Professor's train before it enters Germany.

In true pulp style, things never go smoothly. An hour into the flight, three German fighters swoop out of the

clouds, guns blazing. (After failing to hear a report from the castle, the Nazis assume the worst and decide to take down their own zeppelin.)

Run this battle using the regular Chase rules. The zeppelin is at Long range and each Range Increment equates to 10". Deal each Nazi his own action card.

There are no Obstacles, but on a Club suit card the pilot must make a Piloting roll to avoid crosswinds, unexpected thermals, the occasional unlucky bird, and such like. Failure gives the pilot a –2 penalty to his next Piloting roll and the vehicle drops back one Range Increment.

Special Rules: Since the Wild Cards are in a vehicle, damage caused by Extras doesn't Ace. Chassis Critical Hits are assumed to strike the envelope. This has no effect in play, but the heroes will notice a drop in altitude.

As this a pulp game, ignore the **Speed Kills** rule—the focus should be on two-fisted action and daring stunts, not realism.

Nazi Pilots (2): See page 19.

ZEPPELIN

Acc/Top Speed: 10/120; **Toughness:** 11 (2); **Crew:** 1+10 (in combat)
Notes: Only one weapon per round may fire at an individual target.
Weapons:
* 1 x MG34, left gondola (Range: 30/60/120, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3)
* 1 x MG34, right gondola (Range: 30/60/120, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3)

FIGHTERS (3)

Acc/Top Speed: 20/180; **Toughness:** 12 (2); **Crew:** 1
Notes: —
Weapons:
* 4 x machineguns (Range: 30/60/120, Damage: 2d8+2, ROF 3)

SCENE 4: TICKET TO RIDE

Minutes after the last plane nose dives into French soil, the train comes into view. De Molay informs the adventurers there are no more stops before the German border. If the characters don't come up with the daring plan to lower themselves onto the train by rope, the Templar suggests it. He's a competent pilot and can maneuver the zeppelin into position.

Have the heroes make Agility rolls. With success, they drop onto the rear carriage of the train. Failure causes them to fall prone. A critical failure means they are prone and Shaken.

No sooner have the heroes landed then Nazis begin climbing out of the windows onto the roof. There are a total number of goons equal to three per hero. Each round, before action cards are dealt, roll 1d4+2 for the number of soldiers making an appearance. Spread these as equally as possible along the train, beginning with the rear carriage. Climbing onto the roof counts as an action, but doesn't take any movement.

Deal one action card for each carriage—all the Nazis who *begin* the round on that carriage use that action card. This prevents all the Nazis going at the same time and breaks up the flow of the combat more equally.

Falling Off: Any character Shaken or wounded must make an Agility roll as a free action. With success, they remain on the train. Extras who fail fall from the train to their deaths. Wild Cards are left dangling by one hand as the train thunders through the countryside. Climbing back onto the roof requires a Strength roll as an action.

TERRAIN

Rail Cars: The train comprises an engine, a coal car, and two cars. Each car is 8" long, the coal car is 3" long, and the engine is 6" long. All are 2" wide.

Separating a car from the train requires a character to drop into the gap (2" of movement) and make a Strength roll as an action. With success, the car separates from the train. At the start of the next round it drops back 1" from the compartment to which it was attached (so the gap between them is 2"). The distance widens to 3" on the round after. After this the gap is too far to jump, though someone with a pair of rocket boots could clear the gap.

The Professor is in the passenger car nearest the coal cart, so the heroes should feel free to release the other cars. Any Nazis who crawl onto the roofs of these cars are out of sight (thanks to a handy bend in the track) on the third round after their carriage is set free.

Movement: Movement on top of the train counts as difficult ground if a hero is standing, due to the buffeting winds. The swaying motion and constant wind means the train counts as an Unsteady Platform.

The gap between cars is 1". Leaping from car to car on a stationary train is fairly easy. On a moving train, it requires an Agility roll unless the character makes a running jump of at least 2". Failure causes the jumper to fall, as noted above.

HAZARDS & SCENERY

Fighting atop a moving train can be very cinematic, but at the same time it's also rather mundane. To spice up the fight, there are a number of hazards and obstacles. Check the table below whenever a deuce is dealt as a character's first action card (so Level Headed heroes aren't affected more than others and Quick characters aren't immune). Yep, lots of things can occur in the same round if multiple deuces are dealt!

Suit	Result
Club	**Overhang:** A water hose or tree branch is hanging over the train. A hero who uses the overhang to perform a successful Agility Trick, can *either* move up to 6" toward the

rear of the train for free (it doesn't count against his Pace for the round) or make a free Fighting roll (no multi action penalty) as if he had the Sweep Edge against all adjacent foes, as part of the Trick. Shaken foes are simply left stunned at the character's audacity and pluck.

Diamond **Duck:** The train rounds a bend and speeds into a tunnel, under trees, or beneath a low bridge. Have every person atop the train make an Agility roll (grab a handful of dice for the Nazis—a Group roll is no fun in this event).
With success, the character is placed prone. Failure causes the character to suffer 2d6 damage and be knocked 1d6" toward the rear of the train. Survivors are automatically prone. Any Extra carried over the back of the train dies. Wild Cards are left hanging by one hand. Climbing back onto the train requires a Strength roll and takes an action.

Heart **Wild Gunfire:** Someone inside the train opens fire with an automatic weapon. Roll a d6 for each person on the car of the character that drew the deuce. A roll of 1 indicates a character is hit for 2d6 damage.

Spade **My Foot:** The foot of the poor sap that drew the deuce breaks through the roof. Releasing it requires an Agility or Strength roll (character's choice). Until he is freed, he cannot move.

Nazis (3 per hero): See page 19.

INSIDE THE TRAIN

With the goons now out of the game, the characters can clamber down into the carriages. When the heroes reach the carriage nearest the engine, read the following text.

Standing at the back of the carriage is Professor Dickinson. He looks pleased to see you, but the gun at his head, held by a cruel-faced Nazi in a black uniform, has rather dampened his jubilation. Behind the Nazi are four goons.

"Americans!" the Nazi spits. "Always coming to the rescue like the proverbial cavalry. Pathetic! Hand over whatever you found at the castle and I shall release Professor Dickinson unharmed. Refuse…" He pulls back the hammer on his pistol.

Everyone begins on Hold. He also has Medium Cover from the professor's body—any shots that miss by 1 or 2 hit the unfortunate scholar! Remind the players, if necessary, about the rules for the Drop, because Kempler has the Drop on Dickinson. Tell them Dickinson is only an Extra—if he gets shot, he's likely to die.

It's time for Jimmy's character to shine, not by performing some cool Trick, but rather by using his Big Mouth Hindrance to reveal the location of the treasure! Forgetful players should be prompted. Sure, it gives the bad guys everything they need to know, but it's a pulp staple and Hindrances are hindrances, not optional devices.

Of course, a fight is going to break out sooner or later. Once Kempler has the information, he takes the time to gloat.

"What a good little boy!" the Nazi laughs. "A good German would have kept his mouth shut to preserve such knowledge, but you Americans are always so happy to talk," he continues, waving his pistol around. "Unfortunately, now I have what I need to know. All of you are expendable."

Kempler's arrogance has caused him to move his pistol away from the Professor's head, meaning he no longer has the Drop. This is the heroes' chance! Remember, everyone is on Hold, so this round everyone rolls Agility and acts in that order, instead of being dealt cards.

Professor Dickinson is no fighter, but he's smart. Once the shooting starts, he hits the deck and crawls under a seat.

Kempler is the major villain and he has to be there at the climax of the adventure. If he's badly wounded, use the Recurring Villains rule (see the generic pulp rules download from www.tripleacegames.com) to ensure his escape, by leaping from the train and down a mud bank.

The seats in the train can be used for Cover. They provide Armor +2.

Professor Dickinson: See page 17.
Sturmbahnführer Kempler: See page 19.
Nazis (4): See page 19.

THE PROF RESCUED

Professor Dickinson is delighted to see the heroes and greets them all with handshakes and hugs. Unless a hero thinks to do it, he suggests they pull the emergency cord and get off the train before it crosses the German border.

Locating a friendly peasant, the characters catch a lift to the nearest railway station. En route, Dickinson asks for a full update on what has happened since his abduction. He interrupts the conversation with cries of, *"I should have guessed"* and, *"Of course! It's obvious now!"* He studies the medallion (assuming he's shown it) and points excitedly to the image of the mountain behind the knights.

"I know this peak!" he shouts excitedly, thumping the table in joy. "Yes, yes, I can lead you there! Quick, we must get to Iceland before the Nazis. Time is against us! Our prize awaits!"

ACT 4: ICELAND

After securing a flight to Iceland (get that atlas out!) and arranging supplies, which includes winter clothing,

rope, and all the other basic supplies necessary, the heroes and Professor Dickinson quickly head into the unexplored mountainous hinterlands.

SCENE 1: THE CASTLE OF ICE

Howling wind, driving snow, and sub-zero temperatures have been you constant companions since you climbed into the high mountains. Snow and mist have plagued your every step, and more than once the ropes tying you together have saved your lives.

Passing through a narrow ravine, you emerge on the end of a narrow ice bridge. A glance down reveals your deepest fears are confirmed—the bridge has no supports and spans a very deep valley.

Across the ice bridge, through the thinning mist, you catch your first sight of a wondrous creation. Carved from solid ice is a Crusader-style fort, complete with towers and battlements. Two colossal ice statues, both depicting knights, form what can only be described as a gatehouse. Each knight has one arm stretched across to grasp his comrade's wrist. Beneath, where one would expect the gate, is a solid wall of frost-covered ice.

The bridge measures 2" and spans a vast distance. There is no support beneath, only a thousand-foot drop into a mist-filled valley. Lack of maintenance and frequent earth tremors have left the bridge fragile. It begins to collapse and buckle from the end the heroes start at as soon as they begin to cross.

This scene uses a variant of the Chase rules. Place 10 markers in a line on the table. Character miniatures should be placed at one end of the line, behind the first marker. To reach the far end, the heroes must travel *beyond* the final token. An Agility roll is made each round, with a success moving the adventurer one marker toward safety and a raise shifting him two markers.

A hero may push harder by taking a –2 penalty. In this instance, a success moves the character two spaces and a raise means he advances four spaces. However, on a failure he slips and falls. Next round he suffers a –2 penalty to his Agility roll.

On the round after the first character reaches the third token the collapse increases enough to become a real danger. The crumbling bridge has Agility d8 and uses the same rules as above. It can push for extra distance, but only to ensure the characters feel under constant pressure—don't push if a character is within 3 markers of the shattering ice. As the bridge collapses, remove tokens from the end of the bridge where the party started.

A character standing next to a marker which is removed due to the collapse must make an Agility roll at –2. With a success, he manages to leap forward one space. A failure means he is hanging onto the end of the ice by his fingernails—ice which could crumble away soon! The hero can make a Strength roll as an action to haul himself back onto the structure. His comrades can assist, but only if they are adjacent.

Obviously this scene isn't meant to kill the characters. Should a hero be Shaken and standing on the edge of the bridge, fudge the die roll so the collapse doesn't spread this round. Describe how the ice is cracking and flaking away beneath his feet, though—the explorer should *believe* he could plummet to his death any second.

THE ENTRANCE

Blocking the entrance into the frozen fortress is a towering door of solid, blue-white ice, covered in a thin layer of snow and frost crystals. It's impervious to any weapons the heroes have on-hand. A small indentation can be found if the snow is wiped away. It matches the size and design of the silver amulet found in the Templar castle.

As soon as the medallion is placed in the indentation, it begins to glow with a fierce heat. It changes from yellow, to orange, to red, to brilliant white in a matter of seconds.

Thin strands of molten metal begin seeping from the amulet across the ice wall. As they spread, the ice begins to melt, slowly at first, then with exponentially growing speed. Within a few minutes, the door and the amulet have vaporized.

THE ICE IS ALIVE!

Passing between the statues, you step into a winter wonderland. Statues, chairs, tables, and stairs are all made out of solid ice. Even the doors are made of ice, swinging silently on ice hinges held in place by pegs of near-black ice. Everything looks clean and crisp, as if it were carved only yesterday, but there is a smell of decay pervading the air.

Exploration of the upper stories reveals nothing of interest. Progressing deeper into the mammoth structure you reach a pair of double doors marked with the Templar seal.

Behind the doors is a wide, colonnaded corridor, some 20" long and 4" wide. Four ice columns, 2" in width, stand in the center of the room, spaced at 4" intervals. Another set of identical doors stand closed at the far end.

Read the following text when the party reaches the halfway point.

The doors ahead seem to bulge and writhe. No, not the doors! Something is moving through the

closed doors! Two beings, short yet broad, and seeming made of solid ice, step out of the ice as if it were thin air.

Each has cold-blue eyes, a mouth filled with churning ice that reminds you of molten lava, and cracked, icy skin of the deepest blue. A cracking sound behind you causes you to glance around. Two more of the creatures block your escape!

Start dealing action cards. Each pair of ice genies receives its own action card.

The floor is made of highly polished ice and is as hard as marble. While the ice genies have no trouble moving, the heroes slip and slide, even in their spiked boots. Treat the surface as difficult ground. A hero who rolls a 1 on his running die slips and falls. Any Agility rolls involving movement, such as dodging an area-effect weapon or performing an Agility Trick, suffer a –2 penalty.

The double doors at either end won't open until the creatures are destroyed.

Ice Genies (1 per hero): See page 20.

SCENE 2: DEPOSITORY OF KNOWLEDGE

Through the doors is a massive cavern of ice, so big it must extend back into the heart of the glacier. All along the walls are deep niches containing wooden boxes. In the center is a round table. Seated around it are thirteen men in armor, their heads bowed as if in prayer.

Suddenly one stands, drawing his sword. "I am Sir Richard of Toulouse, Knight Templar, and sworn to protect this sanctuary with my life!" he shouts in Latin. "Speak now your reasons for defiling this holy ground, or die!"

Sir Richard isn't an ogre. If the characters explain who they are and why they are here (and especially if they play up the Nazis), Sir Richard lowers his sword. He's an excellent judge of character and can tell the adventurers (assuming they don't lie too often) are people of good heart.

"I knew this day would come. Nothing can remain secret forever. I have watched over this sanctuary for six centuries. I have read works of unbelievable beauty and unimaginable cruelty to pass the long years."

He gestures back to the other knights. "Six hundred years alone. We thought others would come for us, but it became obvious our fate was to be eternal guardians. God forgive us, we used ancient magic to build this fortress, create the ice guardians you must have defeated, and to preserve my life. Aye, my brothers gave of theirs, freely, so that one of us might survive."

Slowly he walks over to one of the niches and pulls free one of the boxes. Taking a key from around his neck he unlocks the box and throws the lid open. Inside are books and scrolls.

"The treasure of the Templars," he sighs. "The collected wisdom of a thousand ages. Egypt, Babylon, Greece, Rome, Assyria, and others which came before and are now forgotten." The knight casts a wry smile in your direction. "You were expecting gold and silver, perhaps? This is true treasure."

Professor Dickinson can barely contain his delight! He squeals loudly, and then holds his hand to his mouth, as his face turns deep red. "Sorry. Got a bit excited."

"Come," the knight smiles, let me show you the wonders of mankind, and its evils, for all knowledge is precious if our race is to evolve."

Sir Richard of Toulouse: See page 18.

SCENE 3: LAND OF FIRE AND ICE

As soon as the characters are near the knight, a loud crack echoes through the chamber. Whirling round, the heroes spot a horde of Nazis fanning out into the room, led by Sturmbahnführer Kempler.

"You Americans really are the bane of my life. It seems I am always one step behind you," snarls Kempler in contempt. "But I must congratulate you for finding the treasure."

The major casts an eye at the books in Sir Richard's hands. "No," he smiles, seemingly reading your minds, "I am not surprised by the nature of the treasure. Did you think the Fuhrer would care about gold and silver? Petty baubles of the corrupt upper classes! With this knowledge, the Third Reich will grow stronger than any empire beforehand. We shall rule the world!" The soldier looks almost insane, his face contorted in a bizarre smile.

Then he signals his men to attack!

The cavern measures 36" to a side. The table is the size of a Medium Burst Template and provides excellent Cover (the ice has Armor +6). The chairs can be tipped over as an action, causing the seated skeleton to collapse to the floor.

Divide the Nazis into groups of five for initiative purposes.

On Round 2, Sir Richard attempts to awaken his dead comrades. Hand out Ally Sheets for the skeletal Templars when he succeeds.

THE END IS NIGH

Things don't look good for the heroes. They're outnumbered and outgunned, even with the skeletal Templars on their side.

On Round 4, before action cards are dealt, Sir Richard points to a small lever on one of the walls (place it within reach of a player character) and calls out, *"My friends! We must protect the treasure. Pull the lever. Have faith in God, and pull the lever!"*

Pulling the lever is an action, but requires no die roll. Nothing untoward happens, at least not for awhile. However, Sir Richard has a few more words to say once the lever has been yanked.

"I'm sorry," the elderly knight says, a wistful smile on his lips. "I cannot allow this knowledge to fall into the wrong hands. While it can be a force for good, it can also be a tool of terrible evil. Run now. Escape while you can. I have lived longer than my allotted time. I must now face the Almighty and explain my actions. May God go with you!"

The lever is actually part of a massive trap designed by the Templars to destroy the treasure rather than let it fall into the wrong hands. Deep beneath the floor, huge stone slabs holding back a magma chamber collapse, allowing the molten rock to boil upward!

Read the following at the start of the next round.

You sense things are about to get really bad, really quickly. A deep rumbling fills the chamber, and everything begins to shake violently. WHOOSH! A jet of steam shatters the ice floor. CRASH! Part of the ceiling collapses. CRACK! A section of floor gives way to reveal an orange glow beneath—lava!

Beginning on the next round, any character drawing a card of the Club suit as his first card (so Level Headed heroes aren't affected more than others) is in for a nasty surprise. Check the value against the table below.

Since a lot of the Nazis go on the same card, they're all affected equally. The skeletal Templars aren't affected unless the card value indicates a Burst Template effect and they're under it—keep the focus of the player's cards firmly on the heroes.

All the heroes need do now is escape! Characters who want to grab a box from a niche may do so, but each can carry just one. Professor Dickinson definitely makes a grab for one, claiming he can't allow all of this wisdom to be destroyed.

Value	Result
2–4	**Collapsing Ceiling:** The ceiling above the hero collapses. He must make an Agility roll at –2 as a free action or suffer 3d6 damage (as from an Extra). The collapsed ice fills the square for the rest of the battle and counts as difficult ground.
5–6	**Steam Vent:** The ice beneath the explorer's feet gives way as a vent of steam breaks through. A character who fails an Agility roll (free action) at –2 suffers 2d6 damage as from an Extra. The vent remains in play for the remainder of the fight. Anyone crossing the steam takes 2d6 damage.
7–8	**Collapsing Floor:** The floor under the character gives way, revealing the rising river of lava below. Have the adventurer make an Agility roll at –2 as a free action. With success, he can move to any adjacent square. Extras who fail, plummet to their death. A Wild Card who fails is left hanging by one hand (yep, even Kempler). He can make a Strength roll each round to drag himself clear of the lava. The square remains open to the lava for the rest of the encounter. Anyone who falls in suffers 2d10 damage per round. Treat this as damage from a Wild Card attack.
9	As Collapsing Ceiling, except the area affected is a Small Burst Template centered on the hero.
10	As Steam Vent, except the area affected is a Small Burst Template centered on the character.
Jack	As Collapsing Floor, except the area affected is a Small Burst Template centered on the victim.
Queen	As Collapsing Ceiling, except the area affected is a Medium Burst Template centered on the poor sap.
King	As Steam Vent, except the area affected is a Medium Burst Template centered on the explorer.
Ace	As Collapsing Floor, except the area affected is a Medium Burst Template centered on the unlucky character.

- **Sir Richard of Toulouse:** See page 18.
- **Skeletal Templars (12):** See page 18.
- **Sturmbahnführer Kempler:** See page 19.
- **Nazis (4 per hero):** See page 19.

HOW DO WE GET BACK?

Fleeing the ice castle, the characters find themselves on the wide ledge outside the main gates. The fortress slowly sinks into the ground, melting from the heat of the lava. Within a few minutes, all that is left is a crater half-filled with hissing and rapidly cooling lava.

A Nazi plot has been stopped and, hopefully, a little of the ancient knowledge of mankind saved. All in all, it was a successful endeavor and one worthy of true heroes.

Now all they have to do is find a way to get down the mountain!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

PROFESSOR HAMILTON DICKINSON

Beneath the wild white hair, thick glasses, and doddery mannerism, lurks an astute mind. Professor Dickinson is widely regarded as an authority on the Knights Templar, though some of his theories have seen him labeled as a

kook and crackpot. Nonetheless, the professor is closer than he thinks to unveiling one of the greatest treasures of mankind.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d4, Investigation d8, Knowledge (History) d10+2, Knowledge (Occult) d8+2, Notice d4
Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Bad Eyes, Clueless (forgetful), Curious, Quirk (always checking the time)
Edges: Scholar
Gear: Glasses, pipe

KNIGHTS TEMPLARS



PIERRE DE MOLAY, MODERN TEMPLAR COMMANDER

De Molay is the head of the modern Templars. Although fanatical in his devotion to the cause, he is a man of honor. He commands his organization to discredit scholars who come close to the truth, rather than killing them, though he is not beyond ordering research material destroyed.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Piloting d8, Shooting d8
Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Death Wish (protect treasure), Loyal
Edges: Command, Improved Dodge, Level Headed
Gear: Short sword (Str+d6), pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1)

MODERN KNIGHT TEMPLAR

Descendants of the ancient Knights Templar, the modern knights protect the long-lost secret of their forefathers' treasure. They have no knowledge of the location of the treasure, but rather act to thwart those who seem close to unlocking the secret of the location.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6
Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Loyal, Vow (Major; protect the treasure)
Edges: Dodge
Gear: Short sword (Str+d6), pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1)



SIR RICHARD OF TOULOUSE, ANCIENT TEMPLAR

Sir Richard was one of thirteen Templars entrusted with the true treasure of the Templars. The last survivor, and now over 600 years old, Sir Richard remains steadfast in his vow to protect the treasure from an undeserving world.
Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d10, Knowledge (History) d6, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Riding d8, Stealth d6
Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 8 (2)
Hindrances: Elderly, Heroic, Loyal, Vow (Major; protect the treasure)
Edges: Block, Dodge
Gear: Chain hauberk (+2), medium shield (+1 Parry), long sword (Str+d8)
Special Abilities:
* **Awaken the Dead:** Sir Richard can use an action to awaken his dead comrades to serve him again. This requires a Spirit roll at –2, but can be attempted each round. With a success, all the Templar skeletons animate for the next hour.
* **Blood of the Brethren:** When Sir Richard is dealt a Joker, the spirit of one of his brethren temporarily possesses him. For this round, he gains an extra action.

SKELETAL TEMPLARS

The former comrades of Sir Richard, these pious and loyal men gave their lives so that he might live to guard the treasure. They answer solely to his command, fighting with their rusty swords, to preserve the collected knowledge of the ancient world.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4
Pace: 7; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (1)
Gear: Rusty chain hauberk (+1); medium shield (+1 Parry), rusty long sword (Str+d6)
Special Abilities:
* **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
* **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from Shaken; Called Shots do no additional damage; immune to poison and disease

NAZIS



STURMBAHNFÜHRER HEINRICH KEMPLER

Ruthless and fanatical, Kempler is a model member of the SS. A former archaeologist, his view of history is now slanted in favor of Nazi idealism. He cares little for the cultural aspects of the treasures Hitler sends him to find, seeking instead only to return them to their "rightful" place in Berlin.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (History) d10, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Taunt d8
Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6/7; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Arrogant, Delusional (Major; believes in Nazi superiority), Mean
Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command, Fervor, Improved Nerves of Steel, Level Headed, Strong Willed
Gear: Pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1), sword cane (Str+d4, Parry +1)

HERR RUDOLPH TEMPLEMANN, GESTAPO OFFICER

Kempler's chief lackey is Herr Templemann, a member of the feared Gestapo. He's a true stereotype, complete with long leather coat, wide-brimmed hat, spectacles, and limp. He has no interest in history or riches—he simple wants to please his master, like the loyal lapdog he is.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Taunt d8
Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Lame, Mean
Edges: Command, Strong Willed
Gear: Pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1)

TYPICAL NAZI SOLDIER

These aren't fanatical and bloodthirsty SS stormtroopers, but they are dedicated to Hitler's cause. They follow Kempler's orders without question.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6
Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: —
Gear: Helmet (+3), SMG (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, ROF 3, AP 1) *or* rifle (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8, AP 2), dagger (Str+d4), 1 grenade (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 3d6–2, Medium Burst Template)

NAZI PILOTS/MOTORCYCLISTS

Skilled vehicle operators, these young men will one day be a vital part of Hitler's blitzkrieg tactics. Right now, they're more interested in obeying orders and making sure Germany gains the fabled Templar treasure.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Piloting d8, Shooting d6
Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: Steady Hands
Gear: Leather (+1), pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1)

BEDOUIN

The Bedouin, in whose land the old fort stands, are descendants of the secret library's guardian. Over time, the truth of what they guard has been distorted. These days, they believe they watch over a cursed site (hence they have never explored it).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6
Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: —
Gear: Scimitar (Str+d6), musket (Range: 10/20/40, Damage: 2d8, AP 1)

CAMEL

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d6
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 8
Special Abilities:
* **Kick:** Str.
* **Ornery:** Characters must subtract 1 from their Riding rolls when riding them.
* **Sand Walker:** Camels treat deserts as normal terrain.
* **Size +2:** Camels are only slightly larger than riding horses.

MONSTERS

ANIMATED STATUES

These statues of knights were animated using magic found in the vast collections of books and scrolls that make up the Templar treasure. They have but one goal—to protect the crypts beneath the castle.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6
Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (3)
Gear: Stone long sword (Str+d8)
Special Abilities:
* **Arcane Resistance:** +2 to trait rolls to resist magic and +2 Armor against damage-causing arcane effects.
* **Armor +3:** Statues are made of solid stone.
* **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to disease and poison.
* **Fearless:** Statues are immune to Fear and Intimidation.

IBIS-HEADED MUMMIES

Former guardians and librarians, these protectors were mummified wearing ibis-headed masks.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8
Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8
Gear: Bronze sword (Str+d6)
Special Abilities:
* **Beak:** Str+d4.
* **Shuffling Gait:** Mummies roll a d4 running die.

* **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to disease and poison.

ICE GENIES

Ice genies manifest as five-foot tall, vaguely man-shaped collections of compacted snow and ice.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d8
Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (3)
Special Abilities:

* **Armor +3:** Icy hide.
* **Bash:** Str+d6.
* **Burrowing (6"):** Ice genies can meld into and out of the ground or walls so long as it is made of snow or ice.
* **Elemental:** No additional damage from Called Shots; Fearless; Immune to disease and poison.
* **Ice Strike:** Ice genies can spit a freezing blast of ice using the Cone Template. Characters within the Cone must beat the genie's Shooting roll with Agility or suffer 2d10 damage.
* **Wall Walker:** Can move over ice and snow as normal ground, even running up walls or along ceilings.
* **Weakness (Fire):** Take double damage from heat or fire.



SERPENT OF SET

Created by the great Greek artificer Heron on the orders of the secret guardians of the temple and its treasure, the Serpent of Set is actually a clockwork construct set in place to watch over the vaults, which once contained the true treasures of the Library of Alexandria.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+1, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d12, Swimming d10
Pace: 10; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 15 (4)
Special Abilities:

* **Armor +4:** Metallic scales. This is not Heavy Armor.
* **Bite/Tail Slam:** Str+d6.
* **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; No additional damage from Called Shots; Immune to disease and poison; No wound penalties.
* **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
* **Improved Arcane Resistance:** +4 Armor versus magic, and +4 to rolls made to resist magic effects.
* **Large:** Attackers are +2 to attack rolls against the creature due to its size.
* **Poison (–2):** Victims must make a Vigor roll at –2 or suffer a temporary one die reduction in Agility and Agility-linked skills. Effects are cumulative. A skill dropping below a d4 means the victim cannot use the skill. Agility cannot drop below a d4. One die is recovered every Scene.
* **Quick:** May discard action cards of 5 or lower and draw another.
* **Size +4:** 30' long.
* **Spines:** 2d6 damage. A hero adjacent to the guardian who rolls a 1 on any physical trait roll (regardless of Wild Die) has been stabbed by one of the spines.
* **Tail Lash:** The serpent can sweep all opponents in its rear facing in an area 3" wide and 4" long. This is a standard Fighting attack. Damage is 1d12.
* **Weakness (Eye):** The serpent will not attack someone presenting the glass ball. Placing the glass ball in its empty eye socket causes the serpent to retreat back into the water, taking the ball with it. See page 9.

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THE RACE IS ON! CAN YOU FIND THE TEMPLAR TREASURE?



An invitation to Washington to attend a lecture seems innocuous enough, but nothing is ever straightforward when the heroes are around.

When a mysterious motorbike rider makes a daring theft and snatches a small wooden box from the hands of the noted historian, Professor Dickinson, it starts the heroes on a deadly quest. You soon discover that the Nazis are behind the theft—but what do the Nazis want with this small wooden box?

Daring Tales of Adventure #03 takes the characters on a whirlwind ride from the streets of Washington to the baking sands of Egypt, onto a Crusader castle, and finally to a vast ice fortress in the frozen north, and all in search of a treasure that men have killed to acquire and killed to protect—*The Treasure of the Templars.*

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DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

THE TALONS OF LO-PENG



OFFICIAL SAVAGE WORLDS LICENSED PRODUCT

PAUL 'WIGGY' WADE-WILLIAMS

DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

04

THE TALONS OF LO-PENG

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THE TALONS OF LO-PENG

Shi Huang Di, First Emperor of China, brought many advances to his people, but it is also said he was an autocratic tyrant and extremely paranoid. And not without good reason, for the Emperor had many enemies, not the least of which was a powerful and evil dragon called Lo-Peng.

Legends speak of the Emperor becoming fascinated with immortality in his latter years, but history was not recorded correctly. Shi Huang Di sought not for eternal life, but to rid his people of Lo-Peng's malevolent influence.

After countless years and a search that spanned much of the world, Shi Huang Di's magicians finally found a solution—a scroll, written long before the pyramids of Egypt were raised, contained an incantation that would turn Lo-Peng into a human being. Through trickery, the dragon was lured to the Imperial palace and the incantation recited.

Lo-Peng was transformed into a man, but he gained the power of immortality and still retained many of his fearsome powers. Enraged, the Emperor ordered Lo-Peng's heart removed. No beating muscle lay in his chest, though, for Lo-Peng's heart was a lump of pure jade. Alive but crippled, devoid of his most potent abilities, Lo-Peng was thrown into jail.

Shi Huang Di, like all men, died. He was buried in a great tomb, concealed beneath a hill and protected by an army of terracotta statues. He took with him to the grave two items of note—a scroll and a lump of jade. At least, that was his dying belief.

Alas, Lo-Peng still had allies, and the jade was stolen before the Emperor was entombed. The dragon's minions had hoped to return their lord to full strength so he could enact his revenge, but their cult was discovered and its members put to death. The jade was broken into three segments through powerful spells, but no magic could reduce it to dust. Instead, it was ordered they be kept under lock and key and heavily guarded.

Centuries passed and still Lo-Peng languished in jail, all-but forgotten. Under a general amnesty in the 7th century AD, all prisoners were released, among them Lo-Peng, whom the current administration mistook for a beggar. Without his heart, Lo-Peng was but a shadow of his former self, and it would be over a millennium before he gathered enough strength to begin the search for his heart.

With his heart intact, he knew he could find the Emperor's tomb, the location of which had been forgotten. There he would find the scroll that caused his fall, and with it he planned to reverse the magic and once more take flight as a full dragon.

Lo-Peng tracked down one piece of the amulet to a remote temple in Tibet, for the three pieces had become separated and lost after the Mongol's conquered China. But Lo-Peng was not the only treasure hunter after the shard…

THE CHARACTERS

This Savage Adventure contains a pulp tale based around the exploits of four pre-generated characters. The full character sheets are available for free at **www.tripleacegames.com**.

The heroes have all their leveling opportunities from Seasoned (at which they begin) into Legendary mapped out in advance. Each published adventure in this line earns the heroes a fixed 5 Experience Points, guaranteeing them an advance every mission. All the players need do is tick the appropriate box and start making use of the new upgrade.

Characters: 40 XP.

The GM also needs 20 marker stones of two different colors, and the pulp setting rules from the TAG website: www.tripleacegames.com.

ACT 1: BOSTON

This Act begins in the characters' not-too-distant past

and introduces them to the nefarious villain. For the opening sequence, the players should use the *20 XP* versions of their characters. As soon as the main adventure begins, they switch back to their current XP.

SCENE 1: IN THE BEGINNING...

It's 1935. After a long search, you finally located the Jade Talisman, supposedly a mystical artifact dating back to the time of the first Chinese emperor, in an abandoned temple in Tibet. It isn't much to look at, but the Boston Museum is paying you well.

The only thing between you and a successful mission is some crazy Chinese wizard named Lo-Peng and his army of skeletal warriors who turned up just as you were trying to leave! The acid pool traps don't help, either.

Deal the action cards straight away!

The aim of this fight is simply to introduce Lo-Peng, the main villain of the story, and signify the importance of the relic. This is important for the next scene. As soon as the fight ends, cut to the next section—don't go into any more details about this flashback.

The temple measures 8" wide and 16" long. A set of double doors at one end mark the only exit. Our heroes begin at the other end of the hall. Between them and victory stand Lo-Peng, his skeletal minions, and several pools of acid.

Across the center of the temple is a strip of weak stone measuring 4" wide. Mark a dozen squares at random with a gaming stone or other marker. These are acid pools. Stepping in one causes 2d6 damage as an Extra. The other squares in this narrow belt are extremely fragile and liable to collapse. Each time someone steps on one, roll a d6. A roll of 1 indicates the stone has broken. The victim must make an Agility roll to step back or plunge knee-deep into the acid!

Whatever happens, Lo-Peng must appear to die. Ideally, when he reaches Incapacitated he stumbles into one of the acid pools, face down. The pool immediately begins boiling and spitting wildly. The skeletal warriors crumble lifeless to the floor.

Lo-Peng: See page 17.

Skeletal Warriors (2 per hero): See page 19.

PRESENT DAY, BOSTON

Boston Museum, 1936. The sun is barely in the sky and you're all standing in the Chinese Wing of the Boston Museum, summoned by the curator, Doctor Barneswell.

"Sorry to call you in so early," Barneswell says apologetically, "but I figured you'd have a certain interest in what happened here tonight. Someone broke in and stole that jade talisman you found in Tibet. Swines killed a guard as well. I won't go into details, but we found this burned into his skin."

Barneswell hands you a piece of paper, on which is inscribed an unusual Chinese pictogram superimposed over three lighting bolts. Brent's knowledge of Mandarin is a little rusty, but he's sure it translates as, "He who lives forever."

"We've been doing a little research recently on that piece. It seems it does indeed date back to the unification of China. According to legend, it was a dragon's heart, ripped from an evil dragon on the orders of the Emperor. Poppycock superstition, of course, but it might be important.

"The local police," he whispers conspiratorially, "aren't really up for this. I need you to investigate. We'll pay all your expenses as normal."

There aren't any clues at the Museum. Fortunately, Brent knows a guy in Boston's Chinese district, Eddie Chang, who might be able to help. The pair go way back to Brent's days as a mercenary pilot and are as thick as thieves, or so Brent recalls. Eddie always had an interest in Chinese mysticism and became quite an expert during his tour with Brent.

SCENE 2: BIG TROUBLE

Eddie works as a chef at the Golden Bowl Chinese restaurant, a popular eatery and meeting place for Chinese immigrants. Eddie's at work in the back, but comes out if the heroes ask the waiter for him.

Eddie emerges from the back, wiping his hands on his apron. He looks up, his smile fading as he sees Brent! "Oh no," he says in English, backing away, his hands in the air, "not Brent Hardcastle! I haven't forgiven you for that time in Shanghai! Whatever you want, its trouble, and I want no part of it!"

The details of the "Shanghai episode" are left for the *player* to improvise—really, it can be *anything* he wants. Sample ideas include Brent leading Eddie on some foolhardy and perilous mission for gold, an encounter with a tattoo artist while drunk, getting arrested, or even an incident with the general's daughter Eddie had to cover for.

The aim is introduce Eddie as a friend, but one with a few bad memories of Brent's crazy antics. Obviously Eddie *will* help the characters—he just needs some friendly persuasion.

Eddie is a happy-go-lucky sort. He immediately takes an interest in Lady Amelia, but only because he suspects

she's Brent's girl and hasn't heard all his exploits. He's happy to inform her of Brent's days in China as a mercenary, unless Brent stops him. Again, this requires pure off-the-cuff roleplaying. Let the characters have some fun—things are about to get a lot hotter.

Once convinced the group needs his help, Eddie shows them to a table and orders several plates of food. He listens attentively to their tale. If shown the piece of paper he studies it for a few moments before his eyes widen.

"Five years and you haven't changed! Trouble is your shadow! This symbol," he whispers, tapping the paper, "is Lo-Peng's glyph. Yeah, I heard you met him in Tibet, but I assumed that was wild talk. He's a sort of Chinese bogeyman, used to scare children into being good. My father told me he's immortal and feeds on children. Man, that tale kept me on the straight and narrow, at least until I met you! Anyway, the lightning bolts represent his "talons." No one is sure what that means, though.

"Weird thing is, the stories might actually be true. I've seen images in books of several Chinese philosophers and magicians, and they all appear to show the same man."

WHOOSH! The piece of paper inscribed with Lo-Peng's name suddenly bursts in bright green flames. You think you catch a glimpse of a pair of eyes in the smoke, but it could be a trick of the light.

Suddenly, the patrons begin screaming. Looking around, you see them rushing toward the door as rising through the floor are a bunch of pale, almost translucent, Chinese wearing martial arts robes. Eddie shouts out, "Spirit warriors!" and then dives for cover.

Deal action cards.

The dining area of the restaurant is 8" square. There's a 2" long counter at the back, a single door at the front, and plenty of glass windows to break. The dining area is littered with tables and chairs knocked over by the fleeing patrons. Treat all movement as over difficult ground.

Eddie has seen these creatures before and knows their weakness. Unfortunately, it takes him a few rounds to prepare.

On the first round, Eddie dives behind the counter at the back of the restaurant. None of the spirit warriors pay him any attention. On round three, he pokes his head up and throws a bundle of bamboo chopsticks, enough for a pair per adventurer, toward the nearest hero, shouting, *"Use these! Magic chopsticks I picked up in Shanghai!"* He looks rather embarrassed at what he has just said.

The chopsticks land 1" away and require an action to pick up. They really are enchanted, and allow the characters to do Str+d4 damage when using them against the spirit warriors.

Eddie keeps a pair of chopsticks for himself. Starting on round 4, give an Ally Sheet for Eddie to one of the player's (not Brent's). The chef isn't reckless, but he's quite tough.

In between Eddie vanishing and the chopsticks appearing, the heroes don't have a lot of combat options. At best, they can keep the spirit warriors Shaken, and they're likely not carrying guns in a restaurant (at least they shouldn't be).

However, there are a lot of props lying around—big serving plates (both full and empty) which count as a buckler, chopsticks (not bamboo), plates to throw (range: 3/6/12, Damage: Str+d4), skewers (Str+d4) to use as daggers, chairs, candles, and table clothes, to use in Tricks, and so on.

Eddie Chang: See page 17.

Spirit Warriors (2 per hero): See page 19.

MY RESTAURANT!

After the fight, Eddie gets up from behind the counter.

"You've wrecked my restaurant! Man, my wife is going to kill me! Listen, I've seen a few guys a block or two down sporting tattoos like that symbol. I didn't think much of it until now, but it might be worth checking up on them. Try the Dragon Pagoda, it's a small martial arts school on East and 15th."

Eddie let's the characters keep the chopsticks. They'll need them later (and enterprising players will *always* find a good use for them elsewhere).

SCENE 3: SHAOLIN SHOWDOWN

Lo-Peng may have only recently regained his powers, but he didn't spend the centuries twiddling his thumbs. He has a network of agents across the world looking out for the jade pieces (and making him rich through criminal activities).

No matter what time of day the heroes visit the kung-fun school, there are students training. The visible part of the school measures 10" by 10".

As you enter, the students in the center of the room stop their activities and look at you with steely eyes. All have the same tattoo on their right forearm—the mark of Lo-Peng!

The school seems quite bare, aside from racks of martial arts weapons, a huge brass gong against the far wall, and a big box in the back corner labeled fireworks.

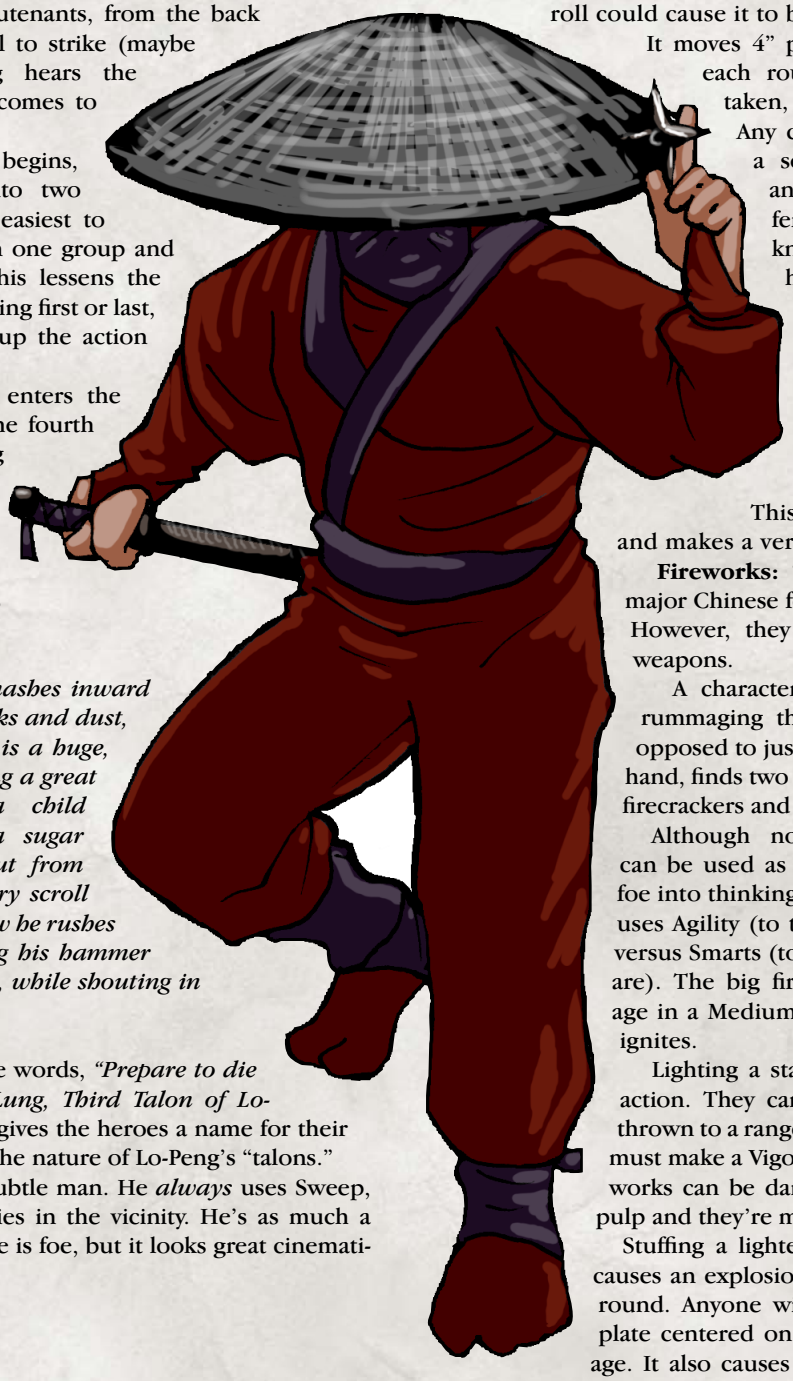
One of the martial artists takes a step toward the ad-

venturers and says, in Mandarin, *"Get out!" You're not welcome here."* He cracks his knuckles for added effect.

Should the characters refuse, begin asking questions, or mention Lo-Peng by name, the thugs immediately attack. One, chosen at random, makes a run for the gong. As an action, he can strike it. This summons Ti-Lung, one of Lo-Peng's lieutenants, from the back room. Should he fail to strike (maybe he's shot), Ti-Lung hears the ruckus anyway and comes to investigate.

Once the fight begins, split the mooks into two groups of four. It's easiest to stick numbers 1–4 in one group and 5–8 in the other. This lessens the chance of them all going first or last, and so helps break up the action more realistically.

Ti-Lung: Ti-Lung enters the fray at the start of the fourth round, crashing through the back wall into the main room. Read the text below when he appears. He gets his own card.



The back wall smashes inward in a cloud of bricks and dust, Stepping through is a huge, bald man carrying a great hammer like a child waves around a sugar cane. Sticking out from his belt is an ivory scroll case. With a bellow he rushes forward, swinging his hammer in a sweeping arc, while shouting in Mandarin.

Ti-Lung shouts the words, *"Prepare to die at the hands of Ti-Lung, Third Talon of Lo-Peng."* This not only gives the heroes a name for their foe, but also reveals the nature of Lo-Peng's "talons."

Ti-Lung is not a subtle man. He *always* uses Sweep, regardless of any allies in the vicinity. He's as much a danger to friend as he is foe, but it looks great cinematically.

PROPS

There are two major props available for use, in addition to the collection of martial arts weapons (all Str+d4).

Huge Gong: The gong has several uses. First, it makes great Cover. It has Armor +6.

Second, the striker can be used as a two-handed weapon causing Str+d6. The wielder suffers –1 Parry due to its imbalance as a weapon.

Third, the gong should break free at some point during the fight and begin rolling across the room. The GM should decide when, but a stray thrown weapon, bullet, exploding firework, or even a missed Fighting roll could cause it to break loose.

It moves 4" per round at the start of each round, before actions are taken, until it hits a solid object. Any character in its path (not a solid object) must make an Agility roll at –2 or suffer 2d6 damage and be knocked prone, as it runs him over.

Fourth, a hero succeeding in a grapple while adjacent to the gong has the option of breaking the hold and instead ramming the victim's head into it. This causes Str+d4 damage and makes a very satisfying bong.

Fireworks: The fireworks are for a major Chinese festival approaching soon. However, they make great improvised weapons.

A character that spends an action rummaging through the fireworks, as opposed to just grabbing what comes to hand, finds two items of interest—a set of firecrackers and a massive firework.

Although not harmful, firecrackers can be used as part of a Trick to fool a foe into thinking he's under gunfire. This uses Agility (to throw them out of sight) versus Smarts (to spot them for what they are). The big firework causes 2d6 damage in a Medium Burst Template when it ignites.

Lighting a standard firework takes an action. They can be fired (Shooting) or thrown to a range of 3/6/12. Anyone struck must make a Vigor roll or be Shaken. (Fireworks can be dangerous, kids, but this is pulp and they're more of a nuisance).

Stuffing a lighted firework into the box causes an explosion at the end of the same round. Anyone within a Large Burst Template centered on the box takes 2d6 damage. It also causes a swarm of fireworks to begin whizzing randomly around the room. Any character drawing a deuce from here on automatically suffers a hit and must make a Vigor roll or be Shaken before he gets to take an action.

- **Ti-Lung:** See page 18.
- **Martial Artists (2 per hero):** See page 19.

THE SCROLL

Read the following when the heroes examine the scroll.

The scroll, which is written in Mandarin, provides two important pieces of information. First, it seems the piece of jade you found is actually one of three identical shards, which together form something called the Jade Heart. Lo-Peng has obviously retrieved one piece, but he's still looking for the other two. Second, the crazy sorcerer requires the Jade Heart to lead him to a scroll which will, "give him back his true life."

While there are no other clues to be found here, the characters do know the Boston Library has a fantastic collection of old history books. Maybe something there can lead them to the next piece of the Jade Heart?

SCENE 4: QUIET, PLEASE

The Boston Library has a huge collection of books. It has some very rare historical tracts, but they are very few in number.

Have the characters make a Cooperative Investigation roll. With success, they discover all three parts of the Jade Heart were stolen from China, but there is a vague mention of the Mongols taking one piece to Afghanistan. According to the Mongol *Secret History*, a jade stone matching the description of the piece the characters found was placed in a secret room behind the tallest Buddha of Bamyan. On a raise, they learn the Jade Heart was once known as the Dragon's Heart and was deliberately broken.

Read the following text aloud once the information has been learned.

The peaceful silence of the library is shattered by the crashing of a door and raised voices. A glance up is quickly followed by you ducking for cover, as two Chinese open fire with Tommy guns! Bullets thud into the tables and tear apart books, sending paper flying everywhere. A loud cry indicates they have friends—martial artists by the look of them. It's going to be one of those days!

The main library measures 12" by 10". Place markers, indicating long tables, rows of tall bookshelves, and chairs, liberally around the tabletop.

Each round *after* the third, a number of martial artists equal to the party size enter the fray. It's hoped this encourages the characters to flee, not stand and fight impossible odds. Although the adventurers should escape safely, they have inadvertently left behind a valuable clue for the villains to find—the mention of Afghanistan!

The goons with guns *always* use autofire, even though they don't have Rock and Roll. They're present to cause mayhem, not gun down the heroes! It also looks great in the player's imagination when you describe bullets blowing books apart and ripping through tables, mere inches from the characters' heads.

Various props include the following. Encourage heroes to use what is around rather than instantly going for their guns by awarding bennies for clever use of props. Due to a recent spate of accidents elsewhere in Boston, the bookshelves are firmly bolted to the floor!

* Books. Light tomes have Range: 3/6/12 and cause Strength damage, whereas thicker volumes are Range: 2/4/8. cause Str+d4, but give –1 to Throwing
* Rubber stamps (if a hero uses one and knocks out a foe, it should say, "Overdue")
* Ink pots for use as part of an Agility Trick.
* Furniture. Chairs inflict Str+d6 damage but give –1 to Fighting. Tables can be tipped over as an action and used for Cover (Armor +3).

Goons with Guns (2): See page 18.

Martial Artists (unlimited): See page 19.

ACT 2: AFGHANISTAN

Tickets are quickly booked on a flight for Afghanistan, with stopovers at Lisbon and Istanbul. Don't forget the atlas trick we recommended in our earlier adventures—it gets players in the right mood and probably humming a certain theme song!

SCENE 1: HOW MANY PARACHUTES?

The final leg of the journey from Istanbul to Kabul, capital of Afghanistan, sees just the four of you and a few goats and chickens as passengers. The steady thrum of the twin propellers soon lulls you into a sleep filled with dreams of dragons.

Suddenly, you waken with a start. Through bleary eyes you catch sight of the two pilots. Why are both sneaking out of the cockpit wearing parachutes? And why can you see a mountain zooming into view?

Lo-Peng's agents bribed the pilots in Istanbul. The devious curs have dumped all the fuel and are now preparing to abandon the heroes to a messy death!

There are just seconds before the plane hits the mountain! Unfortunately, the plane isn't very wide and reaching the cockpit is not an easy task. Assume for the sake of combat the plane is 3" wide and 6" long. The left and right sides contain seats and cargo, and count as difficult ground. The pilots are at one end, just outside the cockpit, while the characters are near the back.

The only door out of the plane is at the back on the left hand side. If the pilots can somehow reach it, it takes an action to open. Stepping out is a free action.

It's time for a fight! Grab the action deck and deal!

Just to make the fight a little more interesting, the

chickens escape and begin flapping around in a panic. All Trait rolls are made at –1 due to the feathers and squawking birds getting in the way. A chicken could also be used as a Trick.

It may occur to the characters to grab the chutes off the dead pilots and leap, with two characters sharing one chute. Although the livestock are only animals, true pulp heroes don't let poor, defenseless creatures die a needless death. Encourage them to be heroic!

Once in control of the plane, the pilot has just one chance to avoid a collision. No matter how long the fight took, there is always just enough time to pull up. Have him roll Piloting at –2. With success, the plane skirts over the mountain-top by mere inches. A failure causes a severe tremor in the doomed plane, as the undercarriage is ripped off!

With no fuel left, the engines sputter and die seconds later. Fortunately, there's a wide expanse of dusty plain ahead. Landing requires a Piloting roll at –2, –4 if the undercarriage is missing. Failure causes 3d6 damage to all the occupants and wrecks the airplane (not that it was going very far, anyway).

Pilots (2): Treat as Goons with Guns (p. 18), but armed with pistols (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6).

SCENE 2: IT'S COMPETITION TIME

The plane has crashed in the middle of nowhere. As far as the eye can see there is nothing but sand, rock, and a few scrawny bushes. It doesn't matter which way the characters start walking—they encounter the same event.

After a day of walking, the repetitive scenery has become boring. Fortunately, the plane had plentiful food and water. Even the goats and chickens you rescued seem content with their rations.

Up ahead, through the haze, you see something in the sky. Could it be vultures, circling eagerly in anticipation of your deaths? No, they're not birds, they're kites! Someone is flying kites!

An hour later, the character crest a small hill and spy an Afghan village in the dry valley below. Judging by the throng of people, far more than could fit in the few houses, and colored flags flapping in the wind, some sort of celebration is taking place.

The wastes can't support large towns, so everyone lives in small villages. Every year, the various families meet up for a huge festival, to hold a market, swap stories, and arrange marriages. Fortune has delivered the characters right into such a gathering.

THE LOCALS

The locals are rather surprised to see Westerners walking through the desert with goats and chickens, but they're friendly enough. A small few speak good Arabic, but most speak Dari, a form of Persian.

The local headman, Malyar, greets the strangers warmly, offers them food, drink, and a smoke from his pipe, and inquires as to why they have chosen to walk through the wilderness. While they tell their tale, the characters can't help but notice that not everyone is so friendly—most of the menfolk are armed with rifles, which they hold menacingly.

Assuming the characters don't make themselves sound like a threat, Malyar announces loudly that the strangers are friends. Everyone immediately relaxes and begins shaking hands with the characters.

Malyar, if asked, says he knows where the Buddha of Bamyan is, although his people do not go there because they believe evil spirits haunts the site. However, before he hands over the location he says his new guests must prove themselves by entering the competitions. To refuse, he adds, would be a great insult to him as their host and greatly upset his other guests.

Heroes who perform well are rewarded with slaps on the back, happy smiles, and a prize goat. Offering the goat to the villagers, results in even warmer smiles and heartier slaps.

Once the competitions are over, Malyar lives up to his word and provides directions. He even offers to loan them his prized jeep for the journey, which would take several days on foot. Food, water, rope, lanterns, and other basic supplies are stored in the back of the jeep.

COMPETITION

There are four competitions, and each hero must enter a different one. Read out the competition names in a random order and let the characters sort out among themselves who enters.

Although the competitions are described only very briefly, the GM is encouraged to add his own flavor and descriptions. Pulp games don't suffer from a little social interaction.

Horse Riding: The horse race is a flat out race. Place 10 counters in a line on the table, then grab a handful of different colored markers to represent the riders. Each "round," the riders make a Riding roll, advancing one marker with success, and two with a raise. Use four d4, two d8, and a single d10 to represent the tribesmen.

Everyone rolls and moves simultaneously. In the event multiple riders pass the 10th marker simultaneously, the highest roll wins by a nose.

Kite Flying: Flying a kite is child's play, and the Afghans have been doing so since they were knee high! The hero makes an Agility roll. Grab four d6, one d8, and one d10 for the locals and roll them. Whoever rolls the highest, wins.

Shooting: The tribesmen are armed mainly with old British rifles. Most are bolt-action with a five-round magazine, but some are very old single shot weapons left over from the Victorian age! The competition takes place over three ranges (short, medium, and long). Every contestant has a single shot at each range bracket.

Pick up five d6, three d8, and two d10 to represent

the heroes' rivals. The two tribesmen with d10 Shooting also have Marksman so they get +2 to their rolls.

Roll all the dice for the short-range shot. Anyone who fails to get 4+ fails to hit a target, and is disqualified—discard their dice. Then roll the remaining dice for the medium-range shot (–2). Again, failures result in the shooter dropping out. Finally, roll at –4 for the long-range targets. In the event at least two people hit the final target, keep rolling off until one misses.

Wrestling: The wrestling is handled very abstractly, so as not to keep one character in the limelight too long. Each bout, the hero rolls his Fighting in an opposed roll against a local. Highest roll wins the bout and progresses. The hero faces a d4 Fighting in the first round, d6 in the next, and so on up to a d12. If he beats this guy, the local champion, he wins.

SCENE 3: DRIVE FASTER!

Equipped with Malyar's jeep, you speed across the desert, quickly eating up the miles. It's not exactly a smooth ride, but it's a darn sight better than walking.

The jeep barrels into a narrow, steep-sided valley, bouncing and creaking as it tears over small boulders. A sharp crack causes you to wonder whether you've broken the suspension, but it seems okay. Must be those half dozen Afghan tribesmen on horses that just emerged from a side valley firing wildly then!

This scene is run as a Chase. Each Range Increment represents 10". The horses have Pace 8, though they are far more maneuverable and travel better over the rough terrain. The characters begin three Range Increments from the Afghan horsemen.

There are Light Obstacles along the valley. These work as per the standard *Savage Worlds* rules. Typically these are boulders, extremely rough ground, or potholes. This Chase also uses a new rule—Event Stages (see below).

The Afghans are fiercely territorial and don't mince around—they shoot as often as they get a chance. Divide them into two groups for initiative purposes.

Should the jeep break down or be shot to pieces, switch to a standard tabletop fight at the beginning of the next round. The heroes' destination isn't far from here.

Afghan Tribesmen (6): See page 18.

Riding Horse (6): See *Savage Worlds*.

JEEP

Acc/Top Speed: 5/20; **Toughness:** 9 (2); **Crew:** 1+3
Notes: —

EVENT STAGES

Unlike a regular Chase, this one has fixed encounters along the route as the participants move through the valley. Space 20 markers in a line along the table to represent the valley floor. Place a different color marker at the 5th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 16th, and 19th positions. These are the Event Stages. If the Chase carries on beyond the 20th position the GM may either elect to create his own events or assume the valley is clear (except for regular Obstacles).

Move each combatant's playing piece along the track each time it moves one or more Range Increments. This way it is very easy to see where an individual participant is in relation to the events.

When a vehicle reaches a Stage it must deal with an event. These are detailed below. Modifiers to Driving or Riding rolls apply to the roll made at the start of each round. Unlike Triple Ace's standard Obstacles rules, these events affect all vehicles reaching the marker equally.

The stages form an abstract map. This system can be used equally well for Chases in urban areas, rivers, ancient ruins, and so forth—all the GM need do is create a few encounters for his Chase scene that all the vehicles must encounter.

References to Driving should be replaced with Riding in the text below. Other text should be tweaked accordingly.

5th Increment: A hidden turn marks the true course of the valley—overshooting it leads to a dead-end. The driver must make a Driving roll at –2 or overshoot the turning. He doesn't get to make a roll next round as he has to spend time turning around.

8th Increment: Large boulders fill the valley floor, forcing the vehicle to swerve to avoid them. A failed Driving roll causes a collision with a hard obstacle. Assume the horses collide while trying to jump the obstacles.

11th Increment: A choking dust devil is sweeping through the valley. The Driving roll is unaffected. Everyone in the vehicle must make a Vigor roll or be Shaken from inhaling dust.

14th Increment: A landslide threatens to engulf the vehicle. A failed Driving roll causes a collision with a hard object. Since the landslide is doing the ramming, the damage is 4d6.

16th Increment: It seems the chasing Afghans don't own the entire valley. Snipers along the valley wall begin taking potshots at everyone below. Roll three d6 for each vehicle on this marker. A roll of 1 indicates a hit for 2d8 damage.

19th Increment: A shallow crack in the floor causes everyone to hold on tight as the vehicle goes airborne! A failed Driving roll causes the vehicle to go Out of Control when it lands.

SCENE 4: GRAB AND SMASH

A short while later, the explorers reach the site of the Bamyan Buddhas. Carved from the cliff walls, the colossal statues measure 180' and 120' respectively.

Their majesty is marred by holes made by cannons during the reign of Nadir Shah (1698–1747). Some claim

he was attempting to remove all traces of the older face from the now-Islamic Afghanistan.

A fanatical devotee of Ghengis Khan's military genius, Shah was actually searching for the jade shard, which local legends said was concealed inside one of the Buddhas. The fanatical king believed Ghengis Khan had once owned the crystal and, as his successor (in his own mind), it was his destiny to inherit it. He was assassinated before he could uncover the relic.

What Shah never tried was good-old-fashioned exploration. Reaching the head of the tallest statue requires three successful Climbing rolls (or the Doc to *fly* up using his rocket boots with a length of rope he can then lower down). Failure on the first roll cause 2d6 damage from the fall, the second inflicts 3d6 damage, and the third a hefty 4d6 damage. This damage is as from a Wild card (so it hurts!)

The climber quickly discovers that the head is not actually attached to the rock behind. Rather, a dark, narrow opening leads into the cliff face.

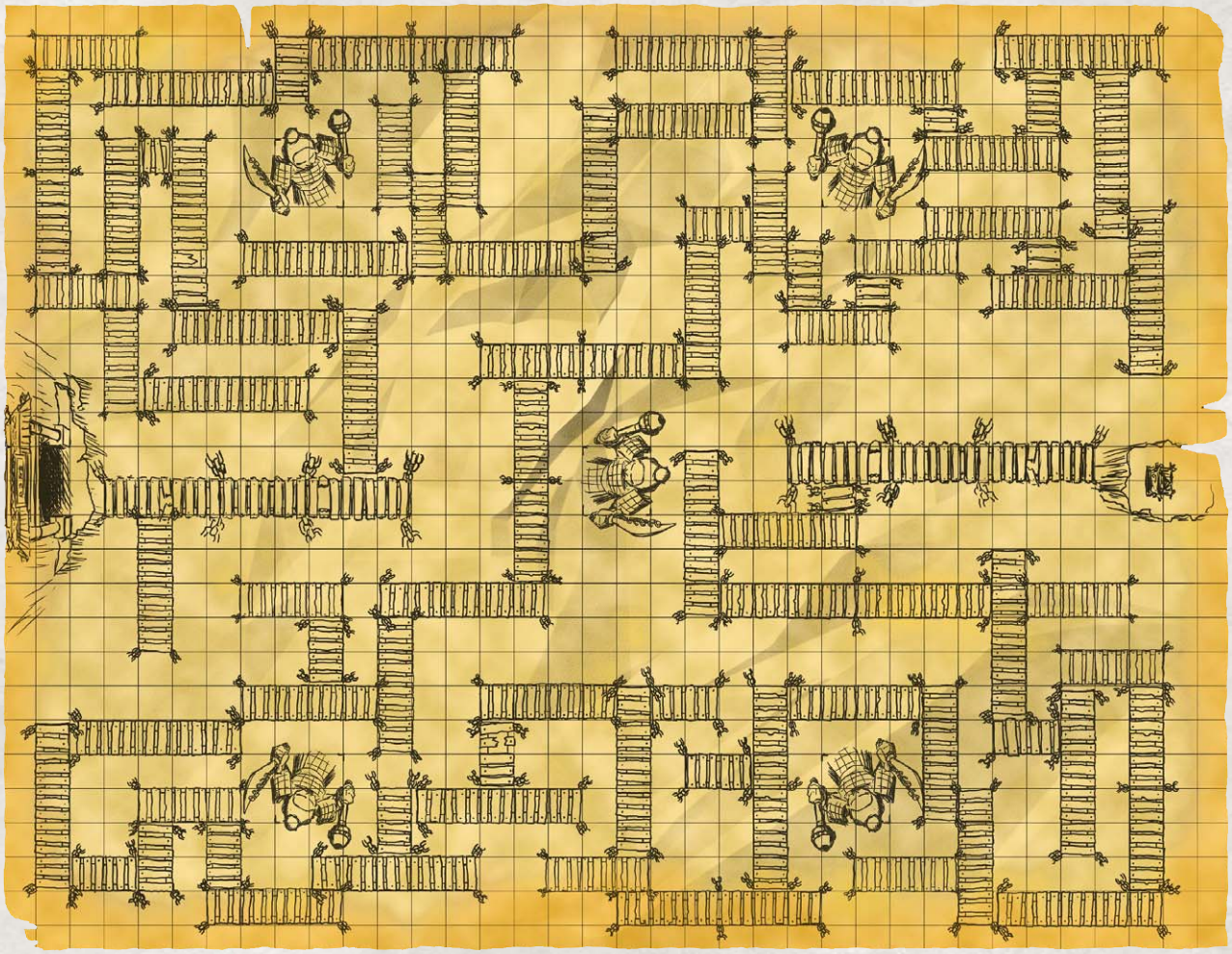
SUSPENDED BELIEF

Crawling through a narrow tunnel, you arrive on a narrow ledge. In front of you are a series of wooden catwalks suspended by heavy chains over what appear to be a bottomless pit! Looking up, the chains vanish into absolute darkness. Colossal statues rise from the pit like petrified gods. Each holds a mace in one hand, its head the size of a large automobile, and a curved sword four times the height of a man in the other. The cavern is so vast you can't see the other side.

The catwalks sway when walked over, but they are very sturdy and easily support the heroes' combined weight. They count as Unstable Platforms, though.

On the far side of the cavern is another small ledge. On this stands a gold box, decorated with strange writing (Mongolian). It's not locked. Inside is a single piece of

MAP OF CHAMBER BEHIND BAMYAN BUDDHAS



jade, identical to the one the characters recovered from Tibet. The moment a character states he is reaching for the jade, read aloud the text below.

"Kill them!" crackles a voice like lightning with a Chinese accent. Spinning round, you see you're too late! Lo-Peng's goons have tracked you down.

Standing at the edge of your vision are a handful of thugs, some armed with guns, others brandishing martial arts weapons. Behind them, dressed in electric blue robes, stands a tall, thin man with piercing eyes. Electricity crackles the length of his long nails.

The instant the jade shard is touched, proceed to the scene below.

- **Shen-Lung:** See page 18.
- **Goons with Guns (1 per hero):** See page 18.
- **Martial Artists (2 per hero):** See page 19.

A SMASHING TIME

Victory! Well, almost—just Lo-Peng's goon squad to beat now and you're home and dry—or maybe not. With a terrifying screech, the statues raise their weapons and begin swinging them! One of the massive maces swings across the adjoining catwalk, knocking a gun-wielding goon into the abyss. His scream seems to rebound off the walls forever.

While it might seem like a good idea for the heroes to sit still on the ledge and wait for the statues to smash the mooks, there's a very good chance the catwalks won't be in place by the time they want to vacate the cavern! You might want to mention this after a few missed blows, before they get trapped.

Special Stunt: A hero on Hold next to a foe might decide to use a cool stunt (or a variant on this theme). He waits until the nearest statue attacks him, ducks, and lets it sweep his enemy off the catwalk instead. This would *definitely* look good on a big screen, and it's a classic pulp move, but it should only be allowed once. Encourage your players to think up new stunts, not repeat old ones—that's boring!

TRAP (HUGE STATUES)

Towering hundreds of feet high and weighing thousands of tons, the statues are a hazard to avoid, not a monster to fight. Nothing the characters can do can put more than a scratch on their surface. Deal each statue its own action card. The statues aim for the closest target with each weapon, whether that's a hero or villain. They go on Hold if no targets are close when their card is called.

Skills: Agility d8, Fighting d8

Special Abilities:

- **Huge:** Due to their size they have a –4 penalty to strike man-sized objects. If a Fighting roll comes up 1 or less due to modifiers, the statue has destroyed a 1" section of catwalk adjacent to the target. Whether it is in front or behind the character depends on relative locations. If in doubt, roll a d6: odd means front, and even means behind the target.
- **Powerful Blow:** Anyone wounded or Shaken must make an Agility roll or be knocked back 1d4" (yep, even flying over gaps between catwalks) and fall prone. Hitting a solid object immediately ends the knockback but doesn't cause any additional damage. Heroes knocked into the abyss are instead left hanging by their fingertips from the closest catwalk to where they fell. A Strength roll is required as an action to climb back onto the catwalk.
- **Two Weapons:** 2d12+4, Reach 3. Each *weapon* may make one attack per round, ignoring off-hand and multi action penalties.

THE THIRD PART REVEALED

Lo-Peng's thugs have totaled Malyar's jeep, but they've left a brand new car in its place. If the heroes have any sense of honor, they deliver the car to the headman to replace his old one.

Malyar is positively overjoyed with his new vehicle and wastes no time driving it round the village to show off. Once he's had his fun, he hosts an impromptu feast for his new best friends. During the feast, Malyar pulls out a map (ex-British Army issue) and lays it out on the table, planning to show them the route to Kabul, from where they can arrange transport out of the country.

As the map hits the table, the hero carrying the jade shard feels it tugging inside his clothing. When it is removed (as any curious hero would), read the following text.

The jade shoots out of your hand and lands on the map. It begins spinning wildly, going faster and faster. After a few seconds it starts inching across the map, ending up on Venice, Italy. It seems the gem knows where its missing sister is located! Of course, Lo-Peng may already have discovered this for himself!

Strangely, it can't detect the piece Lo-Peng already has. This is because he has shielded it from detection.

ACT 3: VENICE

Pick up your atlas and draw a line from Afghanistan to Istanbul, and then onto Venice. On arriving at the nearest airport, the characters find they are expected. The first scene runs at a slower pace, at least until the end, and is designed to allow the players some opportunities to roleplay and catch their breath after the dangers they have faced so far.

SCENE 1: ARRIVAL

Ah, Italy, a land of fine food, excellent wine, and stunning vistas! Pity you're not here to sightsee.

Stepping down from the plane and squinting through the low, evening sun, you catch sight of a smartly dressed man pushing through the other passengers. As he approaches, a broad grin crosses his face.

"Lady Amelia Valentine, I presume? I am Luigi Giovanni, manager of the Grand Hotel, a very fine establishment used by nobility from across Europe. I see you have brought your butler," he says nodding at Brent. "And who is this young chap?" He ruffles Jimmy's hair. "And your personal chef?" He tilts his head toward Doc Davenport. "Believe me, your ladyship, we have excellent chefs at the hotel.

"The airline telegraphed us of your impending arrival. In gratitude for your father's recent donation to our finest museums, we have arranged a suite for you. Please, follow me, I have a car waiting."

He whispers in Amelia's ear, "We can arrange some rooms for your staff, as well. No charge!"

Suspicious as this may seem, Giovanni is who he says he is and the hotel suite really is free of charge. Lady Amelia can confirm the truth of her father's donation with a simple phone call or telegram.

Should the heroes mention their quest, Giovanni thinks for a few moments and then shakes his head.

"No, no, I do not know of any such item. But we have some very fine museums and libraries. Perhaps in the morning you can begin your search there, yes? Or maybe at the tourist office.

"What am I saying?" He slaps his forehead hard. "Would you like me to phone ahead to the chief librarian or tourism minister and arrange an appointment? A complimentary service for distinguished guests." The man really is smarmy.

A PEACEFUL NIGHT

No amount of cajoling, bribery, or threats is going to get the heroes any meetings or information this time of night. All they can do is settle down in their suite and enjoy the hospitality. Since it is well-known Lady Amelia isn't married, the hotel arranges a single adjacent room for Amelia's "staff." There are only two beds, and neither looks very comfortable.

Ask the characters how they intend to spend their evening. At some point Lady Amelia should be on her own (perhaps she wants a bath), or at worst with a single other character (paranoid characters doubling up for security). When this occurs, there is a knock at Lady Amelia's door and a call of, *"Room service! Compliments of the management!"*

A character peeping through the spy hole sees a waiter with a trolley. A large, silver dome indicates some sort of food (there's lobster beneath if a paranoid hero needs to check). There's also a bottle of champagne in an ice bucket.

Alas, the waiter isn't alone! Lurking round the corner is a number of Lo-Peng's goons. They've caught wind that the group is in town, and plan to eliminate them. As soon as the door opens, they storm in. Check for Surprise and deal action cards.

Characters not in the room can make Notice rolls at the start of each round after the first. With success, they hear the commotion and are dealt a card. So long as one succeeds, he can alert his companions.

Señor Giovanni arrives shortly after the fight ends, having been alerted by other guests. He is *extremely* apologetic and promises a full investigation. He also offers the group $200 for not mentioning the "unfortunate incident" to anyone.

- **Goons with Guns (2):** See page 18.
- **Martial Artists (1 per hero):** See page 19.

WE WANT INFORMATION

In the morning the characters may begin their hunt for the last jade shard. Venice isn't a huge city, but it's large enough, and has plentiful historical buildings, to make a house-by-house search all-but impossible. There are three primary avenues of approach, though the players may surprise you with ideas of their own.

First, the characters can visit one of the many libraries and begin searching for references to lumps of jade. This requires an Investigation roll (it can be made Cooperatively). For an "in-joke," have part of the library sealed off for repair work—apparently an American tourist smashed a floor mosaic of a large "X" while searching for buried treasure.

Second, they can ask at the various tourist information offices regarding works of art or buildings renowned for containing jade.

In both cases, success reveals that the Palazzo Malipiero, located on the Grand Canal, has an impressive display of statues in its garden (a rarity in Venice). One of these, the Blind Angel of Venice, has a large jade shard over its heart. The shard, supposedly brought back from China by Marco Polo, was subsequently sold to the Cappello family, who in turn became joined with the Malipiero clan through marriage.

Should the group elect to create a Contact at this point, he or she automatically knows the information above.

SCENE 2: GREEN FINGERS

The gardens are open to the public from dawn until dusk. Assuming the characters arrive during these hours, read the following text aloud. (If they arrive after dusk, perhaps to sneak in, they find the jade shard has already been stolen. However, Lo-Peng appears to them as detailed in **Lo-Peng's Demand**.

The guide at the door gave you directions to the garden, where he said you'd find the statue, but he neglected to mention there's a hedge maze topped with flower-covered trelliswork! You're about to search for a more helpful official when you spot a large group of Chinese entering the maze from another direction. Lo-Peng's goons must have tracked down the shard!

This scene uses a variant of the Chase rules. In order to reach the statue they seek, the heroes need to accumulate ten tokens (move to **The Statue** as soon as this occurs). The tokens represent both time and distance in an abstract manner.

Each round, characters make an Agility roll to determine their pace. Success nets them one token, and a raise two tokens. Characters who want to stay in a single group use the *lowest* roll of the party to determine their progress.

Note that while Doc Davenport can *fly*, the sneaky Venetians have topped the maze in flower-covered trellises to stop nosy neighbors in adjoining buildings peering down on courting couples. The Doc can't see a thing through the flowers. Still, he can elect to *fly* through the maze if he so chooses, swapping Piloting for Agility.

Don't roll dice for Lo-Peng's minions—this scene focuses squarely on the heroes, not the Extras.

Deal each *group* of characters a card for each round of the Chase. If the party split, each character gets his own card. Check the **Events** section below if a Club is drawn.

Although all of Lo-Peng's goons enter the maze together, they quickly divide their forces into small groups. As you'll see below, the Chinese reach the statue first. However, some thugs may be encountered during the search, and numerous fights can break out. When a fight starts, break from the Chase scene and concentrate on the combat.

Split Parties: If the party has split, those with more tokens than the one being attacked may backtrack to aid their comrades. They must give up tokens at the rate of one per round until their total matches that of their comrades. The round after the tokens are equal, they enter the fight.

Groups lagging behind *gain* tokens to bring them up to the total of the characters in the fight, and each token gained involves a one round delay.

Should two or more groups be on equal tokens but not moving together (i.e. they are making separate Agility rolls), they are assumed to have temporarily encountered each other or be close enough to provide immediate assistance.

- **Goons with Guns:** See page 18.
- **Martial Artists:** See page 19.

EVENTS

Dotted through the maze are numerous statues, benches, flower pots (Range: 2/4/8, Damage: Str+d4), gardening implements (Str+d6, –1 Parry, requires 2 hands), and so on. Encourage the use of props in the fights—guns should be considered a bad idea!

Deuce (Crushed): The heroes round a corner to see a child lying on the floor crying. It's obvious the kid just fell from a statue she was climbing. Worse still, the statue is wobbling badly and about to crush the girl!

Saving the girl requires an Agility or Strength roll (character's choice). On a success, he saves the child, but in doing so gives up the opportunity to make an Agility roll to gain tokens. On a raise, he can make an Agility roll at –2 to gain some distance. Failure doesn't crush the girl—she scampers to one side in the nick of time—but she gives her failed rescuers a scowl as she runs off.

Ignoring the girl costs the character a benny for unheroic behavior.

Three (Convenient Gap): A gap high up in the hedge has a bench positioned just right for a flying leap through! Characters who want to make the jump have –2 to their Agility roll, but success or a raise grants them an extra token. Failure causes them to lose one marker as they waste valuable time extracting themselves from the thicket.

Four (Rat-a-tat-a-tat): This is an encounter with a number of Lo-Peng's goons with guns (p. 18) equal to one per two characters (minimum of 1) in the group that drew this card. Let the fight begin!

Five (Rake): A gardener has accidentally left a rake lying on the floor, just around a blind bend. If the hero fails his Agility roll he steps on the rake, which swings up and smacks him in the nose, causing him to be Shaken.

Six (Wrong Turn): The character has taken a wrong turn and has doubled back on himself. He automatically loses a token, but he can make an Agility roll this round to gain more.

Seven (Kung-Fu Fighting): This is an encounter with a number of Lo-Peng's martial artists (p. 19) equal to one per hero in the group drawing this card. Let the fight begin!

Eight (Crowded Maze): A group of tourists are trying to move through the maze in the opposite direction of the hero. His Agility roll is made at –2 this turn.

Nine (Mistaken Statue): A statue with a green smear on its chest causes the adventurer to stop and check it out. Unfortunately, it's just moss. The delay gives the character a –4 penalty to his Agility roll this round.

Ten (Mixed Bunch): This is an encounter with a number of Lo-Peng's martial artists (p. 19) *and* goons with guns (p. 18). The martial artists number 1 per hero, and the gun-totting thugs one per 2 heroes (minimum of 1) in the group receiving this card.

Jack (Do You Have a Light?): A high society lady stops the character and asks if he has a light for her cigarette. Providing a light (everyone caries a lighter in the 1930s) means the character makes his Agility roll at –2 due to the delay. Refusing to stop costs the hero a benny for being ungentlemanly.

Queen (Making a Hole): The hero spots a thin section of hedge. Ask if he wants to push through or carry on his current path.

If he elects to push through, draw a card from the deck. On a red card, he gains one token immediately thanks to the handy shortcut and may make an Agility roll for more. A Joker means he gains 2 tokens (and can roll Agility at +2 as normal). A black card means the "shortcut" has sent him further back, costing him one token, but still allowing him to roll Agility.

Staying on the path allows an Agility roll as normal.

King (Pushing Daisies): A section of trellis collapses. He must make an Agility roll as a free action. With success, he may make his Agility roll to gain markers, but at –2. A raise gives no penalty. On a failure, the character is treated as being Shaken. Instead of using Spirit, he makes a Strength roll to push off the trelliswork he is caught under.

Ace (Tripped): The explorer either gets tripped by mistake or perhaps runs into a fellow navigator coming around a bend. His Agility roll is made at –2. On a failure, he falls over. His next Agility roll is also made at –2.

THE STATUE

This section begins as soon as one group of characters reaches the center of the maze. Parties who have split use the rules above for catching up.

"There it is! The Blind Angel of Venice! But you're too late. A tall Chinese man in red robes and with orange hair already has the shard in his hand. A number of goons, some with guns, others with martial arts weapons, stand between you and your prize!"

Deal action cards! The statue actually stands at the far end of the maze, against the back wall. A nearby gate, placed within 2" of the chief villain, leads to a nearby canal. The area is 5" wide and 8" long. The thugs begin 4" away from the first character to arrive on the scene.

Fu-T'sang-Lung, the orange-haired man, *must* escape this Scene, so save a benny for the Recurring Villains rule. It's important the goons delay the heroes for at least a few rounds after his escape, so it's best to have the villain escape after half the Extras are out of the fight. Much as he'd love to stay and fight, Lo-Peng's orders were explicit, and he's the only person Fu-T'sang-Lung fears.

- **Fu-T'sang-Lung:** See page 17.
- **Goons with Guns (1 per hero):** See page 18.
- **Martial Artists (1 per hero):** See page 19.

SCENE 3: HERE TODAY, GONDOLA TOMORROW

By the time the heroes defeat the goons, Fu-T'sang-Lung has already fled to the waterside. Grabbing a gondola, the fiend sets off onto the canals toward the lagoon as fast as his arms allow.

As the characters reach the wharf, a seaplane with Lo-Peng's symbol on the tail touches down further out on the lake. A figure appears at the door and begins waving frantically to the Chinese villain. There are two more gondolas at the wharf. Each holds a maximum of six people. These are the only vehicles available.

Run this scene using the Chase rules, but without any Obstacles. It's really more of a standard fight in an unusual location, as the vehicles play little part other than cinematically. They do count as an Unsteady Platform, though. The skill used to power the boats is Strength. Poling takes an action, and up to two characters can pole simultaneously. Treat this as a Cooperative roll.

The Doc can *fly* if he so chooses, using Piloting and burning Power Points accordingly. Unless he elects to move at double Pace, he's deemed no faster than the gondolas (due to having to avoid low bridges and flag poles). At double Pace, he gains +1 to his Piloting rolls because he's faster.

Place ten markers along the tabletop to represent the Range Increments. Each Range Increment represents 5". The villain begins next to the third marker, while the heroes are not on the chain on the first round.

Unlike a regular Chase, this one has a fixed duration and ending. If Fu-T'sang-Lung passes the final marker, he leaps into the waiting seaplane. The seaplane then takes off, carrying the jade shard and the villain to safety. It can't be shot down!

Should the mystic be stopped, the plane immediately takes off without him, leaving him to face the characters in one final battle—Lo-Peng does not tolerate failure. Fu-T'sang-Lung fights to the bitter end. In the event of his death, he simply sinks beneath the surface, allowing the GM to use him again in a future scenario.

- **Fu-T'sang-Lung:** See page 17.

LO-PENG'S DEMAND

Whether the characters successfully stop Fu-T'sang-Lung or not, Lo-Peng appears before them in spirit form. He's impervious to all damage and laughs at adventurers who try to harm him.

"You cannot defeat me, mortals," he sneers. "Bring the pieces of the Jade Heart you possess to the Great Wall of China in one week or your friend, Eddie Chang, dies. His death will be on your hands if you refuse."

An image of Eddie, his face swollen and bruised, appears next to the sorcerer. "Hi guys," Eddie smiles weakly. "Lo-Peng is serious. In case you

think this is some sort of trick, Brent, I know you kept a photo of a pretty girl tucked into your flying boots. Some secret, eh?"

The sorcerer claps his hands and the image of your friend disappears. "Do not try any tricks," Lo-Peng says. "Not unless you wish your friend to meet a most horrible death. One week!" With that, the image vanishes.

Brent's character did indeed keep a "lucky" photo in his boots during his mercenary days. Exactly whom the photo was of is left to the player to decide.

Should the characters require further confirmation of Eddie's fate, a phone call to the restaurant reveals Eddie was grabbed several days ago by a gang of Chinese thugs and hasn't been seen since.

ACT 4: CHINA

It's time for the final trip of the adventure. Draw a red line from Venice to Peking (modern Beijing). No matter how quickly the characters reach China, they find Lo-Peng waiting for them on the Great Wall. This prevents them from being able to set up an ambush, which isn't a very pulp way of behaving, anyway.

SCENE 1: THE HANDOVER FROM HELL

The Great Wall of China, one the great wonders of the world. Shame you're not here to enjoy the sights, though. Standing outside one of the many towers is Lo-Peng, his long nails resting across the neck of Eddie Chang. Eddie looks extremely weak and pale.

There are no signs of any goons, but the interior of the tower beyond is concealed in deep shadows.

"Welcome to China," Lo-Peng grins, "welcome to what will soon be my empire! Now, let us dispense with formalities. You will hand over the jade pieces, or your friend will die. After his death, yours will follow quickly afterward."

Lo-Peng is many things, but stupid isn't one of them. He can sense the power of the jade pieces at this range, and instantly knows if any trickery is being used. He uses his death touch on Eddie (who already has 2 wounds) if any fakes are handed over, or if the heroes stall for time, just to spur them along.

Don't worry if the heroes have one of Lo-Peng's lieutenants or goons prisoner—the evil mystic simply blasts them to oblivion with a casual wave of his hand, removing the characters' bargaining chip.

Whether or not the adventurers comply with his demands is up to them, but Eddie's life is at stake. If the jade pieces are offered to him, the sorcerer simply raises a single finger—the shards fly across to his hand.

Once he has the jade pieces, continue with the text below. Just like in the movies, the characters can't interrupt his actions.

"At last!" the sorcerer shouts. "At last I shall be free. You have been most gracious in your generosity, and so very trusting." He runs a nail across Eddie's neck drawing a thin line of blood.

"Did you know," he continues, "that when the Emperors had this wall built, any workers who failed to meet their standards were executed and entombed beneath the stones. Yes, they lie here still, their spirits protecting the wall and helping drive back intruders. I am Chinese," he smirks, "but you are not!"

With that he utters a few words and stamps his foot hard. Suddenly stones begin to explode upward. Withered shapes clamber out shakily. Lo-Peng calls out to them, "Fulfill your duty! Kill the foreign intruders!"

The zombies begin shuffling forward. Lo-Peng laughs again, shoves Eddie to the ground, steps back, and vanishes!

Deal action cards. Divide the zombies into two groups for initiative purposes. Lo-Peng has used a special form of *teleport* to disappear back to his lair.

The wall is 3" wide. This segment of causeway is 33" long—8" in front of the party (whereupon stands the tower) and 25" behind, where there is another tower. The zombies begin the fight 6" in front of the characters.

Lo-Peng: See page 17.

Zombies (2 per hero): See page 19.

NOW WHAT?

All being well, Lo-Peng has the jade shards and has vanished into thin air, leaving the characters with no clue where to go next. Fortunately, the sorcerer has made a fundamental mistake. What until someone raises this point, and then read the following text.

Eddie smiles a wide grin and slaps Brent heavily on the back. "You never did think much! Lo-Peng might be a powerful magician, but he's too preoccupied with his goal.

"Don't look so vacant, buddy. When his goons snatched me and took me to Shanghai they forgot I knew the city inside out. Judging by the sounds and smells, I reckon Lo-Peng's lair is somewhere near the waterfront, in a laundry. All we need to do is track down which one and we've got him!"

SCENE 2: SORCERER'S LAIR

After catching a ride from a passing peasant, the heroes reach Shanghai. After a brief search of the waterfront, they locate a laundry displaying Lo-Peng's mark above the door. The workers are all innocents and make no attempt to stop the characters moving through the building. Read the following text aloud when they reach the back room.

You're too late! A shimmering, golden portal indicates Lo-Peng has already performed his ritual.

Eddie quickly moves over to the glowing void in space and begins chanting. A few minutes later, the portal glows green. "Hopefully I've managed to twist the path for Lo-Peng. It won't stop him for long, but it should cause a delay. Now, get through quickly. I'll stay here and make sure the portal doesn't disappear. Good luck!"

Unfortunately, getting through isn't quite as easy as Eddie hoped. His magic has summoned a number of Lo-Peng's spirit warriors. Hopefully the characters still have those enchanted chopsticks!

Once the initial four are dealt with, another four appear, and so on. Eddie urges the heroes to use the portal before it's too late, saying he'll hold back the ghostly warriors. This is a classic pulp scene, where the characters are forced to choose between completing their goal and saving an ally. Eddie isn't in any real danger, of course, but the heroes shouldn't know that.

Spirit Warriors (1 per hero): See page 19.

SCENE 3: THE EMPEROR'S TOMB

Stepping into the portal, you feel a wave of dizziness come over you. Peripheral images of clawed beasts and strange symbols flicker in the darkness, which encompasses you like a burial shroud. Then the sensations fade, and you feel solid ground beneath your feet. Quickly checking your watches, you see several hours have passed in what felt like the blink of an eye.

Your flashlights reveal a large chamber. The walls and ceiling are lined with bronze plates; wooden statues of Chinese warriors armed with wooden swords and spears leer from the gloom; streams of what appear to be liquid silver cut through the floor of a wooden platform, and ahead stands a jade sarcophagus.

After a few breaths, you begin to feel light-headed and slightly nauseous. Could some sort of trap have been activated?

Have the heroes make a Vigor roll. Those who fail suffer a level of Fatigue for the remainder of this Act. The rivers aren't actually silver—they're mercury, and the deadly vapors fill the tomb!

For now, the adventurers are free to explore as they wish. However, as soon as one crosses one of the bridges (see below) onto the wooden platform, read the following text to the players.

Setting foot on the wooden platform causes the sea and river of liquid metal to begin bubbling. Without warning, humanoid forms, each the color of silver, rise up from the liquid. Their lower legs merge with the rivers and make no ripples as they glide toward you!

Place the mercury elementals in any of the rivers and sea in the chamber. They should be spaced as evenly as possible and not within 8" of any hero. Deal the action cards. Divide the elementals into two groups of four for initiative purposes.

Proceed to Scene 4 *immediately* after the jade sarcophagus is opened.

Mercury Elementals (2 per hero): See page 19.

THE CHAMBER

The circular chamber measures 36" across. From above, it resembles three concentric circular areas. The inner most region is a wooden platform measuring 24" across. In the center, measuring 2" by 1", lies the jade sarcophagus. A wooden statue stands at each corner of the sarcophagus. These occupy a 1" square.

Cutting through it are a number of quicksilver rivers. The GM should place these as he wishes to divide the central area into sections. One quick way is to connect four rivers, each 1" wide, to the edge of the platform. They don't have to be the same length, so you can have large wooden areas and smaller ones.

The second circle is a 3"-wide "sea" of mercury. Eight wooden bridges, spaced evenly around the chamber, allow access onto the central region from the outer zone.

The outer region, on which the heroes begin, is 3" and made of bronze panels. There are no apparent ways out of this chamber.

TERRAIN

Jade Sarcophagus: The sarcophagus is engraved with the name Shi Huang Di. A Knowledge (History) roll reveals he was the first Chinese emperor.

During combat, when time is pressing, removing the lid requires a Strength roll at –4. (After combat, the characters have enough time to eventually remove the lid without a roll.) Inside lies the first Emperor, clad from head to toe in jade armor. Clutched in one hand is an ivory scroll case, and in the other a jade-tipped spear

Opening the scroll case takes an action. Inside is a parchment scroll, on which are written several incantations in ancient Chinese. The longest of these is labeled,

"Reforming the Shape and Severing the Bonds of Immortality."

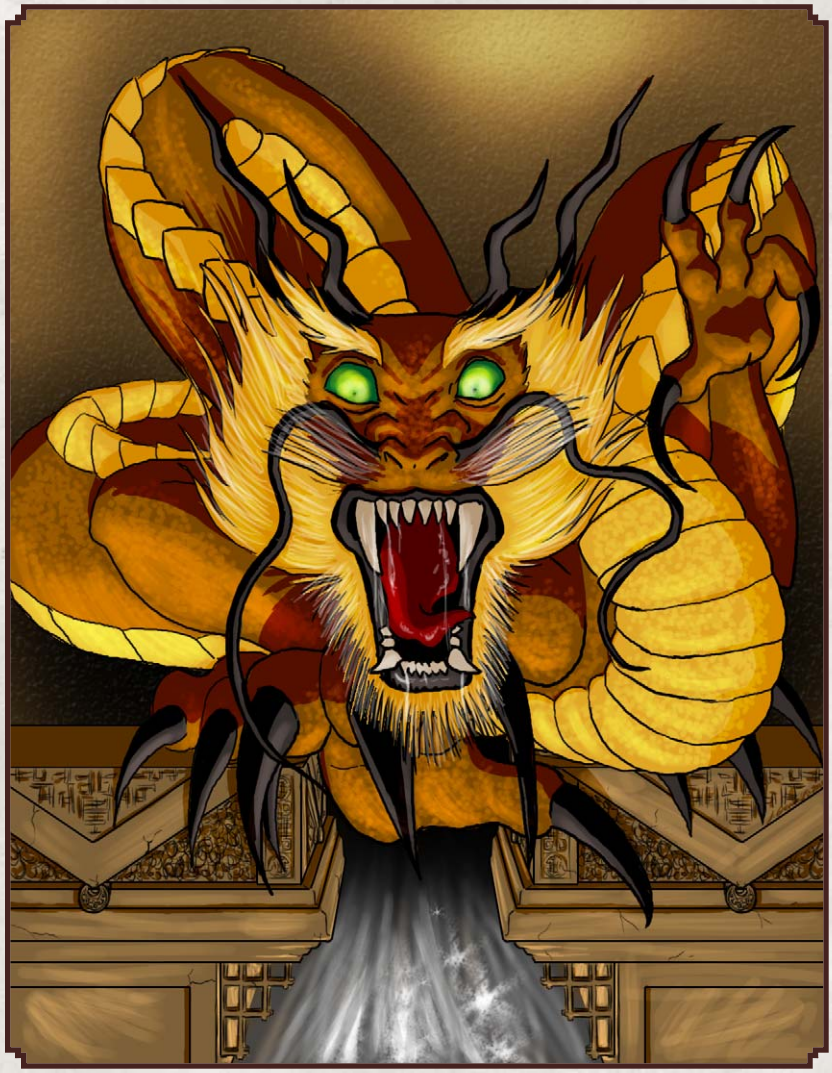
These are gibberish to the party, though Brent can recite the words. This requires three actions. The words have no effect until spoken in Lo-Peng's presence.

The jade spear has regular stats (Str+d6, Parry +1, Reach 1, requires 2-hands), except when used against Lo-Peng. Damage against the sorcerer is Str+d10 damage. This ignores the minimum Strength rule. Grabbing is as per drawing a weapon.

There is a chance a character might want to wear the Emperor's armor. In combat, it takes 2 actions to remove the armor and two more to don it. It grants the wearer the Improved Arcane Resistance Edge and +3 Armor.

Mercury Rivers: The rivers are 1" wide and 1" deep. Moving through them counts as difficult terrain, but also requires the character to make a Vigor roll or gain a level of Fatigue. This can lead to Incapacitation, but never Death.

Any character investigating the silver rivers can make a Common Knowledge roll. Success reveals the metal is mercury. Failure leads to the continued belief they are silver.



Statues: Although the adventurers might suspect the statues are going to animate and attack, they don't—they're just statues. Each statue holds a wooden long sword (Str+d8) and spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2-hands). Grabbing one is treated as drawing a weapon.

SCENE 4: IMMORTALITY AND BUST

Your hand reaches into the jade sarcophagus, inching closer and closer, when…ROOOOAR! A deafening scream of defiance echoes through the chamber. Looking round, you see Lo-Peng and a number of his martial artist goons have finally arrived.

"You would dare defy me!" he snarls, raising his hands in anger. "My destiny cannot be stopped by mere mortals! Kill them! Kill them all!"

It's time for the climax of the adventure. The villains begin adjacent to the portal, which gives the heroes a fighting chance to remove the mooks with their guns. Lo-Peng is still immortal, and remains that way until the scroll is read in his presence.

At the start of the round after the scroll is read, Lo-Peng transforms into his dragon guise. Although he believes he can now achieve his goal, he is in fact in dire straits—his dragon form is mortal! He has two key weaknesses—the Jade Heart, which he wears around his neck, and the Emperor's jade spear.

Once he changes form, allow the heroes a Notice roll as a free action each round until someone succeeds. With success, they spot the Jade Heart is beating steadily. On a raise, they detect it slowly being absorbed into the sorcerer's scales! Unless they act quickly, it will be totally absorbed.

The heart is completely reabsorbed at the *end* of the fifth round. Although the heart can still be targeted with a Called Shot (–4) and Lo-Peng cannot make Soak rolls, damage is rolled against the dragon's full Toughness. The characters have lost their biggest advantage.

- **Lo-Peng:** See page 17.
- **Lo-Peng, Dragon Form:** See page 17.
- **Martial Artists (2 per hero):** See page 19.

ESCAPE TO VICTORY

As soon as Lo-Peng is dead the portal that led the characters here begins to shrink. Eddie's voice comes wafting

through the ether, urging them to escape before they are sealed in the tomb forever! The characters have five rounds to make their escape—plenty of time to grab a few souvenirs and run to the portal.

Should the characters fail, the GM has two choices—he can create an adventure covering their escape from the trap-filled crypt (which covers a vast area) or he can have them pass out from the mercury fumes, only to awaken a short while later in Lo-Peng's hideout (having been rescued by Eddie, who formed a new portal).

Once through, they find themselves in the Chinese laundry. Eddie is beaten up badly, but he remains in good spirits. As the scene ends, Eddie says he'll take them all out for a Chinese meal at this great restaurant he knows.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

EDDIE CHANG

Brent's long-time friend and flying buddy, Eddie is now happily married, runs a restaurant, and avoids excitement. Still, whenever Brent appears, trouble is close behind and Eddie won't let his friend down when he's in a tight spot. Treat Eddie as a Henchman.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Healing d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Piloting d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Throwing d8, Taunt d8 (shouldn't he also have some sort of vague Chinese magic skill?)

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Cautious, Loyal

Edges: Alertness, Charismatic, Frenzy

Gear: Cleaver (Str+d6)

LO-PENG

Lo-Peng was once a mighty dragon. In his bid to become ruler of all China, he warred against the first Emperor. Alas, his arrogance caused his downfall, and he has spent two millennia locked in human form with only a small fraction of his powers at his disposal. But now he is close to securing his release and fulfilling his ancient dream.

Lo-Peng is an immensely powerful sorcerer. Spells that can be maintained automatically last for the entire scene. His spells are the equivalent of many dozen Power Points. He also has other powers, which are described, and used, in the adventure purely in textual terms.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d12, Strength d6, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d10, Spellcasting d12+1, Taunt d10

Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: All Thumbs, Arrogant, Mean

Edges: Command, Improved Dodge, Improved Level Headed, Strong Willed

Gear: Long, sharp fingernails (Str+d4)

Special Abilities:

* **Death Touch:** Lo-Peng may make a Touch Attack (+2) Fighting. Each success and raise inflicts an automatic wound.
* **Powers:** During any scene in which he appears, Lo-Peng can use the following spells: *1 x armor* (dragon scales); *3 x bolt* (3 bolts for 3d6 damage; huge, immaterial claws); *3 x dispel* (dragon snatches spell in mouth); *2 x entangle* (Medium Burst Template; wrapped in dragon's tail); *1 x fly* (hovers); *1 x quickness* (martial arts); *3 x stun* (powerful shout)

LO-PENG, DRAGON FORM

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d12, Strength d12+6, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d12, Intimidation d10, Notice d10, Spellcasting d12+2, Taunt d10

Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 20 (4)

Hindrances: All Thumbs, Arrogant, Mean

Edges: Command, Improved Dodge, Improved Level Headed, Master (Spellcasting), Strong Willed

Special Abilities:

* **Armor +4:** Thick scales.
* **Claws:** Str+d6. Anyone Shaken or wounded is knocked back 1d4" and falls prone.
* **Huge:** Attackers are +4 to attack rolls due to the beast's size.
* **Powers:** During any scene in which he appears, Lo-Peng can use the following spells: *1 x armor* (dragon scales); *3 x bolt* (3 bolts for 3d6 damage; huge, immaterial claws); *3 x dispel* (dragon snatches spell in mouth); *2 x entangle* (Medium Burst Template; wrapped in dragon's tail); *1 x fly* (hovers); *1 x quickness* (martial arts); *3 x stun* (powerful shout)
* **Size +8:** Lo-Peng's dragon form is 30' long.
* **Weakness (Jade Heart):** For the first five rounds of combat, it can be targeted with a Called Shot (–4). Damage inflicted on the amulet ignores the dragon's size (Toughness 12 (4)). Lo-Peng cannot Soak this damage.
* **Weakness (Jade Spear):** The jade spear causes Str+d10 damage (ignoring the minimum Strength rule) to Lo-Peng or the Jade Heart.

FU-T'SANG-LUNG

Fu-T'sang-Lung's specialty is fire. Possessed of a fiery temper and pyromaniac tendencies, Lo-Peng's chief lieutenant is a dangerous foe.

His spells are the equivalent of 30 Power Points (with no maintenance).

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Spellcasting d12, Taunt d6

Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7
Hindrances: Arrogant, Mean
Edges: Combat Reflexes, Level Headed
Gear: Flaming sword (Str+d8, anyone Shaken or wounded has a chance of catching fire)
Special Abilities:

* **Power Surge:** Double spell damage when dealt a Joker.
* **Powers:** During the encounter, Fu-T'sang-Lung can use the following spells: *2 x barrier* (creates 3" of fire), *1 x blast* (Large Burst Template, 2d6 damage; flames), *2 x bolt* (3 bolts for 2d6 damage; flaming spheres), *2 x burst* (jet of flame), *2 x deflection* (heat shimmer), *2 x obscure* (thick smoke), *1 x smite* (intensifies flame of sword. Spells that can be maintained are instead fixed at 3 rounds per casting.

SHEN-LUNG

Shen-Lung carries within him the power to use the element of air and, through that, the weather in general. Nimble of hand and foot and with lightning reflexes, Shen-Lung tries to outsmart, not outfight, his enemies.

His spells are the equivalent of 25 Power Points (with no maintenance).

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Spellcasting d10, Stealth d10, Taunt d8
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Arrogant
Edges: Acrobat, Fleet Footed, Improved Dodge, Quick
Gear: Whip (Str+d4, Reach 1, allows grapple at range)
Special Abilities:

* **Fleet Footed:** Rolls a d10 running die.
* **Power Surge:** Double spell damage when dealt a Joker.
* **Powers:** During the encounter, Shen-Lung can use the following spells: *2 x bolt* (2 bolts for 3d6 damage; lightning), *2 x deflection* (swirling wind), *1 x entangle* (Medium Burst Template; whirlwind), *1 x fly* (Pace 8; carried on winds), *1 x quickness (Trapping?), 1 x stun* (sonic boom). Spells which can be maintained are instead fixed at 3 rounds per casting.
* **Stomach Drum:** As an action, Shen-Lung can drum his fingers on his stomach. This projects a powerful sonic wave in a Cone Template. Anyone struck must make a Strength roll or be knocked back 1" and fall prone.

TI-LUNG

Ti-Lung has been imbued with the powers of the element of earth. He's a hulk of a man, completely bald, and never goes anywhere without his great hammer. Slow-witted but strong and with a will of iron, he's happiest when beating Lo-Peng's enemies to a pulp.

His spells are the equivalent of 20 Power Points (with no maintenance).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Spellcasting d8, Stealth d6
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8
Hindrances: Overconfident
Edges: Block, Sweep
Gear: Big hammer (Str+d10, –1 Parry, can use 1-handed)
Special Abilities:

* **Hardy:** Successive Shaken results do not cause a wound.
* **Mighty Blow:** Double melee damage when dealt a Joker.
* **Powerful Blow:** Anyone wounded or Shaken by his hammer must make an Agility roll or be knocked back 1d4" and fall prone. Hitting a solid object immediately ends the knockback but doesn't cause any additional damage.
* **Powers:** During the encounter Ti-Lung can use the following spells: *3 x armor* (rock hard skin), *1 x barrier* (creates 3" of earth bank), *1 x burrow* (sinks into floor), *1 x burst* (spits rocks), *3 x stun* (smashes hammer on floor). Spells that can be maintained are instead fixed at 3 rounds per casting.
* **Size +1:** He's 8' tall and extremely well-muscled.
* **Tough:** When Ti-Lung makes a Soak roll, he rolls two Vigor dice and a Wild Die and takes the highest.

AFGHAN TRIBESMEN

Fiercely loyal, highly territorial, and distrustful of outsiders, the tribesmen defend their lands the old-fashioned way—with violence.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Riding d8, Shooting d6
Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Loyal, Mean
Edges: Steady Hands
Gear: Rifle (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8), sword (Str+d6), riding horse

GOONS WITH GUNS

These thugs aren't exactly crack marksmen, but with a Tommy gun accuracy isn't as important as how much lead you can fire!

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Shooting d6
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: —
Gear: Tommy gun (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, ROF 3)

MARTIAL ARTIST

These thugs know a variety of martial arts. The GM is free to mention specific styles he knows about, or he can just refer to them as using kung-fu.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Taunt d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Acrobat (and see below)

Gear: Hand (Str+d4), feet (Str+d4), assorted martial arts weapons (Str+4)

Each of the martial artists knows one special move. The number on the goon's figure flat tells you his Edge.

No.	Edge/Special Ability
1	Block (Parry 7)
2	Frenzy (two attacks at –2)
3	Sweep (attacks all adjacent characters at –2)
4	First Strike (may attack one foe who moves adjacent)
5	Powerful Blow (anyone wounded or Shaken must make an Agility roll or be knocked back 1d4" and fall prone)
6	Flying Kick (if he moves at least 4", he causes +1d6 damage)
7	Two-Fisted (ignores multi action penalty when using two weapons—can use his hands and feet with this)
8	Florentine (+1 Fighting against foes with single weapons, ignores 1 point of Gang Up bonuses—can use his hands and feet with this)

MERCURY ELEMENTALS

Humanoid in form but composed of quicksilver, these guardians have orders to destroy anyone entering their lord's tomb.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities:

* **Camouflage:** Gain +4 to Stealth rolls when in mercury.
* **Elemental:** Called Shots do no additional damage; immune to poison and disease
* **Fearless:** Immune to Intimidation and Fear.
* **Invulnerability:** Can be Shaken but never wounded by non-wooden mundane attacks.
* **Malleable Form:** Mercury elementals can alter their shape to avoid blows, giving them the Block and Dodge Edges.
* **Slam:** Str+d6.
* **Teleport:** Once per round, a mercury elemental can sink into the river and reappear instantly in a mercury river square anywhere within 12" as a free action. This does not count as the creature's movement.
* **Weakness (Wood):** Can be harmed by wooden weapons as normal. When moving over wood, the elementals treat it as difficult ground and cannot run.

SKELETAL WARRIORS

Animated warriors of an age long past, these mindless servitors obey Lo-Peng's every order to the letter.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6

Pace: 7; **Parry:** 6 **Toughness:** 7

Gear: Short sword (Str+d6), small shield (+1 Parry)

Special Abilities:

* **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
* **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; Immune to poison and disease; No additional damage from Called Shots.

SPIRIT WARRIORS

Spirit warriors aren't ghosts, but they are otherwordly beings.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

Gear: Pair of short swords (Str+d6)

Special Abilities:

* **Invulnerability:** Can be Shaken but never wounded by non-bamboo mundane attacks.
* **Kick/Punch:** Str+d4.
* **Two-Fisted:** Spirit warriors ignore the multi action penalty when using two weapons. Still suffer the –2 off-hand penalty.
* **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; Immune to poison and disease; No additional damage from Called Shots.
* **Weakness (Bamboo):** Can be harmed by bamboo weapons as normal.

ZOMBIES

Former workers entombed within the Great Wall for failing in their duties, they are now bound to protect China from outsiders.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5 **Toughness:** 7

Gear: Small weapons (Str+d4)

Special Abilities:

* **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
* **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; Immune to poison and disease; No additional damage from Called Shots (see below).
* **Weakness (Head):** Called Shots to a zombie's head cause an additional +2 damage.

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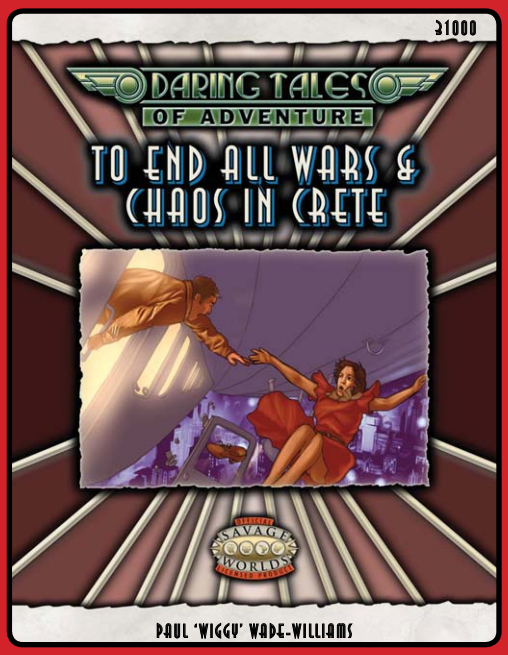
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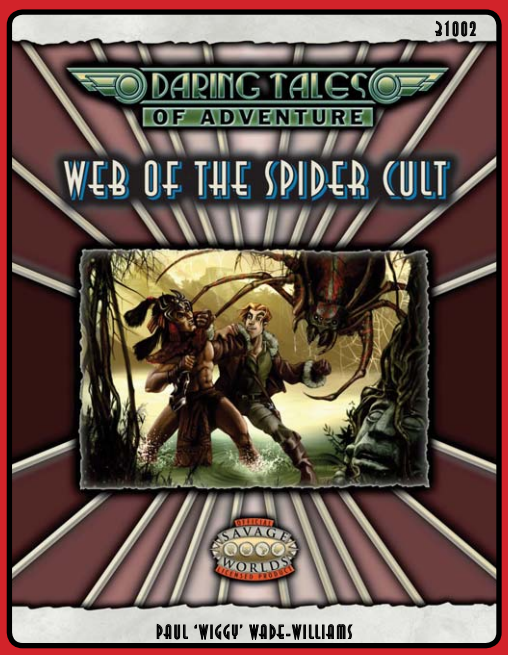
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DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

05

SKY PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN

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SKY PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN

The Devil's Triangle, which only gains the nickname the Bermuda Triangle in the 1960s, isn't that well known to the public in 1936. Of course, that changes when Flight 19 mysteriously vanishes, but that is a few years to go yet. Planes and ships do go missing in the region, but with radar not yet invented, no one is tracking their movements. Most likely wandered off course and ran aground or were sunk in storms. But that was until recently.

In recent months a surprising number of cargo planes and ships have vanished in the Bermuda Triangle area. With trouble brewing in Europe and the shipping owners unwilling to start raising an alarm, what with the economy still fragile after the Great Depression, the public remains blissfully unaware of anything suspicious taking place.

The cause is not aliens, nor methane bubbles (a modern day theory), nor even a rip in time and space. Rather, the culprits are a gang of sky pirates operating from a very advanced flying airfield. Flying high above the cloud layer, they use weird science to scramble magnetic compasses and jam radios before swooping down in fighter planes to attack (armed with torpedoes to sink ships). Unlike pirates of olden times, they don't even bother looting the cargo from their victims.

The mastermind behind this devious strategy is Doctor Werner Schmutzig, an aeronautical genius and a loyal crony of Adolf Hitler. The Nazi plan is to keep the American economy weakened for as long as possible, and so prevent them from interfering in Hitler's plans for Europe.

Schmutzig has agents in all the major shipping companies and airlines in America, who keep him fed with timetables and cargo manifests. One such agent is Emily Brown (real name Amelia Braun), an American-German who switched her name to better blend unobtrusively into society.

She has been feeding information about her employer, Rutger Van Gulden, a notable shipping magnate, to Schmutzig. Van Gulden suspects someone in his organization is a traitor, but he needs more proof. With that in mind, he hires a group of adventurers to fly a cargo plane to Cuba, in the hope they are attacked. Once his sacrificial lambs have been attacked, they're sure to want to help him.

THE CHARACTERS

This Savage Adventure contains a pulp tale based around the exploits of four pre-generated characters. The full character sheets are available for free at **www.tripleacegames.com**.

The heroes have all their leveling opportunities from Seasoned (at which they begin) into Legendary mapped out in advance. Each published adventure in this line earns the heroes a fixed 5 Experience Points, guaranteeing them an advance every mission. All the players need do is tick the appropriate box and start making use of the new upgrade.

Characters: 45 XP.

The GM also needs the pulp setting rules from the TAG website.

ACT 1: TROUBLE IN THE TROPICS

The adventure begins in *media res*. The heroes are cruising at 5,000 feet over the waters between Bermuda and Cuba. All has been well since refueling in Bermuda, but things are about to get a little strange.

SCENE 1: AERIAL BANDITS

A routine cargo-hauling trip to Cuba with the promise of a week's paid vacation at the other end was too much for you to resist. Rutger Van Gulden, the renowned and exceptionally wealthy shipping magnate, asked for you personally. And who were you to turn down his generous offer?

Since refueling in Bermuda, you've made your way steadily toward your destination, cruising along smoothly at 5,000 feet, well below the cloud layer. The only thing that's been bugging you is why he made sure three long, slim crates were placed in the passenger compartment with orders only to open them in an emergency. What could possibly go wrong up here?

Well, having the compass suddenly start spinning wildly isn't a promising sign!

In an age without GPS or even radar, losing your compass isn't a good sign. Any hero who goes to check out a window can make a Notice roll. With success, they spy a trio of fighter planes with skull and crossbones motifs screaming down from the clouds behind them! A failure means they are Surprised.

This scene is run using the Chase rules, but without any Obstacles. The Range Increment is 10" and the fighters begin at Medium distance. Check out the rules on page 14 as well—you'll need them for this encounter.

Only three choices are available to the heroes—fight, flee, or get shot down. The enemy isn't interested in discussing surrender.

Any hero who checks the mysterious crates finds each contains a heavy machinegun and a long belt of ammunition. Mr. Van Gulden obviously *was* expecting trouble. Opening up a crate and getting the machinegun ready to use takes an entire round. The cargo plane isn't built for combat. Only one gun can be targeted at an individual enemy.

Unfortunately, the villain of the adventure already knows they are aboard and has sabotaged them. On a roll of 1 on a Shooting die, regardless of Wild Die, the gun jams badly enough that not even a Doc Davenport can fix it. Note that a successful Wild Die means the weapon jams *after* the shot was fired.

Calling for help on the radio reveals the airwaves are full of static on all the standard frequencies! However, all is not lost. Doc Davenport, technical genius that he is, can use an action to try and retune it to avoid the interference. This requires a Repair roll. During this time he's in the cockpit, and there's no room to fire a gun from there.

Success means he can just about tune out the interference, but the signal is weak and erratic. A mayday should get through, but it means repeating it several times and twiddling knobs to keep the signal locked. Whoever wishes to call for help must use an action each round. Calling for help doesn't actually achieve anything, beyond giving the adventurers a bit of hope.

With a raise, he actually manages to tune into the frequency used by the fighter planes! Listening in to the information being passed between the pilots gives the heroes a slight edge. Deal the pilot an extra action card. He has the option of keeping it himself or giving it to another character, who uses it in place of their own card.

Even with three machineguns and listening into enemy broadcasts, the heroes are doomed. This scene requires them to be shot down! In the event the enemy is defeated or the heroes flee beyond 10 Range Increments, have a few more planes arrive—the enemy has plenty to spare.

Eventually the cargo plane *is* going to crash. Checking the parachutes reveals they've all been slashed open, rendering them useless. So, the only option is for the pilot to try and avoid a disastrous landing. Fortunately, there is a small airstrip looming into view on a small tropical island. It looks overgrown and disused, but it's that or hit the jungle!

Roll as normal to avoid a crash landing, roll any dam-



age required (treat this as from an Extra), and proceed to the next scene.

As the plane descends, the heroes catch sight of powerful, bright lights, flashing red, green, and blue, just above the cloud layer.

Average Sky Pirate (3): See page 19.

C12 STORK (CARGO PLANE)

Acc/Top Speed: 10/100; **Toughness:** 16 (3); **Crew:** 1+6
Notes: —
Weapons:

* Heavy machinegun (Range: 50/100/150; Damage: 2d10; ROF 3, AP 4)
* Heavy machinegun (Range: 50/100/150; Damage: 2d10; ROF 3, AP 4)
* Heavy machinegun (Range: 50/100/150; Damage: 2d10; ROF 3, AP 4)

JU-26 VENTILATOR (FIGHTER)

Built for speed and firepower, the Ju-26 is a decent warplane. Each is also fitted with a powerful magnetic generator, which scrambles compasses and radios in a mile radius around the plane. Fortunately, the Ju-26's radio is protected from this effect by weird science shielding.

Acc/Top Speed: 20/150; **Ceiling:** High; **Toughness:** 14 (3); **Crew:** 1
Notes: —
Weapons:

* 6 x linked light MGs (+3 Shooting, Range: 30/60/120; Damage 2d8+3; ROF 3, AP 2)

SCENE 2: MEALS ON LEGS

Well she's down, and she won't be flying again. You didn't see any settlements as you plummeted to earth, but you did notice a boat at the far end of the island. Whether it's seaworthy or not is another matter, but with the radio fried you don't have much choice but to set off into the jungle.

Characters who want to take a machinegun from the wreckage, assuming any didn't jam, are out of luck—they all got smashed during the crash landing.

The airstrip once served to support a missionary post, deep in the jungle. Due to the native's preference for "bipedal pork," the mission was abandoned years ago. It's been a while since the cannibals tasted "white meat," so to speak, and they didn't fail to spot the plane ditch. A small band begins stalking the explorers through the jungle.

Read the following text aloud after a few hours of travel in the sweltering heat.

Only the sudden realization that the birds have stopped squawking alerts you to the fact something is wrong. Emerging from the undergrowth ahead is a group of natives. While their spears look wickedly sharp, it's the skulls and bones on their belts, and their strangely pointed teeth, that look most disconcerting.

Deal action cards. The natives begin 16" away from the heroes.

The locals are hungry, but they're not suicidal. Once they are reduced to half their number, have each survivor make a Spirit roll. Success means the native fights to the bitter end, his survival instinct overridden by his urge to dine. On a failure, he tries to flee.

TERRAIN

General Setup: The battlefield covers an area 12" wide by 24" long. The long sides are bordered by extremely dense jungle, which can't be penetrated easily. Any hero entering it moves just 1" per round, which requires an action to hack a path, and can't run.

The GM should place six smaller patches of vegetation and trees on the tabletop. Each measures 3" by 4" and counts as difficult ground. It also blocks line of sight. Numerous vines hang from the canopy.

Also position three Small Burst Templates face down on the tabletop. These represent pools of quicksand (see below), although until a hero enters one or makes a Notice roll as an action they look like clumps of fallen leaves. The natives know the area and so avoid the quicksand.

Quicksand: Any character entering quicksand immediately ends his movement for the round. Escape requires a Strength roll as an action. A failure means the hero begins to sink deeper. His Strength die is reduced one step for the purposes of escaping. When it drops below a d4, he begins drowning. Note that quicksand is actually much denser than water—if you don't move, you don't sink.

Vines: These can be used to swing around the battlefield. Grabbing one requires a character to be adjacent to one of the patches of vegetation. This counts as the character's movement and requires an Agility roll. If successful, he moves to any other area within 8". He may not move further this action even by "running."

An adventurer can use Frenzy and Sweep while on a vine, but for the latter all targets must be adjacent at the point the hero declares his attack. If he swings further than 4" and strikes home, his foe is also knocked back 1" and sent prone. Vines can also be used as part of an Agility Trick.

Swingers can be struck while in flight by foes in their path who are on Hold or who haven't acted yet this round. A would-be Tarzan who takes a hit in flight must make an opposed Strength roll versus the damage total or lose his grip and fall prone.

Aiming for a vine is a Small Target (–6). They have Toughness 6. A hero on a cut vine automatically drops and falls prone.

Cannibal Natives (2 per hero): See page 19.

SAIL AWAY

No other natives harass the heroes on their journey. A few hours later they reach the boat they spied. It's old but seaworthy. The outboard motor even has a full tank of gas. By nightfall, the heroes can make land in Cuba and arrange for a flight home.

SCENE 3: APOLOGIES & EXPLANATIONS

Once back in civilization, the characters are likely to want a word or two with Mr. Van Gulden. After all, he put the machineguns on board, so he knew there was going to be trouble. But who slashed the parachutes and screwed up the radio and compass? Something stinks.

Van Gulden doesn't speak to the characters personally, but his secretary arranges a meeting at Brent's home on the local airfield in five days. This gives the party enough time to return to Boston and make a Natural Healing roll.

One of the young lads who work at the airfield informs you that Mr. Van Gulden's private plane is just touching down. Sure enough, a small passenger plane is taxiing to a halt nearby.

The door opens. First out is a rotund man, maybe in his mid-50s. His sharp suit and stern demeanor is slightly offset by a few day's facial growth and bags under his eyes. Behind him comes a taller man, much thinner, and with dark, beady eyes. His suit probably costs as much as most families earn in a year.

Next down the steps is a young man, maybe in his twenties. He wears a flying jacket, which is slightly too small for his large frame. Finally, a blonde of average beauty emerges form the plane. She stumbles on the bottom step and drops a folder, which spews papers everywhere. None of her fellow passengers pay her any attention beyond a brief look and sigh.

The portly gent steps forward. "I'm Van Gulden," he says. "This is Mr. Jacobs, my accountant," he remarks, indicating the sharply dressed man. "The other fellow is Dan Matthews, my wife's cousin and my personal pilot.

"Now, if you don't mind, I'd like a word with you somewhere out of the wind and preferably where they serve strong drink."

Van Gulden makes no mention of the clumsy woman unless asked. Seemingly with reluctance he introduces her as Emily Brown, his secretary. A male chauvinist of the worst kind, Van Gulden thinks all women should be in the kitchen and preferably gagged. Make sure during this scene he answers any questions put to him by any female adventurer to a male hero. Better yet, have him tell a female to pour the drinks.

Once everyone is comfortable, the men anyway, Van Gulden demands to know exactly what happened to his plane. After hearing the heroes' story, he reveals his reasons for hiring the characters in the first place.

"I wasn't entirely straight with you when I hired you. I knew something strange was happening on and over the waters around Bermuda. I've lost nearly half a dozen planes over the last few months and three cargo ships! It's ruining me and damaging our country's economy. And I'm not the only one suffering. Plenty of other craft have vanished into thin air. Thanks to your work I at least know what is happening.

"But I still don't know who's behind the disappearances, and it is something I intend to find out. Now that's where you come in, seeing as how you have a score to settle as well. There's this guy being held in an ultra-maximum security prison out in the boondocks. I had my suspicions airplanes were involved in these shenanigans, so I've already arranged for you to meet him and find out what he knows. In return for his cooperation, he'll get a reduced sentence.

"Now this prison really is hard to get into. The only way into it is through a canyon. Try to fly in above the walls and you'll be shot down automatically, regardless of whom you are.

"In order to see you get there safely and quickly, I've arranged for you to borrow two twin-seat planes. They're fast and armed, and damned expensive, so try to keep them in one piece."

The heroes likely have a few questions of their own. Possible questions, and Van Gulden's answers, are detailed below.

Q: Why did you put the guns on the plane?

A: *"Like I said, someone, not something, is behind this. I suspected you might be attacked, but I didn't want to broadcast the fact by having you go up in a bomber."*

Q: Who sabotaged the guns and parachutes?

A: *"I'll be frank. I suspect someone in my organization is a traitor. Likely someone in the shipping department, but it could be any one. We tried to keep a tight lid on your mission, but word obviously got out."*

Q: Could the traitor be in this room?

A: *"I doubt that. Jacobs squeezes enough money from me as it is, and Dan's got no ambition beyond flying me around and collecting a wage each month."*

Q: Maybe it's Miss Brown?

A: *"Miss Brown has been with me for years. Anyway," he whispers none too quietly, "she's a little dizzy. Heck,*

she got lost in a warehouse for three hours only last week."

Q: Who is this prisoner, and what did he do?

A: *"His name is Jed Bullock. He flew in the war with the Brits for a while, before he switched to a life of crime. He and his gang of sky pirates tried a crazy stunt to gas the guards at Fort Knox and steal all our gold reserves. Some say he's the best pilot in the world. As far as I'm concerned, he's a piece of scum with information I need."*

SCENE 4: THEY'RE ONTO US

After concluding the meeting, Van Gulden checks his pocket watch. He then tells the characters to follow him out to the runway to see their planes landing.

No sooner have you stepped out than two planes roar overhead. Sleek and fast, they pull up at the end of the runway and perform a series of agile maneuvers. A pair of machineguns protrudes from the wings, and a second pair sticks out from the rear of the double cockpit.

"I called in a favor with Howard Hughes," Van Gulden smiles. "He calls these babies the M37A. I prefer to call them 'Stallions.'"

As you watch, the planes maneuver to a landing position. The first one begins its approach, but is forced to pull up suddenly to avoid collision with a car, which has appeared from nowhere and is barreling down the airstrip toward you. Two passengers stick their torsos out of the back windows and let rip with a burst from a Tommy gun! Bullets kick up dirt around you as Van Gulden and his aides dive for cover.

Already fearing Van Gulden was onto her, Miss Brown arranged, via a network of contacts, to have a squad of local hoods visit the airfield and fill her employer and his hirelings with lead. The thugs have no idea who hired them, so they can't reveal anything if captured.

The thugs begin 30" from the characters, but their car is moving at Top Speed. Their plan is to perform a drive-by shooting, then stop and blast away at any survivors from behind the safety of the car. They'll change their plan accordingly if the vehicle is forced to stop.

Deal action cards.

The part of the airfield where the action takes place is 24" wide and 40" long. The characters begin somewhere near one end, while the car is at the opposite end. The heroes' half is littered with crates (the contents are left to the imagination of the players and GM), barrels (see below), and planes, providing them plenty of Cover and props for Tricks. For cinematic reasons, any missed shots pepper the scenery with holes.

Oil Barrels: Three of the barrels (determined by the GM) contain oil. If the heroes don't check the contents, have a missed shot cause a small leak.

Pushing them over is an action, but requires no Trait roll. Place the thin end of a Cone Template on the barrel and rotate it to match the direction of its fall. Thick, black oil coats the ground beneath the template.

Anyone entering the oil on foot treats it as difficult ground. Any roll of 1 on an Agility die or running die while in the spill means the character slips and falls prone. Standing up requires an Agility roll as an action. Vehicles must make a Driving roll or go Out of Control when they enter the oil and at the start of each round they begin in the slick.

Goons with Guns (2 + 1 per hero): See page 20.

VILLAIN'S SEDAN

Acc/Top Speed: 10/20; **Toughness:** 12(3); **Crew:** 1+5

SCENE 5: INFORMATION

With the thugs dispatched, the two planes can land safely. Van Gulden provides the party with travel instructions and reminds them again about the prison's defenses. He adds that they'll be contacted by the prison as they approach over the radio. It's in their best interests to answer any questions honestly.

Any character making a Piloting roll can tell the planes will live up to Van Gulden's claim they are fast. They're certainly more advanced than anything on the market right now, and even the military aren't yet flying crates of this caliber.

JED BULLOCK

Curious heroes have time to investigate Bullock a little further if they do desire. This requires a trip to the local library's newspaper archives and records department, and an Investigation roll. There are only so many papers available containing news of Bullock, so other heroes can only provide Cooperative help.

Success reveals everything Van Gulden has already told them, plus the news that Bullock is supposedly in Alcatraz. This is somewhat puzzling to the researchers, since Alcatraz is an island and its location is well known.

With a raise, they learn that Bullock flew a dozen combat missions during the Great War and received medals for his bravery. After the war ended, he joined a bunch of renegade German pilots and operated as a mercenary, before turning to crime. Most notable of his successes was the daring raid of a zeppelin carrying an ancient Carthaginian silver idol from Libya to Istanbul. The newspaper concludes with the interesting fact that the idol was never recovered after Bullock's capture.

GMs who want to devise their own pulp tales can use this last snippet of information as a hook. Getting its location out of Bullock won't be easy, and should require

some roleplaying. Of course, the idol won't be where Bullock stashed it (where's the fun in that?). Otherwise, Bullock admits the idol was melted down and sold off as silver ingots.

ACT 2: PRISONERS & PUNCH UPS

Reaching the prison from Boston takes two days, since it's already late by the time Van Gulden hands over the planes to the heroes. The next scene begins just after midday.

SCENE 1: THE CANYON OF DEATH

The sightseeing trip is over. After endless miles zipping above the Arizona desert, you were contacted by the prison, and, after your flight details were confirmed, ordered into a narrow canyon, with strict instructions not to deviate from your course or rise above the canyon walls.

The high walls slip by as you maneuver slowly toward your destination, the planes only occasionally buffeted by unexpected thermals, and crosswinds from side canyons.

A glint of light reflecting off glass and metal a distance behind, coupled with the sudden loss of your radio, can only mean one thing…you're about to receive unwanted company!

Run this encounter using the Chase rules. Don't forget to use our new rules, starting on page 14. Each Range Increment is 10", and the villains appear at Far Range. Obstacles are Sparse (–1) and represent flying too close to outcroppings of rock or being buffeted sideway and down by thermal updrafts and winds.

The Chase takes place at low altitude. Any aircraft climbing above a few hundred feet ignores the Obstacles rules, but is subject to concentrated fire from batteries of heavy machineguns. The rules of engagement are *very* strict—any plane above the canyon walls is a target for destruction! Roll four d6 at the beginning of each round. Every roll of 1 indicates a hit for 2d8 damage.

Should the heroes extend their Range beyond 10 Increments, they have reached the safety of the prison. Their pursuers give up the chase and turn back.

Sure enough, heroes checking the tail planes of their pursuers spot the skull and crossbones emblem! However, these pilots are more skilled that those previously encountered.

GM's should run this scene with plenty of description. Bullets don't just miss; they rip up the canyon walls and stitch along the ground in a shower of dust. A close call on a Piloting roll to avoid an Obstacle doesn't results in a simple near-miss—instead, the wing scrapes a canyon wall, or the plane suddenly rolls 90 degrees, the underside just grazing the surface in a shower of stones and sparks.

‼ **Good Sky Pirate (4):** See page 19.

M2C VENTILATOR (FIGHTER)

Acc/Top Speed: 20/150; **Toughness:** 14 (3); **Crew:** 1
Notes: —
Weapons:
* 6 x linked light MGs (+3 Shooting, Range: 30/60/120; Damage 2d8+3; ROF 3, AP 2)

M37 STALLION (FIGHTER)

A Howard Hughes design, the M37 is a dual-cockpit design with fore and aft weaponry. The gunner, who sits facing away from the pilot, controls the rear guns.
Acc/Top Speed: 40/160; **Toughness:** 15 (3); **Crew:** 1+1
Notes: +1 to Piloting rolls due to advanced aerodynamics
Weapons:
* 2 x linked heavy MGs, pilot (+1 Shooting, Range: 50/100/150; Damage: 2d10+1; ROF 3, AP 4)
* 2 x linked light MGs, gunner (+1 Shooting, Range: 30/60/120; Damage 2d8+1; ROF 3, AP 2)

WE LOST!

In the unfortunate event one or more player characters are shot down, continue the Chase for two more rounds. (Don't forget all the modifiers because the planes are moving more than twice fast as the figures on the ground.)

These few moments allow for some cinematic effects as the characters dive for cover behind rocks to avoid lines of bullets, and maybe even get a few shots off with their personal weapons as a fighter roars overhead.

After this time, a flight of planes from the prison arrives (alerted by sentries along the canyon) and drives away the enemy vehicles. A jeep is dispatched to collect the stricken characters.

SCENE 2: HELL'S GATE

With the enemy planes defeated, you make your way to the end of the canyon. Ahead, a vast metal door set into the end of the canyon grinds laboriously open, allowing you just enough room to enter. Inside is a huge cavern containing a complete airstrip. Fighter and transport planes are parked along the edge. Peering down from catwalks as you taxi are a dozen guards, each manning a heavy machinegun, which they train on your vehicle.

As you climb down from the cockpit, a stern-faced man with close-cropped hair and tattoos up his exposed forearms walks across to you. It seems

the dress code isn't up to much. Two burly guards, US Marines judging by their uniforms, flank him, SMGs held at the ready arms position.

"Welcome to Hell's Gate," he drawls. "I'm Major O'Connor, duty warden of this facility. If you'll follow me, you'll be briefed on security here and the various dos and don'ts. Then you can see the prisoner."

O'Connor is a career officer, and knows better than to ask questions of visitors to America's top security prison. He has his orders, the heroes have the proper clearance, and that's all he needs to know.

The briefing is short and doesn't contain any major shocks. Visitors are forbidden from bearing arms, no talking to other inmates, no asking questions about the prisoners, no wandering off alone, and so on. Major O'Connor asks the characters if they understand the rules. Assuming they reply positively, they are *thoroughly* checked for weapons before being escorted through the prison by two burly Marines.

THE PRISONER

After descending deep into the earth via elevator, you are led through a dozen checkpoints, all manned by heavily armed guards, and along countless corridors.

Row upon row of identical metal doors carry the names of those incarcerated in this desolate place. You can't help but be shocked at some of the prisoners—Al Capone, Bonnie Elizabeth Parker, Clyde Barrow, Arthur "Doc" Barker, George "Machinegun" Kelly, Professor James Moriarty, Doctor Nikola Tesla, Shiwan Khan…

One of your escorts notices your looks of amazement and cracks a brief smile. "Don't believe everything you read in the media," he says conspiratorially. "This place exists for a good reason. Now eyes front and keep walking."

Finally your escorts stop outside a door labeled "Jed Bullock." One of your escorts opens a viewing plate and stares inside. Satisfied all is well he slides the panel shut. Both escorts produce keys and slip them into locks. With practiced synchronization they turn them, producing an audible click. The door swings inward as both guard level their guns into the room beyond.

"Take as long as you need," one sneers loudly. "He ain't going anywhere. Knock when you want out."

Once all the heroes enter the cell, the door is slammed shut and locked behind them. The cell is extremely Spartan, containing just a few pieces of furniture and a cramped toilet cubicle.

Sitting on the edge of the bed is a man of indeterminate age. His long, ash-blonde hair gives him a boyish appearance, but his face resembles that of a man who has seen, and lived through, many unpleasant things. He stubs out the cigarette he just finished, stands up, and bows in a flowery, mock gesture.

"Well now, this is a surprise," he grins broadly as he straightens up. "I thought O'Connor was winding me up when he said I was going to have visitors." Bullock pulls a cigarette from behind his ear and sticks it in his mouth. "Got a light? I just used my last match and won't get issued any more until tomorrow." He gestures toward a line of spent matches on the table. "Everything is accounted for in here," he laughs.

Bullock won't talk about his backstory, except to confirm anything the characters already know. He pays close attention to their story, though, prodding for as much information as he can. Having spent several years locked up in Hell's Gate, Bullock is keen to cooperate and earn an early release.

"Well," Bullock sighs, "I'm a little out of touch with the real world right now, but if anyone can help you it's Shanghai Harry. Get down to Havana and ask for Harry at the Blue Oyster Club. Appearances change, so you're best asking around. Just mention, 'The weather in Honolulu is very pleasant this time of year.' Harry's reply is, "Yes, and the dancing girls are lovely, as well.' Harry's a little paranoid, so don't go shouting this out around other folk."

Shanghai Harry is actually a woman. However, this piece of information should **not** be imparted to the heroes at this time. Bullock has nothing more to say on the matter.

When the characters are ready to leave they are escorted back to their aircraft, which have been refueled, and sent on their way. Wrecked aircraft have been replaced following a call to Howard Hughes (his details were on the wreckage).

SCENE 3: HAVANA

The Blue Oyster Club is a tango bar in a respectable part of Havana and easily located. When the characters arrive, there's a dance taking place. The smoky club is crowded with locals and tourists.

Asking for Shanghai Harry, the characters are pointed toward a smooth looking gentleman in a crisp white suit, who is dancing a perfect tango with an attractive, dark-haired woman in the middle of the dance floor.

Shanghai Harry is actually the woman (short for Har-

riett). However, it's more amusing to have the characters believe Harry is the man. This should hopefully lead to some comic roleplaying.

When giving the code phrase, "Harry" responds with, *"Yes, so I hear."* Obviously this is the wrong answer. His English is very poor, though. A Common Knowledge roll reveals his accent is not Spanish, the local lingo, but Portuguese. Still, Bullock never revealed Harry's nationality.

Try to maintain the illusion the man is Harry as long as possible. Milk this scene! The gent is actually just a local Casanova, who considers himself slicker than oil and the most attractive man alive. He definitely hits on any female characters, and repeatedly—no to him means, "Try harder!"

YOU'RE HARRY?

Sooner or later the fun must end, and the characters can talk to the real Harry. She replies exactly as Bullock said Harry would. Harriett leads the party to a small table in a booth and orders a round of drinks. As the drinks arrive, Harry suddenly leans over and kisses a male character on the check. At that exact instant, a man in a Panama hat pops up from behind the waiter, takes a photograph, and vanishes into the crowd.

Harry stops the adventurers from giving chase if they try to detain him. *"Let him go," she croons. "He takes tourist photos for a living. No doubt you'll get asked for money outside. We have business to discuss."*

The first thing Harry wants to know is how they found her. She knows Bullock was arrested, but she doesn't know where he is incarcerated. She tries to get this information out of the characters, but won't press if told to drop the matter.

Once convinced Bullock really did send them, she asks to know why they needed Jed's help. This is the explorers' chance to tell the story so far. When they finish, Harry replies as follows.

> *"I might be able to help," she muses, pouting her luscious, red lips. "I need to check a few details. Meet me at 19 Flamingo Road at 7 p.m. sharp." With that, she rises to leave. "Until then, enjoy the Club. Drinks are on the house."*
>
> *As she sways across the dance floor, her hips swinging a mesmerizing to and fro, a burly man grabs her and pulls her close to him. It's obvious he's far stronger than Harry, and has no intention of letting her go.*

In the event the characters phoned Van Gulden to tell him of their trip to Havana, the thug is a Nazi agent (alerted by Miss Brown). Otherwise, he's just a drunken sailor on shore leave. Approaching the man and asking him to let Harry go, results in a gruff retort for the heroes to mind their own business. Persistence results in a flying fist, which allows Harry to slip out of the club.

Deal action cards.

The bar is littered with small, improvised weapons, such as bottles and glasses. They cause Str+d4 damage (and can be thrown; Range 3/6/12). Chairs and similar sized objects can be used as medium improvised weapons, inflicting Str+d6 damage (Range 2/4/8). Any character wanting to wield a table can cause Str+d8 damage, but takes a –1 penalty to his Parry and must use two hands.

The bar is crowded. Use the Innocent Bystander rule for ranged weapons. Fists and improvised weapons cause nonlethal damage. Assume any bystander hit drops unconscious. If you're using minis, place a dozen tourists in and around the melee. These folk just run around like headless chickens and generally get in the way.

Captives don't know anything of use. Drunken sailors are just that, while Nazi thugs are hired as needed and only receive instructions by muffled voice over the telephone.

Bar Tough Leader: See page 19, but he's a Henchman.

Bar Toughs (2 per hero): See page 19.

SCENE 4: HAVANA BY NIGHT

The address Harry gave the characters is in a well-to-do part of town. Knocking at the front door causes it to swing open silently. All is dark inside.

Harry isn't home. After leaving the club she went to see some of her contacts. They managed to find out some information for her, but it left Harry scared. So she left a clue for the characters and then went on the run. She makes a return appearance in a future *Daring Tale of Adventure*.

Sticking out from a large mirror in the front room is a photograph. It shows Harry kissing a character on the cheek! Written on the back in red lipstick are the words, *Monastery San Angelo, Argentina* and *Abbot Delgado.*

Checking the rest of the house, the characters find Harry's wardrobe open and the contents missing. It should be obvious she's left town.

On leaving the house, the heroes are caught in the headlights of two cars, which flare into life further down the street. The sound of gunning engines quickly follows and the cars begin moving forward!

Run this as a Chase using the standard Obstacles rules. Initially, the characters are on foot and must roll Agility. The two cars begin at Far Range, but have a massive speed advantage (+2 to Driving rolls). The Range Increment is 5". Each enemy car has one driver and three passengers.

Fortunately, a limousine pulls up a little further down the street at the start of the second round. The driver gets out and opens the back doors, but leaves the engine running. Hopefully the characters do the pulp thing and steal the car, leaving the intended passengers, who come out from their house, standing speechless as it roars off into the night.

Goons with Guns (4 per car): See page 20.

VILLAIN'S SEDAN

Acc/Top Speed: 10/20; **Toughness:** 12 (3); **Crew:** 1+5

LIMOUSINE

Acc/Top Speed: 4/16; **Toughness:** 13 (3); **Crew:** 1+8

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

A successful Investigation roll at any library reveals the Monastery San Angelo is in the mountains of Argentina and is home to an order of monks known as the Order of Constant Vigilance. The monks are near-hermits, spending their time in meditation and prayer.

Streetwise can also be used, but there is a –4 penalty outside of Argentina.

ACT 3: THE MONASTERY

The monastery is actually a Nazi front. It's really a covert listening station for spying on the Americans and the British Atlantic fleets. Harry's mention of the name gives no indication anything is wrong with the monastery, though, and the GM should not give any clues that it's a nest of villains.

It's impossible to land close to the monastery due to the mountains. The best the heroes can do is land ten miles away and hire a local to escort them to the foot of the winding path leading to the monastery. Unfortunately, the disguised Nazis maintain a close watch on all the approaches. The appearance of the distinctive airplanes has already been broadcast to Nazi agents across the globe by Miss Brown.

Close to the monastery, lies a small village. The locals are all farmers, tending crops growing on terraces cut into the hillside. If questioned, they are very positive about the monks, praising them for providing extra manpower at harvest time and for healing their sick. Mention is made of the monk's vow of silence (to help conceal those obvious accents). The locals aren't Nazis agents or sympathizers—they're devoutly religious innocents who have been duped.

SCENE 1: MEETING THE ABBOT

Spying on the monastery elicits no useful information. Monks come and go into the village at sporadic intervals, a few villagers enter the monastery for prayers, and everything about the area feels perfectly normal. Thus, the adventurers must approach the monastery sooner or later.

Entering openly, they are met by a monk in a gray robe. He listens to any requests and, without saying a single word, leads them into the building to see the abbot.

The monk knocks at a stout wooden door, pauses, and enters. He gestures for you to follow.

Sitting behind a large desk is a bald man in gray robes similar to those of your escort. Slim of build and of middling years, the man rises, closing the Bible he was reading as he does. The young monk approaches him and whispers into his ear. The older gentleman nods once or twice, and then dismisses his subordinate with a wave of his hand.

"The brother tells me you wish to speak with me? I am Abbot Joachim." Abbot Joachim's accent is familiar—not German, but something similar.

Joachim claims to be an Austrian, if asked. He says he left his homeland in 1932 to come here, partly to seek solitude and continue God's work, and partly because events in neighboring Germany were taking a sinister turn.

The abbot has only just heard about Shanghai Harry from his comrades in Havana, but he isn't about to reveal that! Instead, the crafty spy plays along as best he can, revealing little about himself but trying to gather as much information as a possible. Curious heroes are going to ask how the monk can help, so some stock questions and answers are provided to help the GM.

Q: How do you know Shanghai Harry?

A: *"Our acquaintance goes back many years. Really, it is a personal matter, but Harry is a close and trusted friend."*

Q: Is Harry a man or woman?

A: *"My child, Harry is a woman, and one of fine beauty. Truly God made man, figuratively speaking, in His image."*

Q: So how can you help us?

A: *"Ah, now I am forced to reveal to you a secret. This monastery is actually a listening station, capable of picking up radio communications across thousands of miles. We are all men of the cloth, but I am also an American government agent. But I am afraid I cannot say more on this part of our operation."*

Once he is sure the heroes know too much (basically any reference to them investigating the disappearances around Bermuda), he springs his trap (remember, he received advanced warning they were in the area).

"Yes, Shanghai Harry was right. We can help you." The abbot rings a small bell on his desk and sits back. "Most disturbing affair, these sky pirates," he smiles. "And one you will never resolve!"

The door crashes open! Monks armed with Schmeisser SMGs burst into the room and surround you. "Please, hand over your weapons," remarks the abbot casually, drawing a pistol from under his robes. "There is no need to spill blood on holy ground."

This is the party's cue to surrender in traditional pulp style. In the event of a fight, treat the monks as Goons with Guns (page 20). There are a dozen to begin with,

but plenty more are on hand to ensure the heroes cooperate eventually.

GM Tip: Hint to the heroes their struggle will end badly. If they surrender now, they avoid taking wounds for the next scene, and actually gain a benny to help them escape whatever fate awaits them.

SCENE 2: DEATH TRAP

Disarmed and securely bound, you are led to the monastery's basement. A monk pulls sharply on a torch sconce in a back part of what appears to be an ammunition bunker! A section of wall slides open, and you are roughly shoved inside.

Behind the secret door is a large room. A crane hangs over a large, still pool of water. You are dragged onto a circular metal platform, to which your ropes are fastened. The crane is maneuvered over your position, and the hook is attached. Slowly the platform is winched until it is suspended over the center of the room.

Abbot Joachim waves to the crane operator, who pulls a lever downward. Inch by inch, the platform begins to descend toward the calm water.

"This facility," he says, waving his hands vaguely, "is obviously not an American listening post. No, this was built by the finest minds. German minds! From here we coordinate the activities of our flying airbase, the Luftschloss, and its sky pirates."

He walks to the water's edge and peers in. "Although I am a loyal servant of Germany, do not think me a monster," he sneers. "I am by training a biologist, and am fascinated by vicious creatures. Within the pool are my pets—piranhas. I keep them hungry, very hungry. That way I find they are more willing to perform for me when required. I shall return later to make sure my babies have enjoyed their meal."

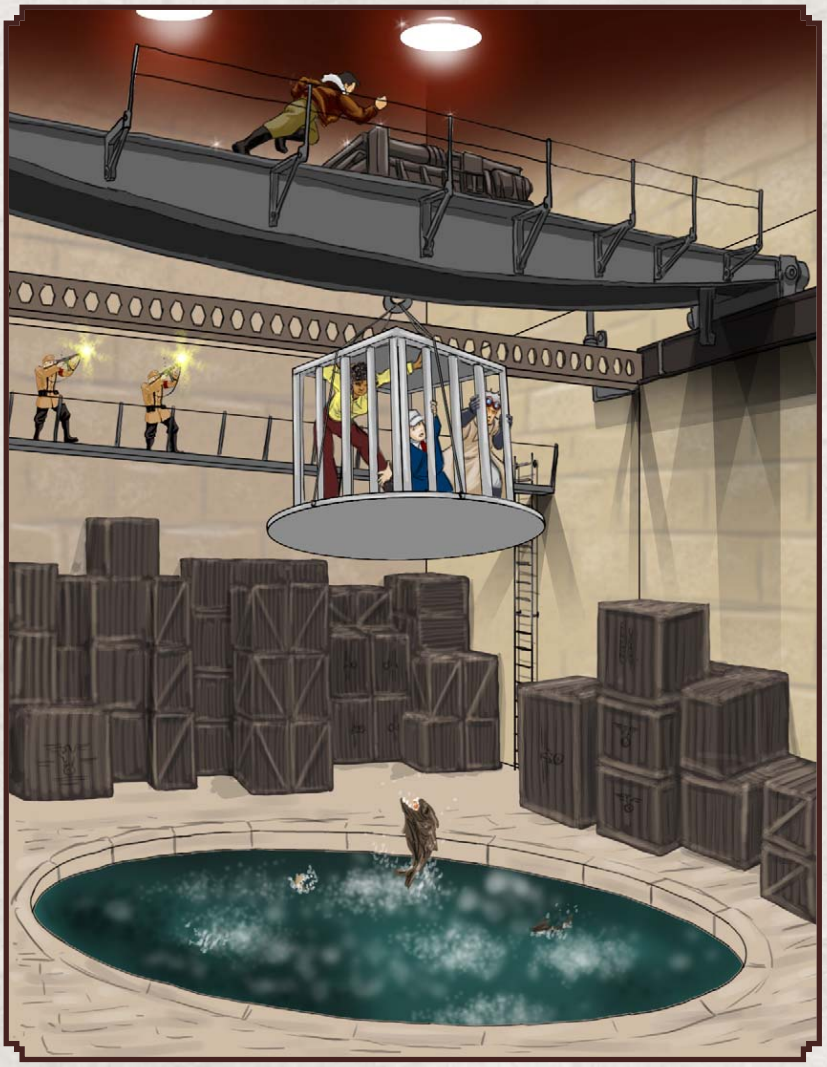
The Nazi then leaves the room with his escort, leaving you to your fate. A handful of goons are left to make sure you don't escape!

The chamber is square, and measures 9" to each side. The pool is 5" wide and is located in the center. The platform on which the hapless adventurers are bound is 1" wide and hangs over the center of the pool. It begins at a height of 3", and drops 0.5" per round. The control panel is located on one wall chosen by the GM. One guard stands in each corner of the room.

The characters have a mere 6 rounds to escape before they become piranha bait. In order to do so, they must complete the following steps in strict order. At the end of round 6, the platform plunges into the water, leaving any characters still on it up to their waist. They suffer 2d4 damage at the start of each round thereafter (from a Wild Card source).

Any adventurer who falls or is shoved into the pool, takes 2d4 from the vicious fish, immediately. At the start of each round he is in the drink, he takes another 2d4 damage. Climbing out requires an Agility roll as an action. Failure means the hero fails, but can try again next round.

* They need to work free of their bonds. This requires an Agility or Strength roll at –2 (hero's choice) each round until successful. One roll can be made each round. Once a character is free, he may untie one other person in a round. This allows for no other ac-



tions.

* The escapee must climb up the rope to reach the crane. This requires a Climbing roll or a Strength roll at –2. Failure means the character makes little headway, but can roll again next round. On a critical failure, the climber falls into the piranha pool, adjacent to the platform. He takes falling damage as if from 20', and 2d4 damage from the hungry fish.
* To reach safe ground, the character has to clamber along the crane boom. This is a Climbing roll to shimmy over or an Agility roll at –2 to walk across. Failure and critical failure are as above.
* Once over dry ground, the character must stop the crane. The lever is extremely rusty and very stiff. Moving it requires a Strength roll. With success, the crane stops descending. A raise, or second success on a subsequent round, is required for it to elevate. Moving the crane over dry ground takes an action from the operator. It moves 3" per round.

The guards, while not geniuses, aren't simply going to stand by and let the characters escape. They open fire with their guns, but only at heroes making a break for it—those tied to the platform are never targeted. Characters climbing the rope or moving along the crane who take a hit must make an Agility roll opposed by the damage, or fall.

Goons with Guns (1 per hero): See page 20.

SCENE 3: HUE & CRY

Activating the secret door, the heroes can now escape into the monastery. Their gear is lying in the next room—the ammunition bunker. Destroying the monastery, and so crippling the vile Nazis' intelligence gathering facilities, is likely on their minds, right now.

There are plenty of explosives and timers. Unfortunately, the timers are all pencil fuses (which rely on acid to eat through a wire and activate the detonator), so they're not very accurate. Still, the room is big, the explosives powerful, and there is no ticking noise to alert guards. Setting a fuse is extremely simple—crack the fuse to release the acid, and stick it into a lump of explosive. Then run and wait.

Characters concerned about injuring the locals have no worries—the village lies well outside the predicted blast radius.

Most of the monks are currently in the refectory, so there are few guards on patrol. As the heroes sneak past a room with an open door, they hear a voice over a radio. It's female and speaking fluent German.

"Congratulations on apprehending those meddling fools," a female voice says. "I shall contact Herr Doctor Schmutzig and inform him Operation Headless Eagle can proceed as planned." The voice, although distorted and crackly, is familiar. Yes, it's definitely Emily Brown, van Gulden's secretary!

Some characters might wish to search the monastery for Abbot Joachim. Remind them that first the abbot is likely to be well guarded, and second, the Nazis obviously have some dastardly plan that needs foiling—any time spent on personal grudges may cost innocent lives.

On reaching the courtyard to make their final escape, the characters run into a guard patrol. The courtyard is 10" long and 8" wide. A set of double gates, currently open, are in the center of the opposite wall. Four guards are stationed on the ground and four up on wooden walkways. Some crates and barrels provide the characters with opportunities to seek Cover.

The gunfire attracts a lot of attention. Within seconds, an alarm klaxon sounds, and the bells begin ringing out. Hanging around for long is not a wise option. As soon as the last hero vacates the courtyard, move immediately to the next section.

Goons with Guns (2 per hero): See page 20.

RUN!

As the characters run from the monastery, a large group of monks give Chase. Don't worry about exactly how many—there are enough to make running the sensible option.

They begin at Far Range. This is a longer distance Chase, so the Range Increment is 10". Since they don't wish to blow their cover just yet, the Nazis don't use guns. They intend to capture the characters and beat them senseless. The characters don't have to worry about such things, and so can use their guns as they wish.

There are no Obstacles. Instead, any hero who draws a Club must make his Agility roll or fall. He gains no distance this round, and makes his next Agility roll at –2 (to account for the time spent getting to his feet).

At the start of round 4, the Chase enters the village. The monks begin shouting loudly, accusing the fleeing adventurers of stealing their sacred cross. Well, that gets the locals suitably riled, and they join the Chase as well! They begin just two Range Increments behind the last-placed character. Treat the mob as having Agility d6 for these purposes.

The mob makes it very hard to target the Nazis. Ranged attacks are made at –2 so long as the villagers are ahead of the monks, and any roll of 1 or less (regardless of Wild Die) strikes a villager. That should be a deterrent for gun-happy escapees.

This scene isn't designed to get the characters captured again—it's about the cinematic visuals of the characters being chased by a mob of angry villagers and a group of monks! Of course, the party should always believe getting caught means a severe beating.

Should the mob or monks reach the same Range Increment as a character, they launch a fusil of fists. Treat this as a swarm attack, but causing 2d6 damage. Since there are dozens of blows landing, this damage is treated as being dealt by a Wild Card. If escape looks unlikely,

have them come across a truck parked by the side of the road. The mob gives up the chase as the truck races away.

Whether the characters outrun the mob (i.e. they extend their distance to more than 10 Range Increments) or find a truck, the monastery explodes exactly at that point, ending at least part of the Nazi plot.

SCENE 4: BACK IN BOSTON

The characters are unable to reach Van Gulden by telephone, thus forcing them to fly to Boston at best speed. Only when they reach his offices can they talk to him. He's shocked that Miss Brown is a Nazi spy, but he suspects, "nothing less than treachery from a woman." Miss Brown is currently at one of his warehouses, overseeing some business. Van Gulden provides directions.

Should the characters think to phone ahead, the warehouse supervisor answers the telephone. He takes down any details, and promises to have Miss Brown delayed until the characters arrive. Naturally he does nothing of the sort, what with him being a fellow Nazi and all.

On enquiring at the warehouse, the characters are directed toward an office. Through the large windows, which face onto the warehouse, they see Miss Brown is on the telephone. She's actually just receiving a call from a Nazi agent in Argentina telling her the monastery has exploded and the heroes are not among the dead! At that moment, she turns and spots the protagonists!

Deal action cards.

A number of the workers in the warehouse are actually thugs hired by Miss Brown as her personal army. Her first action is to use the warehouse's loudspeaker system to call them to her aid. She then whips out a knife and throws it through the window at the nearest hero. Penetrating the glass reduces any damage by a single point.

Don't worry if Miss Brown is captured or Incapacitated—that's part of the plan. When the fight ends, proceed to the next section—**The Traitor Speaks**.

TERRAIN

The warehouse is 8" wide and 12" long. Half the floor space is covered in stacks of barrels. Gaps between these stacks form a network of "corridors" through the warehouse. The office measures 2" square and is situated in the top right corner. The door the heroes enter by is in the center of the right hand wall.

Barrels: The stacks can be toppled over. This requires a Strength roll as an action. A toppled stack fills two adjacent squares. Anyone in these must make an Agility roll or suffer 3d6 damage. Treat moving through toppled barrels as difficult ground. The barrels contain large fish preserved in oil (Str+d4 damage for a fish slap).

Opening a single barrel and tipping out the contents creates a Small Burst Template of oil and fish. Movement through it is difficult ground. In addition, anyone entering the oil or beginning their turn under the template must make an Agility roll or fall prone.

Fire Hose: This is located outside the office. It functions in a manner similar to a flamethrower. Anyone in the path, who fails to beat the attacker's Shooting roll, is struck by the spray. Victims make a Strength roll (–2 if prone) opposed by the hose's "damage" of 2d10". Failure means the victim is knocked back 1" and sent prone. If he hits a solid object, such as a barrel, he is automatically Shaken as well.

Miss Brown: See page 18.

Bar Toughs (2 per hero): See page 19. They are armed with a variety of hand weapons (Str+d6).

THE TRAITOR SPEAKS

Whether Incapacitated or captured, Miss Brown is capable of speech after the fight ends. Indeed, she is very keen to speak.

"Pah!" she spits. "You think you have won? Right now a plane full of your top economic advisors and businessmen is heading to a conference in Cuba. They will never make it alive. Their deaths will cause economic chaos for decades. You may have thwarted our plans to gas the American government, but you cannot stop us this time!"

The heroes may have a few questions for Miss Brown. Sample questions and answers are provided below. She's basically an arrogant and fanatical Nazi who despises the characters if the GM needs other answers.

Q: Why are you helping the Nazis?

A: *"My real name is Amelia Braun. My parents were both German. I was recruited years ago and placed in a position where I would be useful to the Fatherland. My loyalties lie only with Herr Hitler."*

Q: What's a Luftschloss?

A: *"Ignorant savages! It is a marvel of German engineering, a flying airfield capable of carrying out attacks anywhere in the world. With it we shall reign supreme over the sheep you call humanity."*

Q: How did you know we foiled your plan?

A: *"Isn't it obvious? No, maybe you are not as clever as I thought. Miss Knight informed us of your interference. Oh yes, we have been watching you for some time now."*

Read the following aloud when you're ready to move the game along.

Miss Brown suddenly snaps her teeth together. You hear a faint crunch of glass. The traitor spasms, briefly, then goes rigid and slumps to the floor. Poison!

Miss Brown is dead and there's no hope of changing that. At that moment, Van Gulden arrives with the local police. Proceed with the final Act.

ACT 4: STORMY ENDING

Van Gulden dismisses any notion of contacting the FBI as a waste of time, stating how bureaucracy will get in the way of progress. Instead, he suggests an alternate plan. He'll phone ahead to Howard Hughes while the heroes get their plans to his factory. Hughes likely has something that can help them.

SCENE 1: HOT STUFF

Sure enough, Howard Hughes does have something up his sleeve! He greets the characters personally when they reach his private airfield. He makes suitable comments on the airplanes he's loaned them, such as them being in good condition after seeing action or mentioning the number of bullet holes. Any badly damaged planes (2+ wounds) are swapped for brand new ones of identical design. Hughes gets his technicians to mount a rocket booster to each airplane's wings.

"These are new designs," he says, patting one of the rockets. "Just press the big red button on the control stick and these boosters will fire up. They're good for plenty of hours' flight and should get you where you're going in time for the party.

"Just don't hit the red button again while they're working, or they'll drop off and continue traveling on their own until they run out of fuel or hit something. To cut them off, use the yellow button."

Once the heroes are ready, they can mount up and take to the skies.

THE HEAT IS ON

Once airborne, you punch the red button. Sudden acceleration forces you back into your seats as the boosters kick into life. Glancing to the wings, you see jets of flame from the rockets, lighting up the sky behind you.

Suddenly there's a flash of light from the ground, and another, and another. Some sort of rocket-powered projectile has been launched at you!

Hughes' voice comes over the radio. "These missiles are prototypes someone stole a few months ago. They home in on heat sources! Cut your rocket boosters and fly low! Try to lose them!"

The Nazis stole the prototypes as part of their plans for global domination. Hughes' company has plentiful Nazi agents on its staff, and they alerted their comrades to the characters' arrival.

This scene is run as a Chase at a very low altitude, and makes use of our Event Stages rules (see below). The missiles are divided into pairs, though they make a separate Piloting roll. Heroes flying at higher altitudes don't use the Event Stages, but they have to face more maneuverable missiles.

Two missiles follow each plane, having locked onto its heat signature. Each Range Increment between vehicles represents 10".

The heat-seeking rockets have a variable Piloting skill. At ground-hugging altitude, they have Piloting d6 (being confused by multiple heat sources and prone to erratic maneuvers), but above this height their Piloting is d10. Regardless, each pair draws its own action card. Their Top Speed is 200", making them faster than the planes. They are otherwise treated as being aircraft.

Ranged attacks against a missile have a –4 penalty. They have Toughness 8. When they take a wound, they explode.

Should one reach the same Range Increment as a plane it makes a Force maneuver. With success, it strikes home, causing 3d8 damage (AP 4). On a failure, it overshoots and must loop around, dropping it back one Range Increment.

EVENT STAGES

Unlike a regular Chase, this one has fixed encounters along the route as the aircraft roar over the landscape. Space 20 markers in a line along the table to present the chase area. Place a different color marker at the 5th, 8th, 11th, 14th, and 17th positions. These are the Event Stages. If the Chase carries on beyond the 20th position the GM may either elect to create his own events or assume the way is clear (except for regular Obstacles).

Move each aircraft or missile's playing piece along the track each time it moves one or more Range Increments. This way it is very easy to see where an individual participant is in relation to the events.

When a vehicle reaches a Stage it must deal with an event. These are detailed below. Modifiers to Piloting rolls apply to the roll made at the start of each round. Unlike Triple Ace's standard Obstacles rules, these events affect all vehicles reaching the marker equally.

The stages form an abstract map. This system can be used equally well for Chases in urban areas, canyons, ancient ruins, and so forth—all the GM need do is create a few encounters for his Chase scene that all the vehicles must encounter.

5th Increment: Low wires require the pilot to take emergency evasive action. This is a Piloting roll at –2. On a failure, he collides with a soft Obstacle. If the planes are on different Range Increments, the tailing craft can avoid the wires with a straight Piloting roll, having seen his buddy pull up.

8th Increment: A field dotted with haystacks makes a great place to try and shake a tail! Ask the pilot whether he wants to weave or avoid.

Weaving requires a Piloting roll at –2. Failure in-

volves a slight collision with a soft Obstacle. A critical failure strikes a hard Obstacle as the plane plows straight through one.

Avoiding the stacks completely (flying to one side or over) requires a regular Piloting roll, but it means the missiles avoid them as well.

11th Increment: Now this is literal barnstorming! The hero has a chance to cause the missile to hit a barn. All he has to do is fly through the open doors and out the back (the rear doors are open as well). Chickens can opt to go around. If the hero goes through the barn, the missiles tailing him *must* do the same.

Barnstorming requires a Piloting roll at –2. Failure involves a slight collision with a soft Obstacle. A Critical failure strikes a hard Obstacle. An exploding missile destroys the barn, removing this Event Stage for tailing objects.

Avoiding the barn (flying to one side or over) requires a regular Agility roll, but it means the missiles avoid it as well.

14th Increment: Rows of greenhouses lie ahead. Brilliant sunlight reflects from the glass, potentially capable of fooling a missile's primitive sensors. Pilots can either skim above them at Ground altitude, or fly higher, and avoid any risk of a collision.

Skimming requires a Piloting roll at –2. Failure involves a slight collision with a soft Obstacle. A critical failure strikes a hard Obstacle as the plane plows straight through one.

Avoiding the glass houses completely (flying to one side or over) requires a regular Piloting roll, but it means the missiles avoid them as well.

17th Increment: A farmer has lit a bonfire in some deserted scrubland. It's a great source of heat, but there's a lot of smoke as well. The pilot has two choices—fly low over it (Ground altitude) or avoid it.

Aiming to skim the fire requires a Piloting roll at –2 due to the reduced visibility. On a failure, the plane goes Out of Control as the pilot becomes momentarily disoriented. With success, any missiles tailing the airplane follow. They suffer a –2 penalty due to the distraction of a large heat source. With failure, the missile targets the fire and explodes!

Avoiding the fire (flying to one side or high above) requires a regular Piloting roll, but it means the missiles avoid it as well.

SCENE 2: AIR CAVALRY

You've refueled at Bermuda and are heading south, along the projected flight path of the passenger plane. The sky has gradually darkened and the wind increased. It looks like you're flying straight into a tropical storm!

Your radios crackle to life. "This is Van Gulden," a voice says between bursts of static as lightning begins to rip the sky apart. "Listen, Hughes' men have been doing some calculations. They reckon the dignitaries' airplane should be about 30 miles from Havana. Assuming you followed the best route, you should be…." The radio breaks into a mass of static. Your compass has also begun behaving erratically.

Descending beneath the clouds, you spy your target. A flight of four sky pirate planes are already hot on its tail, guns blazing. A warning light on your control panel indicates the rocket thrusters are almost out of juice.

Although this scene is a combat one, it uses the base Chase mechanics. There are no Obstacles.

The Range Increment is 10", and the fighters begin at Extreme distance. Once the characters join the fray, the sky pirates leave the passenger plane and focus on those capable of shooting them down—they can quickly catch and gun down their intended victims. Deal each of the four planes its own action card.

The lighting conditions are Dark (–2) due to the storm.

GM's should note that any heroes' aircraft shot out of the sky mean the end of the adventure for the crew. Keeping the planes airborne should be a priority for the characters and the GM. Fudging a die roll or two is okay, so long as the end result action feels exciting.

Clever players may try to use the rocket boosters as a missile. That's cool, and it's why we had Hughes mention depressing the red button twice. Each booster is a one-shot device. It has Range 70/150/280 and causes 3d8 damage. However, it's slow compared to a bullet. An enemy gets a chance to avoid the projectile by making a Piloting roll opposed by the gunner's Shooting.

As the last plane nosedives into the ocean, the characters spot a lone sky pirate high above them. He doesn't appear to have seen them. Allow the heroes a Common Knowledge roll if they talk about shooting it down. With success, they realize they can follow the plane back to its base. They just need to fly carefully to avoid being seen.

The loss of the enemy planes doesn't free up radio equipment. The Luftschloss is broadcasting a more powerful disruption beam.

‼ **Good Sky Pirate (4):** See page 19.

M2C VENTILATOR (FIGHTER)

Acc/Top Speed: 20/150; **Toughness:** 14 (3); **Crew:** 1
Notes: —
Weapons:

* 6 x linked light MGs (+3 Shooting, Range: 30/60/120; Damage 2d8+3; ROF 3, AP 2)

M37 STALLION (FIGHTER)

Acc/Top Speed: 40/160; **Toughness:** 15 (3); **Crew:** 1+1
Notes: +1 to Piloting rolls due to advanced aerodynamics

Weapons:

* 2 x linked heavy MGs, pilot (+1 Shooting, Range: 50/100/150; Damage: 2d10+1; ROF 3, AP 4)
* 2 x linked light MGs, gunner (+1 Shooting, Range: 30/60/120; Damage 2d8+1; ROF 3, AP 2)

SCENE 3: SABOTAGE

By following the lone fighter, the characters can indeed locate the flying airfield.

Through a break in the dark, turbulent clouds, you catch sight of the Luftschloss. It's exactly as Miss Brown described it—a flying airfield! It resembles the deck of an aircraft carrier, complete with a conning tower. Four huge cylinders stick out of the side, angled downward, but there's no sign of any propellers. They're obviously engines to keep the flying war machine aloft, but they're not generating any visible source of lift.

The sky pirate's plane has just touched down and is taxiing into a hangar. By the looks of things, the crew is keeping indoors to avoid being blown overboard in the rapidly strengthening winds. The runway is clear.

The Luftschloss isn't a target to be shot down. Aside from its huge Toughness, it has Heavy Armor, making it impervious to the characters' weapons. Any hope of bringing it down lies in getting inside and sabotaging it.

While the hangar is thoroughly secured by the time the heroes land and get out their planes, a Nazi has accidentally left one of the bulkhead doors open into the main operations and accommodation area at the rear of the craft.

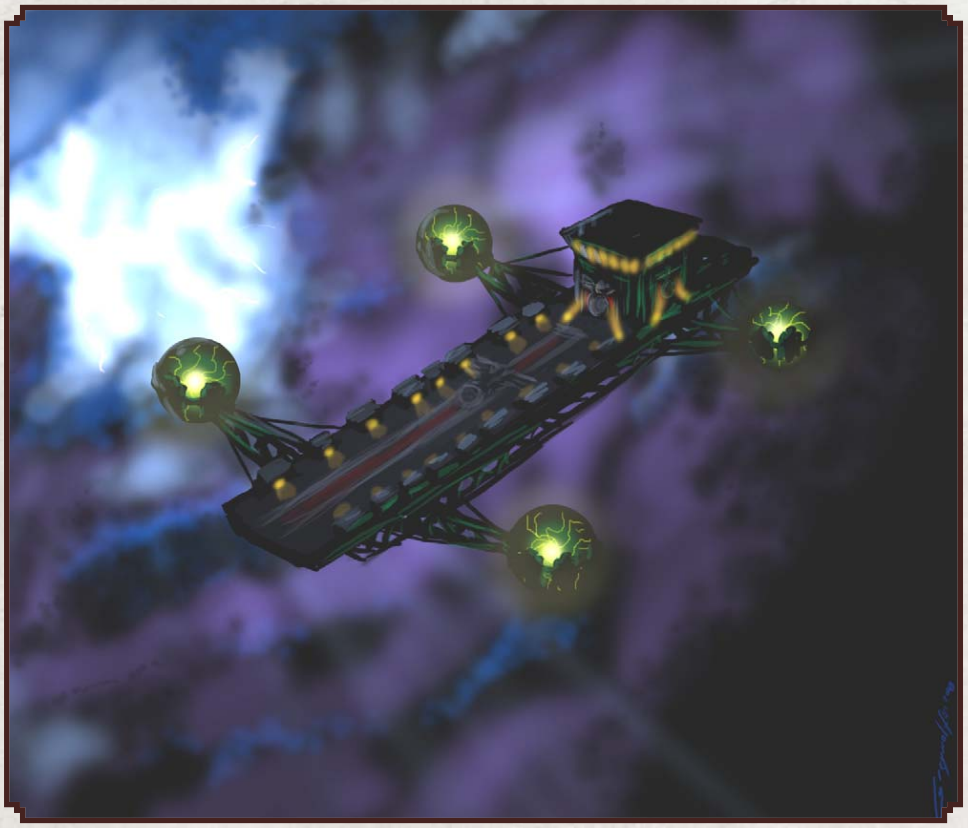
The Germans have put deck plans and labels in all the corridors (all in German) to help the crew orientate themselves. The bridge is upstairs and likely heavily guarded, because that's where the officers are likely to be, but the engine room is below decks and probably lacking guards. Anyway, sabotaging the bridge isn't likely to cause many problems for the Luftschloss, but a loss of power, that's another matter altogether.

THE ENGINE ROOM

The engine room is divided into sections by a bulkhead wall. An open door (1" wide) provides access between compartments. Although entered via the back of the Luftschloss, the engine room stretches toward the front of the vessel.

The first section, where the heroes enter through, is the Power Room. It measures 14" long and 7" wide. To both sides are banks of massive capacitors crackling with blue energy. Touching one delivers a powerful electrical shock. The victim is knocked back 1d4" and Shaken for 1d4 rounds. He can only try to unShake after this time.

The second section is the Engine Control Room. It is 8" long and 5" wide. All the walls except the adjoining bulkhead are covered in control panels covered in dials and blinking lights.



Half the engineers are in the Power Room. The other half are in the ECR with the Chief Engineer.

Have the characters make a Stealth roll at +2 as they reach the bottom of the stairwell leading to the Power Room. This can be a Cooperative roll. This is opposed by a Group Notice roll from the engineers. With success, the characters have Surprise. Unless all the villains are dropped before they can act, a verbal alarm is raised, and the crew from the other compartment comes to their aid.

Any missed shots from a ranged weapon automatically hit either one of the capacitors or a control panel, depending which area the heroes are in. Each time this happens, the

damage is enough to cause one of the anti-gravity engines to fail. This has no effect until all four are damaged, at which point the Luftschloss lurches violently and begins to tilt its nose seaward, accompanied by flashing red lights and very loud alarms.

Chief Engineer Schultz: See page 19.

Engineers (2 per hero): Treat as bar toughs (page 19), but armed with big wrenches and spanners (Str+d6).

SABOTAGE

Hopefully the Luftschloss becomes damaged during the fight. In the event it doesn't, the GM has to hurry things along a little. Having the characters search the flying fortress room by room is not part of the adventure.

Any character with Weird Science can make an arcane skill roll to deduce the basic principals behind the Luftschloss' lift—rays of energy repel gravity at varying strengths. In order to send the craft plummeting to earth, all one has to do is reduce the power to the capacitors and smash all the controls! Unfortunately, once this is done, the craft begins falling very quickly.

Characters reluctant to do this find nature takes matters into her own hands. A massive lightning bolt strikes the ship, penetrates the hull, and burns out all the capacitors. This sends the Luftschloss on a collision course with the planet below, complete with alarms and flashing lights.

If necessary, warn the characters that thousands of tons of steel hitting the ocean at high speed is *going* to be fatal to them.

SCENE 4: ESCAPE TO WHERE?

You rush out onto the deck and are almost swept off your feet. This isn't a storm—it's a hurricane. The clouds, black and heavy, boil overheard, lightning slams into the deck, and the wind howls like a choir of banshees.

Through the gloom you can just see the outlines of your planes backlit by distant lighting flashes—they've been blown toward the far end of the runway! Squinting against the driving rain, you can see a squad of sky pirates staggering toward them. Lose your planes, and you lose your only hope of escape!

The deck measures 48" long and is 24" wide. The rear end comprises the command centre, the living quarters, and the hangar bays. The hangar bays are at ground level, the living quarters above that (3" higher), and finally the control center (2" higher). The block is 8" deep. The heroes begin adjacent to this.

Along both sides are a few maintenance and storage sheds. Each is 5" long by 3" wide. The GM should place two on each side. Both planes are located 3" from the far end on the runway. The sky pirates are 10" from the characters.

Divide the goons into four pairs for the purposes of dealing action cards.

Several fixed events also occur during the final fight.

THE WEATHER

The weather plays a major part in this final battle.

Lightning: Any hero who draws a deuce has been struck by lightning. Only the first card dealt to a hero is used to see if a lightning strike occurs. For the goons, pick one of the pair as the target. This occurs at the *start* of the round, before any actions are taken.

Place a Large Burst Template over the victim. The victim suffers 3d6 damage from an Extra and is knocked prone. Everyone under the Template is automatically Shaken and knocked prone by the blast.

Visibility: The darkness and rain make the lighting conditions Dark (–2), except during rounds when lightning strikes. Visibility is normal during these rounds.

Wind: Hurricane force winds make movement difficult—treat all movement as other difficult ground. Any failed Agility roll means a character is blown back 1" and knocked prone as he loses his balance.

Standing near the edge may prove fatal if this happens! Give a falling hero an Agility roll to grab hold of something. A Strength roll as an action is required to climb back onto the deck. Otherwise, he falls into the water. For damage, roll 4d6 and multiply the result by the numbers of tokens the Luftschloss has left (see below). Incapacitated characters automatically begin to drown—which can kill them!

FIXED EVENTS

Any Round: Place ten tokens on the table in clear view of the players. Each round a Joker is drawn as a character's first card, remove a token. Drawing two Jokers in the same round means two tokens are discarded. The tokens represent the Luftschloss' altitude. Each token removed means a drastic reduction in height.

Once all the tokens are gone, another Joker means the Luftschloss has ditched into the sea. The characters don't want to be onboard when that happens! Pulp may give heroes a chance to survive horrendous odds, but being left onboard at this point means *instant death*. Otherwise, the tokens have no meaning.

Round Two: Doctor Schmutzig, the evil genius behind the Luftschloss, makes his one and only appearance. Read the following text to the players before you deal action cards.

"What have you done?!" screams a high-pitched voice, barely audible over the roaring wind. Spinning around, you spot a lone figure hovering a few yards off the ground. His long, white hair trails behind him like a plume of pale smoke. Thick goggles shield his eyes from the physical effects of

the storm, while a stiff leather flight suit protects his body. Strapped to his back is a miniature version of the energy devices you discovered in the engine room.

"My Luftschloss is ruined!" the man shouts. "For this you will pay a heavy price!"

Now deal action cards for the round. The doctor has already activated his *deflection* and *fly* powers. Both were activated with a standard success.

His primary tactic is to use *stun*, then target Shaken victims with *burst*. He targets heroes who venture near the edge of the deck with *telekinesis* in an attempt to send them overboard,

When he reaches Incapacitated or his Power Points reach zero, whichever occurs first, his *fly* power goes haywire (whether he has any Power Points remaining or not). This catapults him over the edge of the deck before suddenly cutting out, sending him tumbling into the darkness below. Since the heroes never actually witness his death, they won't know whether he actually dies. This entire adventure helps set up the doctor as a recurring villain.

Round Four: At the start of round four, read the following text aloud.

The sky lights up brilliant white as a bolt of lighting strikes one of your planes! BOOM! The end of the airfield lights up orange and red, as a fireball rolls upward into the dark sky. What remains of your aircraft is swept off the deck by the wind.

Round Five: Now that's a pretty bad state of affairs, giving the remaining plane can't hold four people, but things get even worse. Read the following passage to the players at the beginning of the next round, after action cards are dealt but before anyone acts.

You're scant yards from reaching your plane when a powerful gust of wind rips across the deck. All you do is watch wide-eyed as your bird is picked up and swept into oblivion!

All is not lost, however. At the start of the next round, the crew begins abandoning ship. They come running from the crew areas in droves. Allow each hero a Notice roll (and at the start of each subsequent round until someone succeeds). With a success, they realize the crew is wearing parachutes! It may sound crazy, but they're jumping overboard like lemmings. Still, it's probably better than being blown to pieces when the Luftschloss hits the ocean!

Treat the escaping crew as Average Sky Pirates. All they do is run toward the edge of the deck and fling themselves off. They only fight to stop heroes from stealing their parachutes.

Grabbing a parachute from a body and strapping it on requires an Agility roll as an action. With success, the parachute has been removed from its former occupant. A raise allows the character to slip into the straps as well. All the heroes need do then is run to the edge and jump!

The Hangar: The Luftschloss' hangar bay doors are bombproof. Due to their immense weight, the door mechanism was powered by the anti-gravity engines. With no anti-grav engines, the doors are jammed shut.

- **Doctor Schmutzig:** See page 19.
- **Good Sky Pirate (2 per hero):** See page 19.
- **Average Sky Pirate (lots):** See page 19.

FINALE

Buffeted and slammed by the strong winds, you are blown hundreds of yards from the Luftschloss. Craning your necks round, you see the flying leviathan in its dying moments. The thing plunges like a knife into the water. A momentary silence is followed by a titanic explosion, as the German aerial fortress is consumed in a massive fireball.

Then you're down and fighting to dump your chutes before you drown. Ripping them free, you kick like crazy to remain above the towering waves.

The sky illuminates white as a flare bursts into life. Another pops, then glows like a miniature sun. Soon there are dozens of them in the air. Over the wind and rain you can just about hear a loud voice calling. "This is the United States Navy. You are all under arrest!" Looks like the bureaucracy Van Gulden disdained so much was of some use, after all.

At least you'll be warm and dry while you convince your captors you're on their side.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

EMILY BROWN

Emily Brown, born Amelia Braun, is a hardened Nazi with total conviction in their cause. She has worked her way into a position where she can aid their latest crackpot scheme—America's economic ruin. Of plain appearance and operating under a disguise as a clumsy blonde, she is actually a deadly fighter. She keeps a set of slim throwing knives strapped to each thigh.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d8, Taunt d8, Throwing d10
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Overconfident

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Level Headed, Marksman, Quick, Quick Draw, Strong Willed
Gear: Knife (Str+d4), throwing knives (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: Str+d4)

DOCTOR WERNER SCHMUTZIG

A pilot during the Great War, Schmutzig went on to aeronautical research and weird science after an injury left him unfit for flying duties. Germany's loss left him a defeated man and full of vengeance. Hitler's rise to power has rekindled his belief in a strong Germany.

Offering his services to Der Fuhrer, Schmutzig was thrilled beyond words when Hitler accepted the designs for his Luftschloss and provided funds for its construction. Schmutzig knows his mission is vital to Germany's growth, and he intends to let nothing stand in his way.

The mad doctor has one gizmo, an anti-gravity device, into which all his powers are built. With it he can weaken or strengthen the effect of gravity. He has a pool of 45 Power Points, shared between his powers. This value takes into account his beginning the encounter with *deflection* and *fly* already activated.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Shooting d10, Weird Science d12
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (1)
Hindrances: Arrogant, Lame, Stubborn
Edges: Ambidextrous, Arcane Background (Weird Science), Level Headed
Gear: Flight suit (+1), stick cane (Str+d4, Parry +1)
Gizmos: *Burst, deflection, fly, speed, stun, telekinesis** (45 Power Points)
Special Abilities:

* **Weakness (Gizmos):** Astute characters may target the capacitor on the Doctor's back. It is a Small target (–4). Reduce the Doctor's Power Points by the damage inflicted by the attack.
* Deflection *and* fly *are already activated when he makes his appearance.*

CHIEF ENGINEER SCHULTZ

A bull of a man, Schultz was a navy boxing champion before being drafted to the Luftschloss. He doesn't believe in guns. No, he'd much rather crush a man's skull with his bare hands or his beloved wrench, which he affectionately calls Gertie, after his mother.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7
Hindrances: Hard of Hearing, Loyal
Edges: Block, Frenzy, Improved Sweep, Quick, Trademark Weapon (huge wrench)
Gear: Huge wrench (Str+d10, –1 Parry, 2 hands)

AVERAGE SKY PIRATE

They're not the best pilots by any standards, but they're loyal and easy to replace. Note they don't have Steady Hands, so they suffer a –2 penalty to Shooting rolls while flying.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Piloting d6, Repair d6, Shooting d6
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)
Hindrances: Greedy (Minor), Loyal
Edges: —
Gear: Flying jacket (+1), M1911 pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, AP 1), knife (Str+d4)

GOOD SKY PIRATE

These hired hands are all veterans of the Great War. Most are Germans, but there are a few other nationalities who are willing to put money before ideology.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Piloting d8, Repair d6, Shooting d8
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (1)
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: Steady Hands
Gear: Flying jacket (+1), M1911 pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, AP 1), knife (Str+d4)

BAR TOUGH

Whether Nazi agent or drunken sailor, the bar tough is good with his hands, if not his brains.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Throwing d6
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5
Edges & Hindrances: —
Gear: Improvised weapons

CANNIBAL NATIVE

These purveyors of fine flesh haven't had a foreign meal in ages, and they're mighty hungry. As well as carrying skulls and other trophies of their feasts, they've also sharpened their teeth.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Throwing d6
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: All Thumbs, Illiterate
Edges: Combat Reflexes
Gear: Spear (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1), bite (Str+d4)

GOONS WITH GUNS

These thugs aren't exactly crack marksmen, but with a Tommy gun, accuracy isn't as important as how much lead you can fire!

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Shooting d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: —

Gear: Tommy gun (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, ROF 3)

PULP AIRCRAFT CHASE RULES

For our pulp adventures, the Chase and vehicle combat rules for aircraft need a few tweaks. These changes are detailed below. More ideas can be found in Pinnacle's *Pulp Gear Toolkit*, and, of course, the original Chase rules are available in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook.

COMBAT & CHASE ALTERATIONS

AIMING

In a Chase, a pilot who holds Steady is eligible to use the Aim maneuver next round (or the Marksman Edge in the current round), as are any gunners on board.

LINKED WEAPONS

Firing linked weapons is handled in a very simple and abstract way. Roll Shooting dice to match the weapons' ROF as normal, but add +1 to the Shooting and damage rolls per two linked guns. All the plane stats in the adventure have the bonuses already included.

Example: *A pilot with Shooting d6 is flying a plane with six light machineguns. Singularly the guns deal 2d8 damage and have ROF 3. The pilot rolls three d6 and adds +3 to each die when he fires them as a set. Any hits inflict 2d8+3 damage.*

ROCK AND ROLL

The penalty for firing an automatic weapon is generally because of the heavy recoil. In a plane, the weapons are fixed and the pilot doesn't actually get his hands on them. As such, pilots and gunners can ignore the autofire penalty.

SPEED KILLS

Yes, excessive speed does kill, but pulp is about high-speed chases and daring stunts, not realism. This rule is completely ignored in our pulp adventures.

DEEP IN THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE TROUBLE AWAITS OUR HEROES!

Recently many cargo planes and ships have gone missing whilst traveling through the mysterious area now known as the Bermuda Triangle.



Reports of these disappearances have been kept secret from the wider populace in the hope of avoiding alarm. These missing planes and ships are not caused by aliens or even freak weather. This is simply piracy!

Flying high above the cloud layer is a highly advanced flying airfield. Using a variety of advanced engineering and weird science, it hovers undetected allowing the Sky Pirates to swoop on unsuspecting victims! Our heroes are thrust into the middle of this adventure when they are enticed to take a vacation in Cuba. Once attacked by the Sky Pirates they discover the real reason for the missing ships and planes!

Sky Pirates of the Caribbean is a high octane pulp adventure that takes your heroes on a wild ride in the clouds!

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DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

THE PALLADIUM PERIL



OFFICIAL SAVAGE WORLDS LICENSED PRODUCT

PAUL 'WIGGY' WADE-WILLIAMS

DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

06

THE PALLADIUM PERIL

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FLOOR PLAN: FLOOR PLAN OF THE PANTHEON FROM GEORG DEHIO/GUSTAV VON BEZOLD: KIRCHLICHE BAUKUNST DES ABENDLANDES. STUTTGART: VERLAG DER COTTA'SCHEN BUCHHANDLUNG 1887-1901.

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THE PALLADIUM PERIL

This *Daring Tale of Adventure* revolves around a Nazi hunt for a magical statue and the heroes' race to prevent it falling into Nazi hands.

According to mythology, Zeus sent down a statue of Pallas Athena (the Palladium) from the sky to Dardanus, the founder of Troy. The wooden statue was imbued with the power to protect the great city. Its magic was most evident during the Trojan War.

Troy may have stood for eternity, but for an act of treachery. Helenus, the son of Priam, ruler of Troy, was blessed with prophetic powers. He had also fallen out with his brother and father over Helen of Troy, when her hand in marriage was awarded to his brother after the death of Paris.

Helenus revealed the secret of the Palladium to the Greeks. Two Greek heroes, Odysseus and Diomedes, snuck into Troy one night and stole the statue. Within weeks, Troy was a burning ruin, having fallen for the ruse of the "Trojan Horse."

Centuries later, the Palladium reached the city of Rome. Legends tell that the magical statue safeguarded the city for many hundreds of years, allowing Rome to extend its power across much of Europe and North Africa.

What became of the statue is unknown. Some legends say Emperor Constantine had the sacred object moved to Constantinople. This story may hold water, for whereas Rome fell to barbarians, the eastern city held off determined Arab assaults in the 7th century. Yet Constantinople was sacked in 1204, during the Fourth Crusade, an indication the Palladium had moved on yet again.

This adventure begins in England, but moves to Rome, then Constantinople, and finally to Vienna, the Palladium's final resting place. Along the way, the characters must deal with fanatical Nazi agents determined to capture the statue for Hitler. If the legends are true, Berlin would become impregnable, and Hitler would be able to bring his Thousand Year Reich into existence.

SS AHNENERBE

Founded in 1935 by Heinrich Himmler, the *Deutsches Ahnenerbe Studiengesellschaft für Geistesurgeschichte* (Ancestral Heritage Society for the Study of the History of Primeval Ideas) was concerned with proving German racial superiority. In our pulp adventures, however, the organization is a front for Nazi occult investigations across the globe.

Historically, the full title was shortened in 1937, but we use it here for simple convenience. Likewise, it was not folded into the SS until 1939, but defeating the SS has much more pulp appeal. We hope history buffs will forgive our cinematic usage of the organization.

THE CHARACTERS

This adventure contains a pulp tale based around the exploits of four pre-generated characters. The full character sheets are available for free at **www.tripleacegames.com**.

The heroes have all their leveling opportunities from Seasoned (at which they begin) into Legendary mapped out in advance. Each published adventure in this line earns the heroes a fixed 5 Experience Points, guaranteeing them an advance every mission. All the players need do is tick the appropriate box and start making use of the new upgrade.

Characters: 50 XP.

The GM also needs 20 marker stones (15 of one color and 5 of a different color) and the pulp setting rules from the TAG website.

ACT 1: MERRY OLD ENGLAND

The heroes have been staying at Valentine Manor, Amelia's ancestral home on the outskirts of London, looking after the house while her parents are on vacation in the south of France. The best part of a week has been spent sightseeing around London and shooting game birds.

Then, one wet day, an invitation arrives in the mail for the characters. There are four tickets for the evening performance of Macbeth at the London Palladium, but no indication of who sent them. A slip of paper merely states that their mysterious patron wishes to speak with them as a matter of urgency.

Our adventure begins as the heroes take their seats in a packed theater. Their tickets are for seats 17B, C, E, and F.

SCENE 1: ENCORE!

The curtain is just rising when a smartly dressed man with slicked back hair and an odor of foreign aftershave squeezes past you and sits in seat 17D. He says nothing until the play begins. The rumble of thunder as the three witches on stage begin their opening speech seems ominous and foreboding.

"Good evening," the man says quietly. "My name is Reginald Forsyth. I'm afraid I don't have much time, so I'll be brief. I work for the British Intelligence Service. A matter of supreme importance to the defense of this realm has come up. We've been keeping track of your exploits, Lady Amelia, and feel you and your chappies are ideally suited to aid us. The Germans are…"

A long crash of lightning causes the audience to jump. Forsyth slumps forward, his head resting against the back of the seat in front.

Looking around, the heroes spot a man leaving from one of the boxes. Before they can give chase, Forsyth, with his dying breath, grabs the nearest character by the arm. He presses something into their hand and gurgles, "Find Blumenthal in Oxford. Tell him it's true." With that, he passes away.

The object Forsyth passed is a gold ring, embossed with a sword and oak leaf motif. It's not an emblem the characters have seen before, so they can't roll to determine its meaning.

No matter how quickly the adventurers leave the theater, they reach the exit just in time to see a black sedan drive round the corner. The only vehicle within easy distance is a red, open-topped, double-decker bus. The driver is having a cup of tea in a nearby café.

THE NUMBER 42 BUS

The bus driver has taken the keys with him, so the characters will have to hotwire the vehicle. This requires a Repair roll. With a success, the bus fires into life, and the chase is on! A failure allows the characters to try again, but the villain's car is one additional Range Increment away per failure.

Each Range Increment is 10", and the sedan begins 3 Increments ahead. This Chase uses our new Obstacles rules. The driver concentrates purely on escaping.

At the start of round 2, the bus passes beneath a bridge. The characters hear several thumps from the top deck. Any character on the open deck automatically spots four thugs leaping onto the bus from the bridge. Deal the goons an action card this turn.

The bus, for game purposes, is 2" wide and 6" long. The front left square of the bottom level is the driver's compartment. The back left squares on the bottom and top decks contain the stairs. All movement in the bus is treated as difficult ground due to the seats.

At the start of round 3, four motorbikes, each carrying a single passenger, join the chase. They begin 1" behind the bus, having pulled out from a side street. Deal the bikes 1 action card between them. The drivers use the Parallel maneuver to get close enough for their passengers to jump onto the bus. London buses have an open entry at the rear, so the attackers aim for this. Jumping onto the bus is an action, so the thugs can take other actions in the same round. Once aboard, the thugs are dealt their own separate action card on *subsequent* rounds. The bikers then use their pistols to target any heroes visible through the windows or leaning over the top deck.

Don't worry if any thugs are captured—all they know is someone delivers a letter to the Dog and Bone public house in Islington (part of London) when their services are required. Staking out the pub is a fruitless endeavor. Their orders were to kill the man in seat 17D and prevent any pursuers from catching the killer.

- **Sedan Driver:** As Thug (see page 19), except he's a Wild Card.
- **Bikers (4):** As London Thug (see page 19).
- **London Thugs (8):** See page 19.

VILLAIN'S SEDAN

Acc/Top Speed: 10/20; **Toughness:** 12(3); **Crew:** 1+5

DOUBLE-DECKER BUS

Acc/Top Speed: 5/15; **Toughness:** 15(2); **Crew:** 1+50

MOTORBIKES

Acc/Top Speed: 20/36; **Toughness:** 8 (2); **Crew:** 1+1

OBSTACLES

Collisions count as Extras, so damage rolls don't Ace against the heroes' bus.

Deuce (–4) Salvation Army: The local band of the Salvation Army (a charitable Christian organization) is marching through the streets, while donation collectors knock on residents' doors. A success means the car nips down a side street and emerges back in the chase. Failure causes the vehicle to inch forward while the band runs to the sidewalks, costing it 2 Range Increments.

Three (–2) Drunk in the Road: A happy drunk is weaving across the road. A failure means the vehicle has swerved hard to avoid him (rather than taking a gentler evasive maneuver). The vehicle collides with a soft obstacle (like a garbage bin or police box).

Four (–2) Road Works: Workers have left their wooden barricades in the road overnight to stop cars driving into a utility trench they're digging. A success avoids the road works, while a failure leads to a collision with a soft Obstacle.

Five (–2) Slow Traffic: Slow-moving traffic forces the car to dodge and weave to make any progress. On a failure, the vehicle is blocked in and drops back 1 Range Increment.

Six (–1) Blocked Windshield: Part of a newspaper lands on the windshield, blocking the driver's view. A failed roll means the car drops back 1 Range Increment while the obstruction is cleared.

Seven (–1) Narrow Street: Obstacles on either side of the road make the gap very narrow. A failure causes the vehicle to suffer a collision with a soft obstacle, as it scrapes against the obstructions down one side or the other.

Eight (0/–2) Traffic Cop: A policeman directing traffic holds up his hand for the vehicle to stop. Characters have the choice of stopping or ignoring his signal. The sedan always ignores the cop, while the bikes do so only if the bus has pulled ahead.

Stopping causes the car to automatically drop back 2 Range Increments due to the delay. Tearing past the junction the cop is policing requires a Driving roll at –2. A failure leads to a collision with another vehicle. Since this is a "T-bone" collision, only the speed of the vehicle involved in the Chase counts.

Nine (–1) Dangerous Overtaking: A truck pulls out to avoid a parked car right into the path of the oncoming vehicle! A failure leads to a head-on collision. The truck is moving 10" per round.

Ten (0) Passenger: A pedestrian steps into the road and flags down the vehicle, thinking it either a taxi, bus, or motorbike cop. Ignoring him gives no penalty to the Driving roll as the vehicle roars by. Should the bus stop (no thugs will), the heroes lose a Range Increment, but make a few bucks from the passenger (who hurriedly gets off the next time the driver fails a Driving roll).

Jack (–1) Traffic Jam: Heavy traffic forces the car onto the pavement, scattering pedestrians. A failure has no additional effect beyond the vehicle making no progress.

Queen (–1) Covered Windshield: Part of a newspaper lands on the windshield, blocking the driver's view. A failed roll means the car drops back 1 Range Increment while the obstruction is cleared.

King (0) Blocked Road: A vehicle pulls out into the road, sees the oncoming chase participant, and brakes hard! A success allows the driver to swerve around the car, while a failure causes a collision with a hard obstacle. This is a "T-bone" collision, so only the chasing vehicle's speed counts.

Ace (0/–2) Scaffolding: A stack of bricks and paint pots have been left atop scaffolding outside a building. Ask the driver if he wants to avoid it or try to knock it down. The thugs never try to knock it down.

Avoiding it requires only a standard Driving roll. To clip the scaffolding, the Driving roll is made at –2. A failure causes a collision with a soft obstacle, and the scaffolding remains upright. A success means any other vehicles within 1 Range Increment must make an immediate Driving roll or suffer a collision with a stationary hard obstacle. Those at 2 Range Increments who fail a Driving roll collide with a stationary soft obstacle. Vehicles beyond this are not affected.

SCENE 2: BLUMENTHAL'S RESIDENCE

Forsyth mentioned Blumenthal and Oxford. As any English heroes know, Oxford is a major university city, not far from London. Any character making an Investigation roll at a library can find several books by Professor Ernest Blumenthal. He's regarded as an expert on the Greek Classics, specifically those concerning Troy.

Unfortunately, he's on a research sabbatical for a year. The receptionist at the university suggests they try his home address in Oxford. She provides directions.

Blumenthal lives in a Victorian townhouse. When the characters arrive, the door is slightly ajar. Sounds of someone moving around upstairs can be clearly heard. The professor has been kidnapped by German agents and is soon to be smuggled out of the country to aid in their search for the Palladium. Meanwhile, the Nazis are searching his house for anything that looks like it may be useful in their quest.

If the heroes investigate the noise without making their presence known in advance, they gain Surprise. Have the villains make Notice rolls when the characters reach the first door on the upstairs landing. Otherwise, the intruders are ready for them.

Deal action cards!

The top floor of Blumenthal's house comprises a long corridor (1" wide and 8" long), off which there are three doors. These lead to his bedroom (3" long x 3" deep), study (3" x 3"), and a bathroom (2" long by 3" deep). Place the scenery and props as required.

Two thugs are in the bedroom, one is searching the bathroom, while the last thug and the head villain of this Act, Klaus Steiner, are in the study. Steiner is wearing a fencing mask, which obscures his face, and a leather dueling jacket.

Whatever happens, Klaus Steiner must escape this scene, preferably with as few wounds as possible. He'll spar until he takes one wound, and then use the Recurring Villains rule to make good his getaway. If need be, he leaps through a window out onto the street, lands as gracefully as a cat, and vanishes into the crowds. However, as he escapes, he drops a glove, which was tucked into his belt. As he leaves, he snarls out a warning.

"We've warned you Englanders once," the figure snarls. "Stop meddling in our affairs or pay the price!" Whoever the man is, he has a German accent.

Again, captured villains are just hired help, and clueless with regard to the larger plot. Their orders were to meet a man outside the address and assist him as he commanded.

The glove, however, is a major clue. It is embroidered with a crest. With a successful Common Knowledge roll, Lady Amelia recognizes it as the Albion Fencing Academy, a prestigious club in Mayfair. She received a few lessons there in her youth, before moving onto other hobbies. Should she fail (or if you are using your own characters), a successful Investigation roll reveals the above information.

- **Klaus Steiner:** See page 18.
- **London Thugs (1 per hero):** See page 19.

SCENE 3: EN GARDE!

The receptionist at the Albion Fencing Club can identify Steiner by either his physical description or his glove. He gives the party directions to the main fencing hall, which is on the second floor.

As you approach the hall you hear the clang of steel on steel. Within, you see two fencers engaged in combat, while a handful of students look on. One of the fencers, obviously a skilled swordsman, scores a point, and the bout ends. Both swordsmen salute each other.

The winner notices you and turns to face you. "Can I help you? Are you here for a lesson?" he asks, his voice muffled by his facemask, but his accent unmistakably German.

Steiner has received some medical attention and has one wound less than he took in the previous encounter. If he still has wounds remaining, the GM should describe his movement as rather stiff.

Steiner obviously recognizes the characters, but he has no real idea who they are or what they want. He assumes they're British agents working for a secret organization (more on that later), but his curiosity is piqued, especially if he heard any American accents.

He plays dumb if questioned about Blumenthal, and never removes his mask. A successful Notice roll reveals Steiner's right-hand glove is different from his left one. He claims to have lost it if asked.

FIGHT CLUB

A fight *will* break out. Either Steiner will grow bored of the intruders' questions (it'll soon be obvious they know nothing of value to him) and order his students to attack, or the characters will grow belligerent and make the first move. It's time to deal action cards!

The main hall (8" to a side) is full of props. All manner of swords hang from the walls (grabbing one requires a hero to be adjacent, and this counts as Drawing a Weapon), there are suits of armor to knock down (as a Trick), glass display cases to smash (either as a Trick or from a missed blow), furniture to leap over (or use as Cover), and banisters to slide down (+1" to Pace when sliding), should the characters wish to take the fight to another level. Place the obstacles in interesting places on the map. The lower level is much like the main hall, except it doesn't have any stairs going down.

One special rule applies in this scene. In order to simulate the to-and-fro movement of cinematic sword fights, a character who is targeted by a Fighting attack automatically moves 1" away from the blow, or 2" if the attack struck home. This movement is per attack. Attackers who cannot retreat suffer no specific penalties.

The attacker must follow up to maintain his position adjacent to his victim. Should multiple attackers be ganging up, they all follow the target as he is forced back. This never counts as Withdrawing from Melee, nor does it provoke First Strike attacks from any combatant—it's purely a quick way of mimicking the cut and thrust of the movies.



Steiner may have fled once before, but this time he is on home soil and fighting in front of his students—he cannot afford to lose face by retreating. As such, he'll only escape once all his students are out of the fight, fighting to the death in the meantime, if necessary. Again, use the Recurring Villains rule once all his minions are out of the picture.

Whether he escapes or is defeated, Steiner reveals some information before he departs, thanks to his Arrogant Hindrance.

"You're too late!" the fencing master snarls. "Blumenthal will soon be aboard an airplane bound for Italy. Meonia has failed to stop the Third Reich, and Germany will soon rule the world!"

Klaus Steiner: See page 18.
Fencing Students (1 per hero): See page 19.

SCENE 4: FLIGHT 14 IS NOW DEPARTING

The word "Meonia" is a mystery to the characters. None have ever heard it uttered before, though clever players may suspect it has something to do with the ring Forsyth gave them.

Any English characters automatically know the only airport for miles is London Airport. Non-English characters need to make a Streetwise roll. As is the pulp tradition, they'll always get to their destination just in the nick of time, but the characters don't know this. Make it sound like time is against them as they question passersby.

Inquiring at the departure desk, the official tells the characters that only a single plane is bound for Italy today, In fact, it's just heading out to the runway for takeoff! No amount of bribes or threats can halt its departure (*"It's more than my job's worth, guv'nor!"*).

Airports in the 1930s, especially in pulp games, weren't the high security places they are today. The characters' car is parked outside, and there's nothing to stop them from giving chase to the plane. Players who don't think of this course of action should be prompted as necessary.

TAXI!

Taxiing onto the runway is a Douglas C-32 cargo plane. This scene uses a modified version of the Chase rules. Space out 10 markers as normal. The C-32 starts on the third marker, while the heroes begin on the first marker. Each round, the plane automatically moves 1 Range Increment (there's no need for a Piloting roll), though it is still dealt an action card because of the thugs onboard. When it *passes* the last marker, it's in the air. There are no obstacles and the Range Increment is 5".

As an added complication, the Nazis onboard are throwing crates from the plane and firing their pistols! Each round the car is behind the plane, the aircraft's action card suit determines the Nazis' actions. When it's even with or ahead of the plane, they just use their SMGs. A maximum of two goons can fire guns from the doorway.

Diamond or Heart: No action taken (they're busy grabbing a crate or can't get a clear line of sight).

Club: They throw a crate. The driver must make a Driving roll at –1 or suffer a collision with a soft obstacle.

Spade: They open fire with their SMGs. The plane is an Unstable Platform, they don't have Rock and Roll, and the speed difference in irrelevant.

The characters have two sensible choices. If they can get in front of the plane before it reaches the last marker, they can force it to come to a screeching halt. The Nazi goons onboard then disembark and begin a firefight on the airstrip.

Alternately, they can pull alongside and try to leap aboard—the goons haven't closed the rear door yet. This requires the use of the Parallel maneuver. The driver can leap over as well—the car simply slows down without any pressure on the accelerator.

The interior of the airplane is, for game purposes, 2" wide and 8" long. The front 1" is the cockpit. All movement counts as difficult terrain due to the cramped conditions, seats, and cargo. Aboard are four Nazis, two pilots (who surrender if threatened), and Professor Blumenthal (who is bound and gagged).

Whatever happens, the GM should ensure the characters stop or board the plane. The players have no idea the airplane takes off at the end of the marker chain, so adding an extra marker or two won't hurt. So long as the action is frantic, let the good guys win (but not without some heroic effort).

Blumenthal: See page 18.
Nazi Soldiers (2 per hero): See page 19.

BLUMENTHAL RESCUED

Blumenthal thanks his rescuers, but beyond that he's rather tight-lipped. Any character who makes a successful Notice roll spots a gold ring on the professor's left hand. It's identical in design to Forsyth's.

The scholar claims to know nothing of any Nazi plot (claiming he was kidnapped for money) and hasn't heard of Meonia until Forsyth's ring is produced and the agent's message relayed (both conditions must be met). Once satisfied the characters really are on his side, he tells his story.

"Poor old Forsyth," Blumenthal sighs, wiping his glasses on his shirt tail. "A great scholar, but a poor field agent. Both he and I are members of a secret organization known as Meonia. Meonia has been in existence for centuries and has one goal—to safeguard Britain from any threat. Right now, that threat is the Nazis.

"If what Forsyth said is true, we must get to Rome immediately and find the Palladium. You do know the legend? The Palladium was a magical statue of Athena, given to the founder of Troy by Zeus. So long as it remained in the city, it would never fall. Sadly, it was stolen by two Greek heroes, and the rest, as they say, is history.

"Some of our members believe Hitler is seeking the Palladium. Forsyth, with both his words and his death, has confirmed that is true. If Hitler manages to find it and place it in Berlin, he'll no doubt go to war soon after, safe in the belief its power will protect Germany. The man is mad and fascinated with the occult. Our aim is to stop him and bring the Palladium to England for safe storage and study.

"What Hitler doesn't know is exactly where the Palladium is located. That's why he wanted me—I've spent half my life studying its history. History says the Palladium was taken to Rome at some point, and Hitler knows that, but no one knows where it was housed or what fate befell it. I have an inkling it's in the Pantheon."

The Pantheon, as any character with Knowledge (History) knows, once served as a temple to all the Roman gods. Athena was known as Minerva to the Romans. The current building dates to the reign of Hadrian (circa 125 AD), the previous structure having burnt to the ground in 80 AD. Blumenthal can fill in any gaps in the characters' knowledge of ancient Rome.

Unless the characters plan to back out now, it's time to book tickets to the Eternal City. Grab an old atlas, and draw a red line from London to Rome to show the heroes' progress. Blumenthal accompanies the party.

ACT 2: THE ETERNAL CITY

Blumenthal spends the trip to Rome deep in concentration. He refuses to answer any questions regarding Meonia, insisting he must have time to think about the Palladium and its possible resting place within the Pantheon. The scholar forbids any talk of conducting excavations, for the building has been used as a church since the early 7th century.

Blumenthal admits to being worried, though. While the basic layout hasn't changed in two milennia, the statuary and decoration have been heavily modified over the centuries. Any clues might have been obliterated during makeovers or rennovations.

SCENE 1: THE PANTHEON

The streets of Rome are jammed with automobiles and pedestrians. What's most alarming is not the Italians seeming lack of road sense, but the number of German military trucks crowding the roads. It seems the Nazis are here in force.

Very few common Italians speak much English, so the heroes need to be able to speak the language if they want to ask the locals any questions. A successful Streetwise roll reveals the Germans are here to conduct archaeological excavations. They were "invited" by Mussolini to help uncover Rome's ancient treasures, and restore the city to its former glory.

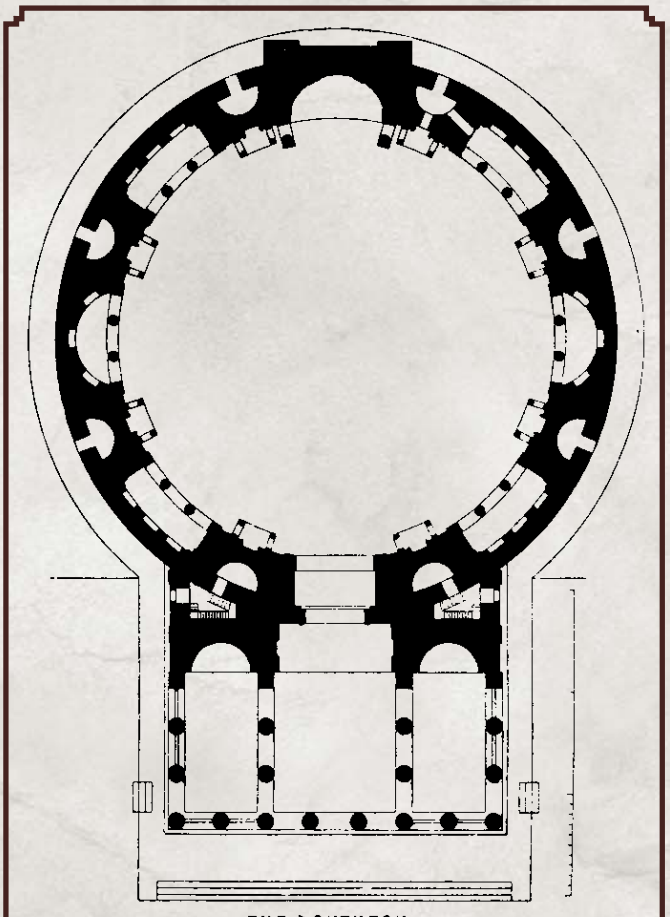
The Pantheon is popular with tourists (Italy has fewer of these with each passing year under Mussolini) and worshippers. So long as the doors are open, there are always folk passing through.

The dome of the building has an open aperture (an oculus), which lets in natural light. During daylight hours, it's the only light source in use (part of Mussolini's plan to save energy, and therefore money), so the lighting is rather gloomy when it's overcast. As the Earth rotates, a beam of light moves around the interior, highlighting different areas.

Allow the characters to make a Common Knowledge roll at –2 or a Knowledge (History) roll. With a success, they recall that Minerva was usually shown alongside Jupiter and Juno, the three deities forming a triad. Blumenthal automatically passes his roll if all the characters fail.

Although the statues in the Pantheon have been moved over the centuries, the bases on which they stand have not. Searching round, the characters find one bearing Minerva's name. Tapping it reveals it to be slightly hollow. Unfortunately, there's a statue on top of it.

How the characters remove the statue is up to their



THE PANTHEON

ingenuity. One idea is to claim they are city workers, removing the statue for maintenance, or German archaeologists here at Mussolini's direct request. Shoving it over is always a possibility, but such vandalism will likely have serious consequences. Once the statue is out of the way, the characters discover the lid of the base is actually hinged.

Hidden beneath the marble plinth are a large gem and a scroll. The scroll, written in Latin, reads as below.

"I, Marcus Licinius Corvus of the Gens Valeria, loyal servant of the Order of the She-Wolf, sworn defender of Rome, do inscribe this in the reign of the Emperor Hadrian, who raised this structure from the ashes of old.

"Men are of fixed years, but Rome is eternal. Emperor Titus was a man of cursed nature, whose reign brought many disasters. Without our wisdom and foresight, Rome would have perished in fire and blood. The Palladium, secret protector of Rome, was moved to safeguard her from the great fire and the ignorance of those who do not understand her power over Rome.

"I place this scroll here in secret, so those of our order who come later in full knowledge of what they seek may learn where the goddess sleeps. Show this gem the light of the midday sun in the Flavian Amphitheater and she shall be revealed."

Any character with Knowledge (History) automatically knows the Flavian Amphitheater is the original name for the Coliseum. However, there is less than a quarter hour to go before noon!

LOCAL TOUGHS

The discovery of the gem has not gone unnoticed, no matter how quick the characters are at retrieving it. A local hood, visiting the Pantheon on the lookout for rich tourists to rob, noticed the sparkling stone. He slips outside to alert his comrades, who are keeping an eye out for the police. As soon as the characters leave, the toughs surround them.

"Hey-a," one snarls, "why-a don't you-a hand-a over the gem, eh? Give it to us, or we'll-a cut you open like-a pigs." A snick of a switchblade punctuates his final word.

The thugs outnumber the characters, but they're not well trained, and are used to their scare getting them what they want. The character should have little trouble teaching them some manners. Blumenthal is reluctant to use his magic in public, unless the situation grows very serious.

Blumenthal: See page 18.

Street Toughs (2 per hero): Treat as London thugs (page 19), but armed only with knives.

SCENE 2: RUSH HOUR IN ROME

The clock is ticking. If the characters rush, they might just reach the Coliseum in time. Any delay means waiting around for a day in a city full of Nazi agents, and there's the risk of the toughs the characters defeated outside the Pantheon will snitch about them to the police. There's little doubt the Nazis have informants here.

It's too far to run to the Coliseum, and the amount of traffic makes catching a taxi pointless. However, there is a mode of transport perfect for getting through crowded streets quickly—scooters. It's up to the characters whether they rent some ($10) or just borrow some. Either way, there are only two available.

Scooters can carry two passengers for short distances, but the extra weight and added instability, gives the driver a –2 penalty on all Driving rolls.

Shortly after the characters head into the dangerous traffic of Rome, several of the thugs defeated earlier appear behind the characters' scooters, brandishing knives and shouting abuse. Each has his own scooter.

This scene is run as a Chase. The Range Increment is 5", the chase begins at Medium range, and there are Rough Obstacles (other road users). The thugs have pistols, but will only use them if fired upon first. Otherwise, they try to draw within one Range Increment and use the Force maneuver to smash the characters into cars or buildings.

The scene is also one with a time limit. Unless the characters deal with the goons or flee within 12 rounds (each round represents a brief glimpse of action in what are effectively minute long rounds—the gaps are the heroes weaving through traffic), they'll be too late! Well, that's what they should think. As pulp demands, the adventurers will *always* get there in the nick of time, so long as they don't act stupid and stop for coffee and cake, anyway.

Blumenthal: See page 18.

Street Toughs (1 per hero): Treat as London thugs (page 19).

SCOOTERS

Acc/Top Speed: 6/18; **Toughness:** 7 (2); **Crew:** 1+1

SCENE 3: THOSE ABOUT TO DIE

Read the following text to the players when they enter the arena.

It looks like the Nazis have been doing some decorating. Nazi banners hang from the walls, the largest draped down from the Emperor's box. Even the floor of the arena has been made ready for something—it's been covered in sand, no doubt concealing a wooden floor beneath.

There is no sign of any Nazis, but they are present, watching from the shadows of the many gates, which once let gladiators and wild beasts into the arena. Don't

give the characters a chance to search the area—they should get here just a few moments before midday.

A beam of sunlight strikes the gem if it is held aloft at noon. The crystal seems to glow with an inner fire, before a beam of light bursts forth, striking the huge Nazi banner hanging from the Emperor's box. Hitting square in the center of the swastika, the beam burns a hole clean through the fabric. Within seconds, the entire banner has been engulfed in flames, revealing the stonework behind it. A single stone is highlighted by the beam of light.

BANG! A large metal grille slams shut, sealing off the exit. Across the other side of the Coliseum, another grille slides opens. A small squad of Nazis rushes through and takes up firing positions. Following them, dressed in his fencing uniform, is Herr Steiner. It's a trap!

"Can you feel the power?" Steiner shouts, turning slowly on the spot, arms outstretched. "All the energy of those who fought and died here is locked into these stones forever. It's almost tangible." He turns to face you, his sword's tip just touching the ground, tracing a swastika in the sand. "We were planning to host a celebration here after we found the Palladium, but it seems the festivities must be brought forward.

"Now, what do you say?" he asks. "Would you die like cowards, clutching your guns as my men fill your bodies with lead, or are you prepared to fight and die like the gladiators of old?"

The prospect of fighting in the Coliseum has gone to Steiner's head, and he's quite prepared to fight to the death for the glory of the Fuhrer. He'd prefer to duel with the heroes like men, and should they agree, he orders his men to use only their knives. Otherwise, he orders them to open fire while he closes to melee range.

The oval floor of the Coliseum measures 42" by 24". Aside from a covering of sand, it is bare.

On the 3rd round, Steiner uses an action to give a hand signal. Metal grilles slide upward along the walls with a loud clank. Next round, hungry lions enter the arena! The Nazis were planning to celebrate finding the Palladium by holding a mock gladiatorial event. Steiner has decided to use the beasts to liven up the current conflict!

The lions are hungry, and their captors have been teasing them, so they're riled. For convenience, the lions all begin in the center of the long side behind where the characters began. They attack the nearest targets, caring nothing for whether their foe is a hero or villain.

Once Steiner is Incapacitated, the sound of a gunshot rebounds through the mighty stadium. Proceed to the next section. Should all the characters be Incapacitated first, jump straight to **Scene 4**. Steiner plays no further part in this adventure whatever the outcome. If he survives this fight, he can return to plague the heroes in your own pulp adventures.

- **Klaus Steiner:** See page 18.
- **Blumenthal:** See page 18.
- **Experienced Nazi Soldiers (1 per hero):** As Nazi soldier (page 19), but with the Rock and Roll Edge.
- **Lions (1 per hero):** See page 19.

SURRENDER OR DIE

Nazi soldiers are pouring through the entrances and taking up positions around the edge of the arena, their SMGs leveled at you. A mocking, hollow laugh echoes down from the Emperor's box.

Standing up there, clad all in black, is a skeletally thin German officer. His face is split in a wide smile, which gives him the appearance of a grinning skull. He begins a slow clap.

"Well done, Amerikaners," he cackles. "I am Colonel Klinsmann of the SS-Ahnenerbe, and you are surrounded by Germany's finest soldiers. Now, how will this scene end?" He holds out his right arm, his thumb extended horizontal to the ground. "Live or die, it's your choice."

There are a lot of Nazis—the characters count at least 50, and more are arriving all the time. In true pulp fashion, it's time to surrender. Starting a huge fight is certainly an option, of course, but the soldiers don't close to engage in melee—they have SMGs, and they'll use them. Keep sending in reinforcements until the adventurers surrender or are Incapacitated.

Characters who succeed at a Common Knowledge roll (–2) have heard of the SS-Ahnenerbe. They're charged with hunting down historic and occult artifacts for Hitler.

- **Colonel Klinsmann:** See page 18.
- **Experienced Nazi Soldiers (unlimited):** As Nazi soldier (page 19), but with the Rock and Roll Edge.
- **Blumenthal:** See page 18.

SCENE 4: WASHOUT

Disarmed and bound, you are marched deep into the catacombs of Rome, and roughly thrown onto the floor of a small, bare chamber. Colonel Klinsmann's skeletal face leers close to your own, his mocking laugh reverberating off the walls.

"You are about to join the pages of history," he cackles. "So many people were buried here, and now you are about to join them! Packed behind that wall," he indicates one of the walls, "are very powerful explosives. When we have reached safety, we will detonate them by remote control. Oh, do

ESCAPE FAILED

As with any scene which involves the randomness of dice, there is a chance the door won't be open by the time the dynamite goes off.

Any hero in the room during the explosion takes 2d10 damage, from a Wild Card source. Worse, the room rapidly begins filling with water!

At the end of the second round after the walls collapse, water completely fills the room. (The characters essentially have two rounds to bash down the door before they begin drowning.)

Opening the door once the room is filled, or even partially-filled, causes the water to sweep the characters along. Don't run the Chase scene—it's too late for that. For simplicity, assume each hero is carried the entire length of the tunnel, and suffers 2d10 damage from a Wild card source before he reaches the higher level of the catacombs.

not worry—the explosion is unlikely to kill you. No, you see, on the other side of that wall is s network of flooded chambers and tunnels. When the wall comes down, this chamber will fill with water!"

He gestures to his men to begin withdrawing. Before they leave, they dump your gear on the floor. It looks like they don't expect you to escape their fiendish death trap.

"I would stay to watch, but we must continue our search for the Palladium. Behind that stone was a most illuminating parchment. It seems Emperor Domitian placed the Palladium somewhere in the chambers and tunnels beneath the Coliseum. A fitting resting place for the goddess of war, no? How it must gall you to have been so close, and yet fail."

With that, the Nazi leader whirls on the spot and joins his men in the passageway. The door slams closed. A heavy scraping on the far side can only mean one thing—they've bolted the door!

The characters have only a short time before the dynamite is detonated, breeching the walls, and flooding the chamber. This occurs at the end of the 6th round. In order to escape the death trap, the characters have to perform two actions.

First, they must escape their bonds. This requires an Agility or Strength roll (character's choice) at –2. Once free, an adventurer can untie a comrade as an action. No other actions are permitted.

Second, they must batter down the door. A successful Strength roll at –2 is required. Heroes can Cooperate. Once the door is down, the adventurers can start running.

The escape through the catacombs works like a Chase, except there are no Obstacles. Lay out ten markers on the table. Each represents 10". To reach safety, the characters must pass the 10th marker. Here there is a ladder, which leads to a higher level—it'll be some time before the water rises this high.

The heroes and the wall of water soon to be surging through the passages use Agility (though Doc Davenport may substitute this for Piloting if he elects to *fly*). The water has Agility d10.

A hero's initial position depends on when he started running. For each round before the dynamite explodes, he gains one position on the track. For instance, a character ran for 3 rounds before he heard the explosion—he begins on the 3rd marker. The water begins off the track—its first Range Increment gained moves it onto the first marker.

Should the water reach the same marker as a character, it automatically sweeps him off his feet. Each round, he is carried forward with the water, rather than making his own Agility rolls. He suffers 2d8 damage per round (as if from an Extra) as he is pounded by the turbulent wave and smashed against the walls. Once he passes the final marker, the waterlogged adventurer may make a Strength roll at –2 each round to grab the bottom of a ladder. Colleagues who have reached safety may Cooperate on this. Failure means he takes more damage.

As always, don't let a scene like this boil down to a handful of die rolls. Describe the sound of the rushing water, the feel of the spray, the screams of comrades being swept along, and so on.

Blumenthal: See page 18.

STORAGE CHAMBER

Atop the ladder is a small chamber. The walls are decorated with early Christian symbols, and a few pots and jars lie discarded on the floor. One in particular stands out, partly because it is intact, and partly because of its fine workmanship. It also has writing around the rim. The image on the jar shows a man in stately pose carrying a small statue toward a stylized city!

A hero making a Knowledge (History) roll identifies it as early 4th century, long after the reign of Domitian. Any character who can speak Latin (Blumenthal is fluent) can translate the words. They read, *"Emperor Constantine takes the Palladium to his city."*

Allow the players to solve this simple puzzle using their own knowledge of history. "His city" refers to Constantinople, which Constantine named after himself, known as Istanbul in the modern era. Should they require help, a Common Knowledge roll at –2 or Knowledge (History) roll reveals the above information. The characters know what this means—the Germans are digging in the wrong city!

It looks like it's time to sneak out of Rome, and head east!

ACT 3: GATEWAY TO THE EAST

This is a great time for a hero to invent a Contact. Unlike the regular rules, this time using a Contact pro-

duces a character already detailed for the GM—Stavros "The Bull" Papadopoulos. Details on this shady antiques dealer can be found on page 19. Stavros agrees to meet the heroes in the morning. He says he'll send a messenger to their hotel.

Should no player wish to use a Contact, or if one has been used already this adventure, Blumenthal knows Stavros. He makes a phone call as soon as they reach the city, and arranges a meeting for the next morning.

SCENE 1: HOT AND STEAMY

Your breakfast is interrupted by the appearance of a scrawny, unshaven man wearing a white, sweat-stained suit. He stands in front of your table, coughing continuously as he draws on a Turkish cigarette. The smell of nicotine and body odor hints at several unsavory habits.

"Excuse the intrusion, good people," he coughs, tugging his greasy hair. "I am Beni, Stavros' assistant. My master will meet you in the Turkish baths situated off the bazaar in one hour." He pauses, raising one hand to his mouth as he throws a coughing fit. "Stavros has acquired a private room, to allow for any female company." (He stares lustfully at any women in the party).

He tosses a gold coin onto the table. "Just hand this in at the front desk." He coughs violently again, but this time his hand reaches his mouth too late. A glob of spit lands square in <insert hero's name> breakfast.

Beni looks at you with wide eyes and open mouth, smiles weakly, makes a feeble excuse about his sick mother, and quickly runs out of the hotel.

A modern equivalent of the Roman baths, Turkish baths are renowned for their steam rooms and the vigor of the burly masseurs. Woman and men are usually forbidden from using the same bath. Let the heroes make a Common Knowledge roll. With success, they know that wearing clothes around the bath is prohibited—only towels are allowed! Should they all fail the roll, the receptionist points out the establishment's rules to them when they arrive. Unless a hero has a derringer, the small towels reveal a tell-tale bulge if a character tries to smuggle in a weapon.

- **Blumenthal:** See page 18.
- **Beni Hassan:** See page 18.

MEETING STAVROS

After changing into your towels, an assistant guides you to the room Stavros has booked for your meeting. As the door opens and steam billows out, you hear a deep voice calling out, "Come in! Come in before all the steam escapes! The water is very warm. Please join me." Through the thick, sweet steam, produced by two braziers full of burning coals, you spy the owner of the voice.

Sitting at the far end of the bath is a brute of a man. His hairy torso pokes up through the steaming water. His arms are like huge pistons, packed with muscle, but further down the muscle gives way to rolls of fat. The dim glow of a large cigar is visible in his mouth.

A loud cough from the back of the room alerts you to another presence—Beni!

Stavros would normally stand, but he refrains if there are ladies present. He doesn't care whether a hero decides to join him in the bath or not—he's used to Westerners and their strange ways. When the characters are settled, Stavros reveals what he knows.

"I have done some research for you, my rich, foreign friends," he begins, stubbing out his cigar in the water with a loud hiss. "Yes, the Palladium was brought to Istanbul. Emperor Constantine himself delivered it here in the 4th century to ensure his new city would never fall. I know something of the legend, and I must say, there is some truth to its fabled powers. The Arabs failed several times to capture the city.

"Still, nothing good lasts forever, eh? The city was sacked by Crusaders in 1204, so it's very unlikely your statue was still here at that point. Ah, don't be too upset—Stavros always comes through for those he likes!

"The most likely candidate for stealing it is Emperor Alexius III. He ruled this great city until the Venetian fleet turned up and deposed him. I came across a parchment in my private collection that mentions him sending many treasures away for safety when the fleet first anchored. Your Palladium was probably one of them—there is no reference to anyone knowing its powers, but it was a very old treasure by then. Alexius is buried in a monastery in Nicaea.

"I've arranged for my son-in-law, Kristos, to bring a truck so you can get there in comfort. He'll be here soon. Until then, relax and enjoy the steam. Very good for the sinuses."

The heroes may have some questions for Stavros. Possible lines of enquiry, and Stavros' answers, are given below.

Q: How do you know Alexius was buried with the Palladium?

A: *"Nothing is certain in life, except death, taxes, and sleeping on the sofa if you forget your wife's birthday. Even if Alexius didn't take the treasures to his grave, he may have left a clue." He shrugs his massive shoulders. "And it's all I have for you."*

Q: How far is Nicaea?

A: *"It's across the Bosphorus, in Asia Minor of old. Maybe 70 miles, maybe a bit more. You'll reach it by nightfall. My cousin runs a nice little hotel there. I'll phone ahead and make you reservations."*

Q: Have any others been asking for this information?

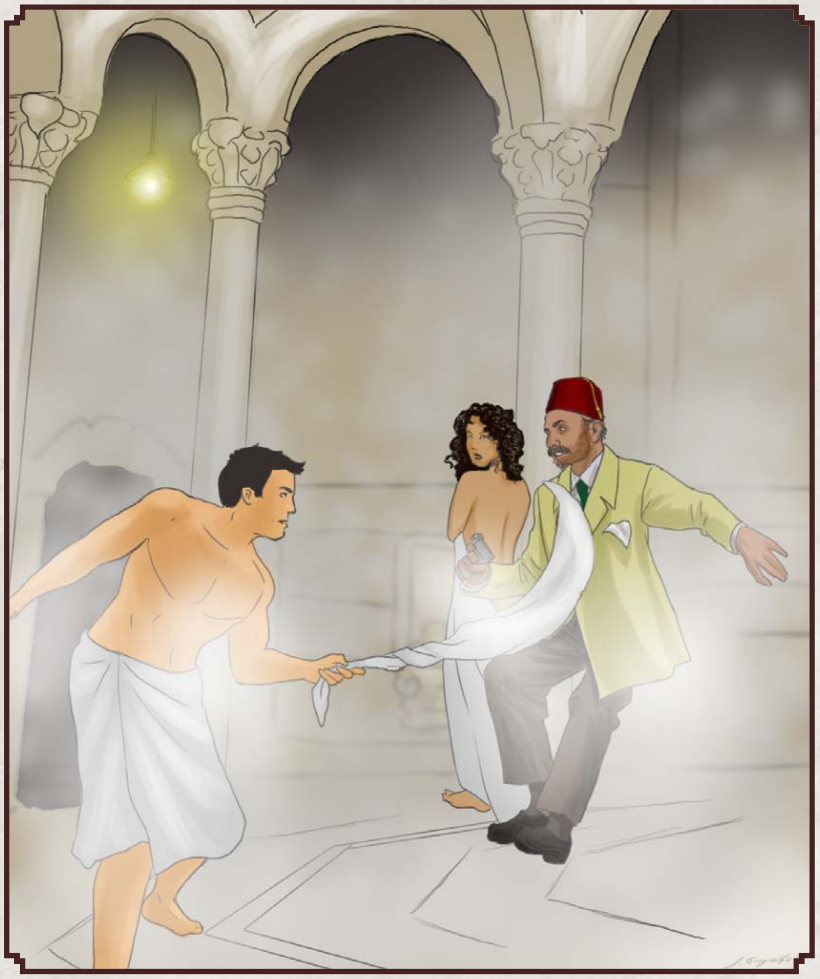
A: *"No, you're the first. Why, who else is interested? If they're rich, I should have doubled my fee!" he laughs.*

Once the questioning is complete, the characters hear the door to the room open. A group of men wearing dark robes have entered.

"Hey!" shouts Stavros. "This room is private. Clear out before I throw you out." Apparently the challenge is accepted, for each man draws a curved knife from beneath his robes.

It's time to deal action cards.

The bath room measures 8" to a side. The bath sits in the center of the room and is 4" by 4". The steam makes the lighting Dim (–1). Treat movement through the water as difficult ground.



The thugs don't target Beni, and he makes no attempt to interfere in the fight. Instead, he runs from the bath once the skirmish starts (to alert more assassins waiting outside). Stavros, however, has taken this intrusion has a slight on his honor and authority. He'll aid the characters. Blumenthal assists in whatever manner he feels is right. Hand out Ally Sheets for these two helpers.

Several handy props are located in the bath area.

* **Small buckets (4):** These are full of water. Used as a weapon, a bucket causes Str+d4 damage. Alternately, the water can be thrown (once per bucker) as part of an Agility Trick.
* **Large bars of soap (2):** These can be thrown (Range: 3/6/12, Str+d4) or used as part of an Agility Trick.
* **Towels (6):** While not exactly feared as a weapon, twirling it into a spiral and flicking someone with the wet end is a great Agility Trick.
* **Brazier (2):** These produce the steam filling the room. Tipping one over requires only an action. Place a Small Burst Template adjacent to the brazier. Anyone under the template must make an Agility roll or be Shaken as they are sprayed with hot coals. The assassins, who are wearing full-length robes, have a chance of catching fire as well. Cinematic pulp humor demands a goon who ignites must jump into the bath (taking 1d10 damage just before the flames are extinguished).

The template remains in place for the remainder of the encounter. Anyone entering it or beginning their turn in it must make an Agility roll or be Shaken as their feet begin to burn.

- **Stavros:** See page 19.
- **Beni Hassan:** See page 18.
- **Blumenthal:** See page 18.
- **Istanbul Assassins (2 per hero):** See page 19, but only armed with knives

AFTERMATH

Stavros tells the characters he'll sort out the mess and smooth things over with the bathhouse management. Meanwhile, he suggests they get dressed quickly and quietly, and wait outside in the bazaar for his brother-in-law.

Should a thug be taken alive, he knows nothing of interest. They don't tend to study their clients or record names.

SCENE 2: BRAWL IN THE BAZAAR

Beni, fearing his plan might fail, and knowing enough information to ensure a decent payoff by the Nazis, has warned a party of assassins lurking outside the baths to attack the heroes. However, he can't

very well run off, in case Stavros grows suspicious. As such, he is loitering in the market.

Stavros joins you after a few minutes. "All sorted," he grins. "Money covers up a lot of sins. Hmmm, Kristos is late, as always. Ah well, we might as well browse the stalls for a bit. You can find some good bargains here, if you're prepared to haggle.

"Ah, Beni, you coward!" Stavros roars. "Get your worthless hide over here. I need you to guide my friends to Nicaea."

Let the characters browse the stalls. The various sellers are pushing jewelry, rugs, incense, coffee, hot food, decorated ceramics, silverware, and whatever else the GM wants to add.

Before they get too complacent or start to lose interest, the crowd of shoppers suddenly parts. Surrounding the characters is a band of robed men, all brandishing scimitars! Without giving the characters a chance to offer surrender terms, they rush to attack!

The bazaar is huge and should cover most of the table. Each brightly-covered stall, and there are dozens and dozens of them, measures 1" wide and 2" long. The objects for sale on the stalls are whatever the characters require (within sensible limits). For instance, if a hero wants to grab a pot to smash onto a thug's head, stab one with a kebab skewer, wrap one in a rug, or grab a silver plate to use as a makeshift buckler (Parry +1), there's one on the nearest stall!

When there are just two assassins left, Stavros points up the street to a huge mob of similarly dressed men, all brandishing swords. Just at that moment, a flatbed truck screeches to a halt across the street, disgorging a dozen men armed with pick axe handles.

"Good old Kristos—always prepared to have a little fun," Stavros laughs, slapping each of you on the back. "Go now, my friends, while you still can, and find that statue of yours. My family and I have to teach some manners to these scum. Good hunting in Nicaea!" With that, he and his men charge toward the sword-wielding thugs.

Beni looks reluctant to accompany you, but one glance at Stavros cracking a thug's head with his bare hands quickly changes his mind. He climbs in the cab and waits.

- **Stavros:** See page 19.
- **Blumenthal:** See page 18.
- **Beni Hassan:** See page 18.
- **Istanbul Assassins (2 per hero):** See page 19.

SCENE 3: BOMBS ON WHEELS

A maximum of three characters can squeeze into the cab, though there's plentiful room on the flat bed. Stacked in the back, beneath a heavy tarpaulin, are dozens of crates. Curious heroes opening a few find only live chickens and obviously fake antiques, the latter no doubt destined for some shady market stall owner to pawn off to unsuspecting tourists. There is a hidden surprise, but that comes later.

After about 50 miles, two German halftracks burst through the undergrowth just behind the truck, and give chase! This is a Chase scene, and uses special Event Stages (see below). The Range Increment is 5", and the initial distance is Near.

The halftracks try to move alongside the truck, so the drivers can use the Parallel maneuver. This allows the soldiers in the back to leap onto the back of the truck—their orders are to take Blumenthal alive. Everyone else is expendable.

The machineguns on the halftracks are more for cinematic effect than a true threat. While the speed difference between the vehicles in irrelevant, the halftrack is an Unstable Platform, and the gunners don't have Rock and Roll, giving them a –4 penalty.

ARMED AND DANGEROUS

On the first Critical Hit to the truck or failed Driving roll, whichever comes first, several of the crates tip over. Hidden beneath the topmost crates is a smaller one. It is open, and stacked with small bottles of clear liquid. A warning label on each displays the words, "Nitroglycerine, handle with care."

The crate contains 12 bottles. These can be thrown to a range of 3/6/12. For the purposes of the Chase, everything on the same Range Increment as the impact suffers 3d6 damage (AP 2, HW). The whole crate can be dumped overboard, but not thrown. It explodes at the end of the current round, causing 4d10 damage (AP 24, HW) to everything within 1 Range Increment.

Draw a card from the action deck any time the truck suffers a Chassis Critical Hit after the nitroglycerine has been discovered. A Joker indicates the nitroglycerine has been damaged and will explode at the *end* of the current round. Crates explode as above.

EVENT STAGES

Unlike a regular Chase, this one has fixed encounters along the route as the participants move through the Turkish landscape. Space 20 markers in a line along the table to present the route. Place a different color marker at the 5th, 8th, 12th, 15th, and 20th positions. These are the Event Stages. The Chase won't carry on beyond the 20th position.

Move each combatant's playing piece along the track each time it moves one or more Range Increments. This way it is very easy to see where an individual participant is in relation to the events.

When a vehicle reaches a Stage it must deal with an event. These are detailed below. Modifiers to Driving rolls apply to the roll made at the start of each round. Unlike

Triple Ace's standard Obstacles rules, these events affect all vehicles reaching the marker equally.

The stages form an abstract map. This system can be used equally well for Chases in urban areas, rivers, ancient ruins, and so forth—all the GM need do is create a few encounters for his Chase scene that all the vehicles must encounter.

5th: A flock of sheep are blocking the road. The driver has three choices—speed through the flock, slow down and gently push through, or go off-road. Going through the herd means slowing drastically, whereas heading onto the rough may damage the truck or cause the driver to lose control.

Speeding through the flock requires a Driving roll at –2. A failure causes a collision with a soft obstacle. The Nazis all elect this option—their halftracks have Heavy Armor.

Gently nudging through the sheep gives a –4 penalty to the Driving roll, but a failure only results in no progress.

Heading off-road imparts no penalty. A failure causes the vehicle to suffer a collision with a hard obstacle, such as a tree stump or boulder.

8th: Road? This isn't a road! Things get rather bumpy, which is probably rather nerve-wracking for the passengers cradling the nitroglycerine in the truck! The driver must make his Driving roll at –2, or the vehicle goes Out of Control.

12th: A sharp bend in the road forces the drivers to turn quickly. The Driving roll is made at –2. On a failure, the vehicle drives into a ditch, forcing it to forgo any movement next round.

15th: The road passes between high-sided cliffs. Unstable rocks begin to slide down onto the road. The Driving roll is made at no penalty. Failure leads to the vehicle being hit by a boulder for 3d6 damage (Wild Card source).

20th: The road is heading for a steep canyon, the bridge is out, and there's nowhere to turn around! Jumping the bridge requires a Driving roll at –4. Success means the truck clears the gap with ease, and bounces away to safety—the halftracks can't make the leap. Failure causes the truck to suffer 3 automatic wounds on impact, possibly Wrecking it. Fortunately, there are plenty of rocks to hide behind. The Nazis soon give up the chase and turn back.

- **Blumenthal:** See page 18.
- **Beni Hassan:** See page 18.
- **Nazi Vehicle Crew (2 per vehicle):** As Nazi soldiers (page 19).
- **Nazi Soldiers (6 per halftrack):** See page 19.

HALF-TRACKS

Acc/Top Speed: 5/20; **Toughness:** 13 (2); **Crew**: 2+15
Notes: Heavy Armor
Weapons:
* MG34 (Range: 30/60/120, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3)

KRISTOS' TRUCK

Acc/Top Speed: 8/16; **Toughness:** 14 (2); **Crew:** 1+10

SCENE 4: A GRAVE SITUATION

At long last, the heroes reach Nicaea. Stavros' cousin, Azban, is expecting them at his hotel. Finding it requires only mentioning Stavros' name. Azban is a friendly chap, but prone to over-politeness to Stavros' friends. He has rooms booked, though only three—one double, and two singles.

Of course, the characters may wish to head for the monastery immediately. Azban provides directions and mules for the short trip. He offers shovels, rope, torches, and pick axes, as well—Stavros' friends invariably come to the region in search of artifacts, though Azban has learned not to ask questions of his "honored guests."

Azban explains that the monastery is now an abandoned ruin. The tomb of Alexius III lies in the east wing, and takes the form of a granite sarcophagus. He hasn't heard of any other "archaeological parties" operating in the region.

TOO LATE

No matter when the characters decide to check out the monastery, the place is deserted. The sand and dust have clearly not been disturbed in years. After a brief search, they locate the sarcophagus. Removing the lid is hard work, but doesn't require any die rolls (time isn't against the characters).

Inch by inch, the heavy slab begins to move. With a final creak it swings clear, crashing to the ground with a noise like a bomb going off. Inside, the tomb is empty—completely empty!

If an adventurer checks, the inside and outside depths don't match. Even allowing for a thicker base, the sarcophagus is a good foot shallower inside than it should be. Should they not check, allow them a Notice roll to discover this.

Hacking at the bottom of the sarcophagus interior eventually reveals a hole. Leading into the gloom is an ancient, wooden ladder. It's perfectly safe, despite appearances.

Climbing down brings the characters to a small chamber at one end of a long corridor. At the far end is a stout wooden door. All along the walls are wooden panels, covered in images of ancient rulers, all with identifying labels beneath. The final panel depicts Alexius III. In his hands he holds a small statue, which Blumenthal confirms is the Palladium!

The door opens into a large chamber. Carved into the walls are dozens of large holes, in which were once placed wooden coffins. These have been dragged out and smashed, and the human remains scattered haphazardly around, though the cobwebs and settled dust would indicate the desecration did not occur recently.

One skeleton wears a chain hauberk and carries

a long sword. From the look of it, the killing blow was to his head, and from behind. On his left hand is a large gold ring. He also has a leather pouch on his belt.

The skeleton belongs to one of the tomb robbers, Crusaders who discovered the tomb in the 14th century and looted its treasures. The gold ring displays a heraldic crest. A Knowledge (History) roll reveals it be of Viennese origin, dating no later than 1370. Inside the pouch are a handful of silver coins. Again, a Knowledge (History) roll places these as Viennese from the 14th century.

Don't worry if the explorers fail these rolls—they can try Investigation rolls when they reach civilization, or ask Stavros should they return to Istanbul.

SLICE AND DICE

Leaving the burial chamber activates an ancient trap. When the occupants were laid to rest, one member of the funerary party always stayed at the other end of the corridor, wherein the trap control mechanism is located. It takes the guise of a stone, which depresses to disable the deadly trap.

Entering the corridor for the return trip, you are forced to leap back as spinning metal discs, no doubt with razor sharp edges, whirl out from the walls. Further along the passage you can see more discs and whirling, twisting blades.

It looks bad, but things are about to get even worse! A huge stone is lowering at the far end, threatening to seal you in the depths of the earth!

The stone seals the heroes in the corridor at the *end* of the 6th round. In order to escape, the characters need to avoid the blades and discs, and dive under the door.

The corridor is 11" long in total, and 1" wide. Don't worry about the character sharing the same square—each one is 2 yards to a side, so there's plenty of room for the purposes of this scene.

The first two squares out of the burial chamber are clear. The next square contains whirling discs and blades, as does very other square thereafter. The stone door is located at the far edge of the last square—a square filled with blades!

Each set of blades whirls to its own particular timing. A character who makes a Smarts roll at –2 spots a gap in their movement, giving him a chance to leap through with relative ease. A failure means he misjudges his jump. One Smarts roll must be made per set of blades and discs.

Actually moving through a trapped square requires an Agility roll at –2. Characters who succeeded in their Smarts roll don't suffer this penalty, while those who failed must take a –4 penalty. A failure on the Agility roll means the explorer takes 2d6 damage (Wild Card source) *and* makes no progress this round!

Note that characters can try to clear multiple sets of traps in the same round. However, the Smarts roll only covers the first set (the others are too obscured to study clearly), and the Agility roll also suffers a multi-action penalty. Any failure stops the character at the *first* set of traps he is trying to avoid.

Any hero who reaches the chamber beneath the sarcophagus can make a Notice roll each round. With a success, he locates the disarming device. Pressing it causes the blades to retreat into the walls and the stone to lift back into the ceiling.

Unfortunately, there is an added obstacle. Once the square nearest the burial chamber door is completely vacated, a huge stone block slides down, preventing the characters from going back to the chamber. They face being totally trapped, deep beneath the earth, and surrounded by whirling death!

Don't panic if the door actually seals the characters inside the tunnel—Azban turns up a few minutes later, having been phoned by Stavros and told to keep a very close eye on his friends—and deactivates the trap. On no account should the characters be told this in advance—the threat of death should seem very real to them.

- **Blumenthal:** See page 18.
- **Beni Hassan:** See page 18.

ACT 4: OH, VIENNA

Once free of the deadly trap, the characters can leave the monastery. Unfortunately, they are about to run into old friends. Note that while the first scene of this Act follows on directly from the one above, it was placed in Act 4 to allow the characters to recover a wound (a sneaky, but effective, use of our setting rules).

SCENE 1: TURKEY SHOOT

As you clamber down from the ruins, you spy a number of German vehicles parked nearby. Before you can react, the distinctive sound of SMGs being cocked reaches your ears. Nazi soldiers emerge from the surrounding undergrowth. Behind them is Colonel Klinsmann, still looking like he just crawled from a grave.

"Thank you for your assistance," he cackles. "I'm afraid all the credit will be mine, but I am willing to be magnanimous in victory. Now, where is the Palladium?"

Heroes with Big Mouth now get their chance to spill the beans. If they don't (feel free to confiscate a benny for this breech of the rules), or no character has the Hindrance, Beni reveals his true nature. If a character talked, Beni still goes across to the Colonel, only this time to clarify the adventurer is telling the truth.

Before you can even think of a suitable insult, Beni runs forward. "It's in Vienna, Colonel. Something to do with a noble family." The traitorous cur turns to face you and shrugs. "What can I say? They pay better than Stavros."

Klinsmann smiles his grinning-skull smile. "Excellent. You are too resourceful to leave alone to die a second time. This time I shall watch your demise in person. FIRE!"

Deal the action cards.

If the party managed to save any nitroglycerine, it's a handy time to use it. A vial can be thrown to a Range of 3/6/12, and explodes for 3d6 damage (AP 2, HW) in a Medium Burst Template.

The battlefield covers an area 24" to a side. The Nazis begin 20" from the heroes. Broken, toppled columns and low walls provide ample Cover, as do the Nazi trucks. Moving through the rubble is treated as difficult ground.

A few pillars are even standing, at least until a hero decides to topple them. Shoving over a pillar requires a Strength roll at –4. Characters can Cooperate on this task. Place a Cone Template to represent the angle of fall. Anyone underneath the template must make an Agility roll at –2 or suffer 3d8 damage (from an Extra).

Colonel Klinsmann isn't destined to be defeated yet. Use the Recurring Villains rule to ensure he escapes in one of the German vehicles. His vehicle is impervious to damage as he drives off. In one of those pulp twists, the GM should ensure the other vehicles are too damaged to give immediate pursuit—stray shots could have punctured a tire, or a vial of nitroglycerine may have blow one to pieces.

- **Colonel Klinsmann:** See page 18.
- **Blumenthal:** See page 18.
- **Beni Hassan:** See page 18.
- **Nazi Soldiers (3 per hero):** See page 19.
- **Azban:** Stavros' cousin is only present if he had to rescue the heroes from the trap. Treat him as a London thug (page 19).

SCENE 2: VON HANSEN'S LEGACY

With the Nazis defeated, the characters can head back to town and arrange for transportation to Vienna.

Austria is currently a land in turmoil. The Chancellor, Engelbert Dollfuss, has banned all political parties save his own, and the country is run as an autocracy. Needless to say, he isn't a popular man. Indeed, many Austrians speak of Hitler, savior of Germany, coming to liberate them!

Determining any details about the Viennese crest requires an Investigation roll. Fortunately, Vienna has many libraries and museums. With success, the characters learn it belongs to a Danish family, the Hansens. According to the texts, this particular branch of the family moved to Vienna sometime in the 12th century. A family mausoleum lies in the Central Graveyard, a vast necropolis said to be the second-largest burial ground in Europe. On a raise, they learn the family changed its name to von Hansen centuries ago.

Locating the Central Graveyard is easy, but finding the Hansen plot proves impossible. (If they know of the change of name, locating the plot is quickly achieved). Fortunately, there are several attendants on duty (they speak German and Italian). If approached, one chuckles when he hears the name.

"Ah, you'd be here all day! The family changed its name to von Hansen generations ago. Baron Theophil von Hansen was the last member of the family to be buried here. His mausoleum is ten rows up and eight plots to the left. A very famous man, the Baron. He designed many of this city's finest buildings, you know."

Baron von Hansen's mausoleum is a grand affair, not surprising given he was a great architect. Aside from the usual dates of birth and death (1813-1891), there is one inscription of interest—*"She was my finest work, and is Vienna's savior."*

The attendant is still nearby. He knows exactly to what the cryptic message relates—Baron von Hansen designed the parliament building, outside of which stands a statue of Pallas–Athena! He didn't sculpt the statue, but he designed it. There was even a special dedication ceremony, attended by many prominent Freemasons, when it was finished in 1902.

THESE GUYS GET EVERYWHERE

The Nazis, meanwhile, have managed to track down the mausoleum. A squad of soldiers is moving up through the surrounding gravestones and tombs.

Your talk with the attendant is cut short by the rat-a-tat-tat of machinegun fire. A squad of Nazis, led by Colonel Klinsmann, has tracked down the von Hansen mausoleum and is moving through the graveyard toward your location.

Deal action guards and get the bullets flying!

The exact dimensions of the graveyard are far too big to fit on the tabletop. All that matters for this fight is that there are plenty of gravestones and small tombs to provide the characters with cover. Passing over a square containing a burial plot is treated as difficult ground. The Nazis begin 24" from the heroes, and approach on four fronts.

The attendant hits the dirt and crawls away. Klinsmann should escape with his life. It's easy enough for him to retreat further into the graveyard and vanish among the tall stones and trees.

Missed shots don't vanish into the ether—headstones explode in a shower of dust and gravel! To keep the action, and characters, moving, assume any missed shot destroys a headstone. If the attack missed because of the

Cover modifier, then the stone being used as shelter is destroyed—otherwise just remove a random grave marker.

- **Blumenthal:** See page 18.
- **Colonel Klinsmann:** See page 18.
- **Nazi Soldiers (3 per hero):** See page 19.

SCENE 3: ATHENA RESPLENDENT

The statue of Pallas-Athena stands in the center of a fountain directly outside the parliament building. No Nazis are present when the characters arrive, but they can hear the distinct sound of trucks and motorbikes approaching.

In order to retrieve the Palladium, the characters have to follow the steps below—easier said than done when a horde of Nazis is about to arrive! The characters have four rounds to find the Palladium's hiding place. At the end of the fourth round, Klinsmann and his men arrive. They immediately open fire. The low wall in front of the statue grants the characters Medium Cover (–2).

* The characters have to search the statue to find where the Palladium may be stored. This requires a Notice roll as an action by an adjacent character. Success means they locate a stone beneath the water marked with an owl (the symbol of Athena). On a failure, they may try again next round.
* The party must pry the stone free. This requires a Strength roll. There is a –2 penalty unless the characters have a crowbar or similar tool. With a success, the stone pops free, revealing a pull-up handle. With a failure, they can try again next round.
* The handle must be pulled. It is rather stiff, so a Strength roll is required. Success causes the interior of the fountain to fold away, revealing a set of spiral stairs descending beneath the streets of Vienna. It seems Baron von Hansen didn't take any chances with the Palladium! The water from the fountain flows down the steps.

Inside the stairwell is another handle. Pulling it closes the fountain behind the party, concealing their route. The fountain quickly refills with water, but the Nazis have the same clue as the characters and won't be far behind.

- **Colonel Klinsmann:** See page 18.
- **Nazi Soldiers (3 per hero):** As page 19.
- **Blumenthal:** See page 18.

SCENE 4: THE PALLADIUM

The stairs, slick with water from the fountain, spiral down, taking you deep beneath the streets of Venice. After maybe 30 feet, the stairs end at the edge of a large chamber.

The floor is tiled in four color strips—red, yellow, white, and black. In the center of the back wall stands a short, narrow pillar. Encased in glass, atop the column sits a small, crudely-shaped lump of rock. Could this innocuous object be the fabled Palladium?

The floor area is 24" by 24". The tiles are laid in columns of the same color and in the order noted above. The object atop the pillar is the Palladium. It's actually carved from meteoric stone, which relates to the legend of Zeus sending it to Earth from the sky.

The glass is a product of weird science, and is totally impervious to all weapons. Etched into the surface are words. On one side they are written in Latin, another Greek, then German, and Italian. They all read the same—*"The weight of the four virtues reveals all."*

When four characters stand on the squares adjacent to the pillar, their combined weight causes the glass to retract into the column, allowing the Palladium to be snatched. Doing so also activates a nasty trap.

Each floor tile color relates to a card suit. Red is noted by Clubs, yellow by Diamonds, white by Hearts, and black by Spades. At the *end* of each round, the GM should flip over the top card of the action deck. Anyone standing on a square of the appropriate color receives a powerful electric shock for 2d8 damage (as from an Extra). A Joker indicates the trap misfired, and no one gets shocked.

Flying may seem a safe option, but von Hansen thought of this when he designed his trap. Flying characters are struck by a 2d8 bolt of lighting at the *start* of every round!

By coincidence, the moment the Palladium is lifted, Klinsmann and his cronies locate the secret entrance in the fountain! Read the following text to the players as the Palladium is removed from the plinth.

A faint scraping sound of stone on stone, and the sudden appearance of water down the stairs reveals the worst—the Nazis have found the secret entrance!

The characters have some advanced warning of the Nazis arrival. Each character may take one round of actions. Once they're done, deal action cards.

The Nazis rush down the stairs and onto the tiled floor. Move each one 6" into the room. By the time they realize their mistake, it's too late! Driven by his fanaticism, the Colonel orders his men to grab the Palladium from the characters. The final fight should be quite shocking!

Once the Nazis are defeated, the characters can make their escape. Klinsmann didn't leave any guards on the street above, so the heroes can quietly vanish into Vienna and arrange passage home.

- **Colonel Klinsmann:** See page 18.
- **Nazi Soldiers (4 + 2 per hero):** As page 19.
- **Blumenthal:** See page 18.

AFTERMATH

To ensure the city never falls to invaders, the Palladium is concealed deep beneath London in a location known only to the highest-ranking members of Meonia.

In 1938, Vienna, its magical protection lost, falls to the Nazis. Hitler fully mobilizes his war machine a year later. Resistance is weak, and the Nazis quickly conquer Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, and France.

Summer of 1940 sees the Battle of Britain take place in the Skies above England's south coast as Hitler begins his offensive against Britain. Despite numerical superiority, the Luftwaffe fails to gain the air superiority required to launch Operation Sealion—the invasion of Britain. In September of that same year, Hitler formally abandons plans to conquer the stalwart nation by direct force.

Britain will have a rough time until the war ends thanks to continued raids and U-boat activity, but the Palladium has worked its magic again.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

PROFESSOR ERNEST BLUMENTHAL

Blumenthal is a scholar at heart, but he's also a member of the secret organization known as Meonia. What his scholarly colleagues don't know is that the professor is actually a semi-talented sorcerer, having learned the arts from ancient texts. Blumenthal is a Henchman.

Special Rule: Rather than mess around tracking Power Points, Blumenthal can cast each spell a certain number of times during any scene. Once he's used his allotment he can't cast any more spells. Spells which can be maintained instead last for three rounds per casting (track these by using gaming stones). His power list is the equivalent of 15 Power Points.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Knowledge (Classics) d10, Knowledge (History) d8, Notice d6, Spellcasting d8, Stealth d6
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Bad Eyes, Code of Honor, Curious
Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), Scholar (Classics & History)
Powers: Each scene, Blumenthal can cast the following spells: *1 x armor* (ghostly chain armor), *2 x healing* (warm glow), *3 x elemental manipulation* (any element), *1 x quickness* (lightning reflexes)
Gear: Umbrella (Str+d4)

KLAUS STEINER

Steiner is a renowned fencing master, who teaches young gentlemen and ladies the noble art of dueling. He's also a secret Nazi agent, part of a Fifth Column placed in England by Hitler just in case he ever goes to war with Britain.

Beneath his mark, Steiner is an attractive man of middling years. His close-cropped hair is battleship gray and he has a scar running down his left cheek. He's in peak physical form.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Taunt d10
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 7 (1)
Hindrances: Arrogant, Loyal, Stubborn
Edges: Acrobat, Dodge, Frenzy, Improved First Strike, Level Headed, Quick, Strong Willed, Sweep
Gear: Fencing mask (+2, head only), leather jacket (+1), rapier (Str+d4, Parry +1)
Special Abilities:

* **Crippling Injury:** If Steiner scores a raise on his Fighting roll, he can forgo rolling damage to instead automatically deliver a crippling blow. The hero rolls on the Injury Table. The injury cannot be Soaked, and only goes away at the end of the Act in which it was delivered. Typically, Steiner does this if his action card is a black suit.
* **Sacrificial Lambs:** Steiner doesn't give a damn about his lackeys. If an opponent strikes Steiner with a successful melee attacker, the villain shoves one of his adjacent minions (any villainous Extra in the same scene he appears) in the way to take the blow. The damage is dealt against the goon, instead. He can do this once per round, and must decide to use it before damage is rolled.

COLONEL DIETER KLINSMANN

An SS-Colonel serving with the Ahnenerbe, Klinsmann wears his black uniform with pride. Skeletally thin and extremely gaunt, Klinsmann's face is a living parody of the death's head insignia on his uniform. He cares nothing for history or archaeological research—his only desire is to deliver the Fuhrer the tools to win the coming war.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Taunt d6
Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Arrogant, Loyal, Ugly
Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command, Improved Dodge, Level Headed
Gear: Pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1)

BENI HASSAN

A sniveling weasel of a man, Beni is as trustworthy as a cobra and has the backbone of a jellyfish. He's great at making promises, but very poor at keeping them. His only interest is money, and the Nazis are paying well for information on anyone contacting the shady antique dealers of Istanbul. As soon as Stavros told him to expect foreign guests, he arranged several welcoming parties.

Beni is a Henchman.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d4, Intimidation d6, Shooting d6
Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Anemic, Greedy, Habit (Minor; coughs), Habit (minor: rarely washes), pacifist (Minor)
Edges: Fleet Footed, Quick
Gear: Knife (Str+d4)

STAVROS "THE BULL" PAPADOPOULOS

A former wrestling champion and currently an antiques dealer of dubious character, Stavros (a Greek expatriot) is well known in Istanbul to both criminal gangs and the authorities. He's gained a lot of weight since he quit wrestling, but he's still as strong as his nickname.

Stavros' code of honor is a simple one—take folks' money, but never get personally involved in their problems unless the cause is a damn good one. Stavros is a Henchman.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Antiques) d10, Knowledge (History) d8, Persuasion d6, Notice d8, Streetwise d8
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7
Hindrances: Code of Honor, Obese
Edges: Block, Connections (lots), Scholar (Antiques & History)
Gear: Small pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6–1) when clothed
Special Abilities:
* **Grappler:** +2 to make and maintain grapples.

FENCING STUDENTS

The vast majority of the school's students are nothing but the rich offspring of aristocracy, members of Parliament, or army officers. Those who aid Steiner are a mixture of British fascists, bullies, and troublemakers.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Shooting d6
Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6 (1)
Hindrances: Loyal (to Steiner), Mean
Edges: Combat Reflexes
Gear: Fencing mask (+2, Head only), leather jacket (+1), rapier (Str+d4, Parry +1)

ISTANBUL ASSASSINS

Clad head to toe in black robes, the assassins serve any master willing to meet their steep fees, caring nothing for politics or religion.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: Frenzy
Gear: Short sword (Str+d6), knife (Str+d4)

LION

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8
Special Abilities:
* **Bite/Claw:** Str+d6
* **Improved Frenzy:** May make 2 Fighting attacks each round at no penalty.
* **Size +2:** These are males, and weigh over 500 pounds.

LONDON THUGS

Hired by the Nazis through a string of agents, these thugs serve as nothing more than expendable muscle. They have no idea who they work for, but probably couldn't care less, so long as they get paid and their work allows them to crack skulls.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6
Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Shooting d6
Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Loyal, Mean
Edges: Combat Reflexes
Gear: Pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1), knife (Str+d4)

NAZI SOLDIERS

Handpicked to serve the Ahnenerbe, these men don't ask questions of their superiors and obey every order given them to the letter.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Shooting d6
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: Combat Reflexes
Gear: Pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1), SMG (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, ROF 3, AP 1), knife (Str+d4)

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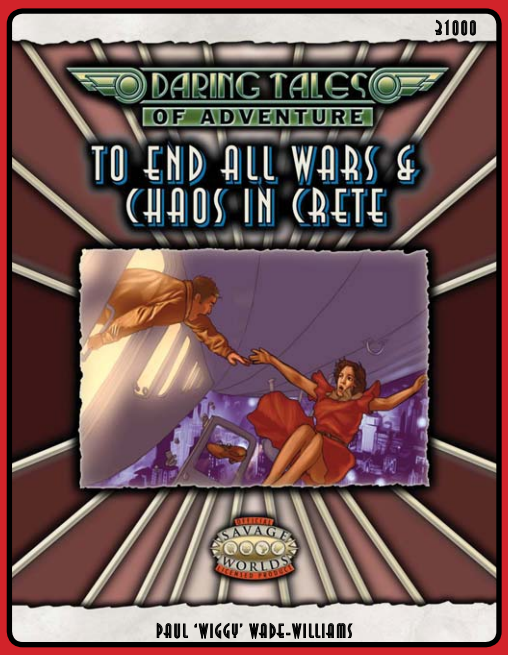
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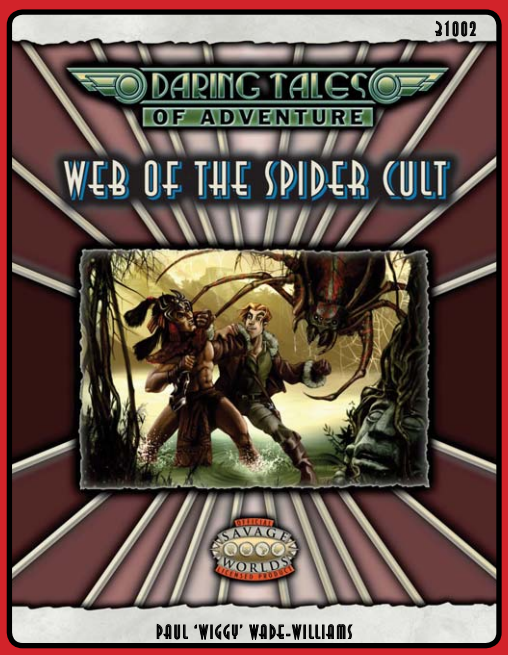
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THE TWELFTH GATE



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PAUL 'WIGGY' WADE-WILLIAMS

DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

07

THE TWELFTH GATE

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THE TWELFTH GATE

Thousands of years ago, the Egyptians raised the mighty pyramids, constructed vast temples, and worshipped a pantheon of gods. Of these many deities, two are central to our story.

Egyptian mythology held that the sun god, Ra (sometimes spelled, Re), would descend each night into the underworld. There, he traveled in his solar barque through twelve gates, each representing an hour of the night, before reemerging on the other side of the world as the rising sun.

But his journey was not a smooth one. Ra's mortal enemy was Apep (known to the Greeks as Apophis), a snake deity, and lord of darkness and evil. Each night, Ra battled with Apep, aided by his mortal priests, who conducted rituals to thwart the night demon's goal of capturing Ra and plunging the world into total darkness.

Such was the fear of Apep that the Egyptians wrote entire texts on defeating the snake-demon. Of these, the most powerful scroll was *The Book of Overthrowing Apep*, a collection of spells and incantations.

So long as the Egyptians continued to worship Ra, Apep was always defeated. But civilizations crumble, and old gods are replaced by new ones. Christianity came to Egypt, and was in turn replaced as the dominant religion by Islam. While worship of Ra faded into the mists of time, Apep's mortal supporters continued to honor their deity.

For almost two millennia, they have worshipped their god in the old ways and performed lengthy and complex rituals to ensure his ascendancy. Of the twelve Gates of Night through which Ra once traveled, all but one are now choked by darkness and writhing, demonic serpents. Their great ritual is almost at an end, for Apep has broken Ra's enchantments on all but one gate. When this last, weakened ward fails, an inevitability rather than a possibility, Apep will have the strength he needs to capture the sun and prevent its rising.

But the cult's plans have not gone unnoticed. One solar astronomer has detected subtle changes in the sun's intensity. His calculations have proven that over the last few years, the sun has grown dimmer. Unable to convince the scientific community of his findings, he has taken to sending his story to newspapers across the globe.

Through an old friend, word of his crackpot theories reaches the ears of the heroes, and the race to foil Apep's insidious plan begins.

THE CHARACTERS

This Savage Adventure contains a pulp tale based around the exploits of four pre-generated characters. The full character sheets are available for free at **www.tripleacegames.com**.

The heroes have all their leveling opportunities from Seasoned (at which they begin) into Legendary mapped out in advance. Each published adventure in this line earns the heroes a fixed 5 Experience Points, guaranteeing them an advance every mission. All the players need do is tick the appropriate box and start making use of the new upgrade.

Characters: 55 XP.

The GM also needs 20 marker stones of two different colors, and the pulp setting rules from the TAG website at www.tripleacegames.com

ACT 1: BOSTON

The heroes begin in Boston, at the home of one of the party members. Why they are gathered is left for the characters to decide. Someone has just knocked at their door, and one of the adventurers has gone to investigate.

If the party didn't play through *Daring Tales of Adventure #1*, they won't have met Miss Braveheart before. In this case, the GM will have to alter the text below as necessary. The characters' exploits are well known, so she could easily have heard of their brave deeds.

SCENE 1: THE DEAD ASTRONOMER

Standing at the door, soaked by the rain, is Valerie Braveheart, the plucky reporter from the Boston Herald you saved from the Nazis several months ago. Without waiting to be invited, she steps inside, shaking the water off her coat.

"Sorry to disturb you at home," she says, removing the wet garment and handing it to you, "but I thought you'd be interested in a story just passed to me. Is there somewhere we can talk?"

Miss Braveheart gratefully accepts any offers of refreshments. Once the characters are assembled and the reacquainting is over, she pulls a notebook from her handbag.

"Doctor Edgar Whatley, an astronomer at the Boston Observatory, sent me some notes and a letter. This may sound absurd, but he claims the sun is going out! He says his science is solid, but no one will believe him, so he sent me the story to broadcast to the world.

"I've done a little investigation, and he's made some strange claims in the past, like seeing flashes of light on the surface of Mars, and claiming to have seen the surface of Venus through a break in the Venusian clouds. If he's a crank then we have nothing to fear, but if he's telling the truth…" She lets her words hang in the air for a few moments before continuing.

"Anyway, I thought you might be interested in following it up, and seeing what the old coot is on about. Could just be his telescope is dirty," she laughs.

Miss Braveheart hands over the astronomer's scientific notes. Unless a character happens to be an astronomer, the numbers are just reams of gibberish. Any astronomer in the party can make a Common Knowledge roll at –2 to try and decipher the notes. With success, he realizes the data does point to the conclusion the intensity of the sun is weakening. Should it extinguish, the world would suffer a global catastrophe and another Ice Age.

If asked why she can't cover the story herself, Miss Braveheart replies her editor has her scheduled to cover another story—some new exhibit of Egyptian artifacts at the Boston Museum. Her deadline for the Museum story is in a few hours, so she can't spare any time on the doctor's wild claims just yet.

If the characters state they intend to phone the observatory, Miss Braveheart tells them not to bother. She's been trying all morning, but no one is answering. The party discovers this out for themselves if they try to call ahead.

THE OBSERVATORY

Doctor Whatley stumbled onto the Sun's weakening quite by accident. Its reduction in luminosity, though invisible to the naked eye, is very real, and a result of Apep's machinations. Unfortunately, Whatley's public proclamations have reached the ears of the cultists, who intend to silence the astronomer before any further research is conducted and their plans noticed by their enemies.

The observatory is 10 miles from the city. On arriving, the characters spot three cars outside. One belongs to Whatley, the other two are owned by Apep cultists who have already tracked down the astronomer. After a lengthy interrogation, as much for sport as to acquire information, they killed the astronomer. This is where the characters enter.

The center of the single-room observatory is dominated by the telescope platform. Desks and shelves clutter the walls and part of the floor space.

Toward the back are a group of dusky-skinned men, all armed with daggers. One, a burly man in black robes, is holding a white-haired man around the neck. No, he's not holding him—he appears to have a snake wrapped around the man's neck!

The black-robed thug swivels round to stare at you, a forked tongue flickering from his mouth! But it's his arms that shock you the most. They aren't human—they're two, long serpents!

As he orders his men to attack, a piece of paper falls from the mouth of the cobra at the end of his scaly, right arm.

Have the characters make a Spirit roll to avoid the effects of Fear—Abdul's visage is scary enough to warrant this on the first encounter. Don't roll next time he's met.

The observatory contains just a single room, measuring 8" to a side. Dominating the center 2" square of the room is the telescope platform. Along the walls are various scientific devices, desks, bookshelves, and other assorted paraphernalia. A few desks and chairs are dotted around the rest of the floor space. Movement through any of these squares is treated as difficult ground. The only door is in the southeast corner.

Two cultists remain adjacent to Abdul at all times and act on his action card. This allows them to use their Fanatic special ability. The others all act on a single action card.

Abdul has already read the letter. His sole aim is to escape and acquire the fragment of papyrus from the Boston Museum. Use the Recurring Villains rule to ensure he survives. If necessary, throw a few more Apep cultists into the fight to cover his escape. Should the

characters have deflated all the tires, perhaps to prevent an escape, another cultist vehicle pulls up just in time to rescue Abdul.

The observatory telephone has recently been pulled from the wall and smashed (Whatley managed to break free and tried to all for help), so the heroes can't alert the museum in advance. As always, their car tires have been punctured should they try to follow the cultists. Abdul may have done this during his escape, or any newly-arrived cultists do so as an action to ensure their boss gets away.

Whatley is dead. A brief examination reveals several sets of puncture wounds on his neck.

Abdul, Snake-Armed Cultist: See page 18.

Apep Cultists (2 per hero): See page 20.

A LEAD

The piece of paper Abdul dropped is a letter. Give the player's Handout #1 at this time.

Characters with Knowledge (History) or (Religion) may make the appropriate skill roll. With success, they know Apep was an evil Egyptian snake-god, who sought to devour Ra, the sun god, and plunge the world into total darkness. They also know the legend of Ra's travels through the Underworld and the 12 Gates of Night.

Without these skills, the heroes are forced to use Investigation when they have time to visit a library.

SCENE 2: THE PAPYRUS STOLEN

Judging by the chaos outside the museum front steps, you're too late! Valerie Braveheart pushes through the crowd toward you, waving frantically to get your attention.

"Robbery," she pants, pointing back at the museum. "Someone just smashed a display case and made off with a papyrus. You'll never believe this," she gasps, "but he keeps snakes up his sleeves! Hey!" she shouts. "That's him, in the black robes, heading for that alley!"

Following the direction of her arm, you spot the villain. It's definitely the same guy from the observatory, the one who murdered Whatley.

The alley is too narrow for the characters' car. Being locals, the heroes also know the alley connects to several possible exits—trying to drive round to the other side won't guarantee the characters can catch the rogue.

As the heroes race after Abdul, a handful of cultists move to block the alleyway. The alley is 12" long and 2" wide. The thugs begin 4" in front of the characters and block the route. A number of trashcans can be used as Cover, as part of an Agility Trick, or to throw at the villains. A fire escape ladder located 3" into the alley allows a character to swing over cultists blocking his route. He must make an Agility roll at –2 to clear a square occupied by a single villain, and at –4 to clear two squares in a line blocked by villains. This is an acrobatic maneuver, so the bonus from the Acrobat Edge applies.

Once the cultists are all defeated or the characters manage to maneuver around them, proceed to the section below.

Apep Cultists (1 per hero): See page 20.

SLIPPERY CUSTOMERS

Run this scene as a Chase, using TAG's alternate Obstacles rules. Abdul begins at Medium Range (3 Range Increments), plus 1 extra Range Increment for every round it took the heroes to defeat the cultists. Each Range Increment represents 5".

Note that if the characters simply rush past the cultists, the thugs give chase, adding a third party to this scene. They begin just 1 Increment behind the characters. They'll always try to use the Parallel maneuver when close enough, so as to make a melee attack.

Abdul is intent only on escaping the scene of the crime as quickly as possible. If a character moves within 1 Range Increment, he can make a Fighting roll. Remember, you don't suffer a multi-action penalty for running and attacking in a Chase.

With any luck, the characters manage to defeat the villain. Should Abdul increase the gap to more than 10 Range Increments, he leaps into a waiting car and escapes.

Abdul, Snake-Armed Cultist: See page 18.

OBSTACLES

Deuce (–4/–) Busy Road: The chase moves across a busy road. The character has arrived during a period of particularly heavy traffic. He may either take his chances and keep running or halt and watch for a gap in the traffic. Abdul only tries the second option if the pursuers are within 3 Range Increments. Otherwise, he waits for a gap.

Those who elect to run into the road make their Agility roll at –4. Success means they have managed to dodge cars or safely roll over the hoods. Failure indicates they have been run down. They take 3d6 damage (from an Extra).

Heroes who elect to pause for a gap cannot make an Agility roll this round, and thus do not move any Range Increments. Next round they may move as normal.

Three (–2) Slippery: A storeowner has been washing his floor, and the sidewalk is covered in soapy water. A failed Agility roll indicates the hero slips and falls. His Agility roll next round is made at –2 due to the time lost having to regain his footing.

Four (–2) Trash Cans: Trash cans line the sidewalk and the character barrels into them. His Agility roll is made at –2. With failure, he suffers 2d6 damage (from an Extra).

Five (–2) Damn Drivers: As the adventurer tries to

cross an intersection, a car pulls to a halt right in front of him. Failure indicates the character slowed too late and slams into the car for 2d6 damage (from an Extra).

Six (–2) Sudden Surge: A surge of shoppers leave a department store, sweeping a hero up in their exodus. If he fails his Agility roll, the character is forced back 1 Range Increment by the crowd.

Seven (–2) He Went That Way: A helpful youth points out the route of the villain as he momentarily vanishes from sight. Unfortunately, the lad got the wrong direction and the hero must waste time recovering old ground. A failed roll moves the hero back 1 Range Increment.

If Abdul draws this card, he simply gets caught up in a crowd of pedestrians.

Eight (–2/0) My Baby: A mother has lost control of her carriage, which is rolling toward the traffic. Ask the character if he wishes to stop the carriage being crushed or ignore it and keep moving. Abdul always goes for the latter (and the carriage is stopped by a policeman).

Stopping the carraige gives the character a –2 penalty to his Agility roll. Success means he catches the carriage in the nick of time and can move this round. With a failure, he manages to stop the carriage, but only by throwing himself in the way. He loses 1 Range Increment as he frantically tries to untangle himself.

A character who ignores the woman's cry for help rolls his Agility with no penalty, but loses a benny for his unheroic deed (and the policeman comes to the rescue again).

Nine (–2/0) Girl Scout: The adventurer bumps into a Girl Scout selling cookies for a worthy cause, scattering her boxes of goodies across the street. The hero can either stop and help her pick them up, or ignore her and keep running. Abdul, being a villain, never stops to help.

A character who stops to assist makes his Agility roll at –2 for this round. Failure means the task takes much longer than anticipated, and he moves back a Range Increment.

Ignoring her plight allows an Agility roll at no penalty, but costs the character a benny for being "a mean person."

Ten (–1) Hobo: A drunk staggers in front of the character and tries to block his route while he begs for some change. A failed Agility roll means the hero loses 1 Range Increment due to the delay. Abdul suffers this penalty as well. The drunk doesn't care he has snakes for arms—he's seen worse in his nightmares.

Jack (–1) Pedestrians: As the character reaches an intersection the lights go green and he is met by an onrush of pedestrians coming the other way. Failure has no special penalties, beyond the character not making any headway this round.

Queen (–1) Stray Dog: A vicious stray dog decides to take a bite at the adventurer. Make a Fighting d8 roll. With success, the hero has been bitten, suffering d6+d4 damage (from an Extra), before he makes his Agility roll.

King (–1) Fire Hydrant: Kids tampering with a fire hydrant manage to get it shooting out a jet of water—straight at the character. A successful roll means the hero avoided the spray. With a failure, he is knocked over, and loses 1 Range Increment as he is sent flying by the jet.

Ace (–2/0) Catching a Ride: The character has the opportunity to leap onto a car's running board as it zooms by. Ask the character if he wants to try to catch a ride or keep moving on foot. Abdul, desperate to escape, always tries the former.

Catching a lift requires an Agility roll at –2. With success, the hero moves an additional 2 Range Increments. This doesn't stack with Push. Failure means the hero falls from the running board. He takes 2d6 damage (from an Extra) and suffers a –2 penalty to his Agility roll next round as he gets to his feet.

Characters who elect to keep moving on foot simply roll their Agility die as normal.

THE BOOK OF OVERTHROWING APEP

The fragment of papyrus contains several spells. These can be invoked by any character who reads Egyptian hieroglyphs. If no one can read the ancient script, the spells can be translated at Boston or Cairo Museum, or by the astrologer later in the adventure.

Casting requires a Smarts roll. Spells which can normally be maintained are instead fixed at 3 rounds, unless otherwise stated. When a spell is cast, cross it off the list. It doesn't matter if copies of the spells exist—each can only be cast a fixed number of times.

The spells on the papyrus are as follows. Each has its English translation (which should be given to the heroes) and its game mechanic equivalent (which the characters don't know). Give the group Handout #3. Common sense and a little guesswork are the adventurers' best hope of choosing wisely.

* Spitting Upon Apep (*bolt*; light trapping, 1 bolt of light for 3d6 damage)
* Defiling Apep (*light*; lasts 10 minutes, or 60 combat rounds)
* Taking a Lance to Smite Apep (*burst*; light trapping)
* Fettering Apep (*entangle*; Medium Burst Template)
* Taking a Knife to Smite Apep (*smite*)
* Putting Fire Upon Apep (*blast*; light trapping, 3d6 damage in a Medium Burst Template)

THE PAPYRUS

Hopefully, the characters end up in possession of the text. It's written in Egyptian hieroglyphs, so unless a character can read them, the symbols are meaningless without translation by an expert (such as those available at the Boston Museum). The papyrus contains several spells, which will prove useful to the party. Details can be found in the sidebar on page 5.

Don't worry if Abdul escapes. The papyrus isn't vital to the next sections of the adventure, though it would have made their life a little easier in places, and the characters get a chance to recover it later on.

By rights, the papyrus should be returned to the museum. However, it's a useful tool, and one the characters are unlikely to want to give away. The GM can safely ignore the "theft," since it is for a good cause, and let the characters return it after the tale concludes. Alternately, if the heroes take it back to the curator and explain their need to retain it, a successful Persuasion roll allows them to keep it for a short while.

SCENE 3: THE VEIL FALLS

Whether they have the papyrus or not, the characters have only one lead to follow—Aziz El-Mahdy of the Egyptian Department of Antiquities.

He can be reached by phone. However, he claims never to have heard of Doctor Whatley, and scoffs at the notion of an evil plot or a cult dedicated to Apep. This alone should raise the heroes' curiosity and ensure they head to Cairo to investigate further. Making early contact also alerts the Apep cultists to the characters interference in their plans.

Read the following text aloud when the characters reach Boston airport. If they have their own transportation, the GM will need to alter the text accordingly.

The sun is high in the sky as you sit in the departure lounge with all the other passengers. Your flight has been called, so it won't be long before you embark.

Suddenly, you notice everything is growing darker. Glancing outside, you see a solar eclipse seems to be taking place. Yes, a black disc is definitely moving over the face of the Sun. But if that's the case, why is the moon clearly visible in another part of the sky?

A scream from behind you causes you to whirl around. Emerging from under the seats, from passengers' bags, even your own, and behind potted plants are hundreds of snakes!

Remind the characters that while pulp heroes don't draw police attention from using guns, that rule doesn't give them *carte blanche* to begin shooting up a public airport crowded with innocents.

The airport lounge measures 10" long by 8" wide. There is one row of seats against each long wall, and a line of back-to-back seats (2") wide down the center of the room. Moving through these counts as difficult ground for the heroes, but the serpents are able to slither underneath with ease. There are a few potted plants the characters can use for cover.

The seats aren't bolted down, and can be used to club the snakes (Str+d6). Alternately, a hero can grab a magazine from a chair and roll it up to use as a makeshift club (Str+d4). Picking up an improvised weapon counts as Drawing a Weapon.

Due to the sudden eclipse, the lighting inside the lounge is Dim (–1).

Have the heroes place their miniatures on the tabletop. When that's done, the GM places the snakes. One demon snake begins in each corner of the room. The two swarms begin in the central column of chairs, one at each end. Don't worry if the characters begin under a swarm's template—the snakes don't start biting until their action card.

The other passengers sensibly jump onto chairs and begin stamping their feet to drive back the snakes. For convenience, they take no damage during this scene, nor do they assist the heroes in any meaningful way.

Once the snakes are dispatched, the lighting conditions immediately returns to normal. The "eclipse" has ended as quickly as it began. Have the characters make Notice rolls. With success, they realize the sun is noticeably dimmer than it was before!

Until the end of Act 2, all daytime encounters take place in Dim lighting (–1)—things get worse then!

- **Demon Snakes (1 per hero):** See page 20.
- **Snake Swarm (2):** See page 21.

ACT 2: CAIRO

Cairo did not exist in the time of the pharaohs. In that ancient epoch, the capital lay at Memphis, some 12 miles south of modern Cairo and on the opposite bank of the Nile. Dating from the 10th century AD, Cairo has grown rapidly into a sprawling metropolis.

Although independent of British rule since 1922, under the terms of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936, Great Britian retains a large army to help guard the Suez Canal and train Egypt's army. She is also bound by the treaty to help defend Egypt should the country be attacked. In a few years, Egypt will call upon Great Britian to help against the Italians and Germans.

Cairo is a city of contrasts. The splendor and wonders of the Khedivial Opera House, Egyptian Museum, Khan El-Khalili bazaar, and the many mosques and Coptic Christian churches are contrasted by the poverty and murderous inhabitants of the slums, sinister cults which operate in the shadows, coffee houses where artifact smugglers and tomb robbers make secret deals to plunder Egypt of its heritage, and bars selling illegal alcohol, hashish, and other narcotics.

Several modern myths speak of the Black Pharaoh, a mysterious crime lord who deigns to rule over Egypt in the manner of the kings of old. But that is a tale for another day.

SCENE 1: AN AGGRESSIVE WELCOME

The Department of Antiquities is located on an island within the Cairo city limits. The northern portion of the

island is the Gezira district, while the southern part, where the Department has its offices, is the Zamalek district. A receptionist directs the party to Doctor El-Mahdy's office, which is on the second floor.

As you reach out to knock, the door suddenly opens. Framed in the doorway is a dusky-skinned woman wearing a brightly colored headscarf and dark glasses. Tall and slim, her dress clinging to every curve like a second skin, she could be the living incarnation of the beautiful queen, Nefertiti, considered by many to be one of the most attractive women who ever lived. Without a word, she slides past you and heads down the stairs. The smell of jasmine fills your nostrils.

The woman is Nadine, one of Apep's most trusted agents. Doctor El-Mahdy, a specialist in the mythology of Ra and Apep, stumbled across the cult's plans quite by accident. When the cultists discovered what he knew through their spies in the Department of Antiquities, Nadine was ordered to use her special powers to enthrall the doctor—he is too high profile to suddenly vanish, and his knowledge could be beneficial to Apep's followers. He has been subjected to a special form of *puppet*, which has left him totally loyal to the cult.

El-Mahdy is a rugged Egyptian in his late-Twenties. As much a field man as a scholar, he enjoys getting his hands dirty on archaeological expeditions. His meeting with the heroes is covered as a series of possible questions and answers. With regard to matters not listed below, the doctor is evasive.

Q: We found your letter to Professor Whatley. Why is the world in danger?

A: *"I'm sorry, you must have mistaken me for someone else. I don't know of any Professor Whatley, and, as far as I know, the world is perfectly safe."*

Q: This letter (shows the doctor the missive).

A: *Doctor El-Mahdy reads the letter. "A fake," he says, placing it on his desk, "sent to discredit me, perhaps. In my line of work, locating and conserving valuable antiquities, one makes many enemies among artifact hunters who would prefer to sell them on the black market."*

Q: Who was that woman?

A: *"A friend."*

Q: What do you know of Apep?

A: *"Apep was invented by the ancient Egyptians to explain the passage of the sun through the heavens. Solar eclipses were seen as strange, potentially catastrophic, events. The ancients were intelligent people, but they lacked our modern knowledge of the universe. They sought to explain celestial phenomena as acts of the gods."*

Q: We believe the cult is still active. Does that surprise you?

A: *"Really? I'm afraid you cannot be allowed to spread such gossip. It could be…harmful, to certain activities" With that, he springs to his feet, a long knife, similar to those wielded by Whatley's murderers, in his hand.*

Deal action cards. Note that while the last question may not come up in the exact form above, any reference to the cult triggers a subliminal implant to kill those with knowledge of Apep's followers.

Normally gunfire doesn't bring the authorities running. However, that's only the case when the villain is obviously a villain. In this case, any gunshots alert security guards (actually cultists placed here to watch over El-Mahdy), who arrive on the scene 1d4+1 rounds after the shooting starts.

Read the following text aloud when El-Mahdy reaches Incapacitated. It's important the doctor not be taken alive. Should he be grappled or hit with nonlethal damage, then a second subliminal implant, one which stops his heart, causes his death.

"Forgive me," he whispers. "I had no choice. My mind…images…obedience. Rashid ibn Al-Azif…find him…ask him…" With that, the doctor turns the knife on himself, plunging it through his chest. As he slumps to the floor, a smile crosses his lips. "No more darkness," he sighs, as the life leaves his body.

The arrival of the cultist security guards actually gives the characters a perfect cover for the doctor's death (see below). El-Mahdy has, hopefully, mentioned he has many enemies. Claiming the security guards burst in and fired first may not be completely heroic, but it saves the good doctor's otherwise excellent reputation.

Note that while it might seem logical to have the cult of Apep provide descriptions of the heroes to the authorities and have them hunted by the Egyptian police, that really isn't the pulp way. That works better in noir, a separate, darker genre.

Doctor El-Mahdy: Treat as a Wild Card cultist of Apep (page 20), but armed only with a dagger.

Security Guards (1 per hero): As cultists of Apep (page 20), but replace their daggers with batons (Str+d4).

SCENE 2: APEP SPEAKS

Locating Rashid ibn Al-Azif requires a Streetwise roll. He doesn't appear on any official census records, so Investigation is no use in tracking him down.

Rashid ibn Al-Azif lives in the slums of Cairo, not far from the great pyramids and Sphinx at Giza. The area is a maze of narrow alleys and streets, unlit by streetlamps, and avoided at night by those who value their lives.

The local inhabitants claim he has lived here since the days of the pharaohs, for everyone knows someone whose grandparents swear blind he was there in the time of their grandparents. Regardless of what they believe, the locals know Rashid as a good man, always willing to offer advice in return for a few coins or a hot meal. Rashid is *extremely* elderly, but how long he has lived is not for discussion.



The astrologer lives alone and answers the door when the heroes knock. The old man's skin is heavily weathered, his teeth long since fell from his skull, but he radiates very intense charisma.

He welcomes the characters and invites them into his home. He ignores any questions until he has served them peppermint tea and bowls of dates and figs. Only then does he ask their business. No doubt a battery of questions follows. Rashid raises a hand to indicate he wants silence.

"If you want the current news, read a newspaper," he says quietly. "If you want to know other things, we must follow the proper rituals, in accordance with the gods' teachings. Please, follow me into the back room." He stands, moves to a curtain hanging on the back wall, and pulls it aide.

As he gestures you into the room, his hand movements extinguish one of ten small candles, the only light sources in the chamber. In a quick motion, he whips out a lighter and rekindles the flame.

"Don't worry," he smiles with a wry, toothless grin, "I keep a flashlight handy in case I get too boisterous. Come now; be seated," he says, indicating several plump cushions on the floor. "When you are comfortable, we shall begin."

Once the heroes are ready, the astrologer asks them what wisdom they seek. Possible questions or lines of enquiry and the mystic's answers are given below.

After each question is asked, the astrologer checks an astrolabe, rolls special dice engraved with arcane symbols of knowledge, meditates a moment, and then consults several old parchments of astrological charts. It's a slow process, and he refuses to be rushed.

After the last listed question is asked, no matter when it is asked, read narrative text at the start of the next section to the players—the audience is over, and a new one is about to begin.

Q: Did you know Aziz El-Mahdy?

A: *"Yes, I know him. I have performed divinations for him on many occasions to aid in his search for ancient relics of our ancestors. But he has not been here for several weeks, now."*

Q: What can you tell us about Apep?

A: *"Apep is the enemy of light. He inhabits the Underworld and guards the twelve Gates of Night. Each night,*

he battles Ra, the sun god, as he sails his solar barque along the underground river that joins the eastern and western horizons."

Q: What are the Gates of Night?

A: *"Stages through the Underworld. Each represents one hour of darkness. In the heavens, there are 12 Gates of Day. These are in perfect balance—12 hours of night opposed by 12 hours of light. This is as the god's intended. Long ago, it was called* ma'at*—the cosmic balance that ensured the universe worked smoothly."*

Q: Did you know Apep's cult is still active?

A: *"The old gods are slumbering, but not dead. Many have worshippers still, for good or for evil."*

Q: The cult of Apep is planning something. Can you tell us what?

A: *"Apep seeks to plunge the world into eternal darkness and seek sovereignty over mankind. This has always been his goal, for he abhors light, but with the loss of the old god's power, he now grows close to fulfilling his ambitions. He has sealed eleven of the Gates of Night. When the twelfth is blocked, he will capture Ra in his coils, and the sun will never rise again."*

Q: How can we stop him?

A: *"Seek the Staff of Ra. Only this relic can save mankind. Search the cobra's nest."*

A DIFFERENT VOICE

The astrologer suddenly goes rigid, and then falls limp, before rising upright again. His eyes are jet black, pools of absolute night. His mouth hangs open. Without moving his lips, he speaks in a deep, dark, sibilant voice.

"What mortal dares to interfere with the ascendancy of Apep, Lord of Night? My reign of terror is forecast in the heavens, but you shall not see it come to pass. Soon your souls will be mine, and I will subject you to an eternity of torture for your audacity. Let the darkness come forth!"

The astrologer begins to shake violently. Dark wisps of smoke coil out from his eyes and mouth, coalescing into midnight-black serpents with burning coals for eyes. As quick as lightning, they strike for you.

Deal action cards. Rashid won't need one—he's dead.

The ground floor of the astrologer's house comprises two rooms. His reading room is out back, and measures 4" wide and 3" deep. Adjoining this is the front room, which is 4" wide and 4" deep. Due to the clutter of furnishing, all movement along the ground is treated as difficult ground.

The astrologer provided plenty of clues in his answers about how to defeat the shadow snakes. Whether or not the characters realize is another matter.

The lighting in the back room is Dim (–1), since the only sources of light are ten small candles. As noted in the stat block for the shadow serpents, the candles can be used as weapons, but have a chance of extinguishing. The candles can also be snuffed out by weapons. An attack roll which comes up 1 on the skill die (regardless of the Wild Die), puts out a candle, either by knocking it over or generating enough wind to kill the feeble flame. This doesn't supersede the Innocent Bystanders rule, however, if firearms are used. When half the candles are extinguished, the lighting drops to Dark (–2). Should they all go out, the conditions worsen to Pitch Darkness (–4).

Lighting conditions in the front room are Dim (–1), thanks to a low wattage light bulb, hanging from the center of the ceiling. Treat this as an Innocent Bystander for the purposes of accidentally breaking it.

The astrologer's flashlight is by his body, which is in the northeast corner of the back room. Grabbing it is treated as Drawing a Weapon.

The front door is locked, a result of Apep's magic. It has Toughness 10 for the purposes of battering it down. The shadow snakes will follow the characters from the house. Outside, the lighting is Dark (–2), there being no street lamps in this part of the city.

Shadow Snakes (1 per hero): See page 21.

THE STAFF OF RA

Learning anything about the Staff of Ra requires either a Knowledge (History) roll at –2 or an Investigation roll. The latter requires the use of a library. Success reveals the staff was carried by Ra's high priest, and used each morning in rituals to drive away Apep, so ensuring the Sun would rise. On a raise, the character learns the staff was topped with a gemstone, from which rays of light could be commanded to appear.

Strangely, none of the library books referenced contains any images of the Staff—all the pages indicated in the text as containing a picture have been ripped out! The librarian, if questioned, shrugs apologetically and blames it on relic hunters.

THE COBRA'S NEST

Researching this enigmatic phrase requires either a Streetwise roll at –2 or an Investigation roll at a library. With success, the characters learn there is an exotic dancing club, the King Cobra Club, in downtown Cairo.

SCENE 3: THE KING COBRA CLUB

The King Cobra Club is a front for the cult of Apep. By day, it is open to all and sundry, but the caliber of the dancers is poor. At night, the club is open only to members, and it has an exclusive membership. Extremely popular with influential Egyptians, it allows the cult to covertly watch those who may be a danger to their activities, and, if necessary, bring them into the fold through Nadine's unique gift.

The handful of patrons seated around the tables spare no more than a casual glance as you enter the club. Their attention is focused on the stage, where a stunningly beautiful woman, dressed only in the skimpiest clothes, twists and gyrates in tune to music from a scratchy record.

A cloud of smoke hangs near the ceiling, wafting round the room in the breeze generated by a slow moving ceiling fan. A waiter approaches you and gestures to a vacant table.

All the staff and clientele present are cultists. Nadine recognizes the characters from El-Mahdy's office, but she doesn't let on. They only recognize her if a hero specifically asks if it's the same woman (she is wearing a lot less clothes now) or if they approach her, at which point they recognize her jasmine-scented perfume.

Nadine's performance ends after a few minutes. The patrons clap enthusiastically, and then look enviously at the characters as the exotic dancer takes a seat at their table.

"I have not seen you here before," she says, her voice as silky as her skin. "Ismail," she calls to the waiter hovering nearby, "bring another round of drinks for our new clients."

Nadine wants information. She avoids using her Natural Charmer power unless the characters are being evasive or obtuse. The she-devil asks the heroes what they are doing in Cairo, then proceeds to get them to elucidate on any comments. Remember, she doesn't know everything the GM knows, but she is a shrewd interrogator, and picks up on the slightest snippet of information. Characters with Big Mouth won't give her cause to risk exposing herself as a cultist—they'll quickly spill the beans.

Once Nadine learns, or has enough information to deduce, the heroes are in Cairo to stop Apep's plans, she signals her men, through an innocuous gesture, to prepare to fight.

Unless a character specifically said he was *not* drinking, then common courtesy assumes he has at least sipped his drink. All the drinks brought to them have been spiked with a powerful sedative, though it hasn't had time to take full effect when Nadine makes her move.

Have the heroes make Vigor rolls at –2. Success means the victim is Fatigued. On a raise, the adventurer suffers no ill effects. With a failure, he is Exhausted. On a critical failure, he is Incapacitated, the drug quickly rendering him unconscious. Fatigue recovers at the rate of one level per hour. Once the Vigor rolls are done, proceed to the next section.

FIGHT AT THE CLUB

The main area of the club measures 8" wide and 10" long, and is divided into two sections. The southern portion (8" by 7") is the main seating area. Circular tables and chairs cover the floor. Against one wall is the bar. Aside from the entrance, there is a single door leading to the dressing rooms, offices, and storerooms. The northern part is raised off the ground and forms the dance floor. Crossing onto the stage requires 2" of movement. A door here provides access to the behind-the-scenes areas of the establishment.

There are plentiful props for use in the fight. Chairs can be wielded as weapons (Str+d6, requires two hands), used in Agility Tricks, or provide Cover. The tables can easily be tipped to provide Cover. Bottles of spirits on the tables and bar can be used as weapons (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: Str+d4), but smash after a single, successful attack (or any impact, after being thrown).

Nadine begins changing into her snake-human hybrid form as an action. The characters, never having witnessed this before, must make a Spirit roll to avoid fear. Next round, she casts *quickness*. She then uses her Natural Charmer ability against the most dangerous-looking male characters.

Rather than turn charmed heroes on their colleagues, something she knows weakens her hold over them, she simply has them drop their weapons and do nothing. Should this plan fail, or if she comes under ranged attack, she launches her *bolt* spells. *Obscure* is retained to help her escape, should the opportunity arise.

The she-snake should only escape this scene if Abdul has been killed previously. Otherwise, she fights to the bitter end in a bid to slay the heroes and stop them from interfering any further. Due to a sudden change in conditions outside (see **Scene 4** below), pursuing characters won't be able to give chase.

None of the cultists, including Nadine, know where Apophis' lair is located. Note that if taken alive, Nadine can use her Natural Charmer ability using her voice *or* her eyes—she likely won't stay captive for long.

Nadine: See page 19.
Apep cultists (2 per hero): See page 20.

SEARCHING THE CLUB

Once the fight ends, the only people left standing are, hopefully, the heroes. This allows them to search the club for clues.

In Nadine's dressing room is a stout, iron chest. The lock has Toughness 14. Lockpicking rolls are made at –2. Failure activates a spring-loaded needle, which stabs the would-be thief in the finger. He must make a Vigor roll at –2 or suffer an automatic wound. Alternatively, the adventurers can search Nadine—she wears the key around her neck.

Inside are several papyri, all messages from someone called Apophis (the Greek transliteration of Apep). All are written in Egyptian hieroglyphs. One instructs her to seduce and enthrall Doctor El-Mahdy. Another indicates the 11th Gate of Night will soon be sealed. A third makes mention of the Staff of Ra. Give the group Handout #2

at this time. The term "*Saou*" is meaningless to the heroes—secret societies don't tend to advertise.

If the characters lost the fragment of *The Book of Overthrowing Apep* in Boston, it's also in the chest. See page 5 for details.

SEQENENRE TAO II

Characters who pass a Knowledge (History) roll know several facts about the pharaoh. Heroes without this skill must rely on Investigation to uncover the facts. This information isn't central to the plot, but it's always good to add in a little real world history and mix it with a hint of pulp flavoring.

Seqenenre's name means, "He Who Strikes like Ra." His other name, Tao, simply translates as "Great," and is used in a manner similar to Alexander the Great.

A ruler of the native 17th Dynasty, he came to power around 1560 BC, and ruled for just a few short years. Discovered in a cache at Deir el-Bahri in 1881 and unwrapped in 1886, the royal mummy showed clear and dramatic evidence of a violent death. According to the historical texts, the pharaoh died in battle against the Hyksos, invaders who ruled northern Egypt under Pharaoh Apophis. Apophis was viewed by the Egyptians as the earthly incarnation of Apep.

According to one legend the hero recalls, Seqenenre Tao was given the Staff of Ra to carry into battle by the high priest of Ra, but he chose, instead, to lock it away in a vault he had constructed shortly after taking the throne.

Some say he had a vision before in his youth, in which he foresaw a greater need for the Staff to be wielded in the future. In deliberately choosing not to take it on campaign, he all-but guaranteed his own death.

SCENE 4: NIGHT COMES EARLY

Read the following text aloud when the characters leave the club.

Stepping outside, you find yourselves not in the bright sunshine, but in conditions more akin to a starlit night. The plaza is crowded, though no one is moving. Instead, everyone is staring upward and pointing. The sun, still high in the sky, is barely visible. The golden disc, which should be burning bright, is a pale orb, less luminous than a full moon.

Screams and shouts alert you to another danger, one much closer. Smoky wisps are forming into the distinctive form of snakes, while a handful of armored serpents slither across the ground. The crowd panics as the serpents rear up, fangs bared. Even the local snake charmer runs for his life, dropping his flute as he sprints away.

Apep has managed to seal the 11th Gate of Night, as indicated in the papyrus found in the club. His power is almost at its zenith, as evidenced by the sun's pitiful glow.

Let the characters position their heroes in the plaza before placing the snakes. A demon snake begins in each corner, while the two shadow snakes start in the center.

The plaza measures 16" to a side and is full of innocent civilians and market stalls. Each stall measures 2" by 1" and holds a variety of common goods. The exact contents should be determined by the heroes' needs. If they require a rug to throw over a serpent as a Grapple or Agility Trick, then there's a stall selling rugs. If they don't have Rashid's flashlight to hand, then a stall just happens to have *one* for sale. Characters who don't want to draw guns can find a trader with a collection of daggers (Str+d4) and short swords (Str+d6) nearby.

An adventurer can use the snake charmer's flute to charm any one serpent within 3". This is handled as a Trick, using Agility (representing the musician's playing skill) against the serpent's Spirit (its ability to resist the music).

Until the end of the adventure, lighting conditions outside during the hours of daylight are Dark (–2).

- **Demon Snake (1 per hero):** See page 20.
- **Shadow Snake (1 per 2 heroes):** See page 21.

ACT 3: SEEKING AND FINDING

Luxor, the nearest settlement to the Valley of the Kings, can be reached by train or ferry—there is no internal air service available. From there, the characters can either set off on foot or hire mules for a small fee. Provisions, water, shovels, rope, and other standard exploration gear can also be acquired. For convenience, just assume any standard piece of equipment is available to the heroes during their expedition—don't worry about the cost or encumbrance.

SCENE 1: AN ANCIENT ORDER

Without the scorching heat of the sun, the journey is comfortable, though dusty. The trail finally winds down into a narrow canyon. All is silent, perhaps too silent.

Knowing the canyon is guarded by fanatical warriors, the heroes may announce their presence as they venture along the dusty floor. If they choose this course of action, a voice calls out to them, telling them to put down their weapons. Should they comply, proceed to the next section. Any delay, however, even taking the time to ask to whom the characters speak, results in the following.

The *Saou* wait until the characters draw closer to the end of the canyon and open fire without warning. Allow the explorers a Notice roll to avoid Surprise—they might hear a loose stone tumble as a warrior shifts position, or catch a glint of weak sunlight on steel.

The end of the canyon is 5" wide and 24" long. The *Saou* warriors are spread equally along both sides, with positions in front of and behind the heroes. Large boulders, placed by the GM, can be used as cover. The canyon walls are 20" high, and contain many natural ledges. Narrow, natural paths allow a hero to climb up at half his normal Pace. Alternatively, the characters can climb.

Half the *Saou* use their rifles from their elevated positions, while the other half draw their scimitars and rush down the slopes to attack.

The *Saou* guardians are fanatics, but they also serve to protect the relics for a reason. As an action, a hero can make a Persuasion roll at –2 to try and convince the *Saou* the party's cause is a just one. With success, their commander, Mardek al-Malik, orders his men to cease fire. They don't put away their weapons, though. Continue to the next section.

Mardek al-Malik, Saou Commander: Treat as a Wild Card *Saou* warrior (page 21).

Saou Warriors (3 per hero): See page 21.

A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION

The commander of the *Saou*, accompanied by half a dozen of his men, climbs down from the slopes and approaches the heroes.

"Entrance to this valley is forbidden to outsiders. Speak your reasons for trespassing clearly, or prepare to meet your god."

The *Saou* have witnessed the darkening of the Sun. They also know the old legends regarding Apep. Thus, mentioning his vile cult, their plan to extinguish the Sun, and the quest for the Staff of Ra is the heroes' wisest course of action.

After listening to their tale, Mardek reveals a little about the *Saou* (see page 21), and then addresses the characters.

"If what you say is true," he says, glancing upward at the pale sun, "Apep is near to achieving his goal. You may enter the tomb, but you do so alone. Our ancestors swore vows never to enter the tombs under any circumstances, and we hold to that vow. Still, you go with our blessing."

Mardek has his men roll aside the boulder blocking the tomb entrance. Behind is a set of stone-cut steps, which lead down to a sealed doorway. Carved into the door is a cryptic message—*Four must be as one.* This refers to the phrases which must be repeated to gain the Staff (page 13).

SCENE 2: THE TEMPLE INTERIOR

Pulp tombs use a special rule for their layout—only the areas where something interesting happens are described. Take *The Mummy*™ as a prime example of this mentality. You don't see the heroes exploring every stretch of corridor and checking every alcove and chamber. That's boring for the viewers, and it adds nothing to a pulp game. Detailed investigation of subterranean constructions has its place in roleplaying games, but not in this lively genre. As such, the GM should invent flavor text describing corridors and chambers covered in hieroglyphs as the party moves toward the fun areas.

The two key areas described below are listed in the order the party discover them.

THE FIRES OF RA

Navigating the network of passageways and chambers, you arrive at a stone door inset with a large, iron ring. Tall hieroglyphs, painted bright red, seem to indicate a warning.

The glyphs read, "*Only those worthy of Ra's blessing may pass. Faith and good spirit shall be your guides.*" Pulling the door open is easily achieved. Beyond lies a long corridor swathed in scorching flames. There is no way to avoid the inferno—the only way forward is through the fire. Strangely, the flames do not feel particularly hot.

A character stepping into the flames must make a Spirit roll (or Faith if he has the skill and worships a benevolent deity). He suffers a modifier to his roll depending on his Hindrances, as shown below. All modifiers are cumulative.

Mod	Hindrance
+2	Code of Honor, Heroic
+1	Loyal
–1	Arrogant, Doubting Thomas, Greedy (Minor), Mean, Vengeful (Minor)
–2	Bloodthirsty, Greedy (Major), Vengeful (Major)

Whether the roll succeeds or fails, the character can walk through the flames untouched. Only at the other end of the corridor is failure punished—the character takes 3d6 damage (from an Extra) when they reach the far end as his skin burns and blisters.

Looking back down the corridor reveals no sign of the fire. The trap only affects those entering the complex—those leaving are allowed to go in peace. This was the first trap installed, and ensured all the workmen entering the tomb were trustworthy.

THE CHAMBER OF RA

The walls of this chamber are covered in hieroglyphs depicting Ra's nocturnal struggle against Apep's dark forces. Dominating the center is a huge statue of Ra in its anthropomorphic form of a hawk-headed human. In his right hand he holds a crook and flail, symbols of kingship, while his left clutches a wooden staff topped with a gemstone.

Smaller statues of Ra, each carrying a bronze sword and shield, stand in the four corners.

The chamber measures 12" to a side. The central statue has a base of 2" by 2".

As soon as the last hero enters the room, the doorway seals shut. Only when the Staff has revealed the site of Apophis' tomb (see below) does it reopen. If a hero elects to stay outside the room, it closes anyway. Give the character a chance to join the action, though.

The weapons cannot be removed from the statutes—they are gripping them tightly. Likewise, Ra's statue retains its grip on the staff, being impervious to all weapons. Each corner statue is a Minion of Ra, a magical construct placed here to guard the tomb. If a hero attempts to deface any part of this chamber, all four animate and attack. The central statue is just a statue.

Carved into the chest of the central statue are a line of hieroglyphs. These read, *"Repeat the words of power granted the cornerstones of the universe."* This refers to inscriptions on the base of the four statues, which all read, *"Ra triumphs over Apep. Taste you death, Apep."* If no one in the party understands the language, the adventurers can nip outside and ask the *Saou* to translate for them. There's no need to roleplay this—just assume it's done. The warriors can't solve the puzzle for the party, however.

To gain possession of the Staff of Ra, the characters need to speak the four inscriptions aloud simultaneously. In the event you have fewer players, adjust the number of inscriptions accordingly.

Speaking less than the required number of phrases causes a number of statues to animate equal to four, minus the number of phrases actually spoken. Thus, if the characters speak just a single phrase, three statues come alive. If they repeat three, only a single construct attacks.

Once the four phrases have been uttered, the central statue releases its grip on the staff, which clatters to the floor. Unless picked up by a hero with the Noble Edge, the four statues of Ra attack. While the magic within the staff can't tell the descendant of a pharaoh or high priest from a European nobleman or powerful New York stockbroker, for instance, it can detect the innate authority of such an individual.

Once the guardians are defeated, or a Noble hero wields the Staff of Ra, the gemstone glows brightly.

Projected from the gem is an image of the canyon outside. The image changes as the viewpoint takes to the sky, giving a magnificent bird's eye view of the surrounding landscape. Whoosh! It's like you're flying at unbelievable speeds! Past the temples at Karnak and Luxor, up the long, glittering Nile at lightning speed, past tombs and statues, beyond the mighty pyramids and Sphinx at Giza, then out west across the desert and the start of the endless sands of the Sahara.

Just as you're starting to feel sick, the images slow, stopping finally at a small oasis notable only by two standing obelisks. It seems the Staff wants you to go there next.

As the image fades, the stone blocking the door lifts, allowing the explorers to leave.

Minions of Ra (1 per hero): See page 20.

THE STAFF OF RA

A powerful Egyptian relic created to thwart Apep and his minions, the Staff contains several powers. Invoking them requires a Spirit roll by whoever holds the artifact. Spells which can normally be maintained, are instead fixed at 3 rounds per casting, unless otherwise stated. There is no limit to how many times a spell can be cast, but each requires a separate casting, as per the regular arcane rules.

The Staff can also be used as a weapon. It inflicts Str+d4 damage, Parry 1, Reach 1, requires two hands. Against any servant of Apep, it causes Str+d8 damage (ignoring the minimum Strength requirement).

* *Bolt* (1 bolt for 2d6 damage. Against any follower of Apep this inflicts 2d8 damage and ignores *all* forms of armor; ray of light)
* *Deflection* (surrounded by aura of light, only affects serpentine creatures)
* *Healing* (cures no wounds, but removes the effects of any poison delivered by a serpent creature)
* *Light* (this is permanently on, but can be dampened by placing a hood over the gem)

COLLAPSE

The tomb was constructed to protect the Staff of Ra until it was next needed. Since the relic has been retrieved, the tomb serves no purpose. As such, a final trap activates as the adventurers make their way out, causing the structure to collapse!

This uses a variant of the Chase rules. Place ten markers on the tabletop. Each round, the heroes make an Agility roll to move along the markers. When they pass the final one, they escape. Characters can Push as normal for extra distance. Falling masonry further along the passages is treated as Light Obstacles. Damage from a "collision" is 2d6 (from an Extra).

The collapsing tomb has an Agility die of d8, but doesn't roll until the second round begins. It can't Push, either. Success moves the falling rubble one marker, and a raise two markers. Use a token to represent the collapse.

If the rubble ends up on the same marker as a hero or moves ahead of him, the explorer suffers 2d6 damage (from an Extra) at the *end* of the current round. This rule exists to make the action cinematic—not reduce the heroes to a bloody pulp.

Example: *Brent ends the first round of movement on the first marker (having rolled a success on his Agility die). Next round, the rubble enters play. Brent wins the initiative but fails his Agility roll, gaining no distance. The rubble rolls a 5, and moves one position, bringing it level with Brent. He suffers 2d6 damage when the round ends.*

Next round, the rubble draws a higher action card and gets a failure. Brent scores a raise! He rushes ahead of the debris field, emerging from a cloud of choking dust. Since he's ahead of the debris at the end of the round, he takes no damage.

At no point does the tomb ever totally crush a hero or seal him in. Characters left unconscious far behind the advancing rubble field can be rescued, but it requires a hero to move back down the track (risking damage) in order to administer first aid. Dragging an unconscious comrade gives a –2 penalty to the hero's Agility roll. Only when the last hero reaches safety is the tomb considered totally sealed by debris.

SCENE 3: SHIPS OF THE DESERT

Mardek al-Malik and his men are waiting for the heroes to return. The commander congratulates the heroes on their success, and wishes them good luck in the rest of their quest. His men, who have formed a semi-circle around the characters, then clear a path, revealing a battered jeep.

"She is not much to look at," Mardek says, gesturing to the wreck, "but she will get you back to Luxor quicker than your legs. Your best route from there is via the train. We have sent runners to bribe the engineer—the train won't make any stops until you give the signal."

Now they know the cult of Apep is still operating in Egypt; the *Saou* intend to gather their disparate forces and begin a hunt. As such, they can't aid the characters directly.

After a few miles bouncing over the desert, the characters catch sight of what appear at first glance to be a band of nomads on camels. The riders quickly turn and give chase, drawing pistols from beneath their robes. The cultists have been watching activities in the canyon from the cliff top, and alerted their comrades using signal mirrors that the heroes have the Staff of Ra.

The heroes begin 4 Range Increments ahead of the riders (Far). Each Range Increment represents 5". Split the cultists into two groups, simply to avoid them all acting before the heroes during a round. Use the standard Obstacle rules. The Obstacles are Light and represent concealed stones and hidden gullies. All collisions are with hard Obstacles.

The sand means the jeep is moving over difficult ground. The camels don't suffer this penalty, which allows them to keep up with the escaping heroes. The camels actually move faster than the jeep over sand, so the riders have +1 to their Riding rolls (which offsets the –1 penalty from the ornery beasts).

All the cultists want intact is the Staff of Ra—the heroes are completely expendable (so surrender isn't a good option). As they ride, they use their pistols to take potshots at the vehicle. This gives them a –2 penalty for performing two actions, and another –2 for the Unstable Platform. Although the characters are outnumbered and can't outpace their pursuers, their superior skills should see them through.

Apep Cultists (2 per hero): See page 20.

Camels (2 per hero): See page 19.

JEEP

Acc/Top Speed: 10/20; **Toughness:** 9 (2); **Crew:** 1+3

SCENE 4: TROUBLE WITH THE TRAIN

Before they board the train, there is time to investigate the image of the oasis and obelisks. Luxor is home to many Egyptologists. Acquiring their help requires either an Investigation (borrowing a library or map) or Persuasion (asking their advice) roll.

With success, the heroes learn the oasis is regarded as nothing special by Egyptologists, and the obelisks, which have yet to be studied, are assumed to be way markers for ancient caravans. On a raise, they discover a legend claiming that region was used as the burial place of the Hyksos pharaohs (of which Apophis was one), but no one takes it seriously.

Luxor is many miles behind you, as the train thunders through the countryside toward its destination. The engineer promised he'd give three blasts on his whistle when you got close. So until then, the car is all yours.

An hour into the journey, one of the characters sees a man leave the nearest bathroom. What's strange is that the hero never saw him enter the lavatory, and the man is wiping grease off his hands.

If the characters give chase, the man starts running down the train in the opposite direction. Treat this as a Chase scene, with a Range Increment of 1". The thug begins at Medium range. Use the regular Obstacle rules, but instead of a collision, any hero who fails his roll has had his route blocked by a passenger—the rest of the train is crowded. Treat the passengers as Rough Obstacles.

The characters can interrogate the cultist if he's captured, but it doesn't take much to get him talking. In fact, he's only too keen to talk.

"You're going to die," the cultist laughs. "There's a bomb under the train set to explode if it drops below 30 miles per hour. In a few minutes the train will slow for a bridge."

Should the villain extend his range beyond 10 Increments, assume he reaches the back of the train and throws himself off. He dies, but such is the life of a fanatic.

All is not lost if the villain does escape. Investigating the bathroom (whether out of curiosity or because the cultist talked), the characters realize the bowl has been unscrewed. Beneath it is a hole just wide enough for a character to squeeze through. It should be clear the cultist was doing something beneath the train, and that can't be good news.

Jumping off is certainly an option. The train is currently moving at 50 miles per hour (20" per round), so the heroes would take 4d6 damage. Given that this is from an Extra, it's likely to cause only a few wounds on average. However, the hundreds of innocent passengers would be blown to pieces!

Before the characters get a chance to investigate the toilet further, the cultist's comrades rush into the car. They were hiding among the passengers and had orders only to interfere if the characters appeared to have detected their plan. A gang of cultists rush in from both adjoining carriages to try and delay the characters.

The battlefield comprises two cars, each 3" wide (for game purposes) and 12" long. Mark these out on the tabletop. A single door at each end of the car leads to another compartment. There are two rows of seats and a central aisle, each 1" wide. Movement over the seats counts as difficult ground. The seats can be used as Cover. The train is an Unstable Platform. The toilet occupies a 1" square in the characters' car, next to the door to the second car.

All being well, either Abdul or Nadine survived their earlier encounter with the characters. Whichever one remains is leading the cultists. In the event neither made it, add a Wild Card cultist of Apep.

Half the thugs approach through the door in the character's car furthest from the toilet. The other half begins at the far end of the other carriage. Both sides should thus be about 12" from the toilet (and the characters)

Disarming the bomb is covered in the next section.

- **Abdul, the Snake-Armed Cultist:** See page 18.
- **Nadine:** See page 19.
- **Apep Cultists (2 per hero):** See page 20.

DISARMING THE BOMB

The bomb is set to explode in just six rounds. In order to defuse it, the characters must complete the following tasks in order. Since the device is located under the train, it means one hero is going to have to risk his life and leave his comrades to fend for themselves.

At the end of the 6th round, the train slows for the bridge. Fortunately, the driver slows to 35 miles per hour, meaning the bomb doesn't activate. Of course, the characters shouldn't know this.

In the event they are complacent, perhaps openly voicing that the story would never allow it to explode, they're in for a shock! The explosion derails the train, which slides off the bridge and into the Nile. Every hero takes 4d6 damage from a Wild Card source, and the deaths of hundreds of innocent lives are on their hands.

* The hero has to squeeze through the hole in the floor. This requires an Agility roll. Small characters roll at +2, while Brawny or Obese heroes are at –2. With success, the character is now hanging from the underside of the car, inches from the rails. Failure means he has failed to make any progress, but can try again next round.
* Now he's underneath the train, the adventurer must shimmy along the car using whatever handholds he can find until he reaches the bomb. The character may use the higher of his Agility or Strength for this, but both suffer a –2 penalty due to the adverse conditions. Success means he has reached the device. Failure indicates he has made slow progress, though he can try again next round. A critical failure results in the hero taking 3d6 damage from an Extra as he slips and is smashed against the rails before regaining his hold.
* The hero must study the bomb in order to determine how to disarm it without triggering the detonator. This requires either a Smarts roll at –2 or a Repair roll. Until he succeeds, he knows removing the device will trigger an explosion.
* Finally, the adventurer must physically disarm the bomb. This requires either a Smarts roll at –2 or a Repair roll. Success renders the device safe. A failure means the hero hesitated before ripping out or cutting a wire.

ACT 4: THE NETHERWORLD

After saving the train, the rest of the journey to the tomb of Apophis goes without interruption. Again, the characters can pick up basic exploration gear for free before they set off on the final leg.

SCENE 1: TOMB OF APOPHIS

It's just like the Staff showed—two obelisks partially buried in sand standing beside a small oasis. If there's a tomb here, it's well-hidden.

The two obelisks are engraved with hieroglyphs praising the glory of Pharaoh Apophis and the other Hyksos rulers. Apophis' name, complete with symbols of Apep, dominates one face of the monuments. It doesn't matter whether the characters can read them or not, as they don't provide any clues to the location of the tomb through the writing.

Characters who state they are clearing away the sand automatically discover cracks along the base of the obelisks. A Smarts roll reveals the pillars might rotate. Otherwise, a Notice roll is required while searching the general area to reveal the cracks.

No roll is required to rotate the obelisks, though moving them is hard work. In order to reveal the tomb both faces depicting Apophis/Apep must be turned to face the west, the direction of the Underworld. When discovered, one faces north and the other south.

As the last obelisk finally grinds to face west, the sand nearby begins to shimmer, like its being gently shaken. Slowly, an area of sand begins to rise, like its being pushed up from beneath. Emerging through the sun-baked crust is a layer of worn stones. A structure, a small temple perhaps, hidden for thousands of years, finally reveals itself.

INSIDE THE TOMB

Not every Egyptian tomb was an elaborate maze of tunnels and chambers. In fact, most were very simple affairs. Apophis' tomb falls into the latter category, though it holds a few nasty surprises.

Indeed, after descending a set of stairs and breaking through a stone wall, the characters enter a single chamber. The room is 8" by 12". In the center lies a black granite sarcophagus (2" long and 1" wide). Hieroglyphs of gold leaf decorate every face. Carved into the left and right walls are false doors. There are two on each side. These are not an unusual feature in Egyptian tombs, for they represent symbolic pathways for the spirit of the deceased.

As soon as a hero enters the chamber, four mummies wrapped in snakeskin bandages burst through the thin walls covering the false doors. Check for Surprise.

The hieroglyphs on the sarcophagus identify the occupant as Apophis, Beloved of Apep, born of Darkness. Apophis isn't occupying his tomb, though—he's in the Netherworld. Inside the sarcophagus is a narrow shaft, leading down into the bowels of the earth. During combat, a Strength roll at –4 is required to shift the heavy lid. Outside of the action the heroes have plentiful time to remove the cover without a die roll.

Snake Swarm Mummies (1 per hero): See page 22.

SCENE 2: THE SOLAR BARQUE

The stairs lead down, down, down, ending after what seems like many hours. A narrow, stone wharf extends onto a canal of dark, slow-moving water. The circular tunnel encompassing the waterway is covered in Egyptian hieroglyphs. It is obvious that once they honored Ra, but they have been over cut with Apep's fell symbols.

At the end of the wharf is a barque, identical in shape to those seen on the walls of a hundred tombs and temples. A dozen wooden figures, dressed like ancient Egyptians, sit by the oars, while at the back, a similar statue holds the steering board.

Students of nautical matters should note the Egyptian barque is not the same as the 3-masted sailing ship of that name. Taking its name from "barge," the barque is essentially a long, shallow-keeled or flat-bottomed vessel with a curved prow and stern.

The oarsmen and steersman are ushabti figures, life-sized constructs powered by magic. As soon as the heroes are all aboard, the rowers take up their oars and begin stroking. They do not speak, obey any orders from the characters (they are preprogrammed for a single task), and cannot be diverted from the task. The heroes are passengers, for this is Ra's solar barque, and only a god can divert it from the route it has taken since the dawn of time.

The barque moves silently and slowly through the tunnel. All along the walls, you see signs of decay. The once-brightly colored hieroglyphs are faded, the stonework is cracked, and in places it is covered in black slime or a mass of writhing, black serpents. The water is little better, for in places it is a thick, oozing sludge composed of rotting snakes and foul-smelling vegetation.

The stillness of the water is broken as a long, serpentine neck bursts through a layer of corruption. With a fearsome roar, the foul creature lunges at you, it's maw a mass of curved, jagged teeth.

The barque measures 12" long and 4" wide. There are six rowers on each side. These take up the six center squares along each long side of the vessel. Passing through these is treated as difficult ground. The canal is 10" wide and infinitely deep.

The serpent cannot harm the solar barque or the ushabti, at least not while Ra continues to enjoy limited freedom. As such, it only targets the characters. The barque moves forward at 6" and nothing the adventurers do can alter its course or speed. Should a hero fall overboard, his comrades had better have rope handy, or he'll be left behind.

Netherworld Serpent: See page 20.

SCENE 3: THE TWELFTH GATE

The canal emerges into a vast, domed cavern. In the center of the lake sits a temple, magnificent in its architecture, disgusting in its defilement. Long black snakes creep up the columns, and many of the ancient writings have been defaced or recarved to honor Apep.

Spaced equidistantly around the distant edge are a dozen enormous pylon gates. These must be the fabled Gates of Night. Eleven are etched with vile, eldritch runes, and the gap between the gates is choked with slithering, crawling darkness.

The last gate retains its original markings, praising Ra's glory. The tunnel beyond glows a dim orange, but far in the distance, you spy a black,



incoherent form, moving rapidly toward the entrance. This must be Apep, and it seems his plan is very close to fruition!

Silently, gracefully, the barque draws to a halt at the edge of the island. Carved on the pillars that form the gateway to the island are identical images. Each shows the Staff of Ra radiating what seem to be sunbeams. The lower part of the staff is not visible, for it is swallowed by a stone block.

The darkness within the Twelfth Gate is Apep. Fortunately, his true form is not visible, for the merest gaze at his abominable form would drive the heroes instantly and irrevocably insane.

Unfortunately, they are in danger of witnessing his physical being, for in 12 rounds, Apep will have sealed the last Gate of Night, plunging the world into total and permanent darkness! The heroes shouldn't worry about what will happen to the world if they fail—they'll be dead at the start of the 13th round, as Apep devours them.

The island is huge, but the GM need only concentrate on the central temple, for this is where all the action takes place.

The temple is 10" wide and 22" long. It is divided into three sections, each 10" in length. Dividing these is a 1" thick stone wall, broken by a 2" wide open gateway in the center. Against the dark wall of the temple is an altar (3" long and 1" wide). Protruding from the top is a staff, carved in the image of a serpent. Its tail is rammed into a small hole in the center of the altar. Rays of inky blackness shoot forth into each of the twelve monstrous gates.

THE FINAL SHOWDOWN

The disciples of Apep begin guarding the gateway through to the second section. Apep's Champion guards the second gateway. Apophis, the high priest of the cult, starts adjacent to the altar. Each demonic snake he summons (see page 20) automatically slithers (treat this as running, in Savage Worlds terms) toward the intruders to engage them in melee.

The characters don't have to slay all the bad guys to win. In fact, killing them doesn't change anything. Victory is assured only by removing Apep's staff from the altar and replacing it with the Staff of Ra. Hopefully, the carving of the Staff in the block and the beams of

black light radiating from Apep's staff will be enough of a clue. As noted above, the heroes have just 12 rounds to achieve this goal.

Removing Apep's staff and inserting Ra's staff in its place each take an action and require two hands. As soon as the Staff of Ra is in place, it emits powerful rays of sunlight.

With a satisfying click, the Staff slides into the hole. The gemstone immediately flares to life. Brilliant rays, as powerful as the fires of the Sun, shoot out, striking each of the Gates of Night. Apep's unholy wards and demonic serpents shrivel into nothingness as the burning rays strike them.

In the Twelfth Gate, Apep roars in impotent rage as searing energy burns his scaled flesh. Unable to withstand the torment of Ra's fury, the terrible serpent withdraws into the darkness of the Netherworld, wounded, perhaps crippled, but not fully defeated. The cosmic balance is being restored!

At the start of each subsequent round, every villain still alive takes 2d8 damage from the piercing ray of light. This ignores *all* forms of armor. It also automatically dispels any *obscure* spells in effect. None of Apep's followers can touch the Staff, and it's immune to all damage, so there is nothing they can do to prevent it from working its magic. All the characters have to do now is survive!

- **High Priest Apophis:** See page 18.
- **Champion of Apep:** See page 19.
- **Demon Snakes:** See page 20.
- **Devotees of Apep (1 per hero):** See page 20.

AFTERMATH

Once the last of Apep's minions are slain, the tunnels beyond the Gates of Night flare brilliant yellow-orange, as Ra finally overthrows his shackles and regains his strength. The Twelfth Gate suddenly spews out a wave of burning fire, which washes over the temple, destroying Apep's influence. The adventurers black out.

When they awaken, they find themselves outside Apophis' tomb. The sun is high in the sky, burning as brightly as it did before the adventure began. The tomb remains open, but the entrance to the Netherworld has ceased to exist, sealed off to prevent Apep's few remaining supporters from reaching their wounded master.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

HIGH PRIEST APOPHIS

Former pharaoh of the Hyksos rulers of Egypt, Apophis' mortal empire fell to a resurgent Egyptian dynasty of sun worshippers. Apep rewarded Apophis for his efforts, transforming him into cobra form, imbuing him with powerful spells, and granting him immortality from aging. He has spent over three thousand years in the Underworld, loyally serving his demonic master.

His spells are the equivalent of 30 Power Points worth, without any maintenance costs.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d12, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Faith d12, Fighting d10, Intimidation d12, Notice d10, Stealth d10

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Hindrances: Loyal (Apep), Overconfident, No Hands (can't use any technological item)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Charismatic, Command, Improved Arcane Resistance (doesn't affect spells he casts on himself), Improved Frenzy, Improved Level Headed, Inspire, Quick

Special Abilities:

* **Armor +2:** Thick scales.
* **Constrict*:** Apophis may choose to constrict a single foe in its coils and does so by making a Fighting attack. The round it entangles and each round thereafter it causes Str+d8 damage. Given his large size, Apophis may constrict one foe and bite without suffering the standard multi-action penalty.
* **Powers:** During the encounter Apophis can use the following spells: *2 x bolt* (2 bolts for 3d6 damage; smoky, spectral snakes), *2 x deflection* (snakes intercept attacks), *2 x dispel* (words of power), *1 x entangle* (Medium Burst Template; snakes), *1 x fear* (images of Apep in victim's mind), *2 x obscure* (sphere of darkness, impenetrable by any light), *1 x puppet* (hypnotic voice), *1 x speed* (super fast). Spells which can be maintained are instead fixed at 3 rounds per casting.
* **Size +3:** Apophis' serpentine body is 20' long and 2' wide.
* **Summon Demon Snake:** Apophis can summon a demon snake each round as a free action. The vile serpent begins adjacent to Apophis.
* **Taste the Air:** Serpents ignore all darkness penalties against living foes.
* **Weakness (Light):** Suffer double damage from arcane powers with a light trapping. A spirit snake exposed to a *light* spell automatically takes 2d4 damage per round it remains in the template. Candles don't radiate intense light. Using one to harm a snake requires a Fighting roll. On a roll of 1 on the Fighting die (regardless of Wild Die), the candle is extinguished. A candle causes 2d4 damage with a successful hit. A flashlight or lantern beam inflicts 2d6 damage, but must be targeted at the snake with a Shooting roll, as it was a firearm. Sunlight causes 2d10 damage per round.

ABDUL, THE SNAKE-ARMED CULTIST

Abdul has devoted his entire life to serving Apep, as have generations of his ancestors. Apep chose to bless his most fanatical cultist, warping his arms into deadly

snakes. The snake-armed cultist now serves as his god's chief assassin.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Stealth d8
Charisma: –8; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7 (1)
Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Mean, No Hands (can't use any technological item), Ugly (scaly skin)
Edges: Ambidextrous, Combat Reflexes, Command, Frenzy, Quick, Two-Fisted
Special Abilities:
* **Armor +1:** Snake scales for skin.
* **Left Arm:** The villain's left arm is a constrictor snake. It allows him to make grapple attacks at Reach 1. With success, he inflicts Str+d6 damage each round.
* **Right Arm:** His right arm is actually a venomous snake. It allows him to make Fighting attacks at Reach 1. Damage is Str+d4. Shaken or wounded victims must make a Vigor roll or suffer an automatic wound. This is treated as part of the bite's damage for the purposes of Soak rolls.
* **Taste the Air:** Serpents ignore all darkness penalties against living foes.

NADINE, SHE-SNAKE DEMON

Nadine is a snake-demon, and one of Apep's top agents. She has the ability to assume the form of a beautiful, Egyptian woman. In this guise, she operates as an exotic dancer in the King Cobra Club, a meeting place for Apep cultists. Her real form is half-human, half-snake. She retains her human torso, arms, and head, albeit covered in scales, but has a serpentine lower body.

Special abilities marked "*" only apply in her snake-human hybrid form. Her spells are the equivalent of 15 Power Points.
Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Climbing d10, Faith d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d12, Streetwise d10, Taunt d10
Charisma: +4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6/7 (1)
Hindrances: Arrogant, Loyal (Apep), Quirk (flirts with victims)
Edges: Acrobat, Arcane Background (Faith), Arcane Resistance, Quick, Very Attractive
Gear: Key around neck (part of costume)
Special Abilities:
* **Armor +1*:** Snake scales for skin.
* **Bite*:** Str+d4. Shaken or wounded victims must make a Vigor roll or suffer total paralysis for 2d6 rounds.
* **Constrict*:** Nadine can use her serpentine lower body to grapple foes at Reach 1. She can maintain her hold as a free action. Damage from the grapple is Str+d6.
* **Natural Charmer:** Through a combination of her looks, hormones, and force of will, Nadine can use *puppet* as an action each round. She uses her Persuasion as her arcane skill, but gains no Charisma bonus. She can only affect a single target at a time, who must be male, but her influence lasts until she is slain or the victim manages to break free (by being allowed another Spirit roll to resist).
* **Powers:** During the encounter Nadine can use the following spells: *2 x bolt* (2 bolts for 2d6 damage; smoky, spectral snakes), *1 x obscure* (sphere of darkness, impenetrable by any light), *1 x quickness* (serpentine reflexes). Spells which can be maintained are instead fixed at 3 rounds per casting.
* **Seductive:** Nadine exudes powerful pheromones that weaken the resolve of men adjacent to her. All Spirit rolls and Fighting attacks made by adjacent male heroes are at –2.
* **Taste the Air*:** Serpents ignore all darkness penalties against living foes.

CHAMPION OF APEP

This nameless abomination serves as Apophis' bodyguard and chief enforcer of his will among the cultists. The fiend's torso is vaguely human, but it is covered in thick, armored scales. Its lower body is that of a gigantic serpent, and its head that of a serpent.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d12, Intimidation d10, Notice d10, Shooting d8, Stealth d8
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 13 (2)
Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Loyal
Edges: Berserk, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Quick
Gear: Great sword (Str+d10, –1 Parry, 2 hands)
Special Abilities:
* **Armor +2:** Thick scales.
* **Fear:** Once during the encounter, the Champion can cast the *fear* spell, using Spirit as his arcane skill.
* **Reach 1:** By springing forward on its tail, the Champion can make attacks at foes 1" away.
* **Size +4:** The Champion measures 15' long and is exceptionally muscular.
* **Spit Venom:** Range: 3/6/12. Use Shooting. An acrid goo, the Champion's venom causes blindness. Victims must make a Vigor roll, –2 if he scored a raise on the attack, or be blinded by the foul gas the venom emits. Cleaning away the venom requires an Agility roll as an action. Until successful, all actions requiring sight are at –6.

CAMEL

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d6
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 8
Special Abilities:
* **Kick:** Str.
* **Ornery:** Characters must subtract 1 from their Riding rolls when riding them.

* **Sand Walker:** Camels treat deserts as normal terrain.
* **Size +2:** Camels are only slightly larger than riding horses.

CULTISTS OF APEP

Anyone who wants to plunge the world into perpetual darkness can't really be described as sane. Apep's cultists are total fanatics, willing to give up their lives to save their superiors in the name of the snake-god's cause.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Throwing d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Combat Reflexes

Gear: Snake fang dagger (Str+d4), throwing knives (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: Str+d4), pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1)

Special Abilities:

* **Fanatic:** If a cultist is adjacent to a Wild Card servant of Apep who is successfully attacked, he automatically throws himself in front of the attack. All damage is applied to one of the cultists, instead.
* **Immunity (Poison):** Immune to all poisons.

DEMON SNAKE

While they resemble vipers and cobras, demon snakes are not of this earth. Their thick, black scales, red eyes, and huge teeth give them an altogether unholy appearance.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d10, Stealth d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Special Abilities:

* **Arcane Resistance:** +2 Armor against damage-causing powers and +2 on trait rolls to resist opposed powers.
* **Armor +2:** Thick scales.
* **Bite:** Str+d6. Shaken or wounded victims must make a Vigor roll or suffer an automatic wound. This is treated as part of the bite's damage for the purposes of Soak rolls.
* **Quick:** Shadow snakes redraw action cards of 5 or lower.
* **Taste the Air:** Serpents ignore all darkness penalties against living foes.
* **Weakness (Light):** Suffer double damage from arcane powers with a light trapping. A spirit snake exposed to a *light* spell automatically takes 2d4 damage per round it remains in the template. Candles don't radiate intense light. Using one to harm a snake requires a Fighting roll. On a roll of 1 on the Fighting die (regardless of Wild Die), the candle is extinguished. A candle causes 2d4 damage with a successful hit. A flashlight or lantern beam inflicts 2d6 damage, but must be targeted at the snake with a Shooting roll, as it was a firearm. Sunlight causes 2d10 damage per round.

DEVOTEES OF APEP

Devotees were once human, but their dedication has resulted in them being given new form. Similar in form to a cobra, though with two human arms, devotees are Apep's elite warriors.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Gear: Long sword (Str+d8), medium shield (+1 Parry), long bow (Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 2d6)

Special Abilities:

* **Armor +2:** Thick scales.
* **Bite:** Str+d6.
* **Fearless:** Having seen their demonic god, devotees are immune to Fear and Intimidation with regard anything less than another deity.
* **Quick:** Redraw action cards of 5 or lower.
* **Scent of Blood:** They gain +1 to Fighting rolls against any foe with one or more wounds.

MINIONS OF RA

Minions of Ra are magical constructs, set in tombs to guard them against robbers. They have a humanoid form, but with a hawk's head. When animated, their eyes glow bright red.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (3)

Gear: Bronze long sword (Str+d8)

Special Abilities:

* **Armor +3:** Made of solid stone.
* **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken, no additional damage from Called Shots, immune to disease and poison.
* **Eye of Ra:** Minions can fire a single beam of concentrated light from their eyes each round as an action. Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6.
* Improved **Sweep:** Can attack all adjacent characters at no penalty.
* **Regeneration (Special):** When a Minion of Ra is defeated, its shattered stonework reforms. The statue resumes its original place until activated again. There is no limit to how many times each statue can do this.

NETHERWORLD SERPENT

The serpent is a minion of Apep. Ra has fought this creature every night for eternity, defeating it each time,

but never totally vanquishing it. The same applies to the characters—they can defeat it by causing wounds, but the fiend simply slides back beneath the waters, only to return fully healed the next night.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d10

Pace: —; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 14

Special Abilities:

* **Aquatic:** Pace 12.
* **Bite:** Str+d8, Reach 2.
* **Huge:** Attackers are +4 to attack rolls due to the creature's size.
* **Lunge:** The creature's favored tactic is to rise up, attack, and then withdraw back into the dark water. When it does this, the serpent makes an opposed Stealth roll versus the victim's Notice. If the serpent wins, it has +2 to its attack and damage, +4 with a raise. Targets on Hold may try to interrupt, but only if they win the Stealth vs. Notice roll.
* **Quick:** Redraw action cards of 5 or lower.
* **Size +8:** Sea serpents measure over 50' long.

SAOU WARRIORS

The *Saou* ("Protectors") were originally an elite part of the pharaoh's guard, charged with watching over the final resting places of the mummified kings and guarding the temples. The position was hereditary, passed from father to son since the earliest dynasties. Today, only a handful of families remain to carry on the sacred duty.

Most *Saou* speak English, French, and German, the languages of the major archaeological interests in Egypt.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Survival d8, Tracking d8

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Combat Reflexes

Gear: Bolt-action rifle (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8 +1, AP 2), scimitar (Str+d8)

SHADOW SNAKE

Shadow snakes are otherworldly servants of Apep. They take the form of a constrictor with a cobra's head, but with burning, red eyes. Their body is jet black, and drifts gently like smoke. Unlike normal snakes, they can move through the air as easily as along the ground. Light is especially deadly to them.

A success on a Fighting roll indicates the creature has bitten its victim. On a raise, it entangles them and begins to constrict, crushing their bones. Constricted victims are subjected to Fighting attacks at –2. A raise on a Fighting roll against a grappled foe indicates bonus damage, as normal.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d12, Stealth d12+2

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities:

* **Bite:** Str+d4+shadow poison.
* **Constrict:** Constricted foes are held as if grappled. Each round they remain held, victims take Str+d8 damage on the serpent's action card.
* **Ethereal:** While a shadow snake can bite and constrict victims, it is impervious to mundane weapon, except those of its Weakness. Shadow snakes can pass through solid objects at will.
* **Fly:** Pace 8.
* **Quick:** Shadow snakes redraw action cards of 5 or lower.
* **Shadow Form:** Due to their inky black form, dark penalties are doubled when attacking a spirit snake.
* **Shadow Poison:** The insidious poison of a shadow snake slowly siphons off a victim's soul, sending it Apep's otherwordly domain. Victims Shaken or wounded by a shadow snake must make a Vigor roll or lose one die in Spirit. Victims reduced below a d4 die. Lost Spirit dice return at the rate of one per new scene.
* **Shadow Strength:** Shadow snakes grow stronger the darker the lighting. In Dim lighting, they have the stats presented here. In Dark conditions, they gain +1 die in Strength and Vigor and are treated as Henchmen. In Pitch Darkness, they also become Wild Cards.
* **Taste the Air:** Serpents ignore all darkness penalties against living foes.
* **Weakness (Light):** Suffer double damage from arcane powers with a light trapping. A spirit snake exposed to a *light* spell automatically takes 2d4 damage per round it remains in the template. Candles don't radiate intense light. Using one to harm a snake requires a Fighting roll. On a roll of 1 on the Fighting die (regardless of Wild Die), the candle is extinguished. A candle causes 2d4 damage with a successful hit. A flashlight or lantern beam inflicts 2d6 damage, but must be targeted at the snake with a Shooting roll, as it was a firearm. Sunlight causes 2d10 damage per round.

SNAKE SWARM (SMALL)

These swarms fill a Small Burst Template.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Notice d6

Pace: —; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities:

* **Bite:** Swarms inflict hundreds of tiny bites every round to their victims, hitting automatically and causing 2d6 damage to everyone in the template. Due to their poisonous bite, the damage counts as being caused by a Wild Card.
* **Swarm:** Parry +2; Because the swarm is composed of hundreds or thousands of creatures, cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Areaeffect

weapons work normally, and a character can stomp to inflict his damage in Strength each round
* **Taste the Air:** Serpents ignore all darkness penalties against living foes.

SNAKE SWARM MUMMY

Externally, swarm mummies appear like regular bandaged-corpses. But writhing within their withered husk is a mass of small, venomous snakes.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d4, Stealth d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8

Special Abilities:

* **Fear:** Anyone seeing a swarm mummy must make a Spirit roll to avoid Fear.
* **Shuffling Gait:** Mummies roll a d4 running die.
* **Slam:** Str.
* **Snakes:** An adjacent attacker who Shakes a mummy in melee combat must make a Vigor roll to avoid being Shaken as snakes emerge and crawl over his hand. This ability only works on an individual attacker once per fight. After this, he quickly becomes jaded.
* **Swarm Host:** When a swarm mummy is wounded by any means except fire, the swarm within bursts forth, destroying the creature. Replace the mummy with a Small Burst Template to represent the swarm.
* **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to disease and poison.

HANDOUT #1: THE LETTER

Dear Doctor Whatley,

My name is Aziz El-Mahdy, and I am an official with the Egyptian Department of Antiquities.

I write with regard to your seminar in Istanbul last month on the apparent reduction of the Sun's luminosity due to unknown factors. You are quite correct in your assumptions! Though you may think me mad, I have proof that a terrible and ancient force is at work. The whole world is in danger, and only you can help prevent a global disaster.

I have recently learned from my contacts that your Boston Museum has acquired a piece of The Book of Overthrowing Apep. I beg of you, please acquire the papyrus by any means, and deliver it to me with all urgency. I have tried diplomatic channels, but to no avail.

Respectfully yours,

Doctor Aziz El-Mahdy

Department of Antiquities, Cairo

HANDOUT #2: THE PAPYRUS LETTER

Most Beautiful of Apep,

Our agents have finally located the resting place of the hated Staff of Ra in a complex built by the Pharaoh Seqenenre Tao, Enemy of Apep.

Ten leagues south of the Valley of the Kings lies a small canyon, as yet unexplored by those who would plunder our nation's heritage. At the far end lies a great rock, inscribed with the mark of the Accursed One.

Our agents report the tomb is sealed against our kind, warded by terrible magics, and protected by remnants of the Saon, the hereditary tomb guardians of ancient Egypt. But they know not what they protect; such is their loss of faith over the millennia.

Fortunately, the Saon are fanatics, and will unknowingly serve our cause well by slaying those who would seek to plunder the riches within. Thus, the Staff remains safe and poses no threat to our goal.

Apophis, Beloved of Apep

HANDOUT #3: SPELLS ON THE BOOK OF OVERTHROWING APEP

SPITTING UPON APEP
DEFILING APEP
TAKING A LANCE TO SMITE APEP
FETTERING APEP
TAKING A KNIFE TO SMITE APEP
PUTTING FIRE UPON APEP

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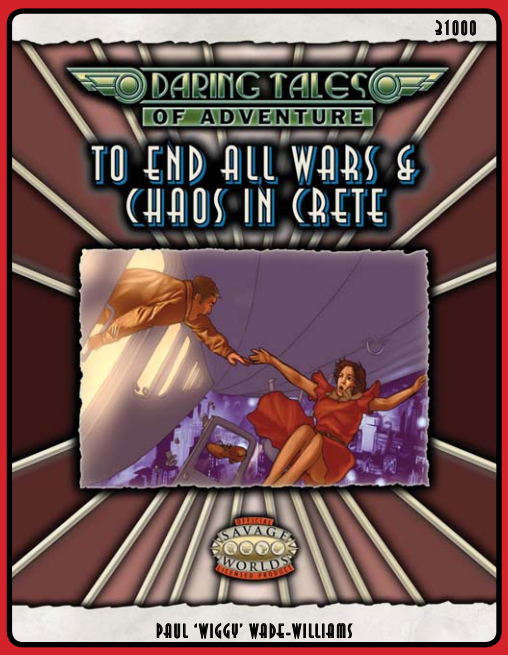
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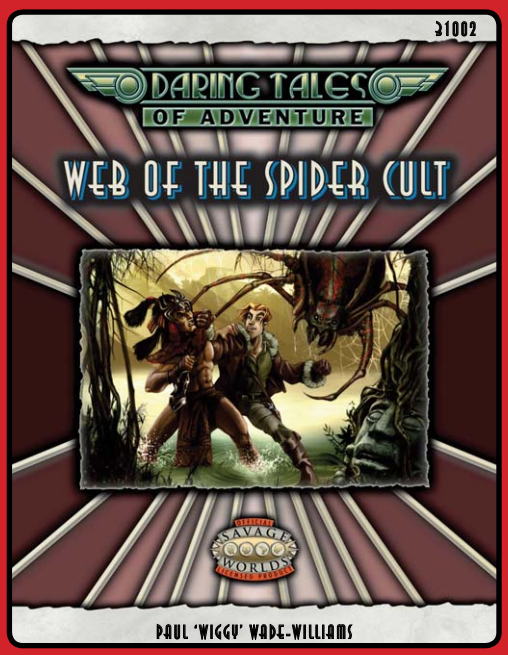
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TERROR OF THE Z-BOMB



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08

TERROR OF THE Z-BOMB

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TERROR OF THE Z-BOMB

It may only be 1936, but the Nazis are already on the path to war. While the European powers try to placate Hitler to avoid another terrible conflict, the dictator has ordered his scientists to prepare new weapons.

In *Daring Tales #5*, the heroes thwarted the insidious plans of Doctor Werner Schmutzig, a Nazi weird scientist. Now the evil genius is back, and he has far more ambitious plans!

During the Great War, the Germans worked on a range of deadly weapons. While poison gas was a result of this research, it was at the mundane end of the technological spectrum, and easily countered by gas masks. At the higher end were the Terror Weapons, technological devices far ahead of their time.

Only one was ever tested during the Great War—a sonic cannon. A British flying ace, James Bigglesworth (a.k.a. Biggles), and his small team of skilled individuals destroyed it before it went into operational use. However, the weapon showed great potential in tests, and plans were already in place to construct a larger version when Germany surrendered.

Among the other inventions proposed were earthquake and storm generators, volcano inducers, lighting rifles, rocket rifles, rocket packs, and a truly fearsome weapon—the Z-Bomb (so named because the probability of surviving its effects are zero).

The Z-Bomb works on a principal similar to black holes (a term not actually used until the 1960s). The theory goes that when detonated, the bomb creates a massive gravitational field, which quickly collapses in on itself to form a singularity. Everything for miles around is then pulled into the center and vaporized. The gravity field is designed to be unstable, lasting no more than a few minutes. After this time, it simply winks out of existence, leaving behind a large crater. Fortunately, the device had several major design flaws, and no prototype was ever constructed.

But now things have changed. Schmutzig has almost solved the mathematical problems, and a fully operational Z-Bomb has been constructed at a secret base in the Antarctic by Schmutzig's *Abteilung für experimentielle Waffengattungen*, or the *Sonderwaffen Abteilung* (Special Weapon's Division), as it is usually referred.

Although the Nazis are missing several key physical components, Schmutzig plans to use his elite soldiers, the *SS-Raketentruppen* (SS-Rocket Troops), to steal the parts he requires. Equipped with working rocket packs and advanced rifles, the commandoes intend to strike deep into the heart of Europe and America.

Once assembled, the crazy scientist plans to test the Z-Bomb by launching it at New York City. He would have preferred Boston, the heroes' headquarters, but it has little strategic or economic value. Should it be successful, the entire world would surely capitulate to Germany.

THE CHARACTERS

This Savage Adventure contains a pulp tale based around the exploits of four characters. Pre-generated character sheets for four suitable heroes are available for free at **www.tripleacegames.com**.

The heroes have all their leveling opportunities from Seasoned (at which they begin) into Legendary, mapped out in advance. Each published adventure in this line earns the heroes a fixed 5 Experience Points, guaranteeing them an advance every mission. All the players need do is click the appropriate box and start making use of the new upgrade.

Characters: 60 XP.

The GM also needs 20 marker stones of two different colors and the pulp setting rules from the TAG website.

ACT 1: NEW YORK ROLLERCOASTER

As the adventure begins, the heroes are shopping in New York City. Their reasons for being there are left to the GM and players to devise. Perhaps they are due to attend a society ball and need new clothes, maybe they're

just celebrating their last successful mission, or perhaps the fact Christmas is just around the corner provides an excuse to let loose a little.

The adventure doesn't dictate whether the characters are armed or not, but just because you're running an adventure shouldn't mean they start packing heat when they go out onto the streets.

All four scenes are designed to keep the heroes moving, not thinking. They run back to back, with no real breaks as far as the action goes.

SCENE 1: WAR ON 5TH AVENUE

Christmas is only a few weeks away and the citizens of New York City are already in a festive mood. Brightly colored lights decorate the storefronts, and illuminated banners hang across the streets. The sidewalks and roads are covered in a light dusting of snow, the first fall of winter. But for now, you're in the warmth of the department store.

THE STORE

Lay out the tabletop as detailed below, and ask the players to place the miniatures representing their characters and say what department they're in. This makes it kind of obvious something is going to happen, but they won't know what or where. You can even spend a few minutes letting the group roleplay their shopping trip, allowing you to time the forthcoming Nazi attack to have greatest impact.

The floor where the action begins measures 12" wide and 16" long, and is broken down into separate departments, each 4" by 4". Put together, the floor is three departments wide and four departments long. Each department is joined to its neighbors by a 1" wide doorway situated centrally in the dividing wall. Two sets of stairs (one in the northeast corner and one in the southwest) lead to the floors above and below. Every other square of the outside wall is a large window.

Exactly what the twelve departments on the floor sell is left to the imagination of the GM and players. For instance, a female adventurer might want to purchase new clothes, a plucky kid could be hunting for toys, and a gadgeteer may be browsing the hardware section.

The layout within each section thus depends on the nature of goods sold, and should be based on your local department store. Just make sure there is lots of scenery, because every missed attack hits *something* in the fight to come.

Likewise, exact contents can be invented to suit a hero's location and need. A character who wants to find a baseball bat in sporting goods is in luck, as is one who wants to use a manikin for a Trick in the lingerie department, or a pot of glue in hardware. The players have a *lot* of leeway in their choice of objects, so the GM may have to adjudicate on the spot—keep it simple, keep it consistent, and you won't go far wrong.

Once you're ready to begin the adventure proper, read the text below to the players.

The sound of breaking glass instantly catches your attention. The screams, which follow close behind, can only mean trouble is brewing. Crashing through the third floor windows are figures clad from head to toe in black, armored suits, and brandishing unusual weapons. But they're not on ropes—they're flying! They all have some sort of rocket pack strapped to their backs. Without warning, they begin opening fire indiscriminately, beams of electrical energy crackling from their rifles! The panicked shoppers flee for the stairs.

From outside, a voice on a loudspeaker announces New York City is under attack and citizens should flee for shelter. A few minutes' notice might have been useful!

Deal action cards!

The mysterious attackers are *SS-Raketentruppen* (SS-Rocket Troops) in the employ of Doctor Schmutzig. That this particular group chose to appear so near the character is, of course, a pulp coincidence.

The *Raketentruppen* avoid landing, preferring instead to hover just above the ground and let rip with their advanced weapons. Their orders are to create havoc by blowing up the city, but they quickly concentrate their firepower on anyone firing at them. Since they're flying, they can cross over obstacles like tables, cash desks, and even shelves with ease.

The heroes are outnumbered and outgunned, but they're not outwitted. The department store is a veritable arsenal—it's up to the adventurers to decide how best to use what is to hand to defeat their opponents.

They fight for just ten rounds. On the 11th round, any survivors activate their rocket booster and propel themselves out the nearest window at terrific speed.

Once the Nazis flee or are defeated, the characters can interrogate any captured villains (assuming one of the characters speaks German, of course). Should there be no prisoners to question, proceed immediately to Scene 2.

Raketentruppen (2 per hero): See page 21.

QUESTIONING THE NAZIS

Captured *Raketentruppen* don't know the Doctor's plans. All they know is they were ordered to create chaos on the streets on New York. Once they had achieved their goal, they were to rendezvous with an airship flying above the city. The characters may try to warn the military about the zeppelin, but their plans are interrupted. Proceed immediately to Scene 2.

In truth, the soldiers are being used as a diversion. A snatch squad has been dispatched to kidnap a scientist

from his New York office (see Scene 3), while a special tunneling machine is burrowing its way into a factory to steal vital supplies (Scene 4).

SCENE 2: GOLIATH

A high-pitched whine suddenly fills the air. It seems to be emanating from every wireless in the store. Suddenly, all the radios begin broadcasting a message. Whoever the speaker is, he's German.

"Citizens of New York City," it booms, "hear the voice of Doctor Schmutzig, and listen well. By now you have already encountered my elite rocket troops and witnessed the destructive power of their weaponry. This attack is to punish those who meddled in my affairs before, and who destroyed my Luftschloss.

"As I speak," Schmutzig continues, "remotely operated bombs are already moving along 12th Avenue. Exactly when and where they will explode will be a nice festive surprise! Let the deaths of innocents be a warning to those who would seek to foil my plans a second time! Oh, and if your airplanes try to intercept any of my men or vehicles, the bombs will be remotely detonated without warning."

Doctor Schmutzig, weird scientist extraordinaire, has created a device, which allows him to use radio sets to broadcast his voice. Every wireless set in New York City is sending out exactly the same message.

Fortunately, the characters' car is parked on the street outside the department store, allowing them to speed across to 12th Avenue. The streets are clear of pedestrians, but abandoned cars force the driver to weave through the streets to avoid a collision.

The car screeches onto 12th Avenue. Ahead you can make out four suitcase-sized vehicles trundling down the street at a brisk pace. They're not bothering to dodge the vehicles—they're driving straight under them. It looks like Schmutzig wasn't lying about them being remotely piloted, for each has a thin antenna sticking out the top.

Run this scene as a Chase. The bombs, which go by the name Goliaths, are 3 Range Increments ahead of the heroes. Each Range Increment equals 5". The remote operators are within 100 miles of the devices, so they suffer no Driving roll modifiers (see page 4).

The Chase uses the regular Obstacle rules, but the density is variable. Compare the driver's Club suit value to the table below. The Penalty column applies to Driving rolls and attack rolls made against the Goliaths that round. While the characters' vehicle has to dodge the stationary traffic, the Goliaths are low enough to drive underneath, which also gives them Cover from attacks. As such, they ignore any draws of a Club suit for the purposes of Obstacles. Treat all collisions as with a stationary hard Obstacle.

Card	Obstacles	Penalty
Deuce	Dense	–6
3–6	Thick	–4
7–10	Rough	–2
Jack–Queen	Sparse	–1
King–Ace	Light	0

Once it becomes clear to the operators their vehicles are under attack, they try to maneuver them to within 1 Range Increment of the enemy and detonate them. Since a Range Increment in this Scene is 5" and a Large Burst Template is 6" across, this is close enough to affect the adventures.

Should the heroes drop out of the Chase, the devices reach their intended targets. However, with the streets clear of innocents, the best the operators can do is wreck a few stores, destroy abandoned cars, and start a handful of fires.

Note that it is possible to jump onto a Goliath from an adjacent vehicle. Doing so is not without risks, for if the Goliath draws a Club suit, it drives under a vehicle! The passenger must make an Agility roll at –2 to run up and over the vehicle and get back onto the bomb as it emerges from the other side. A failure results in a collision with a hard Obstacle, and leaves the hero prone on the road. Until he and the party's vehicle end up on the same Range Increment, allowing him to jump onto the running board as an action, he must continue the Chase on foot.

Once the last Goliath is wrecked, explodes, or flees the scene, move to **Scene 3**. If the characters think to contact the military or mayor's office and report the Goliaths destroyed, allow them a few moments to make the call. Schmutzig's zeppelin is already far out to sea, and the military is more concerned about securing the streets.

WE'RE JAMMING

Knowing the Goliaths are radio controlled, a scientist type can try to create a makeshift jamming device by scavenging bits from the car's wireless and running it off the battery. Due to the lack of time to design and test such a device, he must make a Repair or Weird Science roll (his choice) at –4.

Success creates a short-range jamming device. Any Goliaths within one Range Increment of the car automatically go Out of Control (and the remote detonation doesn't function). A failed Driving roll indicates a collision with a hard Obstacle for 4d6 damage. On a raise, the jamming device works at up to 2 Range Increments. Failure means the hero needs more time to assemble his device. He can roll again next round. A critical failure causes a nasty short circuit and a brief smell of burning insulation, destroying all the available parts, and thus preventing this plan of action being carried out.

Unfortunately, the jamming is lifted when the car moves out of range, instantly restoring the signal and giving the operator full control.

‼ SdKfz 300 (4): See below.

SONDERKRAFTFAHRZEUG 300 "GOLIATH"

One of Schmutzig's weird science inventions, the SdKfz 300 is a radio-controlled bomb. Mounted on a tracked chassis and powered by a small, superbly efficient miniature diesel engine, the Goliath is about the same size as a suitcase. Packed inside are 5 pounds of high explosives.

A small camera fitted to the front allows the remote operator to see where the device is going, and a small antenna on the top allows him to guide its actions. Both are Small Targets (–6) and have Toughness 4. The loss of either causes the Goliath to go Out of Control, but damage inflicted does not transfer over to the Goliath as a whole.

The remote operator uses his own Driving skill to steer the Goliath. Optimal range is up to 100 miles. It can be operated at ranges up to 500 miles, but the operator suffers a –1 penalty to his Driving rolls for each additional 100 miles or part thereof beyond optimal range.

The Goliath is far from rugged, and, despite being a vehicle, can take only a single wound before being Wrecked. A wrecked Goliath does not automatically explode, but the operators, assuming radio contact is still intact, trigger the warhead to prevent its capture on the following round. As such, a Goliath should be dealt one more action card the round after it is wrecked. If the card is a red suit or Joker, the antenna is damaged and the device does not receive the self-destruct signal. A black card causes an explosion when the card is called.

The Goliath is still highly experimental, and the explosive charge lacks the punch to penetrate heavy armor. Plans are afoot for an SdKfz 301, which will transport 50 pounds of explosives.

Acc/Top Speed: 4/24; **Toughness:** 6 (1); **Crew:** —

Notes: Extra, Remote Controlled (Driving d8), Tracked

Weapons:

1 x 5-pound warhead (Damage: 4d8, AP 4, Large Burst Template)

SALVAGE

Should a Goliath be captured intact (as in it hasn't detonated), a technically competent character can begin experimenting with it when he gets time.

Removing the explosives requires a successful Repair roll and access to a toolkit. With success, the characters now have a working bomb. It uses the stats as listed above. A failure causes detonation due to booby traps.

Creating a remote control device needs a successful Repair or Weird Science roll at –2 and access to a workshop (or at least a junkyard or spare bits of technology). No further Goliaths appear in this adventure, but success means the group now has a device of their own. Who knows, it might be useful later on.

Due to the time it takes to fiddle with the Goliath, these rolls may be made just once per Act.

SCENE 3: A BUNDLED SCIENTIST

Whoever said New York City was a happening place wasn't joking—it's all happening today! Up ahead, you see a group of those flying Nazis shuf-



fling a man in a trench coat out of a building and into the street. The goons are hovering just a few feet off the road, but they seem reluctant to take to the skies. Overhead, USAAF fighters are patrolling the sky—it seems the government isn't taking the threat lightly.

The government had already scrambled fighters before Schmutzig sent his message. Still unsure how many remote controlled bombs may be moving through the streets, the fighters have orders to avoid enemy contact. The Nazis don't know this, though, so they're staying near the ground until they spot a break in the air defenses.

The street is 6" wide (1" of sidewalk each side of a 4" wide road) and 30" long. The characters begin at one end of the street, while the Nazis and their prisoner are 20" ahead of them. Since they're in a vehicle, the adventurers have the advantage of speed and Cover.

If called upon to surrender, the villains stick a gun to their captive's head and threaten to kill him unless the heroes back off. How the potential standoff ends will be decided by the characters' actions.

Should the characters drop their guns, the Nazis decide to make a break for it and risk the fighters—staying on the ground severely limits their options. Each round, they climb half their rocket pack's Pace in inches (due to the added weight of the prisoner). Before he disappears into the clouds, the captive shouts back to the characters: *"Quickly, get to Brooklyn!" he calls, his voice beginning to trail away. "Anderson & Company. Stop them from taking the…"*

- **Raketentruppen (1 per hero):** See page 21.
- **Professor Vasily Yuchenko:** Generic scientist (see page 20).

THE SCIENTIST

The scientist, if rescued, introduces himself as Professor Vasily Yuchenko. However, before any questions can be asked he makes an immediate plea.

"Please, my friends," Yuchenko gasps, "please get to Anderson and Company in Brooklyn as quickly as possible. I shall explain everything on the way."

Yuchenko is true to his word once the group is back on the road. He provides a quick backstory before getting to the important facts. Born and educated in Russia, he left the Soviet Union in 1920 when it became clear his Tsarist views had placed his life in danger. After settling in the United States, he found work first working for the General Electric Company, and later went on to work with Nikola Tesla on his theories on gravity.

"I had heard of Nikola Tesla—who has not?—and sought him out. I helped Tesla with work on his dynamic theory of gravity. The study of gravity is a specialty of mine, though my part was very small and not really worthy of mention. Tesla was planning on releasing his work for public attention, but it was stolen. Poor man, years of work gone in an instant.

"Then I heard from friends that colleagues had gone missing, their research papers stolen: physicists, mathematicians, atomic theorists—all men with overlapping specialties. I knew someone had a list, and my name would likely be on that list. Tesla is too high profile to kidnap, but I am not. So I hid, changing my name and ceasing my work. As you already know, I was not particularly successful in my attempts to disappear.

"The men who tried to kidnap me spoke briefly among themselves, ignorant of the fact I speak fluent German. They mentioned that all was going to plan and soon the raid on Anderson & Company would begin. That company makes extremely powerful magnets. I don't know why the Nazis want magnets, but I know it cannot be for the betterment of mankind."

Yuchenko can provide few answers to any other questions. He can provide a list of the missing scientists, but none are American, so the US government can do little to find them. His true specialty, should anyone ask, is the theoretical study of super-gravity wells and massively dense anomalies.

SCENE 4: METAL MOLE

Nothing appears amiss when the characters arrive at the factory. There are no cars outside, which is not surprising given it's the weekend. There are two entrances to the factory, a small single door near the top end (where the Nazis are) and a pair of hangar-style double doors near the other end. Both are padlocked. Picking the locks requires a Lockpicking roll. They have Toughness 8 (2) if characters prefer to break them.

At the far end of the factory is a gigantic cylinder mounted on tracks, with a large, pointed screw on each end. A squad of soldiers dressed and armed the same as the goons you've met already, save for a lack of rocket packs, is emerging from the metal beast. One, maybe an officer, is signaling them toward four massive magnets sitting in the center of the factory.

If the characters picked the smaller door's lock, they gain Surprise on the Nazis. Roll for the goons individually.

The tunneling machine measures 6" long and 2" wide. It sits at the far end of the factory, having just burst through the floor. Two large doors, each 2" in width, are located in the center of each side. The device is manned

by a full crew compliment. Place the non-crew Nazis within 2" of the tunneling machine.

The factory floor measures 10" wide by 24" long. Around the walls are workbenches, machines, filing cabinets, and other large, metal objects. In the central area are four huge magnets, each 1" square. Place these 3" apart to form the corners of a square. See below for the effect these have on play.

The Nazi goons want the magnets, but the crew has their own orders—not to let the tunneling machine fall into enemy hands (magnets can be found elsewhere if this plan fails). When half the ground troops are dispatched, the tunneling machine fires into life and withdraws down its tunnel. The soldiers left are prepared to fight to the bitter end. Such is their conditioning.

After the fight ends, Professor Yuchenko asks the heroes if they can take him back to his house. He needs to collect some letters, which he feels may be important with regard to recent events. Should the professor have been kidnapped, read the notes at the start of Act 2 regarding how the characters can proceed.

SHEER MAGNETISM

The Nazi's infernal contraption damaged power cables when it burst through the floor. As a result, the magnets on the test beds are switching on and off at irregular intervals.

Number the large magnets one through four. When a deuce of Clubs is drawn as any character's first action card, magnet number one magnetizes. A deuce of Diamonds indicates magnet 2 switches on, and so on. Drawing a second deuce for a magnet that is on turns the thing off, dropping any metallic items stuck it to the floor.

When magnetized, place a Large Burst Template face down centered on the magnet. Each magnet has Strength d12+2. Characters under the template or who enter its area while holding a metal weapon must make an opposed Strength roll or lose their weapon. Wielding a two-handed weapon grants a +2 bonus to the roll. Even if the character retains his grip, all attack rolls within a template are at –2 due to the weapon being pulled around by magnetic forces. Pulling a metal object off an active magnet requires an opposed Strength roll as an action.

Ranged weapons fired at targets *within* a magnet's active field suffer a –2 penalty as well, as the rounds veer toward the magnet. (Lead isn't subject to magnetism, but this is pulp, and it's much more fun to "watch" bullets veering off course than to obey the law of physics.) Even the Nazis' electric guns suffer the penalty as the arc is bent by the powerful force. A missed shot into a template by a *Raketengewehr* automatically causes the warhead to strike the magnet and explode (don't roll for deviation as normal). The magnet is solid enough to shrug off the blast.

Any characters who enter or begin their turn within a template must roll a d6 before taking any actions. On a roll of 1, a small metal object, such as a tool, has struck him as it flies through the air toward the magnet, inflicting 2d6 damage (as an Extra).

MORE MAGNETIC FUN

The rules on page 7 provide fixed modifiers. The alternate system below covers the magnets acting at variable power. It requires a little bookkeeping, but it means the characters won't know a magnet's exact effects if it switches on twice during the scene. When a magnet activates, immediately draw another card. This determines the magnet's power. With this system, the template size, Strength, and modifier to attack rolls is variable.

Card	Template	Str	Mod
Deuce	Large	d12+4	–4
3–10	Large	d12+2	–2
Jack	Medium	d12+1	–2
Queen	Medium	d12	–1
King	Medium	d10	–1
Ace	Medium	d8	0
Joker	Small	d6	0

- **Professor Vasily Yuchenko:** Generic scientist (see page 20).
- **Tunneling Machine Crew (7):** As Raketentruppen (see page 21), but armed only with pistols and wearing no rocket packs.
- **SS-Raketentruppen (2 per hero):** See page 21, but they are not wearing rocket packs.

TUNNELING MACHINE

Invented by Germany during the Great War, the tunneling machine never proved a viable device. It was prone to mechanical malfunction, and in many tests the crew suffocated due to a build up of carbon monoxide.

Schmutzig's Special Weapons Division modified the plans and produced a working prototype. Its purpose is listed as, "A device with which to burrow into enemy installations and disgorge troops, thus circumventing all enemy defensive hardpoints."

Essentially a long cylinder mounted on tracks with a rotating screw at each end, the tunneling machine is capable of digging through anything but the hardest rock. Four machinegun ports, two each side, provide protection for the troops as they disembark. The crew positions are driver, drill operator, and engineer.

Acc/Top Speed: 2/6 (1/4 while tunneling); **Toughness:** 20 (4); **Crew:** 3+20

Notes: Heavy Armor, Tracks

Weapons:

4 x MG34s (Range: 30/60/120, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3, AP 2)

ACT 2: PARIS, FRANCE

Yuchenko doesn't spend long in his house. In light of

recent events he doesn't mind if a hero wants to chaperone him. While he grabs a handful of correspondence from a bureau and stuffs a few clothes into a suitcase, he asks any accompanying characters to make the house look like it's been burgled. *"With any luck," he says, "the authorities may investigate. I've left a list of the missing scientists where your G-Men can find it."* Once he's done, Yuchenko asks to be taken somewhere safe.

YUCHENKO KIDNAPPED

If the professor was kidnapped, the only lead the heroes have is his house. Searching through the papers, they come across Handouts #1 and #2 left in a prominent position. Stuffed in between them is a third letter, which mentions a niece of Professor Rosenbaum, Edith Goldman, who lives in New York. Her address is present.

SCENE 1: LETTERS FROM PARIS

Where the characters take Yuchenko is up to them. Once he's settled in, he pulls the wad of letters from his jacket and hands one to the characters. Give them Handout #1 at this time.

> *"Professor Rosenbaum is, or rather was, a professor teaching advanced physics at Heidelberg University. He specialized in magnetism, which is why I suspect the plot he mentioned is related to the raids today. "Anyway," he hands you a postcard, "this arrived a few weeks later."*

Give the players Handout #2. When the characters have read the missive, Yuchenko continues speaking.

> *"Short and to the point, yes?" the professor says with a slight grin. "Isaac is not prone to flights of fancy. Please, I know I am asking you to place your faith in a crazy old Russian, but will you help me discover what is going on?"*

Yuchenko admits he has no idea who Mimi is, or where in Paris his friend might be staying. However, he does know that Rosenbaum mentioned a niece living in New York. After rummaging through a sheaf of old letters, he comes up with an address in Queens and a name—Edith Goldman.

EDITH GOLDMAN

Edith lives across town, in Queens. She received several messages from her uncle warning of danger, but also received a visit from strangers (Nazis) asking if she knew where her uncle was. They claimed to be officials from the University, but Edith had already received a letter from her uncle saying he had been dismissed. Although the men were polite, they had a menacing air about them. As such, she is a little recalcitrant to allow the characters in when they knock on her apartment door.

Roleplaying gaining entry can be great fun, with Edith asking to see identification, openly denying she knows any Isaac Rosenbaum, asking if the heroes work for the "same men as before," or even threatening to call the police. Players who prefer the dice can make a Persuasion roll at –2. If Yuchenko is present, there is a +2 bonus, as her uncle mentioned his friend several times and he can confirm details only a close friend would know. Handing over the letters isn't worth a bonus—they could have been stolen.

Once inside, Edith offers the party coffee and cake. She still plays innocent with regard to knowing her uncle's whereabouts, but can be convinced to assist the group if the heroes detail recent events and how her uncle might be the only way to stop the attacks.

> *"Mimi is the stage name of Sarah, my cousin, Uncle Isaac's daughter. She always wanted to be a singer, something her mother encouraged, but Uncle Isaac always said it was an undignified profession. When Auntie Ruth died, Sarah and Isaac had a big falling out. She moved to Paris. The last I knew, they had not spoken for a decade. I don't know where she lives, but she sings at a famous club in Paris, the Folies-Bergères."*

Characters making a successful Common Knowledge roll have heard of the Folies-Bergères (characters familiar with France get a +2 bonus) through the 1935 film *Folies Bergère de Paris*, which won an Oscar for Best Dance Direction. It's a music hall-cum-nightclub catering for all manner of acts, including ones considered extremely risqué even by modern sensibilities.

The Nazis are still hunting for Rosenbaum, and the recent failure to steal the magnets has left Schmutzig irate—the professor holds vital knowledge he seeks. He has ordered his goons to kidnap Edith. With her in his grasp, he hopes to force Rosenbaum into surfacing and submit to his demands.

As the characters leave the apartment building, two black sedans screech to a halt opposite. The occupants get out in a hurry. They're dressed like New York cops, but sharp-eyed characters (Notice roll at –2) spot their firearms are of German manufacture. The goons don't speak very good English (they weren't expecting to have to talk to anyone but Edith), and try to avoid answering any questions beyond two word replies.

If the heroes elect to leave the scene, the goons are successful, and Edith falls into Schmutzig's clutches. Should they decide to wait around awhile, the thugs emerge a few minutes later, carrying Edith with them. She's been chloroformed and is unconscious. The thugs reply with the words, "She's sick," if questioned about the woman. The third option requires the character's to put two and two together and deal with the goons before they have a chance to kidnap Edith.

The road is 4" wide, with a 1" wide sidewalk either

side. Aside from the various vehicles belonging to the group and the Nazis, the only other cover is a few streetlamps and garbage cans.

Whether or not Edith had to be rescued, the characters will likely decide to take her somewhere safe. Exactly where they consider safe is up to them. Defeating the Nazis and leaving her in her apartment costs the characters a benny each—it should be obvious to them she's in danger now.

Professor Vasily Yuchenko: Generic scientist (see page 20).

Nazi Goons (2 + 1 per hero): See page 20. They carry pistols, but wield batons (Str+d4) instead of knives.

SCENE 2: LES FOLIES-BERGÈRES

How the characters get to Paris is up to them. Scheduled flights leave New York regularly, and, as always, the airfare is waived as a non-essential part of the adventure.

Paris is, like most European capitals, a city of two halves. There is the glitz and glamour of high society and the fabulous architectural and historical buildings on one hand, and the poverty rampant after the Great Depression on the other. Political activism is high. The government, a union of Socialist and Communist factions, collapsed earlier this year, adding to the turmoil.

The Folies-Bergères, as any Parisian can inform the party, is located at 32 rue Richer, in Paris' 9th arrondissement (district). Other famous buildings in the arrondissement include the Galeries Lafayette department store, the Paris Olympia music hall, the Fondation Dosne-Thiers (a library specializing in French history between 1789 and 1900, open only to those with recommendations from the Insitut de France), the Musée Grévin (a waxworks museum and location of the first animated movie ever screened), and the Palais Garnier (also known as the Grand Opera House).

GAINING ENTRANCE

The nightclub is a public entertainment venue, and thus carrying firearms should be considered taboo by the characters. What with all the political troubles in recent years, security is tight. The concierge doesn't physically pat down clients, but he has a very keen eye.

Any character trying to smuggle in a weapon must make an Agility roll opposed by the concierge's Notice d10+2 (he has the Alertness Edge). Heroes caught trying to smuggle in weapons are politely asked to hand them over—they can collect them when they leave. This is one of those rare occasions in pulp where refusal to comply *does* result in the police being called.

There are ways around this restriction, though it's up to the adventurers to come up with a plausible reason. For instance, a Noble might claim a gun-toting character is her bodyguard. France may have beheaded its nobility centuries ago, but the nightclub welcomes rich and influential clients with open arms.

The nightclub also has a strict adults only policy. Young characters could be disguised to make them look like adults, or the heroes can grease the concierge's palm with at least $50 to look the other way for a second. Bribery does *not* work with regard to weaponry.

Mimi is well-known to the staff inside (the concierge doesn't discuss performers with clients). Her act is just about to begin when the characters enter. As they are shown to their table, the lights on the stage focus into a single point centered on a tall microphone stand.

> *The back curtain parts, and out steps one hot dame. Clad in a long, white dress which clings to her like a second skin, the only color you can focus on is her bright red, glossy lips. With an almost hypnotic swaying of the hips, she moves to the microphone and begins to sing.*

Mimi's act lasts just five minutes (she performs several times a night, in between other acts). When she finishes, she leaves the stage and walks over to the bar. This is the character's chance to approach her, though red-blooded males may be distracted by the scantily clad dancers now taking the stage.

The singer accepts an offer of a drink, ordering a dry Martini. However, she denies knowing Isaac Rosenbaum, and insists her name is Sarah Rabin (she took her mother's maiden name when she left home). Only by presenting Professor Yuchenko in person, producing the letters, or mentioning Edith does she agree to talk more. She leads the party to a booth. Once seated, she demands to know who the characters are and why they are after her father.

Convincing her of their good intention shouldn't be difficult, as she's heard the news about the attack on New York.

> *"I'll take you to my father, but only after my last act. I can't afford to lose my job here. Meet me back here at 10 o'clock sharp."*

MY GIRL

As Sarah gets up to leave, have the characters make Notice rolls. With success, they spy a group of goons approaching their table. Leading them, clad in a long, black leather coat which doesn't conceal the tell-tale lump on his back is Professor Schmutzig. (The concierge is currently laying unconscious outside.) The Nazis have many agents, and one finally came good and tracked down Rosenbaum's daughter.

Unless the heroes immediately react violently, Schmutzig addresses them.

> *"So, Amerikaners," he coos, "we meet again. It is a shame you did not get my message in New York. Now, please hand over the girl. We don't want any trouble, not in such lovely surroundings."*

It's up to the heroes what happens next. If Mimi is handed over (unlikely, but possible), Schmutzig bundles her out of the door while his thugs remain in place. He then uses his *fly* power to blast off into the sky. Locating Rosenbaum then requires the characters to search Mimi's dressing room. In here they find a map of the Paris sewers marked with a route in red ink.

Should the party make threats or try to call his bluff, the Nazi scientist calls over a waiter. He withdraws a wad of cash from his coat, places it on the waiter's tray, and says, *"An apology in advance for disturbing your clients."* He then orders his goons to take the girl by force.

Deal action cards!

The thugs begin by drawing their batons (an action), but switch to firearms if the characters draw heat or are gaining the upper hand.

Schmutzig immediately backs away from the heroes on his first action, while activating *deflection*. Next round he casts *armor*. Since he wants Mimi alive, he uses his *stun* power to try and disable the heroes, though he'll try to avoid knocking out his own men (only so they can distract the characters). Only if Mimi is out of the area of effect does he use *burst*. Once his thugs are keeping the adventurers busy, he uses *telekinesis* to lift Mimi and pull her toward him at the rate of 3" per round. The villain has the benefit of the Recurring Villains rule, and he'll use it to escape if the situation turns bad.

The central floor area of the nightclub measures 12" by 12". The central area is dotted with tables and chairs. Around one edge is a number of booths. The exit is in the wall opposite the booths.

Aside from the ubiquitous tables and chairs for use in Tricks or as weapons (Str+d6 damage for a chair, requires two hands), there are candles, soda squirters, drinks, table clothes, complimentary snacks, and whatever else the characters think should be to hand in a music hall.

The patrons and acts (and the acts are immensely varied) begin screaming and running around like headless chickens while the brawl occurs. Each round a Wild Card draws a Club suit of value 2–10 as his first action card, a patron somehow interferes in the fight (see below). The event occurs before the hero takes his actions for the round. After a card is used, cross it off the list. Ignore repeat draws.

Card	Effect
2	**Mime Artist:** The mime begins feigning an injury, mimicking a punch, or whatever else the hero might find distracting. The character suffers a –2 penalty to all actions this round.
3	**Waiter:** A waiter runs past carrying a bottle on a tray. If the hero elects to grab it, he must use an action as Drawing a Weapon, but gains the Drop if he attacks an adjacent thug the same round (Str+d4).
4	**Annoying Woman:** She panics and grabs hold of the character, giving him a –2 penalty to all actions this round.
5	**Fire Breather:** If a hero makes a Trick against Agility d8, the fire breather accidentally breathes fire in a line 1" wide and 3" in a direction of the character's choice. Anyone in the affected area suffers 2d6 damage (from an Extra) and has a chance of catching fire.
6	**Screamer:** A woman screams so loudly and high pitched it shatters glass. Place a Medium Burst Template centered on the Wild Card. Everyone under the template must make a Vigor roll or be Shaken (non-physical effect).
7	**Drink, Sir?:** Another waiter, this time carrying a shot glass of scotch on a tray. Grabbing it and swigging it down (an action) earns the character a benny. Otherwise, it can be used in a Trick (and doesn't require an action to grab), with the hero gaining a +2 bonus.
8	**Belligerent Tourist:** A tourist feels the fight has ruined his night out, so he throws a punch at the Wild Card. He has Fighting d8, and does d8 damage (as an Extra).
9	**My Eyes!:** A scantily clad dancer rushes by, causing a distraction to male characters. The hero must make a Spirit roll or suffer a –2 penalty to all actions as his attention is elsewhere.
10	**Can-can Girl:** She kicks a thug adjacent to the Wild Card. Fighting d8 (these girls can kick) for d6+d4 damage (high heels).

Assuming Mimi hasn't been kidnapped by Schmutzig, she agrees to take the adventurers to her father immediately after the fight ends. In her haste to protect him, she has forgotten about the map of the sewers in her dressing room.

Doctor Schmutzig: See page 20.

Nazi Goons (2 per hero): See page 20. They carry pistols, but wield batons (Str+d4) instead of knives.

Professor Vasily Yuchenko: Generic scientist (see page 20).

Mimi: See page 20.

SCENE 3: KNEE DEEP IN PARIS

Mimi (or the map) leads the characters to a manhole just outside the Folies-Bergères, lifts it, and clambers down the ladder. She hasn't got a light source, but a character is likely to have a lighter to hand (lots of folk smoke in this era).

It could be worse. At least the winter rains have flushed out the sewers recently. Sloshing through the water, you become aware of another sound from ahead, a sort of chittering, squeaking sound. A sound a bit like… rats!

The tunnel is 4" wide. The center 2" is the sewerage channel, which is full of knee-deep water. Moving through this counts as difficult ground. On either side are raised walkways (only a few inches above the water). This are slippery—any character who rolls a 1 on their

Agility die, regardless of the Wild Die, or a running die, slips and falls prone.

Rat Swarm (2): See Savage Worlds.

Mimi: See page 20.

Professor Vasily Yuchenko: Generic scientist (see page 20).

PROFESSOR ROSENBAUM

After another 30 minutes, Mimi calls out, *"It's me, papa."* She then climbs a short ladder, beckoning the characters to follow. The ladder ascends into a small, dry chamber. Newspapers, empty food cans, and some blankets indicate someone calls this place home. Huddled in the corner, wearing a brown suit, is Professor Rosenbaum. Mimi quickly explains the recent events to her father, before introducing the heroes.

If Yuchenko is present, Rosenbaum greets him warmly. Rosenbaum then asks to hear everything that has happened in recent days. Afterward, he gets straight to business.

"Before I begin, you must understand that my family is German and patriotic, but we're not Nazis. The very thought of what they have done to my homeland sickens me to my core.

"During the Great War, I worked as a scientist for the military. We were engaged in many secret projects, all of them weapons of war. I cannot atone for what I helped designed, but patriotism blinded me. Fortunately for my soul, none of my designs were ever put to use.

"But now, now things are different. A scientist by the name of Werner Schmutzig discovered our blueprints and persuaded Hitler to form the Sonderwaffen Abteilung, the Special Weapons Division. It seems you have encountered some of our designs, but from what you say, I fear the madman is looking to create the most terrible weapon of all—the Z-Bomb.

"The Z-Bomb is not an explosive. In fact, it is an implosive. The warhead contains dozens of super dense metal spheres, metal so dense a piece the size of a pinhead would weigh more than an automobile. These are held is stasis by powerful magnetic fields.

"When the weapon is detonated, the magnetic fields reverse, propelling the spheres together at phenomenal speeds. These collide to form a massively dense object with a gravitational effect far in excess of that of the Sun. The Z-Bomb doesn't blow things up—it sucks them in and tears them apart, atom by atom.

"It's one weakness is its weight. Even with recent advances in rocketry, there is no way to deliver the weapon to its destination. A completed Z-Bomb would weigh many hundreds of tons."

Only if specially asked, does Rosenbaum reveal why the Z-Bomb was so named—because the chances of surviving its effects are zero.

The Professor doesn't know where Schmutzig has his headquarters, but it's likely somewhere very remote—an accident while constructing the Z-Bomb would be catastrophic. However, his unit during the Great War used a partially-ruined castle near the French border as its headquarters. It's likely the Special Weapons Division still maintains it in one form or another, as it was fitted with massive subterranean generators to provide power for the experiments. He provides directions to the castle.

Rosenbaum has no intentions of ever going back to Germany, and France isn't safe now, either. He begs the characters to take him and his daughter to the airport so they can flee the country, ideally to America or Great Britain.

SCENE 4: JUMPING THE TRAIN

Paris has two airports, Le Bourget (where Charles Lindbergh landed after his historic flight in 1927) and Villeneuve-Orly Airport (finished in 1932, and which can cater for airships). Characters who make a successful Streetwise roll learn that a German airship is currently berthed at Villeneuve-Orly. This has nothing to do with the plot, but might give the character cause for concern. The quickest way to reach either airport is via train.

This scene assumes the characters head for a train station. Should they elect to hire a car, the Nazis arrive on the scene just as they pull away. Run it as a standard Chase using car stats of the GM's devising or sedans (page 14). There are two Nazi cars, each containing a driver and three passengers.

As the characters reach the station, they hear of the sounds of squealing brakes and slamming doors. The Nazis, on their way to keep an eye on the main routes out of Paris, have spotted the party.

This scene is run as a foot Chase. Each Range Increment represents 3". The characters begin three Range Increments ahead of the Nazis.

There are Light Obstacles, representing fellow commuters. Characters do not suffer a collision if they draw a Club. Instead, the modifier indicates temporary difficulty working through a crowd. This Chase also uses our Event Stages rules (see below). The Nazis only use guns if fired upon—France is not yet in German hands.

Assuming the adventurers outrun or manage to defeat the Nazis, they reach the airport safely. The two professors and Mimi book the next flight to Great Britain, which leaves within the hour. The Nazis don't have time to report their failure and get a car to the airfield.

Don't worry if the chase goes bad and the heroes are defeated. The Nazis kidnap the NPCs, leaving the unconscious characters where they lie. There is no chance of

catching the goons, but the heroes can complete their quest. A chance to free their lost friends occurs later in the adventure.

EVENT STAGES

Unlike a regular Chase, this one has fixed encounters along the route, as the participants move through the streets and into the station. Space 20 markers in a line along the table to represent the route. Place a different color marker at the 5th, 9th, 13th, 16th, and 20th positions. These are the Event Stages.

Move each combatant's playing piece along the track each time it moves one or more Range Increments. This way it is very easy to see where an individual participant is in relation to the events.

When a character reaches a Stage, it must deal with an event. These are detailed below. Modifiers to Agility rolls apply to the roll made at the start of each round. Unlike Triple Ace's standard Obstacles rules, these events affect all participants reaching the marker equally unless otherwise noted.

5th Increment: The chase enters the station. Locating the right platform and train forces the first character to reach this stage to halt his movement for the round. The Nazis already know the layout of the station, and don't suffer any delay at this stage.

He must make a Notice roll (to spot the name of the airport) or Persuasion roll (to ask the way; non-French speakers suffer a –2 penalty). With success, he may continue his running next round as normal. He can also call back to his comrades, allowing them to bypass this event. On a failure, he is stuck at this stage until either he or a fellow hero makes one of the rolls above. He may then continue running at the start of the following round.

9th Increment: The chase reaches a ticket booth. A hero who wants to purchase a ticket must end his movement for the round at this increment. Next round, he suffers a –2 penalty to his Agility roll due to the delay in finding change or a communication barrier. The characters don't have to stop (the Nazis don't), as there are no barriers to prevent access.

13th Increment: Two baggage carts have collided, spilling cases all over the place. Angry passengers are clustered around the porters, creating a blockage. Characters must make an Agility roll at –2 when they reach this stage to clear the obstacles. Failure causes them to immediately end all movement this round and forfeit their next Agility roll as they scramble over the bags.

16th Increment: A ticket inspector is waiting to check tickets. Heroes who purchased tickets early effectively ignore this scene, as they can wave their ticket as they speed past.

Characters who didn't buy a ticket, or who choose to simply ignore the inspector, suffer a –2 penalty to their next Agility roll, as they must push their way past the man (who is blocking the route) or waste time inventing an excuse.

20th Increment: The train has arrived, and is spilling passengers onto the platform. The character must make a Strength roll to push their way forward. On a failure, they must halt all movement this round. Next round, they use Strength in place of Agility. Moving past this stage means the character is on the train.

If all the heroes and their charges reach the train before any Nazis, the doors close and it moves off, leaving the goons standing helplessly on the platform. Otherwise, the Nazis leap aboard, and a scuffle ensues.

- **Nazi Goons (2 per Wild Card):** See page 20.
- **Professor Vasily Yuchenko:** Generic scientist (see page 20).
- **Professor Isaac Rosenbaum:** Generic scientist (see page 20).
- **Mimi:** See page 20.

ACT 3: INTO THE WOLF'S LAIR

With the civilians safely on their way to freedom (or kidnapped and out of reach), the heroes can now turn their attention to entering Germany. They have directions, and how they reach their destination is up to them.

If they think of simply entering Germany as tourists, have them make Common Knowledge rolls. With success, they realize Schmutzig is likely to have sent their descriptions to his Nazi comrades. Although the border crossing will be guarded, there is no fence around either country—crossing over illegally via a minor road or cross-country is likely to be unopposed.

Schmutzig has indeed forwarded descriptions of the characters, who he considers his mortal enemies. All border guards and airport security personnel are on high alert. Should the party elect to enter Germany openly, the GM must decide what repercussions occur.

SCENE 1: THE WOLF'S LAIR

Approaching the castle, the heroes spy an airfield a few miles away. Sitting on the runway is a large airplane decorated in Nazi markings. Heroes with knowledge of airplanes who pass a Common Knowledge roll at –2 recognize it as a Blohm und Voss Ha 139, a long-range seaplane first flown earlier this year. A raise reveals it has a range of just over 3,000 miles.

The castle is situated on a low hill and comprises three levels. A tall radio mast rises from a second floor balcony.

There are two guards leaning against the castle door. They spend much of their day talking and smoking rather than patrolling, and count as inactive sentries. Dispatching them quietly means no alarm is raised. Gunfire or screams instantly alert the guards on the ground floor, who grab their weapons and rush to investigate—but only after hitting the main alarm! The administrators on the upper floors also draw their pistols and come to the defense of the castle.

Parked around the corner, out of the guard's view, is a German staff car, with *Abteilung für experimentielle Waffengattungen* (the formal name of the Special Weapons Division) marked on the doors. The vehicle isn't locked, but there is nothing of interest inside except a hat and a long leather coat with the rank markings of an army captain.

This could be used in a subterfuge to get near to the outside guards, so as to knock them out quickly and quietly. Assuming the fake captain isn't female and someone can speak German (the "officer" may act arrogant enough not to speak with enlisted men), this ruse gives the heroes the Drop when they attack.

Nazi Soldier (2 per hero): See page 20.

GROUND FLOOR: GUARD ROOM & MESS HALL

The ground floor comprises an open plan guard room, behind which are a small kitchen and a toilet. This floor is manned around the clock, with two soldiers on patrol outside and two on duty inside.

Four pilots are currently in here drinking tea with the soldiers. They are due to fly to the secret polar base soon, and are waiting for their flight papers. As loyal to Schmutzig as the guards, they help to defeat any attackers. The guards are wearing fur-lined flight suits and helmets, ideal for characters who might want to impersonate them.

Nazi Soldier (2): See page 20.

Nazi Pilots (4): As Nazi soldier (page 20) but armed only with pistols.

SECOND FLOOR: OFFICES

Three offices are housed here. The circular office is used by the commander, Colonel Reinhardt. He is not present when the heroes invade.

The smaller office has a map of Antarctica on the wall, marked with a red dot. Adjacent to the dot are the words, "Camp Z–1." This is the site of Schmutzig's secret research base. A second map shows the East Coast of America. New York City has been crossed out!

Characters who search the office may make a Notice roll. With success, they locate four identity cards (those of the pilots) and flight plans for a trip to the polar base. The seaplane parked on the airfield is listed as due to depart this afternoon with stores of food and cold weather survival gear. An administrator is on duty here.

The final office contains dozens of filing cabinets. Within these are dozens of blueprints for advanced weapons and other weird science gizmos. An administrator is on duty here.

Nazi Administrators (2): As Nazi soldiers (see page 20), but armed only with pistols and no helmets.

THIRD FLOOR: RADIO ROOM & RESEARCH LAB

The castle is really only used now as Schmutzig's private workshop. As such, only a single laboratory remains operational (the admin offices were once labs). Four scientists are in here working on a new form of rifle, which fires concentrated beams of light. The device is far from complete and is nonfunctional.

Opposite the lab is a radio room, manned by a single operator. Every day, Schmutzig radios in for a status report. The wireless is set to the Antarctic base's frequency.

The last room is a storage cupboard for the scientists and contains lab equipment and tools.

Radio Operator (1): As Nazi soldiers (see page 20) but armed only with pistols and no helmets.

Nazi Scientists (4): As generic scientist (page 20).

SCENE 2: SIDECAR SITUATIONS

The quickest way to the airfield is using the staff car. It's also a great tool for entering the base in disguise. This scene assumes the characters take the car. If they elect to walk, or take the car and head for a different destination, the GM will have to tweak the scene as necessary.

As the party heads toward the airfield, they hear the roar of motorbikes approaching from behind. Tearing round the corner are German motorbikes, each fitted with a sidecar.

Run this scene as a Chase. The Nazis begin 3 Range Increments behind the heroes, and each Range Increments represents 10". This scene uses our alternate Obstacles rules.

The chase begins along a track running through a lightly wooded area. A character can elect to head offroad and drive through adjoining fields at any time. The Nazis loyally follow. Driving through the fields gives all drivers a –2 penalty to Driving rolls, due to the rough terrain.

If the heroes successfully flee, they outfox their pursuers, who roar off along the wrong road in search of them.

OBSTACLES

Deuce (–4) Flocking Sheep: A herd of sheep is moving across the track between fields. A failure causes no specific problems, other than the vehicle making no progress this round.

Three (–2) Fallen Tree: A bump in the road sends the vehicle heading toward a fallen tree lying on the edge of the road. Failure causes a collision with a stationary hard Obstacle.

Four (–2) Gate: A half-closed wooden gate is blocking the trail. A failure causes a crash with a soft Obstacle as the vehicle smashes into the obstruction.

Five (–2/–4) Tractor: A farmer is plodding along on his antiquated tractor, which takes up most of the lane. The hero must decide whether he wants to try and overtake or stay behind the tractor until it turns off. The pursuing Nazis try to overtake if they are 3 or more Range Increments behind the group.

Overtaking gives a –2 penalty to the Driving roll. With failure, the vehicle scrapes along a hedge or low wall, suffering a collision with a stationary soft Obstacle.

Staying put behind the tractor gives a –4 penalty, but no risk of an accident. A failure means the vehicle simply failed to make any ground due to its extremely slow speed.

Six (–2) Cow: A large cow steps right into the characters' path. A failed Driving roll causes a collision with a stationary hard Obstacle as the driver veers into a tree while trying to avoid the beast.

Seven (–2) Rough Ground: A lack of maintenance has left the track badly pitted and holed. Failure causes the vehicle to go Out of Control.

Eight (–1) Messy: A bird drops a load right onto the windshield or a biker's goggles. An action must be spent to clear the mess. Until this is done, the driver suffers a –1 penalty to all Driving rolls.

Nine (–1) Low Branch: A low branch forces the driver to take evasive action. Failure causes a collision with a soft Obstacle.

Ten (–1) Slippery Gravel: The section of track the vehicle drives onto is covered in loose, slippery gravel. A failure causes the vehicle to go Out of Control.

Jack (0) Hunting Season: The chase takes the vehicles close to where farmers are hunting rabbits and birds. Just as the vehicle clears a hedge, a volley of shotgun pellets is fired across the road. Roll three d6. For each 1 that comes up, the vehicle takes 2d6 damage (from an Extra).

Queen (–1) Deep Puddle: A puddle is actually a lot deeper than it looks. A failed Driving roll means the vehicle automatically goes Out of Control.

King (–2) Another Tractor: Without checking to see if the track is clear, a farmer pulls his tractor onto the road. The vehicle suffers a collision with a hard Obstacle if the Driving roll is failed.

Ace (0) Dead End: A wrong turn leads to a dead-end, not a short cut. A failed roll means the driver failed to realize in time. His vehicle drops back a Range Increment as he turns and drives back onto the track.

Nazi Soldier (2 per hero): See page 20. There is one driver and one passenger in the sidecar.

GERMAN STAFF CAR

Acc/Top Speed: 8/16; **Toughness:** 12 (3); **Crew:** 1+5

MOTORBIKE & SIDECAR

Acc/Top Speed: 14/28; **Toughness:** 8 (2); **Crew:** 1+1

SCENE 3: STEALING AN AIRPLANE

The logical place to head is the airfield. After all, it has a plane fitted out with arctic exploration gear and is fuelled and ready. The airfield is operated by the Luftwaffe, but commanded by the Special Weapons Division at the castle.

Stealing the plane doesn't have to involve any violence. The characters are in a German staff car belonging to the Special Weapons Division, and they may even have identity cards and flight plans to hand over to the guards at the gate. Of course, a party which speaks no German has less chance of pulling off a deception unless the characters are clever (such as answers questions with grunt, frowns, or glancing at their watches to indicate they are in a hurry).

Should a fight occur, the battlefield covers whatever size gaming table you're using. Place the heroes' car at one end and something to represent the airplane at the other end. The plane is facing toward the characters. Ideally, the gap should be around 30". There are several wooden huts (4" by 3") near the gate. Two soldiers guard the gate. The others are in the huts, and emerge the round after an alarm is raised (or shots are fired).

Climbing into the plane requires an action, as does moving into the cockpit. It then requires a Piloting roll to make the plane ready without all the pre-flight checks and tests normally required. Once the plane is fired up and everyone is aboard, it accelerates 12" per round until it reaches the end of the table, at which point it takes off.

For the sake of drama, any bullets hitting the plane simply puncture harmless holes in the fuselage.

Nazi Soldier (2 per hero): See page 20.

THE PLANE'S CONTENTS

The plane has a small gun locker holding two automatic pistols with a pair of magazines each, and a flare gun and six flares. The statistics for the pistols can be found in the Nazi thug stat block (page 20). Two light machineguns are stored in the hold, along with belts of ammunition.

The cargo hold contains dozens of crates. These hold enough sets of winter clothing, skis, ration packs, tents, portable stoves, fuel pellets, shovels, bundles of rope, and so on to support a six man expedition for several months.

Skis: A character wearing skies treats snow and ice as normal terrain, but has his Pace halved (minimum of 1) and cannot run on other terrain. He rolls an extra d6 when "running" downhill on ice or snow. Donning or removing snow shoes takes an action. *Weight:* 4 lbs.

SCENE 4: FROZEN SKIES

The trip to Antarctica requires several fuel stops. The GM is free to add in his own encounters as he wishes, but the adventure assumes a red line appears on a map as the heroes head south.

For the last few hundred miles the sea has gradually filled with ice. Sporadic flows and icebergs have now turned into a solid white mass. According to your charts, you're not far from the actual

coast of Antarctica. Your destination is still several hundred miles away, though.

Uh-oh, looks like you've got company! Two German fighters have drifted down from the clouds and are now flying parallel. The pilots peer through the cockpit at your airplane, then peel off, dropping back behind you.

Having discovered the break in at the castle and theft of the plane, the Special Weapons Division in Germany contacted Schmutzig. After calculating likely routes, he dispatched two planes on an intercept course with orders to shoot down any approaching craft. The doctor's genius did him proud, for he guided the interceptors straight to the heroes.

The characters can make contact with the pilots over the radio and try to bluff them, but it doesn't do any good. The Nazis make it quite clear the heroes are about to be eating a lot of lead.

Run this scene using the Chase rules. No Obstacles are present. The Nazis begin 3 Range Increments behind the characters, and each Range Increments equates to 10".

Nazi Pilots (2): Treat as Nazi soldiers (page 20).

HA-139 SEAPLANE

A long-range cargo plane, the Ha-139 seaplane is powered by four engines. It has no fixed gunnery positions, forcing gunners to fire through windows in the fuselage.

Acc/Top Speed: 12/72; **Toughness:** 14 (2); **Crew:** 4+8

Notes: —

Weapons:

* 2 x Light MG (Range: 30/60/120; Damage 2d8; ROF 3, AP 2)

MESSERSCHMITT BF 109GW

One of the iconic aircraft of World War 2, this version has been modified for arctic conditions.

Acc/Top Speed: 20/140; **Toughness:** 11 (2); **Crew:** 1

Notes: —

Weapons:

* 1 x 20mm cannon (Range: 50/100/200; Damage 3d8; ROF 3, AP 4, HW)
* 2 x linked light machineguns (+1 Shooting, Range: 30/60/120; Damage 2d8+1; ROF 3, AP 2)

ACT 4: ANTARCTICA

Since it's nearly Christmas, Antarctica is enjoying its summer. This isn't to say its warm—in fact, the temperature struggles to rise above freezing, even around the coast. Assuming the heroes take sensible precautions, like wearing winter clothing and sleeping in tents, the ambient temperature causes no undue problems.

The one noticeable feature of the polar summer is the sun, which barely sets this time of year. For an hour either side of midnight the ambient lighting is Dim (–1) as dusk falls across the ice and snow—otherwise it is daylight.

Antarctica is, for the most part, uninhabited. Aside from the Nazis, the only occupants in 1936 are members of the British Graham Land Expedition (exploring the Antarctic Peninsula from their base on Winter Island), the Norwegian Antarctic Expedition (exploring and photographing the coast of the West Antarctic Ice Shelf), and temporary whaling camps dotted sporadically along the coast. While it is possible for a hero to use a Contact in this Act, the character needs a very good story to cover bumping into an old acquaintance.

GOING DOWN

As the seaplane passes over the Antarctic coast, the engines begin to splutter and die. This might be due to the intense cold, or a stray bullet in the dogfight could have pierced the fuel tank. Whatever the cause, the aircraft can't maintain altitude for long.

If the pilot elects to land as soon as possible, the landing is smooth. Pushing further risks stalling as fuel runs out or the engines freeze. Landing the plane without power is treated as a crash landing. The heroes won't need the plane again.

SCENE 1: BLOOD IN THE SNOW

After a long day traveling, the characters have stopped to make camp. Don't prompt them about posting sentries—they're in a hostile landscape potentially crawling with Nazis, so that should be something they think of themselves. If sentries are posted, ask them to work out a quick schedule. Remember, a hero requires six hours of sleep a night to avoid the effects of sleep deprivation.

A group of yetis, brought here from the Himalayas to serve the Nazis, have detected the camp and are slowly moving to investigate. They may be animals, but they're extremely cunning ones. Allow the sentry on duty around 4 a.m. a Notice roll. This is opposed by the yetis Stealth roll of d8+4. Roll individually for the yetis, as they're coming from different angles. One yeti approaches from each cardinal point in an attempt to cut off escape routes.

If the guard fails to spot the yetis, they launch their attack from 5" away from the nearest camp obstacle (be that the sentry or a tent). If he spots them, they begin 12" away. Read the following text, and place the creatures on the tabletop.

Emerging through the snow are humanoid creatures. Each is taller and brawnier than a man and covered in thick, white fur. Small, yellow eyes hint at their animal cunning, while their long claws indicate they are more than capable of ripping



open flesh. They're powerful legs and large feet propel them over the snow like it was asphalt.

The sentry must check for Surprise if he failed his Notice roll. Characters not on duty must always check for Surprise, as the beasts surge forward with a roar. Deal action cards as appropriate.

Sleeping characters who failed their roll remain asleep. Gunshots, cries for help, or having a yeti smash through the tent are all good incentives to awaken quickly. Any of these allow a character to awaken. He joins in the fight at the start of the next round.

Roused characters must take one action to get out of their blankets and another to grab their weapon (unless they have Quick Draw). Attacking in the same round thus gives a –4 penalty due to the multi action penalties.

The battlefield is 24" to a side. Place the heroes' tents (as many as they require) in the center. These measure 2" by 1".

The terrain is a mixture of snow and exposed rock. Movement over the snow is treated as difficult ground. The GM should scatter six Small Burst Templates (face down) to represent patches of rock (or use other terrain/markers he has to hand).

Yetis (1 per hero): See page 21.

STUDYING THE CORPSES

A Notice roll made while studying a yeti corpse detects a linear scar running around the top of the beast's skull. Learning more requires removal of the top of the skull. Once done, it becomes obvious the creatures have been surgically altered. Connected to the brain is a small electrical device. A Repair (–2) or Weird Science roll determines it is designed to provide rudimentary control of the beast based on voice recognition.

SCENE 2: MUSH, MUSH

It's late in the afternoon of the third day before you see any more signs of life. Cresting a low mound is a group of skiers clad in winter clothing. They eye you for a moment before propelling themselves forward, readying SMGs once they have picked up speed.

The Nazis are a routine patrol. Any expedition from the submarine would comprise many more men, or at least have sent out a mayday or fired flares if there was a major problem, so the soldiers take matters into their own hands and assume whoever is on the ice is a potential threat to their secret base. As such, they give chase. They don't fire, however, unless the characters deliberately start fleeing or fire first.

Subterfuge is a possibility, though only if the characters speak German. The Nazis are suspicious, especially if there are women in the party, but they're not always told about visitors. They can be bluffed with a Persuasion roll at –2 (or some good roleplaying), but the consequences for failure are harsh—being surrounded by stationary soldiers armed with SMGs could result in a lot of injuries. Should the characters surrender, they are disarmed and taken to a holding cell in the base. Escape plans are left to the imagination of the group.

THE CHASE IS ON

Divide the Nazis into pairs for action cards. This prevents them all acting before the heroes, and means they won't all encounter the same Obstacle simultaneously.

Skiers use Agility during the Chase scene. The heroes

are 3 Range Increments ahead of the characters, and each Range Increment equates to 10". This Chases uses our alternate Obstacle rules. Moving on skis counts as an Unstable Platform.

SS Ski Troops (2 per hero): See page 20.

OBSTACLES

Deuce (–4) Crevasse: A thin layer of ice collapses, opening a crevasse. A failed Agility roll wedges the character into the gap. At the start of subsequent rounds, he must make a Strength roll to free himself. This requires an action (so characters who want to do other things when their card is called already suffer a multi action penalty). With success, the hero is free and may begin moving again on the *following* round. Failure means it remains stuck.

Nazis who fail fall into the crevasse, and plummet to their death.

Three or Four (–2) Soft Snow: An area of soft snow causes the skis to sink, hampering forward movement. A failed Agility roll means the character is still stuck in the snow, giving him a –2 penalty next round. This continues until he rolls a success and clears the soft matter.

Five or Six (–1) Rocks: An area of exposed rocks forces the hero to weave. A failed Agility roll indicates a collision with a hard Obstacle.

Seven or Eight (–1) Exposed Ice, Smooth: The characters slide onto a section of extremely smooth ice. A failed roll causes a loss of traction, which sends the hero tumbling. They take a –2 penalty to their next Agility roll due to time spent regaining their footing and momentum.

Nine or Ten (–2) Exposed Ice, Rough: The exposed ice is jagged, threatening to trip the participants. A failed roll causes a loss of traction, which sends the hero tumbling. They take a –2 penalty to their next Agility roll, due to time spent regaining their footing and momentum.

Jack (–1) Penguins: A small colony of penguins blocks the participant's path. A failed Agility roll causes the character to drop back 1 Range Increment as he must find an alternate route around the throng.

Queen (–1) Uphill: The terrain goes uphill, threatening a loss of momentum. A failed roll causes the character to move back 1 Range Increment as he slip and slides.

King (–1) Downhill Racing: A slope presents a great opportunity for extra speed. If the Agility roll is a success, the participant moves an additional Range Increment. This stacks with the Push maneuver. A failed rolled causes the character to fall and suffer damage as if colliding with a hard Obstacle.

Ace (0) Downhill & Icy: As above, except the Agility roll is made at no penalty.

SCENE 3: THE NAZI BASE

No matter where the heroes decide to stop for the day, they are not far from the Nazi base—in fact, they're camped right over a distant wing of the mammoth structure. The ground beneath them cracks and gives way, a result of the Nazi drilling machines causing huge fractures in the lower ice.

With a mighty crack, the ground under your feet splinters, plunging you downward. Your descent isn't so much a fall, as a slide. It seems the ice has collapsed into a smooth tunnel, through which you are now sliding out of control!

During the trip, deal each character three action cards. For each Club suit, the hero has to make an Agility roll to avoid cracking his head on an outcropping, smashing his legs or arms, friction burns, and such like. Failure causes 2d6 damage (from an Extra).

The first hero down the chute (determined at random) crashes through a thin wall of ice at the end of the chute, taking 2d6 damage (from an Extra), and emerging in a partially excavated ice cavern. Everyone behind him simply slides into the chamber. Climbing back up the chute is impossible—a dozen meters of snow and ice have slid down behind the party, blocking the tunnel.

Unfortunately, there are Nazi soldiers with SMGs aimed straight at the characters! They order the heroes to surrender or be shot.

The characters don't have to surrender—they are quite free to battle it out with the Nazis. However, surrendering provides two benefits. First, the adventurers don't have to risk suffering wounds that might cripple them later. Second, they get a free benny for use in the climax (which can take them above their usual starting limit).

Whether they surrender or defeat the Nazis, the first area they encounter on leaving the chamber is the main facility. GMs who would prefer the character to sneak through a heavy defended base should design their own map, populated with barracks, mess halls, armories, stores, and so on. In true pulp style, the adventure as written leads straight to where the main action lies.

Quickly describe the layout, using the notes below, or lay it out on the tabletop for them to see. It's important they notice the airplane!

Nazi Soldiers (2 per hero): See page 20.

THE LAYOUT

The ice cavern is huge, and divided into three areas. On the left side is a hangar, which contains a fuel bowser and an Ha-139 seaplane. To the right is a huge rocket, twice the height and width of the Saturn V rocket used to put man on the Moon. Only a small portion is visible—the rest descends into a heavily reinforced chamber below. Massively thick, armored doors separate the rocket chamber from the central area, but they are currently wide open.

The central area holds a huge cylinder, as tall as four buses parked end to end and many yards wide. Surrounding it are big magnets, similar in size to those the heroes saw in New York. Thick cables stretch between

the magnets, eventually joining together and vanishing through a hole in the back wall (where the generator room lies). This is the "graviton array," a device which crushes metal into super dense pellets.

Stretching from the bottom of the cylinder into the chamber is a conveyor belt. At the far end sits a metal barrel, about the same size as a large beer barrel. This is the Z-Bomb, innocent enough to look at, but more deadly than anything else man has ever conceived.

Scattered through the chamber are numerous workbenches and filing cabinets.

In the southwest corner of the central cavern is a large cage. Huddled in here are the kidnapped scientists. If Mimi, Yuchenko, or Rosenbaum were kidnapped, they can be found here.

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

Doctor Schmutzig is standing beside the Z-Bomb when the characters are dragged in. In the event the characters elected to fight, and won, the GM will have to wing events in this section. The characters might hear Schmutzig's rant during the fight.

If the characters are prisoners, he turns to face them, a maniacal grin on his face.

"How nice of you to join us. Your timing is impeccable, for the Z-Bomb is almost complete. Watch the power of science at work!" As he speaks, an overhead crane rumbles past, carrying a vast chunk of metal. It halts over the huge cylinder. A small hatch opens, into which the cargo is released. The cylinder begins to shudder and vibrate, and electricity arcs across it as the magnets power up.

After a few moments, a small hatch in the bottom opens, dropping a tiny metal pellet onto a conveyor belt. The conveyor comes to life, transporting the pellet toward the device Schmutzig is stroking. As it moves, the pellet seems to distort your view of everything behind it, acting almost as a lens.

"This," he says, gesturing toward the pellet, "is the last part of the Z-Bomb! This pellet weighs more than a dozen adult elephants, and together with the others, can generate gravity beyond even God's reckoning!" As he speaks, the pellet drops into the top of the device. Two soldiers rush over and place a large nosecone onto the bomb.

"There is it," Schmutzig roars, his face flushed red, "the most powerful weapon ever devised! In just a few moments, it will be loaded onto a mighty rocket and launched into the sky! When that rocket reaches America, the entirety of New York City will vanish from the map forever! With this power, Germany will be invincible! Nations will fall to their knees and tremble in fear!

"And you," he smiles, calming his fervor, "you will have the best seat in town to watch." He laughs loudly. "You see, you will be passengers aboard the rocket." He signals to the crane operator to lower the hook onto the Z-Bomb. In a few minutes, the warhead will be loaded and the rocket ready to fire!

During Schmutzig's rant, the guards are focused on him, not the characters. They've still got their guns leveled at the party, but their heads are turned away. If the characters choose to act, they automatically gain Surprise during the first round. They also have the Drop on the soldiers. Although the party is unarmed, they can snatch weapons from the guards as an action.

Four soldiers are standing adjacent to the party, who stand halfway between the Z-Bomb and the rocket silo doors. The others are scattered across all three areas as the GM wishes. Divide them into groups equal to the number of characters. This prevents the horde all acting before the characters.

Schmutzig has outlived his villain status, and cannot use the Recurring Villains rule. It's only fitting he be destroyed along with his terrifying weapon.

The benches provide little Cover while standing, but can be tipped as an action to provide Cover. The contents of the benches are left to the heroes to determine as needed. There are plenty of hefty tools (Str+d6) usable as weapons, and jars of chemicals or reams of paper to use in Tricks.

Releasing the prisoners from the cells takes an action. If the graviton array is smashed (see below) and the prisoners are still caged, they manage to break out by themselves. The scientists are grateful to their rescuers, but they're non-combatants and seek cover at the first opportunity. The Nazis aren't interested in shooting them—they have the heroes to worry about.

Outnumbered and outgunned, the characters' wisest course of action is actually to retreat toward the seaplane, the only obvious escape route. A large, red button near the entrance is labeled "Outer Door." Pressing it, a free action for an adjacent adventurers, causes the armored black doors at the end of the hangar to slide open.

The base *must* be destroyed—leaving the Z-Bomb intact and the base operational is too dangerous, and it isn't the pulp way. Place three tokens on the table. There are four ways the array can be destroyed.

* The weak point is the graviton array and its ability to crush metal into super dense forms. The thing is Huge (+4 to attack rolls) and has Toughness 18. One wound is enough to cause its destruction (see below).
* The characters can start blowing up the control panels in the hope one does something. These have Toughness 8. For each wound inflicted, remove one of the tokens. When the last token is gone, the containment shielding fails, and a runaway meltdown begins.
* A hero with Weird Science, who moves adjacent to the control panel nearest the array, can cause it to enter a

state of flux, leading to a critical failure in its containment system. This requires three separate successes on Weird Science rolls, each taking an action.

* In the event sabotage doesn't cross the characters' minds, stray shots take their toll on the array. Each time a Joker is drawn, describe bullets smashing into the array or a control panel and remove one of the tokens.

As the array suffers its critical injury, a loudspeaker begins blaring in a surprisingly calm, female voice. Read the text below to the players, and then proceed to Scene 4.

"Graviton array magnetic field has reached critical instability. Implosion imminent. You have one minute to reach minimum safe distance. I repeat…" The message keeps replaying over and over.



If Schmutzig is still alive at this time, he begins screaming, *"No! It cannot be! Continue loading the rocket! Prepare for immediate launch!"* Somewhere deeper in the base, a loyal Nazis hits the launch button. If he's dead, the rocket malfunctions and begins to take off anyway.

- **Doctor Schmutzig:** See page 20.
- **Nazi Soldiers (3 per hero):** See page 20.
- **Kidnapped Scientists (8):** As generic scientists (page 20).

SCENE 4: HEAVY TIMES

Once the graviton array malfunctions, it enters a fatal cascade toward implosion. In ten rounds, the entire site, and a sizeable portion of the surrounding landscape, will be sucked into a short-lived singularity.

As the array starts to implode, gravity increases dramatically throughout the base. All movement is treated as difficult ground, and physical Trait rolls suffer a –2 penalty. Place a Large Burst Template over the array. At the start of each subsequent round, the template expands by 2" in diameter. Any hero entering this or beginning his turn here suffers 3d6 damage as his atoms are pulled apart.

The only safe escape route is using the seaplane—there simply isn't enough time to run outside the "blast" radius. As before, entering the plane and reaching the cockpit are both actions. Firing up the engines in a hurry requires a Piloting roll. Unless he takes a multi action penalty, the plane does not get airborne until the end if the following round.

As the seaplane screams out of the hangar, along the ice, and into the air, the characters see the huge rocket breaking through the ice, its four engines producing a roaring flame. Then, as the graviton array finally implodes, the rocket, which is barely out of the base, begins to slow dramatically. For a split second it hangs in the air, stationary, as if frozen in time, before it begins to move backward, back into its launch tube!

The implosion creates a massive gravitational pull. The pilot must make a Piloting roll to prevent the plane from being pulled apart. He suffers a modifier equal to 10 minus the number of rounds it took for the plane to get airborne. Thus, if the heroes escaped with just one round to spare, the modifier would be a massive –9!

With success, the airplane bucks like a wild stallion, and the engines redline as they fight to prevent the aircraft being sucked into oblivion. A failure causes the aircraft to suffer 1d3 wounds (don't reveal the number to the characters). A critical failure automatically inflicts 3 wounds. These aren't enough to wreck the vehicle, but that doesn't mean it shouldn't be scary.

The GM should describe the effects of the wounds and Critical Hits in pulp detail. For instance, a Chassis Critical might result in fuselage and wing panels peeling away and flying off back toward the base, while an Engine Critical results in one or two engines being ripped off the plane, starting with the propellers bending back, and

ending up with the entire assembly disappearing! The characters should believe they are in danger of dying.

Within a few minutes, gravity returns to normal. All that remains of Doctor Schmutzig's secret base is a crater. The Z-Bomb is destroyed, the scientists have been rescued, and New York City is safe once more!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

DOCTOR WERNER SCHMUTZIG

Since the failure of his Luftschloss project (see *Daring Tales of Adventure #5*), Schmutzig has been working fervently with the Special Weapons Division on a new range of weapons. His greatest achievement is the near-perfection of the Z-Bomb.

Since his last appearance, he has gained the Vengeful Hindrance. This is a direct result of the characters' foiling his previous plans. However, it is not limited just to the party. He's also added a new gizmo—a gravity density matrix (or the *armor* power in game speak).

The mad doctor has one gizmo, an anti-gravity device, into which all his powers are built. With it he can weaken or strengthen the effect of gravity. He has a pool of 50 Power Points, shared between his powers.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Shooting d10, Weird Science d12
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (1)
Hindrances: Arrogant, Lame, Stubborn, Vengeful (Major)
Edges: Ambidextrous, Arcane Background (Weird Science), Level Headed
Gear: Padded flight suit (+1), stick cane (Str+d4, Parry +1)
Gizmos: *Armor, burst, deflection, fly, speed, stun, telekinesis** (50 Power Points)
Special Abilities:

* **Weakness (Gizmos):** Astute characters may target the capacitor on the Doctor's back. It is a Small target (–4). Reduce the Doctor's Power Points by the damage inflicted by the attack.

GENERIC SCIENTIST

Schmutzig has been kidnapping prominent scientists for well over a year, and forcing them to help design the final stages of the Z-Bomb. They're all men of knowledge, not action. Yuchenko and Rosenbaum also use this archetype, but they are Henchmen.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Investigation d8, Knowledge (Atomic Energy, Mathematics, Physics, Rocketry) d10 [pick one per scientist], Notice d6
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Varies, but usually one from Bad Eyes, Cautious, Quirk, Pacifist (Minor), Stubborn
Edges: Scholar
Gear: Spectacles, notebook, pens

MIMI

Professor Rosenbaum's daughter is a singer in Paris. Feisty and independent, she likes to be treated like a lady, not a sex object. She counts as a Henchman.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Taunt d8
Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Stubborn
Edges: Attractive, Dodge
Gear: Tight dress

NAZI SOLDIERS

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: Combat Reflexes
Gear: Coalscuttle helmet (+3), pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1), SMG (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, ROF 3, AP 1), knife (Str+d4)

NAZI THUGS

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Piloting d8, Shooting d6
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: —
Gear: Pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1), knife (Str+d4)

SS SKI TROOPS

While the regular German army maintains its own alpine and mountain warfare troops, the SS began training its own company of arctic specialists as soon as the Antarctic base was proposed.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Shooting d8, Survival d8, Throwing d6, Tracking d6
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (1)
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: Combat Reflexes
Gear: Thick coats (+1), knife (Str+d4), SMG (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, ROF 3, AP 1), 2 x potato masher grenades (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 3d6–2, Medium Burst Template)

SS-RAKETENTRUPPEN

An elite company, the *SS-Raketentruppen* serve only with the *Sonderwaffen Abteilung*. Armed with advanced rifles, clad in armored flight suits with full head protection, and wearing an experimental rocket pack strapped to their backs, the *Raketentruppen* are trained to drop from the skies into the heart of enemy installations, achieve their objective, and depart back to the heavens before an alarm can be raised.

Their bulky gear means they are encumbered, and so suffer a –1 to all Strength, Agility, and linked skill rolls. They also suffer –1 to Pace on the ground and roll a d4 running die, since their armored suits prevent swift mobility.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Piloting d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Throwing d8

Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Hindrances: Loyal, Mean

Edges: Combat Reflexes

Gear: Armored flight suit (+2), *Spannungsgewehr* or *Raketengewehr* (see below), knife (Str+d4), light pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6–1), 2 x potato masher grenades (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 3d6–2, Medium Burst Template), experimental rocket pack (Pace 100, good for 20 rounds of continual use).

Special Abilities:

* **Weakness (Rocketpack):** The rocketpack may be targeted. It is a Small target (–4), with Toughness 8 (2). A wound causes the pack to explode in a Medium Burst Template for 2d8 damage. Even if the wearer isn't killed, he cannot maintain altitude.

NEW WEAPONS

These weapons form part of Schmutzig's deadly new arsenal. Collectively, they are known as *Handvergeltungswaffen*, or "handheld vengeance weapons."

Raketengewehr: The "rocket rifle" is essentially a bulky, two-handed rifle with a revolver-like magazine. Six light armor-piercing warheads are stored in the cylindrical magazine. When fired, one warhead is launched at relatively low speeds. This helps reduce the already immense recoil. Once clear of the barrel, a secondary booster ignites, propelling the round to tremendous velocity. Its primary drawback is the slow reload time (one action per warhead).

A built-in safety feature prevents the warhead from detonating until it has traveled at least 12 yards (6"). Damage at less than 6" is 2d6 to a single target (a result of kinetic impact).

Each squad (10 men or part thereof) carries one Raketengewehr. This replaces the soldier's usual weapon. On this mission, the soldiers carry no reloads.

Spannungsgewehr: Known as the "electricity rifle," this compact weapon discharges a high-intensity beam of electrical energy over a short distance. In addition to the damage inflicted, victims must make a Vigor roll or be stunned for one round. Targets wearing any metal armor (including a helmet) suffer a –2 penalty. Stunned characters forfeit their next action card. If they have already acted in the round they are stunned, victims do not get an action card in the following round. They cannot try to unShake while stunned. This is the primary weapon of the *SS-Raketentruppen*.

Power is supplied by a large battery (3 lbs). Each soldier equipped with a *Spannungsgewehr* carries one spare battery.

YETI

Native to the Himalayas, yetis were discovered by an SS-Ahnenerbe expedition to the region in 1932. At the cost of a dozen lives, the Nazis finally captured specimens and began studying them. When Schmutzig discovered their existence, he ordered them surgically altered. Now they wander the Antarctic ice, with orders to attack and kill any human who doesn't shout out, "We serve Schmutzig unto death."

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+1, Vigor d10

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Stealth d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (1)

Special Abilities:

* **Armor +1:** Thick fur and fat.
* **Big Feet:** Yetis treat snow and ice as normal terrain, not difficult ground.
* **Claws:** Str+d6.
* **Camouflage:** Yetis add +4 to Stealth roll in snowy terrain because of their white fur.
* **Improved Frenzy:** A yeti makes two Fighting attacks each round at no penalty.
* **Size +1:** Yetis are taller than humans.

NEW WEAPONS TABLE

Type	Range	Damage	ROF	Weight	Shots	Min Str	Notes
Raketengewehr	20/40/80	3d8	1	20	6	d8	Medium Burst Template, AP 4, HW, Snapfire, requires 2 hands, see notes
Spannungsgewehr	15/30/60	2d8	1	15	10	d6	See notes

HANDOUT #1: LETTER

Dearest Vasily,

I apologize for not writing sooner, but things have taken a very bad turn of events here in Germany. The Nazis now have total control over the country, and despite what the media says, Hitler is not merely seeking to rebuild a shattered nation.

Racial tensions are high, as well. Last month I lost my post at Heidelberg University. But I cannot complain, I am one of the lucky ones.

Word has reached me through my few remaining friends of a terrible plot. I cannot say more just now, but will write again when I am somewhere safer.

Your friend,

Isaac Rosenbaum

HANDOUT #2: POSTCARD FROM PARIS



IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD!

A Christmas shopping break in New York City seems an ideal way to unwind, but the Nazis have other ideas.



An attack by flying Nazi stormtroopers leads the heroes on an exciting chase through the streets of the Big Apple as they try to disable remote-controlled bombs, to the glittering lights of Paris and the famous Les Folies-Bergères nightclub, into Nazi Germany in search of clues, and finally to the ice-covered wastes of Antarctica on the trail of a secret Nazi base.

Along the way they learn of a new and terrible weapon capable of removing cities from the globe in a fraction of a second.

In this the latest *Daring Tales of Adventure* from Triple Ace Games, can our two-fisted heroes save the world from the *Terror of the Z-Bomb*?

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DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

ISLAND OF TERROR



OFFICIAL SAVAGE WORLDS LICENSED PRODUCT

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DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

09

ISLAND OF TERROR

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ISLAND OF TERROR

Mankind has forever pushed the boundaries of his civilized lands, seeking new wonders and places in the darkness beyond the edge of the map. Colonialism, resource hunger, and the invention of the airplane have all served to make the world a smaller place. Although mankind might claim the world of 1936 has been explored, there are still many places not on any map. One such island lies off the eastern coast of South America.

Although supposedly undiscovered by man, the island has been inhabited for many thousands of years. A race of man, an early form of Mesoamerican culture, has lived on the island since ancient days. Once they were a young race, full of vigor and drive. They tamed their land, drove back the wild beasts which roamed their island home, and built great cities and roads.

But nature cannot be tamed so easily. Earthquakes and volcanic eruptions wracked the islands and sent the proud cities tumbling. Many citizens fled, using small boats to reach Central and Southern America. Others stayed, believing, erroneously, they could rebuild their great kingdom.

The survivors degenerated over many generations, retaining their ancient rituals of blood sacrifice, but forgetting their meaning. Agriculture failed, and the tribe resorted to hunting and gathering, even cannibalism. Today, what remains of this ancient culture are near-animals, savage in their demeanor, and ignorant of even basic technology.

Several years ago, a zoologist heard tale of a mysterious island, where dwelt fantastical creatures. Reports were scarce, and often tales told by shipwrecked sailors, but they all told the same story. After fruitless attempts to convince the scientific world of his discovery, the explorer was about to give up his attempt to raise an expedition, when an English nobleman philanthropist, Lord Valentine (father of Lady Amelia), agreed to provide the necessary funds.

The expedition ran into trouble the moment it reached the island. Shipwrecked in fog, the survivors hauled what gear they could salvage to shore. Knowing rescue would not come for many weeks, at best, the team set off into the interior to salvage what they could of their mission.

Several weeks ago, a Nazi expedition was dropped off on the island. The Nazis did not come in search of zoological wonders or natural resources. They sought a route to the Hollow Earth, a subterranean realm where supposedly live a race of Aryan supermen, descendants of lost Atlantis, who possesses fantastical technology.

But how did the Nazis learn of the island and its supposed link to the Hollow Earth? Previously, the Nazis "uncovered" an Aztec Codex deep in the jungles of Mexico, a Codex which spoke of the island, which told of the Aztec belief wherein their ancestors had come to the surface world from a cave, and which told of a route into the interior of the earth through volcanic shafts.

Encountering the shipwrecked expedition, the Nazis took them prisoner. Unfortunately for the Germans, the route they sought has been blocked by eruptions in the time since the Codex was penned. So for now they must be patient while they excavate through centuries of debris inside an active volcano.

The missing expedition was not abandoned by the outside world. Lord Valentine has contacted a certain band of heroes and hired them to locate and rescue the scientists. Unfortunately for our heroes, their quest is a perilous one, and one about to go very wrong from the outset.

THE CHARACTERS

This Savage Adventure contains a pulp tale based around the exploits of four pre-generated characters. The full character sheets are available for free at **www.tripleacegames.com**.

The heroes have all their leveling opportunities from Seasoned (at which they begin) into Legendary, mapped out in advance. Each published adventure in this line earns the heroes a fixed 5 Experience Points, guaranteeing them an advance every mission. All the players need

do is tick the appropriate box and start making use of the new upgrade.

Characters: 65 XP.

The GM also needs 20 marker stones (with 5 of a different color), and the pulp setting rules from the TAG website.

ACT 1: THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT

The first two scenes begin *in media res*. In the first, set a few years ago, the characters are battling Nazi agents in the Mexican jungle. The second, which marks the start of the adventure proper, sees our heroes already on their way to locate a missing expedition.

SCENE 1: FLASHBACK: MEXICAN JUNGLE

This scene is a flashback and takes place roughly six month ago. For this scene, the players use their characters as they were at 50 XP (or 15 XP less from whatever they are when you run this two-fisted tale). Once Scene 2 begins, they revert to their current XP level.

Two months hard work digging up a lost Aztec shrine, and your prize, an Aztec Codex, has been stolen by Nazis! After escaping the deathtrap set by their leader, SS-Colonel Stampfer, you found your jeep and gave chase. Now you're bouncing through the jungle at breakneck speed, right on the tail of the Nazi convoy.

The Nazi vehicles are in convoy, each on its own Range Increment. In order, from rear to front, there are three trucks and a kübelwagen. The characters begin two Range Increments behind the truck at the end of the convoy. Each Range Increment equates to 5".

No Obstacle rules are in use. The number of Nazis present and the fact that Stampfer begins five Range Increments ahead already makes it hard for the characters.

Each Nazi vehicle draws it own action card. Stampfer's vehicle and its occupant (just a driver) use the villain's action card. The vehicles count as Unstable Platforms, and the Nazis don't have the Rock and Roll Edge, either.

Should the heroes reach the same Range Increment as a truck, the Nazi driver attempts one of two maneuvers, depending on the color of his action card. If it's red or a Joker, he tries a Parallel maneuver. With success, half the passengers try to leap over onto the jeep each round the maneuver is maintained. Once aboard the jeep, the Nazis use their fists and knives. However, due to the cramped conditions, *all* combatants suffer a –1 penalty to Fighting rolls. On a black action card, he tries a Force maneuver, attempting to nudge the character's jeep into a tree or rock (hard Obstacle).

Firing at vehicles further up the line is possible, but because the vehicles are all bouncing around and weaving, they have Cover. Firing "through" one vehicle gives Light Cover, two vehicles Medium Cover, and all three is treated as Heavy Cover. Missed shots may hit interposing vehicles, but they cause only cinematic damage (i.e. it has no game effect).

Whatever happens, Stampfer *must* escape with the Codex. He's the villain of the piece, and will be encountered again later. Ideally he flees the scene, but if his vehicle is Wrecked, it might plunge over a ravine into a mist-shrouded valley below. The characters hear a crunch and, maybe, see a fireball illuminating the mist from below. Should they investigate (which requires a lengthy climb), Stampfer is nowhere to be found.

- **SS-Colonel Stampfer:** See page 17.
- **Nazi Drivers (1 per vehicle):** As Nazi soldiers (page 18).
- **Nazi Soldiers (6 per truck):** See page 18. Half armed with SMGs and half with rifles.

TRICKS IN CHASES

In the normal Chase rules, drivers perform Tricks against rival drivers by using the Distraction maneuver. Such maneuvers could include switching on the signal lights to fool an enemy into thinking you're turning, cutting in front of him to force him to brake hard, or even just gently bumping a vehicle (a Force is more, well, forceful).

Passengers can also perform Tricks against enemy drivers, though in order to do so their vehicle must normally be Parallel to the enemy or at least ahead by one Range Increment. (There are instances when a Trick can be done at range, such as using a camera flash to blind a driver.) Tricks against passengers work as normal.

The nature of Chase Tricks can vary immensely. Throwing something onto (paint or oil) or through (a brick) the windshield would be a Trick, since the aim is to distract the driver, not kill him. Likewise, in an open top chase through a jungle, a passenger could grab a snake from an overhanging tree and throw it at his foe. If the snake is venomous, this isn't really a Trick—it's a Throwing roll to launch a deadly object.

Regardless of the type of Trick, stunts used against enemy drivers use an appropriate Trait against the victim's Driving, and the results are handled by the Distract maneuver. As with Tricks, effects are not cumulative—you can't suffer from more than one distraction at a time.

TRUCK (3)

Acc/Top Speed: 10/25; **Toughness:** 12 (1); **Crew:** 1+20 (only 6 aboard each)

KÜBELWAGEN

Acc/Top Speed: 10/40; **Toughness**: 7 (1); **Crew**: 1+3

JEEP

Acc/Top Speed: 10/40; **Toughness:** 7 (1); **Crew**: 2+3

SCENE 2: BIRD STRIKE

If you're not using our pre-generated characters, change the reference to Lord Valentine to either a Noble's father, or a wealthy businessman or organization somehow related to one of the characters. The link doesn't have to be familial, but it should provide a strong enough connection to have the heroes undertake the rescue mission.

You were hired by Lord Valentine a week ago to locate a missing zoological expedition he had funded. The small team of scientists and guides had departed months ago, for a remote island off the South American coast, but no word has been heard from them in weeks.

Now your seaplane is buzzing over the ocean. At least you assume it's the ocean. Thick fog and strong winds have made visual navigation tricky, and the compass has begun behaving erratically.

The plane suddenly shakes violently. Warning lights flash red across the control panel. Both engines have stopped! The mist thins enough for you to see the propellers—they're buckled and bent! The plane's nose begins to tip forward!

CRASH! The windshield shatters into shards as something smashes through. For a second you think it's a bird strike, but this is no ordinary bird! Protruding through the glass is an enormous, elongated beak, full of sharp teeth. The creature is snapping at you as you wrestle to control the plummeting aircraft!

Deal action cards. Keep dealing action cards until the end of the 5th round, even if the creature, a pteranodon, is killed.

The seaplane has flown into a flock of pteranodons! As well as wrecking the engine, there's now a very angry prehistoric bird with its head wedged in the cockpit. It's close enough to make a Fighting attack against the pilot and co-pilot (or whoever is filling the second seat), but it can't move. When slain, the bird slides out through the glass and drops into the ocean.

The cockpit is cramped and not designed for staging fights. A maximum of two characters can make Fighting rolls against the pteranodon, and any shots fired from passengers outside the cabin use the Innocent Bystanders rule.

The howling wind tearing through the cockpit and driving rain give the heroes a –1 penalty to all Trait rolls during the fight—including Piloting rolls. Make sure you include these background details in your descriptions.

In true pulp fashion, the plane is already skimming low over the ocean as the combat begins. The fog is thinner here, but obstacles still loom suddenly out of the gloom, giving the pilot very little time to react. On the rounds indicated below, the plane encounters an obstacle. The pilot must make a Piloting roll on his action, modified further as per the description, or hit something. For each failed roll, the plane takes an automatic wound.

Round 2: Towering columns of jagged rock rise from the turbulent ocean. The Piloting roll is made at –1. Each character with a view out the front can make a Notice roll at –2 as a free action. With success, they spot one of the columns is actually a badly eroded statue on a man in a feathered headdress. The glimpse is extremely brief, too short to discern any details.

Round 3: Clearing the columns, the seaplane roars toward a natural rock arch. It's just wide enough to fit through, and without power there's no hope of going over or around it! The Piloting roll is made at –2.

Round 4: Screaming through the arch, the seaplane skims over a graveyard of partially submerged ships, their hulls cracked open by the rocks. Some are from the golden days of sail, while others are more recent.

Each character with a view out the front can make a Notice roll at –2 as a free action. With success, they spot a very recent ship bearing the name *Paradise Found*. That was the ship used by the missing expedition.

Round 5: The plane is about to hit the ocean, and there's very little the pilot can do to prevent it. Unfortunately, the approach is littered with jagged rocks. The Piloting roll is made at –2. With success, the pilot lifts the nose just long enough for the pontoons scrape over the rocks, allowing the plane to bump down in clear water.

Should the plane take its fourth wound during this round, it ditches into the ocean at a steep angle. Water begins flooding in through the smashed window. In the next section, the characters have very little time to grab supplies.

Pteranodon (1): See page 18.

ABANDON SHIP

The seaplane won't be flying again. Even if it avoided taking any wounds, the collision with the pteranodons has wrecked the engines. Among the stores are two inflatable rafts, each capable of holding two people and a small amount of provisions.

The plane is carrying tents, rope, picks and shovels, cooking gear, ration packs, fresh water, medical supplies, ammunition, and such like. If the plane isn't Wrecked, the heroes have plentiful time to gather supplies and load them into the rafts. Should it have taken four wounds, each character has the opportunity to grab just a single item of supplies (such as rope *or* rations *or* tents) before the plane sinks beneath the waves.

SCENE 3: THE EARTH GOD TREMBLES

The island rises nearly vertically from the sea, severely limiting the places the characters can make shore. After

battling with the waves and wind, the rafts finally sail into a sheltered cave. At the back of the cave are a thin beach of black sand and a tunnel, which rises into the island's interior.

While crossing the sand, the characters notice a boot print. A Tracking roll at –2 reveals the print is at least a week old. On a raise, the character deduces it was probably made over a month ago. Although the characters have no way of telling, the print was left behind by a Nazi expedition, which set ashore here.

PAVED ROAD

The tunnel emerges onto a paved road, lining the bottom of a steep-sided canyon. The canyon runs north south. The stones are cracked and weed-choked and impossible to date. Looking south, the road follows a bend in the canyon and quickly passes out of sight.

North, the road continues in an unbroken line for several miles before disappearing into the mist, which is less thick inland. On the northern horizon, jutting from the mist, can be seen the tops of distant mountains, and beyond them the faint outline of a smoking volcano.

If the party heads south, the road abruptly ends after several miles at the edge of the ocean, hundreds of feet above the crashing waves and jagged rocks. The island once continued much further out to sea, but earthquakes collapsed large portions in antiquity.

Heading north, the adventurers come across several tall statues, each depicting men in feathered headdresses. A successful Common Knowledge roll at –2, or Knowledge (History) roll, identifies them as having similarities to Mesoamerican imagery, but they cannot be identified as belonging to a specific culture. A raise tentatively dates them to at least 1,000 years ago, but they could be much older.

After a mile along the northern road, the ground begins to tremble. An earthquake has struck the island! Small rocks begin to clatter down the canyon walls, onto the paving, followed soon after by larger rocks. Then the canyon walls begin to collapse, sending thousands of tons of rock down into the floor!

This scene uses a variant of the Chase rules and our alternate Obstacles rules. Each hero is dealt an action card and makes an Agility roll, as normal. The collapsing canyon walls don't have any skill—the danger they present is covered through the Obstacles. The earthquake continues until the last character escapes the canyon (see below).

The Chase has a fixed end. After passing beyond the 10th marker stone, the characters escape the canyon. Continue with Scene 4.

OBSTACLES

Certain Obstacles leave a character trapped or hanging until he makes a Strength roll. Fellow adventurers on the same Range Increment can aid their comrade through a Cooperative roll. This requires the helper to use an action and either be on Hold or act after his compatriot.

Deuce (–4) Cascade of Boulders: A veritable avalanche sweeps down the canyon walls. A failed roll inflicts 4d6 damage (as an Extra) *and* knocks the hero back one Range Increment.

Three (–2) Huge Boulder: A massive stone threatens to crush the character. If he fails his Agility roll, he suffers 4d6 damage (from an Extra).

Four (–2) Landslide: Part of the canyon wall slides



down. On a failed roll, the hero is swept sideways. He suffers 3d6 damage (from an Extra) and his next Agility roll is made at –2, as he must regain his footing.

Five (–2) Fallen Tree: A large tree crashes down onto the canyon floor. A failure indicates the character is caught up in the branches. He suffers 2d6 damage (from an Extra). Each round thereafter, he must make a Strength roll to free himself from the tangled foliage. On the round after this succeeds, he must make an Agility roll to continue running. A character can take a multi-action penalty (hoping to escape and run in the same round).

Six (–2) Uplifted Stones: The quake buckles the paving slabs, which rise suddenly into the air beneath the hero's feet. A failed Agility roll sends the character flying backward, as a huge stone flips him off his feet. He loses one Range Increment.

Seven (–2) Crack: A section of road collapses, leaving a wide gap. The hero can either go around it or leap over it. The former requires an Agility roll at –2. Failure means the character simply failed to make any ground, due to the diversion.

Jumping the gap requires a Strength roll (no penalty), which replaces the hero's Agility roll this round. A failure leaves the character dangling by his fingertips on the far side of the chasm. Each round thereafter, he must make a Strength roll to pull himself onto the canyon floor. On the round after this succeeds, he must make an Agility roll to continue running. A character can take a multi-action penalty (hoping to escape and run in the same round).

Eight (–2) Statue: A colossal statue smashes onto the floor. A failed roll indicates the character suffers 3d6 damage (from an Extra).

Nine (–1) Crazy Paving: The paving stones ahead have buckled, creating treacherous terrain. On a failed roll, the character has slipped and fallen. His next Agility roll is made at –2, due to time wasted regaining his footing.

Ten (–1) Pebbles: A shower of stones threatens to pebbledash the adventurer. On a failed Agility roll, he suffers 2d6 damage (from an Extra).

Jack (–1) Steam Vent: The island is riddled with subterranean volcanic pockets. The earthquake creates a rupture, which sends a jet of steam to the surface. On a failed roll, the character suffers 3d6 damage (as an Extra) from scalding.

Queen (–1) Skeleton: A collection of bones slides off the plateau above the canyon. On a failed roll, the hero is struck by one and suffers 3d6 damage (as an Extra). If the hero wishes to study the bones, he may either make a Notice roll on the same round he runs (and so suffer a multi action penalty) or delay one round, in which case he makes a Notice roll at no penalty.

Success while studying the bones indicates the beast would be many times larger than an elephant, and, judging by its teeth, was an herbivore.

King (0) Boulder Blockage: Huge boulders dot the road ahead, forcing the character to weave between them. A failed roll simply indicates the hero failed to make any ground due to having to run around and between the stones.

Ace (0) Small Stones: A handful of small stones bounce down the canyon walls. On a failed Agility roll, the character suffers 2d6 damage (from an Extra).

SCENE 4: MAKING CAMP

After escaping the collapsing canyon, the characters journey on along the road for another few miles. Eventually, they find themselves in a ruined plaza. The road continues north across the other side of the plaza, but also stretches away to the east and west. In the center of the plaza is a crumbling ruin, its walls tumbled in places. In all directions, the road carries on along the canyon floor.

Night falls quickly at this latitude, and by the time the heroes reach this point, the sun is already low in the sky. Whether or not the characters choose to set up camp here is left to them to decide. No matter where they stop for the night, they hear the faint sound of drumming in the far distance. A Notice roll at –4 is required to determine the direction—the drums are somewhere to the north, but many miles away.

The drums are being beaten by the degenerate natives who inhabit the island. Regressed almost to an animal-like existence, they continue a debased form of their old religion. Scouts spotted the characters arrival and have reported back to the tribe. Eager to please their gods, and savor some fresh meat, the natives are sending out search parties to scour the ancient road, the most likely route of any interlopers.

In the middle of the night, a small group of savages locates the heroes' camp and launches an attack. The description below assumes the camp has been erected in or around the plaza. The GM must adjudicate the battlefield if the party chose to camp elsewhere.

THE APPROACH

The players should decide the guard roster for the night. There are ten hours of darkness this time of year. After the long flight and the troubled landing, the characters are far from fully rested. Guards working in two-hour shifts don't suffer any penalties. Over this time, the sentry must make a Vigor roll each hour. With success he is considered active. On a failure, he is treated as being inactive. He isn't asleep, he's just not very alert.

The savages attack five hours after dark. The savages approach along the east, north, and west roads. Have each party of warriors make a Group Stealth roll. If actually detected (noted by shouts of alarm or weapon fire), the thugs launch their attack, beginning 12" along the roads from where they join the plaza.

Should all the groups pass their Stealth roll, they must make another roll when they reach 5" from *any* character (even a sleeping one inside the building). This is always opposed by the sentry's Notice. With all par-

ties gaining success, the degenerates gain Surprise. On a failure by any group, the guard spots them and can raise the alarm.

Sleeping characters require one action to awaken after a warning shout is given (or gunfire heard), and another action to throw off their covers and get to their feet. Drawing or readying a weapon requires yet another action.

THE ATTACK

The plaza is a square, measuring 8" to a side. In the center, filling an area 3" by 3" is the ruined structure. The building has a 1" wide hole in each of the walls on the south, east, and north faces. The roads leading to the plaza are 2" high, and extend from the center of the plaza's four edges toward the cardinal points. Visibility is Dim (–1), due to a full moon.

Initially, the tribesmen aren't out to butcher the heroes. They want fresh meat for their gods and their stomachs, so they'll always try to grapple a foe using the Ganging Up rules and then beat him with the butts of their weapons (nonlethal damage, but no penalty to the attack roll).

When reduced to half their starting number, they decide to give up on catching their prey alive and opt to use lethal force. Once down to a quarter their initial strength, the survivors turn and flee as fast as they can.

Two of the fallen tribesmen carry items manufactured in the outside world. One wears a belt of 9mm rounds, while another has a pair of silver SS runes woven into his hair.

When the Nazis arrived and made their way inland, the tribesmen attacked. Although driven off by the intruders' advanced weapons, they did manage to take several prisoners. Most of these have since been sacrificed and eaten (the natives are careful not to kill the few visitors to their island too quickly, as meat is a precious commodity).

In the event the group is overpowered, the tribesmen bind them with rope woven from human hair. The characters have several chances to escape, as the events in Act 2 still occur as written. The tribesmen avoid the river (see below), because they know about the plesiosaur. They take the heroes up onto the plateau via a well-concealed set of steps, and then along the top, and finally down past the waterfall via another set of ancient stairs. This brings the party straight to Scene 2 below.

Degenerate Tribesmen (3 per hero): See page 17.

ACT 2: MONSTER ISLAND

SCENE 1: RIVER OF BLOOD

The east and west roads from the plaza end suddenly atop cliffs. Only the north road continues deeper into the island.

The road comes to an abrupt halt at the banks of a wide, foaming river. A handful of short, stone pillars rise from the water, perhaps once supports for a now-vanished wharf. Upstream, the water cascades vertically from atop the canyon walls. Across the other side, the steep canyon walls rise upward to whatever lies above.

Groups who brought their inflatable rafts with them can use them to paddle downstream. Otherwise, the party has to construct a raft. Building a raft requires a Survival roll, an axe or similar tool, and several hours of hard work. With success, the raft floats and handles adequately. A raise produces a fine and easily maneuverable vessel. A paddler adds +1 to his Strength rolls (see below). With failure, the raft is serviceable, but clumsy. Strength rolls to propel the craft are at –1.

Setting out onto the water, the raft is gently carried downstream. The river runs between high-sided canyon walls. Trees and bushes protrude from the walls at precarious angles. Characters who want to fish can make a Survival roll. Success catches them enough fish to feed the party for a day, and a raise enough food for two days.

After several miles, the river bends round to the right, then sharply left. As the raft clears the final corner, the current picks up. Ahead, the characters can see a waterfall!

Deal action cards.

The section of river is cone-shaped. The river is 3" and the waterfall 8" wide. The distance between the river and the sudden drop is 19". The last 3" of each bank before the waterfall are relatively low ground, flat enough to beach the raft and clamber ashore.

Propelling the raft requires a Strength roll. Multiple rowers can paddle using the Cooperative Strength rules. Each success and raise moves the raft 1", to a maximum of 4". Heroes who end up in the water must make Swimming rolls each round to avoid taking a level of Fatigue from the strenuous effort. Movement in the current is half its normal rate.

Deal the river an action card as well. On its go, it automatically draws the raft and anything in the water 2" closer to the *center* of the waterfall.

Should the raft go over the edge, everyone aboard suffers 4d6 damage (from an Extra) as they hit the water at the bottom. The raft is wrecked, and half the supplies the party was carrying are lost or damaged beyond repair. Items carried on a character's person don't suffer this fate, unless the GM is feeling exceptionally cruel.

The strong current and sudden drop are not the only dangers facing the heroes. A species of freshwater plesiosaur lives in the river. Deal it an action card, as well. The creature begins submerged, then attacks using its Ambush Special Ability. It is not immune to the current, and suffers forced movement as above.

Parties reaching the bank are safe from the plesiosaur so long as they stay more than 1" from the water's edge.

EXPLORING THE PLATEAU

As written, the adventure assumes reaching the plateau is impossible. This is done to keep the action flowing and cut down on extraneous pages. However, once it's in your hands, the adventure can be used how you wish. Groups wishing to take time out to explore the plateau should certainly not be thwarted.

The plateau is rugged terrain covered in dense undergrowth. Dozens of ruins can be found here, as can numerous dinosaurs and other ferocious beasts (like giant spiders and centipedes).

Canyons, with or without paved roads at the bottom, break up the landscape. Old bridges or gigantic fallen trees may provide routes across these. A river, the one the heroes join in Act 2, Scene 1, rises at several points on the hills and flows northward.

Searching around in the undergrowth, the characters locate a set of stairs carved into the canyon wall. These wind down the cliff, parallel to the waterfall, and can be found on both banks.

Plesiosaur: See page 18.

SCENE 2: STAMPEDE!

Whether the characters climb down or take the quick way, they find themselves on the floor of a wide valley. Ahead can be seen mountains, and beyond them the cone of a smoking volcano. A thin, glowing, red line indicates a recent lava flow. A hero using binoculars to survey the mountain range spies a stepped pyramid, similar in design to those in Mesoamerica, halfway up the range.

The river flows round to the right, eventually ending at the edge of the island, where it cascades into the sea. Heading off from the waterfall is another paved road, again weathered and overgrown. It stretches away into the jungle, directly toward the mountains.

Since the river ends, the characters must eventually head off into the jungle. The road is the quickest route through the dense vegetation. It doesn't matter if the characters decide to follow the river, and then cut through the jungle once they realize it's a dead end—they find another road sooner or later.

Progress along the road is swift, even with the encroaching jungle blocking part of the route. The ground begins to judder again, and thick, black smoke belches from the distant volcano. From behind you, you hear the sounds of crashing and breaking trees. The earthquake has stopped, but the noise continues to draw closer. Peering into the vegetation, you can see distant trees toppling over. Whatever it causing the disturbance, it's heading your way!

The earthquake has spooked a herd of triceratops, and they're stampeding right toward the party!

This scene is run as a Chase, but the marker track is fixed at 10 markers (see below). Characters who start running immediately begin three Range Increments ahead of the panicked dinosaurs. Those who wait around to identify the source of the commotion end up just one Range Increment ahead of the herd!

Each Range Increment equates to 5". Since humans have a lower base Range Increment, the characters suffer a –1 penalty to their Agility rolls. The dinosaurs are faster then the adventurers, so they get a +1 bonus.

The triceratopses don't have stats—they're a mobile hazard to outrun, not something the party can kill. Both sides use Agility as their skill (d8 for the dinosaurs). The herd is large, and, while treated as a single entity, extends over two adjacent Range Increments.

If the dinosaurs get within one Range Increment of the heroes, they always try a Force maneuver. This is a *free* action, so they also make an Agility roll to increase their distance as normal. This isn't a conscious attack, but instead represents the dinosaurs accidentally trampling the unfortunate humans, head butting them out of the way, or swiping them with their short but powerful tails. Although not technically an area effect attack, the herd is treated as such, so heroes with Dodge and Improved Dodge receive appropriate bonuses. Characters who fail the opposed Agility roll suffer 4d6 damage (from an Extra).

The Chase takes place along the paved road—the jungle is too thick to move through at any speed (and there are stampeding dinosaurs either side of the road). However, markers 9 and 10 represent an old stone bridge, which spans a gorge.

Millennia old and in poor condition, the bridge is exceptionally fragile. While it can support the heroes' weight, it begins to collapse if the herd thunders over it. The characters don't know it, but allowing the herd to overtake them in the Chase is a bad idea. Passing beyond the 10th marker means the hero has successfully escaped the rampaging herd.

7th & 8th Markers: When the herd reaches these markers, the vibrations start stones falling from the bridge. Characters on the bridge suffer a –1 penalty to their Agility rolls. A critical failure or any roll of 1 or less means the ground beneath the hero has collapsed, leaving him dangling over the precipice.

Next round, he must make a Strength roll to drag himself onto the remainder of the bridge. With success, he may begin running on the following round. Heroes may take a multi-action penalty to haul themselves upright and run on the same round.

9th Marker: As above, except the penalty increases to –2.

10th Marker: When the herd reaches the 10th marker, the entire structure collapses. The triceratopses aren't the smartest of creatures, and they have difficulty stopping suddenly. As such, they keep going over the bridge, plummeting to their deaths on the rocks below.

Characters on the 9th marker when the bridge collapses may make an immediate Agility roll as a free action to leap back onto the road. Those on the 10th marker can make the roll to leap from the bridge onto the ground on the far side. Failure causes the character to fall. He takes 10d6 damage (from an Extra) on impact.

Should the herd collapse the bridge before all the characters are across, the party now has to devise a way to span the gap. The gorge is 10" across and 20" deep. There are no other crossings. Any reasonable plan to bridge the gorge should be allowed to succeed.

SCENE 3: BIG AND HUNGRY!

The bridge collapses under the weight of the stampeding dinosaurs, sending hundreds of tons of rock, flesh, and bone crashing into the gorge. Breathing a sigh of relief, you realize you are standing on the edge of a large open space, dotted with tall stone pillars. Creepers stretch up and around the columns, like gigantic snakes trying to crush the life from their prey. Aside from a gap to the north, where the road continues northward, the courtyard is surrounded by dense jungle.

Give the heroes a moment or two to explore, and then have them make Notice rolls. Those who fail are caught by Surprise as a Tyrannosaurs Rex, drawn here by the noise of the triceratops, crashes through the surrounding undergrowth! It begins halfway along the eastern edge of the plaza.

The plaza measures 13" by 13". The columns form a regular pattern. Place a marker to represent a column in the southeast corner. Then place other columns along the southern edge every third square. Moving northward, leave a gap of 1", and then repeat the pattern. The road (2" wide) continues northward from the center of the northern edge of the plaza.

If a foe is adjacent to a pillar, the T. rex uses a variant of the Innocent Bystander rule when making a Fighting roll. A roll of 1 indicates the beast's head has smashed against the pillar, bringing it crashing down. The column topples away from the direction of the attack. Place a Small Burst Template adjacent to the base of the pillar. Characters beneath this must make an Agility roll at –2 or suffer 3d6 damage (from an Extra) and be pinned.

Pinned characters must make a Strength roll, as an action, to free themselves. Adjacent comrades can aid through a Cooperative roll, but this requires an action and the helper to be on Hold.

The area beneath the template is treated as difficult ground for the remainder of the scene.

Tyrannosaurus Rex: See page 18.

SCENE 4: THE RUINED CAMP

Continuing northward, the party can now clearly see the mountains, the volcano, and the stepped pyramid. From this distance, the similarities to the ruins of Mesoamerica are clear. However, the structure is vast, many times larger than those uncovered in Mexico.

As the sun sinks toward the horizon, the party discovers a crushed metal canteen lying in the road. Just off to the west are clear signs that something big (the Tyrannosaurus) has plowed through the undergrowth, leaving a wide trail. Shreds of paper can be seen trampled into the mud.

Following the trail of debris brings the explorers to a small clearing. Shredded tents, broken rifles, smashed crates, and crushed tins appear to indicate a fight took place here, possibly with a dinosaur. Indeed, a Tracking roll made in the vicinity reveals a colossal footprint exactly matching that of the T. rex. On a raise, the tracker also detects faint boot prints. These match the ones found on the beach.

A Notice roll made while exploring the outside of the ruined camp reveals spent cartridges. Any hero with military or extensive knowledge of guns can make a Common Knowledge roll to identify these as a mixture of American and German casings. Other heroes roll at –2.

In truth, the T. rex got here second, and only recently. The devastation it caused was out of curiosity. Nazis discovered the expedition and, after a brief firefight, took the survivors prisoner.

Aside from a few personal effects, there is only one item of interest within the smashed tents—the expedition diary. Most of it is fairly routine, though it does make mention of the shipwreck and the group encountering dinosaurs. The last diary entry is six weeks ago. It makes mention of setting up a base camp and plans to investigate the ruined temple. Toward the back are extensive copes of pictographs. These allow the group to decipher the glyphs discovered later in the adventure, if no one can read any Mesoamerican languages (such as Aztec).

HUNTING THE LOCALS

What happens if the heroes want to track down the degenerate savages' camp and get some payback? First, the heroes have to locate the settlement. This should require at least one Tracking roll. Second, the GM needs to create a small settlement of rundown shacks inhabited by men, women, and children.

The reason wiping out the savages isn't included in the adventure is two-fold.

First, the degenerates aren't maliciously evil. They do what they do because of circumstances. As with the Aztecs, their practice of human sacrifice is driven by ancient beliefs that without these their society would fail.

Second, it adds nothing to the adventure, as written. They have no technology to steal, only a rudimentary language, and can reveal nothing about their ancestry.

ACT 3: THE LOST CITY

Night quickly falls. Whether the characters choose to stay at the ruined camp or push onward is left for them to decide. Nothing attacks the camp during the early evening.

SCENE 1: TEMPLE OF THE MOON

An hour or so after sunset, the sound of drumming can be heard echoing across the valley. Unlike the previous night, the thumps are much clearer, and closer. A sentry soon notices flickering lights atop the distant pyramid. With binoculars, he can just make out a few figures, though they are too indistinct for a detailed study.

Irate at their failure to capture the heroes, the tribesmen are performing a ceremony to their dark and bloodthirsty gods. It's also an excuse for them to eat their last Nazi prisoner. If the characters don't go to investigate (Curious heroes have little option), the rest of this scene can be ignored. The tribesmen don't live in the temple, and by the time an investigation is launched in daylight they have returned to their distant homes.

Reaching the foot of the mountains takes two hours by road (and much longer cutting through the jungle). The paved trail winds up the mountain, and eventually ends at the base of the stepped pyramid. As the group approaches, it becomes readily apparent there are a dozen or so figures dancing on the top platform.

The darkness and sounds of drums covers the characters approach up the stepped pyramid, allowing them to reach the penultimate tier undetected. From here, they have a clear view of what is happening.

Atop the pyramid, the degenerate savages are dancing frantically, throwing their arms in the air, and wailing in their debased language. Further back, where the platform joins the mountain, is a small building. A figure wearing a feathered headdress steps out, brandishing a metal knife.

The dancers stop their motion and drop to their knees, producing a low droning sound as they do so. Two tribesmen emerge from the dark doorway, dragging a blond haired captive between them. From his uniform, it's clear he's a German soldier.

The warriors haul the prisoner in front of the feathered man, forcing him to his knees. The knife rises, glinting in the moonlight…

If the heroes don't act immediately, the knife slashes down, killing the captive instantly. Should they elect to reveal themselves, they automatically have one free round to act. Since all actions are deemed simultaneous (despite being broken into distinct phases by the action cards), all the explorers have the Drop on their first attack.

On the second round, the shaman slays the prisoner, unless the witchdoctor is killed first. No other tribesman will harm the captive, for to do so, they believe, will offend the gods.

The top platform is 12" to a side. The building standing at the back of the platform is 2" wide and 1" deep. A dark recess leads into the mountain. Standing in each corner is a tarnished, bronze brazier, filled with burning bundles of grass. Although the natives don't know how to make fire, they have the brains to push sticks into lava pools deep in the jungle and bring fire to the temple.

The braziers are treated as Innocent Bystanders, but the rule applies to Fighting rolls as well. They can also be deliberately targeted. They have Toughness 8, or can be toppled with a Strength roll. Place a Small Burst Template adjacent to the brazier in the direction it is pushed or away from the direction of an attack. Everything under the template suffers 2d6 damage from an Extra. The flames, which are not very intense, then die out into pale, glowing embers.

With all four braziers lit, the lighting is good and gives no penalties. If one is toppled, the lighting conditions immediately become Dim (–1). The loss of two or three makes things Dark (–2). When the last one is extinguished, the ambient lighting is Pitch Darkness (–4).

Degenerate Tribesmen (3 per hero): See page 17.

THE PRISONER

If rescued, the captive reveals his name is Hans Oglemann, a Bavarian private in the SS. After watching his friends have their hearts ripped out and flesh eaten raw, he doesn't care much who the characters are—he just wants to leave the island. Interaction with him in this scene is handled through a set of likely questions and Hans' answers, as detailed below.

Q: What are you doing here?

A: *"Those untermenschen ambushed us in the jungle. They dragged several of us away in the night. I am the last survivor."*

Q: No, what are you doing on the island?

A: *"Exploring. SS-Colonel Stampfer brought us to search for an entrance to the Hollow Earth."*

Q: How many of you are there?

A: *"We started with 36—Colonel Stampfer, five Pioneers (German military engineers), and 30 soldiers. At least two Pioneers and two soldiers were taken by the untermenschen. Others may have been killed since I was taken captive."*

Q: How long have you been on the island?

A: *"What is the date today? Really? I've lost track of time. We've been here six weeks now."*

Q: What is the Hollow Earth?

A: *"I am not entirely sure. The colonel does not discuss things openly with enlisted men. From what I could work out, it is a subterranean realm inhabited by supermen. I heard the colonel say they were scions of Atlantis."*

Q: What does he want with these supermen?

A: *"I don't know, something about their technology. He mentioned power crystals, but I have no idea what that means."*

Q: Where is Colonel Stampfer now?

A: *"The plan was to reach the volcano. The colonel has an old book of pictures he uncovered in Mexico, which tell of a route through to the Hollow Earth. I don't know how to reach the volcano. I was captured before the party reached this pyramid."*

Q: What happened to the other prisoners?

A: *"They were sacrificed, and then, then…those untermenschen ate them!"*

Q: Where is the natives' camp?

A: *"Somewhere in the jungle. I didn't take the time to study the route."*

Hans Oglemann: As Nazi soldier (page 18), but unarmed.



SCENE 2: CLICK-CLICK-CLICK

The only way into the temple is through the small building. Stairs wind down, eventually ending in a large chamber, decorated in ancient pictograms. A single corridor leads off from the chamber in the direction of the volcano.

Deciphering the pictographs requires either knowledge of the Aztec language or the diary from page 9. In either case, a Common Knowledge is required (the language is pseudo-Aztec and the pictogram images in the book are far from complete).

With success, the character deduces the builders called themselves the Chicomoztoci, or "Those who dwelt in the place of seven caves." They were a highly advanced culture, favoring worship of the moon god. A raise reveals they left their homeland, Chicomoztoc, many millennia ago, but always retained a link with the forebearers through tunnels, which lead into the heart of the earth.

One set of pictograms is particularly noteworthy. Decorating the borders of the exit tunnel, they warn of the "dawn plunderers of the Valley of the Moon," which lie beyond the mountains. There are no specific drawings of a "dawn plunderer," just images of teeth and long, curved claws.

THE CHAMBER OF THE MOON

The tunnel runs dead straight for several miles, before ending in a large chamber. Scattered on the floor are a large number of spent German shell casings. Sections of the floor and walls appear freshly scorched.

Wall Markings: Pictograms along the walls detail the Chicomoztoci worshipping the various phases of the moon. It is clear each phase had a special meaning in their lives, though the specifics cannot be discerned.

Stone Heads: Carved into each of the side walls are four, life-sized stone heads. Above them is a pictogram for one of the eight phases of the moon. The waxing quarter, waxing half, waxing three-quarters, and full are represented on the west wall, and the waning three-quarters, waning half, waning quarter, and new moon on the east wall. In days of yore, citizens would consult these heads, which were regarded as divine oracles, on the appropriate phase of the moon.

Circular Door: A large circular door stands in the opposite wall. Attached to the door are three large, stone discs, set one above the other. To the right of each one is a triangular wedge of silvery metal, which acts as a pointer. The metal is as hard as steel, but has a reddish sheen.

The discs are a variant of the Aztec calendar. The lowest disc, the largest, is engraved with the name of the 20 days of the ancient calendar. Above this is a smaller disc, marked with the numbers 1 to 13. The topmost disc, the smallest, is engraved with the eight phases of the moon.

The discs functions as a combination lock. To open the door, the wheels must be turned so the pointers

AZTEC CALENDAR

The Aztec calendar, and indeed the Mayan one as well, is based on the Chicomoztoci one, though it does not use lunar symbols as a third date marker. The 20 day signs are, in order, crocodile, wind, house, lizard, serpent, death, deer, rabbit, water, dog, monkey, grass, reed, jaguar, eagle, vulture, earthquake, flint knife, rain, and flower.

The calendar progressed with the day number and sign incrementing one step each day. For instance, the cycle begins on 1 Crocodile. The next day, Wind, is not 1 Wind, but 2 Wind. Next come 3 House, 4 Lizard, and so on. The numbers eventually return to the start, but the day signs do not. Thus, the calendar will reach 1 Jaguar on the ninth day.

In order for a full cycle to be completed and return to 1 Crocodile, 260 days must elapse (13 numbers x 20 signs).

indicate the current day in the ancient calendar and the exact phase of the moon (full). The system can be tried at random, but there are 2080 possible combinations to try.

If the characters rescued Oglemann, they have a clue about the correct combination. Assuming the Nazis passed this way, they did so 6 weeks ago. They must have set the lock correctly for that day. The heroes know it is the last night of the full moon, so that tumbler can easily be set right.

Due to the motion of the Aztec calendar (see the sidebar on page 12), one cannot simply rotate the day signs or numbers—both must be moved together for each day that passes. A character with Knowledge (History) can make a roll to remember this fact. Other heroes make Common Knowledge rolls at –2. It isn't important, *per se*, but it allows the heroes to jump straight to the correct date. Without this knowledge, they likely increment one wheel or the other, not both simultaneously, which means finding the right combination is a matter of luck.

Once any disc is turned a single position, proceed to the next section (**Bugs, I Hate Bugs**). After handling that section, the characters can continue their exploration of this chamber.

BUGS, I HATE BUGS

The first wheel turned does so with a loud clunk. As it thumps into its new position, hundreds of long, black centipedes begin emerging from the mouths in the carved heads. These quickly form into a number of Medium Burst Template-sized swarms and begin moving toward the heroes.

At the start of the 2nd round, another creature joins the fray. Deal it an action card as normal. When the card is called, the paving slabs in the center of the floor bulge upward. Slithering through is a monstrous centipede, over 18' long. Have all the characters make Notice rolls as a free action. The centipede gains +2 to attack and damage on its first attack against those who fail.

Oglemann should become a casualty very quickly. He doesn't make any attacks, being far too scared for such reasoned behavior.

The Nazis encountered the swarms, but not the mother. Dozens of rounds of ammunition were used before the soldiers switched tactics and opened up with a flamethrower. After the Nazis departed, other centipedes cleaned up the charred remains.

Giant Centipede: See page 17.

Centipede Swarm (1 per 2 heroes): See page 17.

Hans Oglemann: As Nazi soldier (page 18), but unarmed.

PANORAMIC VIEW

Passing beyond the circular door, which rolls into the wall when the correct combination is set, the heroes find themselves standing on a circular platform surrounded by a low wall. Engraved on the top of the low palisade are glyphs, proclaiming this to be the "Valley of the Moon."

Stairs lead down to a swathe of tall grass on the valley floor below. Beyond this can clearly be seen the ruins of an ancient city, its walls tumbled by earthquakes and the elements. A few miles past the ruins lies the foot of the smoldering volcano.

If the party has reached here at night, the full moon is almost directly over the peak of the volcano and almost in line with the doorway. Characters making a Knowledge (History) roll at –2 or a Common Knowledge roll at –4 can use their knowledge of the precession of the equinoxes (a slight wobble in the earth's axis) to calculate when the moon on this date would have been directly in line with the portal. Their rough estimate places the date at around 5,000 years ago, long before the Mesoamerican cultures reached maturity.

As the characters descend the stairs, another earthquake strikes. A roar from above and a plume of dust indicate the chamber they just left has collapsed, sealing off the only route through the mountains.

SCENE 3: BEWARE THE LONG GRASS

The grassland covers an area of several square miles between the edge of the mountains and the outskirts of the ruined city. Lurking within is a pack of small, predatory dinosaurs. The dinosaurs are a species known as *eoraptor lunensis*. Despite being small, they are vicious pack hunters. The name translates as, "dawn plunderer from the Valley of the Moon." In the real world, this early predator existed between 230 and 225 million years ago. Its fossil remains were found in the Valle de la Luna in Argentina in 1991.

The grass stands seven feet high, completely obscuring the view of those within. Fortunately for the *eoraptors*, they have excellent senses of smell and hearing.

The GM has guidelines for running this scene as a fight or as a chase, depending in the characters' actions.

The encounter begins with the characters hearing lots of growls from behind and to their flanks. The tops of the grass can be seen swaying as something moves toward the group. Should the party elect to stand and fight at this point, use the **Fight** information below. Should the heroes run, the *eoraptors* give **Chase**.

If the party began exploring the pyramid at night, the sun is just above the horizon as they reach this stage of the adventure. Lighting conditions are normal.

CHASE

Both sides use Agility as their skill for determining distance. The characters begin 3 Range Increments ahead of the predators, and each Range Increment represents 1". For the purposes of the chase, only foes or allies within one Range Increment are visible—it might end up the characters never see what is chasing them!

The *eoraptors* should be divided into four small packs for initiative purposes. Each pack rolls a single Agility die, since the members hunt and fight together. In order to conduct melee attacks, the dinosaurs must use the Parallel maneuver (as must the heroes).

Fortunately for the characters, the chase begins close to the edge of the city. The dinosaurs do not enter the city, for they lose the element of surprise when hunting outside the grass. Place 15 marker stones on the table. The heroes begin on the 3rd marker, while the raptors begin just before the first marker. Once they pass the last stone, they reach the relative safety of the city.

Eoraptor Lunensis (3 per hero): See page 17.

FIGHT

Have each hero make a Notice roll to avoid Surprise as the pack of ferocious beasts burst through the grass to attack. The attackers may be dinosaurs, but they're pretty smart. Half their number rushes the party, while the others wait for an opportune moment to strike against unprotected rears or to help swarm prey. Divide the creatures into two groups for the purposes of action cards.

Attacks can only be made against adjacent foes. Movement through the grass counts as difficult ground.

Eoraptor Lunensis (3 per hero): See page 17.

SCENE 4: BYGONE RUINS

The crumbling, ruined city was once the center of Chicomoztoci culture on the island. It is not hard to imagine that thousands of souls once lived, worked, and played in its paved streets and buildings. Now the structures stand silent and empty, choked by creepers and rubble, the great stones fractured, cracked, and shattered after ages of neglect.

Towering above the distant reaches of the city is the volcano, its black form dominating the skyline. The rivers of lava trickling from its crater are now clearly visible, and the stench of sulfur is caught whenever the wind blows from the north. The black cloud of gas and ash rising from the top seems darker, more ominous. About a quarter of the way up the peak can be seen a wide, dark opening.

The city covers an area of several square miles. It is uninhabited—the degenerates consider the city cursed, primarily because of the frequent earthquakes and the presence of the *eoraptors* in the grassland.

Currently occupying the city is a group of Nazi scouts, out hunting for fresh meat. Any sounds of gunfire from the characters' encounter with the *eoraptors* have reached their ears. Unsure whether the noises were made by another Nazi troupe or outsiders, they have elected to sneak through the city toward the grasslands. It takes them a fair while to cross the rubble, so the heroes have time to explore the ruins. When the players have had enough exploring empty buildings, the Nazis spring an ambush. Check for Surprise as normal.

If the party was relatively quiet (perhaps just a handful of shots), the Nazis don't detect their presence. In this instance, they are seated round a campfire, laughing and joking. This allows the characters to sneak up close. There are two sentries, but they are inactive, preferring to share in the humor rather than keep their eyes peeled for monsters and natives. This gives the heroes a chance to Surprise the Germans.

Groups which have taken wounds or are conserving ammunition might wish to avoid the Nazis once their presence is detected. Assuming they move quietly, you can proceed straight to Act 4.

Regardless of where and how a fight occurs, set up the battlefield the same. The area is 24" to a side. The center is a plaza measuring 6" by 6". Surrounding this is a number of buildings, each measuring 4" by 3". Every structure has an open doorway. Space the buildings to form a network of 2" wide streets leading to the plaza. Finally, place six Small Burst Templates face down on the table to represent areas of rubble. These can be placed inside buildings or over the walls, indicating collapses. Crossing them is difficult ground.

Whenever a Joker is drawn, an earth tremor strikes the city. At the start of the round, before any actions are taken, all combatants must make an Agility roll (free action) or fall prone. If both Jokers appear in the same round, the tremor is particularly violent—Agility rolls to remain standing are made at –2.

Captured Nazis know much of the same information as Oglemann (page 10). They confirm the expedition is working inside the volcano, excavating blocked tunnels, and add that Stampfer is very close to breaching the final blockage.

Nazi Soldiers (2 per hero): See page 18.

ACT 4: HEART OF THE FIRE GOD

In this final Act, the characters come face-to-face with their old adversary Colonel Stampfer. They also get the opportunity to take a rollercoaster ride through volcanic tunnels during an eruption.

SCENE 1: CLIMBING THE VOLCANO

The volcano is steeped-sided, though its craggy surface provides climbers plenty of handholds. When the heroes are halfway to the cave entrance, a flock of pteranodons, which roost on the warm slopes, swoop down to attack. They're not hunting for food, just defending their nests.

Deal action cards.

The characters are at a severe disadvantage fighting on the near-vertical surface. Each round, their movement is limited to half their Pace, and they can't run. Characters wishing to push further can make a Climbing roll. Success allows a hero to move his full Pace, though he still cannot run. Character cannot use a two-handed weapon and move in the same round.

Heroes who are Shaken or wounded must make an Agility roll as a free action or fall. They plummet 1d6 x 10' before landing on a ledge. Damage is calculated as normal, but is from an Extra.

Explorers who lose their grip while roped to a colleague don't necessarily fall. Comrades on either side make a Strength roll to arrest the fall as a free action. If there are characters on both sides, this is a Cooperative roll.

With success, the faller is left dangling from the rope (which is an Unstable Platform). With failure, the would-be helper also loses his grip and falls. Again, another comrade can try to stop both from falling, though there is a –1 penalty per character whose fall he is trying to arrest. Characters dangling from a rope can use an action to swing back toward the rocks and secure a handhold.

The volcano has numerous nooks and crannies, into which a hero can wedge himself for Cover. Any climber who draws a Club suit as his first action card detects a suitable nook within easy reach. The Cover it provides depends on the action card's value. A 2–6 indicates Light Cover, 7-10 Medium Cover, and Jack to Ace grants Heavy Cover. Each nook can accommodate just a single character.

Once the pteranodons are defeated, the heroes can resume their climb in peace, at least until they near the top.

Pteranodons (1 per hero): See page 18.

SCENE 2: FLASH COOKING

When the heroes are a few dozen feet from the cave mouth, a familiar voice calls down to them. Alerted either by gunfire or the squawks of the pteranodons, the Nazi has come to investigate.

"Hello down there!" calls a German voice. Looking up, you spy the one-eyed visage of Colonel Stampfer, along with a dozen or more Nazi soldiers. The goons have their weapons pointed down at you. "I thought after losing to me in Mexico you might have stopped trying to be adventurers. Throw your weapons down the cliff and climb up here, or I will order my men to shoot you."

Stampfer doesn't know exactly how many weapons the party has, but he isn't blind, despite his one eye. Rifles and SMGs are too large to conceal, and he assumes any holster has a pistol in it. Once the characters reach the top, his men perform a thorough search and remove any remaining weapons.

Weird scientists catch a lucky break. Stampfer's orders are to retrieve any useful technology found on his expedition, and he takes that to include weird science gizmos. As such, he allows gizmos to be retained only until the heroes reach the ledge, whereupon they are quickly confiscated.

Unless the heroes fancy starting a fight, their hands are bound by rope. They are then lead down a winding tunnel, through which run small tracks (for mining carts). The heat is intense, and the air grows steadily hotter.

In the event the heroes get feisty, Stampfer flees down into the volcano, leaving his men to fend off the characters. Skip straight to Scene 3 when the heroes defeat the Nazis. If they're captured, carry on with the section below.

SS-Colonel Stampfer: See page 17.

Nazi Soldiers (2 per hero): See page 18.

BURNING KNOWLEDGE

After ten minutes of rapid descent, the party reaches a large chamber near the heart of the volcano. One half has collapsed at some point in antiquity, leaving behind a bubbling lava pool. Several natural tunnels lead off from the chamber.

Soldiers busy themselves loading supplies and weapons into metal mining carts. It looks like the Germans are planning on leaving soon. Confiscated weapons and gear are thrown into one of the carts. There is no sign of the missing expedition members.

The characters are dragged down a side tunnel and thrown into a small cavern, whose walls are coated in a red-hued metal. There are no signs of any seams or rivets.

"That Codex I won from you proved most enlightening," Stampfer smiles. "Although it was written only shortly before the arrival of the Conquistadors, it spoke of this island, and of ancient pathways to the land of Chicomoztoc, a realm at the Earth's core.

"Did you notice how the architecture and language of the civilization on the island, the origi-

nal builders, I mean, not the savages crawling about in the dirt today, resembled that of the Aztecs and Mayans? These people may have been their ancestors. If not these, then others from Chicomoztoc who found their way to the surface world. Remarkable, yes, that a culture previously unknown to man exists beneath our very feet and yet spawned cultures on Earth?

"But now I must answer your unasked questions. The Chicomoztoci are not scions of Atlantis, as I originally thought. No, my friends, they ***are*** *the Atlanteans. This island, this island* ***is*** *the fabled Atlantis! Atlantis was wracked by earthquakes and volcanoes, just like this place. When these disasters came, the survivors fled back to their subterranean home, sealing the passageways behind them.*

"The passageways are quite real, you know. We have cleared rubble and discovered evidence of ancient mines sinking deep beneath this island. Who do you think laid those cart tracks you saw when you entered? Even we industrious Germans could not have laid all that track in just six weeks.

"And if the stories are true, and the evidence says they are, the inhabitants of Atlantis possessed fantastic technology, technology even we today would marvel at. This is why we are here, to seek out and claim their wondrous inventions for Germany!"

At this point, a German soldier enters the chamber, salutes smartly, and address his superior. "Sir, we've broken through the final barrier! The way ahead is clear!"

Stampfer turns to you and smiles. "Well, it has been enlightening, but now I must depart. I hope you enjoy my parting gift. This chamber was built by the Chicomoztoci to act as a sort of release valve in case the lava began to rise. In the ceiling far above your heads is a hatch made of the same unknown metal as these walls. It has proven very resistant to beat and esplosives.

"In a few moments, I predict the lava will reach a critical level, causing the hatch to open and allowing lava to flow into this cavern, so preventing an eruption but, in doing so, killing you. Ingenious, no? And before you think me callous, the members of the expedition we found on the island have been sent to Germany via zeppelin in good health. They will be debriefed, and repatriated in time."

The colonel smartly salutes you and departs. His men activate the door, which rolls into place. On the back face is a single metal disc. Above it is a small disc with the numbers one through three engraved on it, and a blank space. The pointer is currently at three.

Stampfer has let recent discoveries cloud his judgment. Although his theories about the Chicomoztoci being the ancestors of the Aztecs and Mayans is correct, this island was not Atlantis. For a start it's in the wrong place, since the Greeks and Egyptians (who passed on the story to the Greeks) did not know of the Americas. It's also too small, and lacks the concentric rings of waterways and walls attributed to Atlantis in Plato's description.

In order to escape, all the characters have to do is complete the steps below by the end of the 6th round. Should they fail, they are in for a quick but painful death, as lava pours into the chamber.

• Escaping the bonds requires either an Agility roll at –2 or a Strength roll at –4. Freeing another hero requires a complete round.

• Determine how to operate the disc mechanism, which works slightly differently to the ones in the pyramid. It has a metal pointer, just like the others, and can be rotated. However, in order to be rotated it must first be pulled out slightly from the wall. It then rotates freely. When the symbol the characters want is lined up with the pointer, the disc must be pushed back into place. Deducing this requires a Smarts roll.

The top disc cannot be manipulated by the heroes. Whenever a wrong pictogram is locked in place, the small disc rotates one increment, counting down toward the blank space. When it reaches the blank space, the lock mechanism is disabled. It can only be opened from the outside!

• Crack the code to open the door! The lower disc is marked with the pictograms of 85 Aztec deities. Only one of these unlocks the door. Rotating the disc requires an action, and can be done only once per round.

A character making a Common Knowledge roll at –4 (Aztec deity names are commonly bandied around) or a Knowledge (History) roll singles out four likely candidates: Camaxtli (god of fire), Chantico (god of volcanoes), Metztli (god of the moon), and Tepeyollotl (god of earthquakes, whose name means "Heart of the Mountains").

Depending on the GM's view of escaping deathtraps, the characters can find the right answer one of two ways.

First, the GM can pick one of the deities (we recommend Tepeyollotl, as Chantico is just too obvious). If the heroes guess right, then the door opens. This is fine if the characters have multiple rounds to experiment. Also bear in mind there is a 25% chance the heroes won't pick the right one and thus seal themselves in a chamber soon to be filled with lava.

Second, the GM can assume that whatever deity is picked as the characters' third guess or the guess made on the 6th round, whichever occurs first, is correct. This

isn't cheating—it's just a way of adding a little more tension to the game and ensuring the heroes have a last-second escape. So long as you maintain their "lucky guess" was correct, they'll need never know the truth.

SCENE 3: THE FIRE GOD'S ANGER

Whether the heroes have escaped the deathtrap or entered here after a fight outside the cave, this is the scene of the final pitched battle. Characters who escaped the lava chamber can gain Surprise—the Nazis arrogantly believe them dead, and are busy with their chores. Stampfer fleeing to this area during a fight outside the cave means the soldiers are waiting for the heroes.

The cavern is roughly circular and is 20" across. The northern third is a lake of boiling lava some 3" lower than the floor. Four tunnels lead from the chamber. In the south wall is the main entrance, which runs uphill from this cavern. In the east wall are two tunnels, a small one going to the lava chamber and another heading down into darkness. The fourth exit is in the west wall. Each passage is 1" wide.

The cart track runs down the entrance tunnel, levels out as it curves gently across the chamber floor, and then heads out (and down) through the western tunnel. The track runs no closer than 5" to the lava pool at any point.

There are half a dozen mining carts, each made of reddish metal, parked end to end in a line on the track. The metal is virtually indestructible, despite being very light. The carts can be used for Cover. Climbing into one takes an action. The second cart from the end contains the characters' confiscated gear, as well as ration packs, coils of rope, and flashlights.

At the start of the 3rd round, before action cards are dealt, a massive tremor shakes the volcano. Every character must make an Agility roll or fall prone. Roll for each surviving Nazi, individually. The lava pool begins to bubble violently, and the level of molten rock quickly begins to rise!

It is important to show the characters the danger they are in, rather than just tell them. Once the eruption begins, two Nazis nearest the main exit run for the cave entrance. The tunnel roof collapses, burying them under hundreds of tons of rubble. Two others, picked at random, plummet to their deaths as a 1" square section of floor gives way, dropping them into molten lava.

The lava spills onto the cavern floor at the end of the 4th round of combat, covering all the squares adjacent to the lip. At the end of each subsequent round, it covers the next inch of the floor. Characters caught in the lava suffer 3d10 damage (from a Wild Card) and have a chance of catching fire.

As soon as the eruption begins, Stampfer jumps into the first mining cart and releases the handbrake. It begins to trundle off into the volcano's tunnels.

Should the characters presence be unnoticed and they elect to wait and watch, natural events take their course. After a few minutes, the ground shudders violently and the lava begins to rise as above. Unless the heroes act quickly, the Nazis leap into the carts and set off into the darkness. Stampfer is in the second cart.

- **SS-Colonel Stampfer:** See page 17.
- **Nazi Soldiers (2 per hero):** See page 18.

SCENE 4: INTO THE MINES

Run this scene as a Chase with no Obstacles. Although the carts don't have accelerator pedals, gravity keeps them moving at helter-skelter speeds, so knowing when to apply the handbrake for sharp bends is vital. The governing skill is Driving. Each Range Increment equates to 5". Carts can hold a maximum of four people.

Stampfer starts one Range Increment ahead of the characters for every round they delay giving chase. Other surviving Nazis hop into carts behind the heroes, but are slightly slow to react. They start two Range Increments behind the heroes. If all the soldiers were killed, two carts, each containing two goons, join the chase from another tunnel on the start of the second round. They begin three Range Increments behind the characters.

The carts are on the same track. This means it is impossible to overtake another cart, though they can still be on the same marker—the carts aren't 5" long. The Parallel maneuver can be used, though in this case it means the carts are bumped together rather than alongside each other.

Should the characters run Parallel with Stampfer, he draws his sword and engages in melee. Without a driver to control the braking, a cart rolls a d6 Driving and no Wild Die.

The carts are considered indestructible, but they can be Forced off the tracks. Causing an enemy cart to come off the rails requires a raise with a Force maneuver. If the characters suggest grabbing spare wooden planks lying alongside the track and throwing them onto the tracks behind them, only a success is required.

A cart which comes off its rails, either through a Force maneuver or by rolling a Roll Over or Flip on the Out of Control table, plummets into the rising lava filling the volcano (3d10 damage per round, from a Wild Card source).

Should Stampfer be Incapacitated, his cart automatically flies off the tracks, and into the lava. He is destined to plague the characters again in the next adventure, so the evidence of his "death" must be very ambiguous.

The end of the chase isn't quite the end of the adventure. Whether the characters manage to flee or eliminate the Nazis, they are in for one last surprise.

Your cart zooms along the tracks, tilting and swaying. Another shudder wracks the volcano. Up ahead, the ground surges and cracks wide open, breaking the rails, and forming a yawning chasm. You apply the brakes, but it's too late. The cart flies forward, off the rails, leaving a trail of sparks in its wake. It begins falling into the black abyss…

That's the end of the adventure! It concludes in *Daring Tales of Adventure #10*, which picks up right where this one leaves off.

SS-Colonel Stampfer: See page 17.

Nazi Soldiers (1 per hero): See page 18.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

SS-COLONEL REINHARDT STAMPFER

A member of the SS-Ahnenerbe, Stampfer is part scholar and part warrior. His male ancestors going back many generations all served Prussia as military officers. Unlike the stereotypical Prussian officer class, Stampfer never lets his pride override his head. He has seen too many expeditions fail because of arrogant and proud leaders. As such, he has learned to respect his enemy and always plan contingencies.

Soft-spoken and well mannered, he is nonetheless a fanatical Nazi, albeit a suave and sophisticated one. As he often tells his comrades, a soft touch can often achieve more than a club. That said, he will let nothing come between him and his goal—to find the Hollow Earth and make contact with the Aryan supermen he believes inhabit the subterranean realm.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (History) d10, Persuasion d10, Shooting d8, Streetwise d8, Survival d8, Tracking d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Cautious, Delusional (believes in the Hollow Earth), Greedy (Major), One Eye

Edges: Block, Command, Fervor, Improved Dodge, Improved Frenzy, Improved Level Headed, Strong Willed, Woodsman

Gear: Pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1), long sword (Str+d8)

CENTIPEDE SWARM

Small and black, the centipedes are vile creatures, capable of climbing up trouser legs and crawling down open shirts to bite at exposed flesh.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Notice d6

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Centipede swarms inflict dozens of tiny bites every round to their victims, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone covered by the template.
- **Distracting:** Any hero attacked by a swarm must make a Spirit roll or be Shaken due to distraction as the spiders crawl over his body. This is a non-physical effect.
- **Swarm:** Parry +2; Cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Area-effect weapons work normally, and a character can stomp to inflict his damage in Strength each round.

CENTIPEDE, GIANT

Long, black, armored, and possessing powerful mandibles, the giant centipede is the mother of the swarms.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 13 (3)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +3:** Thick chitin armor.
- **Bite:** Str+d8, AP 2.
- **Large:** Attackers add +2 when attacking a giant centipede due to their size.
- **Poison (–2):** Victims must make a Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue for the next hour. This can lead to Incapacitation, but never Death.
- **Size +4:** Giant centipedes grow up to 20' long.

DEGENERATE TRIBESMAN

Centuries of inbreeding and a savage lifestyle have degenerated the tribesmen to little more than animals. They wear only the simplest of garments, made from leaves woven together with grass, animal entrails, and hair. Many have sharp pieces of bone pierced through their cheeks, noses, and tongues. Even their language has devolved, and is no longer recognizable as a human tongue.

Note that while Bloodthirsty, the savages do take prisoners—they sacrifice them to their bloody gods and then eat their flesh.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Throwing d6, Tracking d8

Charisma: –6; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: All Thumbs, Bloodthirsty, Illiterate, Ugly

Edges: Woodsman

Gear: Two crude short spears (Range: 3/6/12; Damage: Str+d6)

EORAPTOR LUNENSIS

Modern paleontologists believe *eoraptors* are the ancestor of many dinosaur species. They run upright on their hind legs, have five digits on each hand (two of which are long claws for handling prey), and sharp teeth. Unlike the better-known velociraptors, they do not have the pronounced foot claw for gutting or gripping prey, though skeletons do show the start of this evolution. *Eoraptors* are pack animals, and use Gang Up tactics on larger prey.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8(A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 4

Special Abilities:
• **Bite:** Str+d6.
• **Size –1:** *Eoraptors* stand about 1 yard tall and weigh about 25 pounds.

NAZI SOLDIER

These aren't fanatical and bloodthirsty SS stormtroopers, but they are dedicated to Hitler's cause. They follow orders without question.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8
Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: —
Gear: Helmet (+3), SMG (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, ROF 3, AP 1) *or* rifle (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8, AP 2), dagger (Str+d4), 1 grenade (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 3d6–2, Medium Burst Template)

PLESIOSAUR

Plesiosaurs are aquatic carnivores. Their seal-like body has four flippers, which propel them nimbly through the water. Their most notable feature is their long, thin neck, which counts for almost half their length.

The plesiosaur is treated as a Henchman.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d10, Stealth d8
Pace: —; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10
Special Abilities:
• **Ambush:** The plesiosaur favors ambush tactics. Each round, its head emerges from the water, attacks, and then withdraws. The creature makes a Stealth roll opposed by the intended victim's Notice. With success, the creature gains +2 to attack and damage that round, +4 if it gets a raise. If the victim wins and was on Hold, he may try to interrupt as normal. Other characters on Hold may try to attack the head normally.
• **Aquatic:** Pace 8.
• **Bite:** Str+d6, Reach 1.
• **Capsize:** If the plesiosaur draws a black action card, it tries to capsize the raft. Every character aboard must make an Agility roll opposed by the creature's Strength die. With failure, the hero enters the water.
• **Quick:** Plesiosaurs redraw action cards of 5 or lower.
• **Size +3:** This species measures 5 yards in length.

PTERANODON

Pteranodons are flying reptiles with long, leathery wings and a pronounced head crest. Its name comes from the Greek for "wing" and "toothless." Rather than bite, it uses its long beak to impale its prey.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8
Pace: 2; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7
Special Abilities:
• **Beak:** Str+d6.
• **Flight:** Pace 12.
• **Size +1:** Pteranodons measure about 6' in length and have a wingspan of 25'.

TYRANNOSAURUS-REX

Perhaps one of the most iconic dinosaurs, the Tyrannosaurus Rex is a fearsome carnivore. Equipped with huge teeth for crippling and killing prey, T. rex also has a very acute sense of smell.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d12, Notice d10, Stealth d8, Tracking d10
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 14
Special Abilities:
• **Bite:** Str+d8.
• **Cumbersome:** T. rexes have difficulty turning quickly at speed due to their anatomy. When moving, a T. rex must use 1" of movement for each 45 degrees it turns.
• **Fleet-Footed:** T. rex rolls a d10 running die, instead of a d6.
• **Large:** Attackers are +2 to attack rolls due to its size.
• **Size +7:** T. rex can measure up to 40' long and an up to 12' at the hip.

CRAZED SAVAGES & DINOSAURS..... WELCOME TO THE ISLAND OF TERROR!

When a scientific mission to a previously unexplored island off the South American coast goes missing, it is up to the brave and fearless heroes to come to the rescue! But all does not go well, for the rescuers soon become stranded on the mysterious, jungle-swathed island. Exploration brings the heroes into contact with degenerate tribesmen, ferocious beasts from a bygone age, deadly traps, and vile Nazis plague our heroes every step of the way.



Can the heroes discover what happened to the lost expedition? Will they end up as dinner for the local inhabitants? Are they capable of decoding ancient hieroglyphs in order to avoid a terrible fate? Can they thwart the Nazis' dastardly plan?

Find out in this action-packed pulp adventure from Triple Ace Games!

This adventure is part one of a two part story.
You will require Daring Tales of Adventure #10: *Kingdom of the Blood Gods* to run the complete adventure. *Kingdom of the Blood Gods* picks up the action exactly where this issue ends!

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DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

KINGDOM OF THE BLOOD GODS



OFFICIAL SAVAGE WORLDS LICENSED PRODUCT

PAUL 'WIGGY' WADE-WILLIAMS

DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

10

KINGDOM OF THE BLOOD GODS

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KINGDOM OF THE BLOOD GODS

Belief in the Hollow Earth is actually as old as man's recorded history, though it is often veiled in myth. Virtually every ancient culture told of a subterranean realm, sometimes as a fearful place and other times as a realm of wisdom.

The Greek Hades, Egyptian Duat, Viking Niflheim, Naraka of the Buddhist faith, the Celtic land of Annwn, Babylonian Kurnugia, Hawaiki, the subterranean birthplace of the Maori, the Mayan Xibalba, and the Inuit Adlivun are just a small few of the names attributed to this realm. The Aztecs recorded their original homeland as a place of seven caverns, a clear reference to a subterranean land.

You see, what the ancients knew, and what modern man now dismisses as myth, is that the Hollow Earth is a very real place, as the heroes are about to discover.

This adventure does not concern itself with the entire Hollow Earth. Instead, the action takes place in a very small section. Within this territory, the dominant culture is that of the Chicomoztoci, the ancestors of the settlers of the mysterious island in *Daring Tales of Adventure #9* and the cruel, ruling elite mentioned in Aztec Codices as the reason the Aztecs fled to the surface world.

Their bloodthirsty gods demand frequent human sacrifices, something the ruling priest caste are only too pleased to provide. Raiding parties are sent out across a sea to distant lands, to acquire slaves and sacrifices. Among their preferred targets is a race of Amazons.

Unable to spare an army to invade the Amazon lands (the Chicomoztoci have enemies as well), the priests must make do with kidnapping hostages. So far the ploy has failed, and all the prisoners have been sacrificed. For their part, the Amazons simply lack the numbers to launch an invasion and eliminate their enemy.

The hostage taking is an attempt to get the Amazons to reveal the location of an ancient temple, a temple supposedly haunted by fearsome ghosts yet filled with wondrous power. According to popular legend, the temple has the ability to transform men into gods!

This temple is actually of Atlantean origin (something we'll be looking at in a later issue). Although the subterranean settlers have forgotten much of their history over the millennia, they are mostly all descendants of this antediluvian race. (We say mostly, because there are settlers who have come here from the surface world, willing or unwillingly, and either chose to stay or have so far been unable to find a way back to the surface.)

GM's Note: This adventure has plenty of opportunities for interaction with NPCs. However, due to the near-limitless ways conversations could go, actual detailed interaction occurs only when required by the plot. Let the players enjoy some banter, and give them chance to insert suitable pulp quips, but keep the action moving at a good pace.

IMPORTANT RULE CHANGE

Usually we allow pulp heroes to replenish their ammunition every new scene. This assumes the characters can scavenge replacement ammo from slain foes or can pick it up in a handily placed store. However, in the Hollow Earth there are no gun stores, and the natives do not use firearms. As such, ammunition (but not Power Points) must be carefully tracked. Once it's gone, it's gone.

THE CHARACTERS

This Savage Adventure contains a pulp tale based around the exploits of four pre-generated characters. The full character sheets are available for free at **www.tripleacegames.com**.

The heroes have all their leveling opportunities from Seasoned (at which they begin) into Legendary mapped out in advance. Each published adventure in this line earns the heroes a fixed 5 Experience Points, guaranteeing them an advance every mission. All the players need do is tick the appropriate box and start making use of the new upgrade.

Characters: 70 XP.

The GM also needs the pulp setting rules from the TAG website.

ACT 1: LADIES GALORE

The action picks up exactly where *Daring Tales of Adventure #9* left off—with the heroes and their mining cart (or carts) flying into an inky abyss! Since it is the start of a new Act, every character recovers one wound.

SCENE 1: DOWN, DOWN, DOWN

BANG! The cart's arcing dive is arrested with a sudden jolt as the buggy shoots into a tunnel mouth in the side of a cavern! A fountain of sparks erupts from the wheels as they seek grip on the smooth surface. The noise is deafening as the cart careens down the steeply angled tunnel.

Looking back, you can see the cave entrance dwindling to a pinprick of glowing red light as the lava rises, and rises, and finally spills into the tunnel! Driven forward by the surging magma behind it and forced down into the tunnel by gravity, a wall of molten rock is rushing toward you!

This scene is run using the Chase rules, except there are no Obstacles. The lava is three Range Increments behind the characters and each Range Increment represents 10". Unlike the regular Chase rules, this scene ends when the characters have moved a total of 10 Range Increments from their starting position (see below).

The cart, which is not running on tracks, handles more like a motorbike now, and can be steered by the passengers leaning to one side or the other. The brake still works, though not quite as well as intended. As such, the primary skill remains Driving. The lava river has d8 in any Trait roll it requires for the purposes of this scene.

The heroes cannot use Force maneuvers against the lava since the flow is indestructible. Distract can still be used. This represents sudden turns down side tunnels and the like. These have the effect of slowing the lava flow, at least temporarily. Any Out of Control entry simply causes the lava to suffer a –2 penalty to its next Agility roll.

The lava only uses one stunt—Parallel. Once level, the lava automatically makes an attack as a free action, as the heat begins to scorch the characters' clothing or small lava droplets splash them. Everyone in the cart suffers 2d8 damage, as from an Extra.

Should the front of the lava flow actually overtake the cart, the buggy is carried along on the molten rock. In this instance, the lava, which fills every Range Increment behind the front edge, can make an attack against the cart as above without requiring the Parallel maneuver. The driver can still make Driving rolls to overtake the front of the lava field, however.

When the heroes have moved a total of 10 Range Increments, the world vanishes beneath their wheels once again!

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE!

The tunnel ends in a sheer drop! The cart's wheels stop clattering, as they leave the rocky surface, and begin spinning freely in open air. For a moment the cart continues its forward motion, but then gravity takes control, and the small vehicle begins to quickly drop into the darkness below. The impact is hard and wet.



SUPRISES

Throughout the rest of this Act you'll find several sidebars like this one. They provide information of how to tweak the adventure if there are no female heroes in the group or if Athena wins the challenge.

Cassandra gives only curt responses to questions put to her by males, using the word "slave" frequently and acting very superior.

There's a chance the players will forget the pulp spirit and have their characters try to overpower the girl and escape. In this instance, have a bunch of Amazon warriors stop them. Unarmed and against experienced fighters, the party should soon realize it's better to play along with the attractive women, even if just for a little while.

Water quickly floods the cart, which sinks beneath icy, fast-flowing water. As you're swept downstream, you see the lava blast from the tunnel and drop into the cold water with a terrific roar. Tremendous amounts of steam spew into the air.

Your fingers fail to grab handholds on the slick walls of the partially submerged tunnel, and you're carried further and further into the darkness. Soon even the glow of the lava has been left behind. Dear gods! The roof of the tunnel you are in gets lower and lower! Taking a deep breath, you can only hope it rises again before your lungs burst! It doesn't. Everything goes black…

SCENE 2: FAIR MAIDENS

Sunlight streams into the room through an open window. The room is bare of furnishings except for a small table, on which stands an intricately carved wooden bowl. It seems whoever rescued you practices sexual discrimination. The women in your party awaken in soft beds covered with thin furs, their heads propped upon pillows stuffed with feathers. The men, however, share a crude cot, are covered with an itchy straw mattress, and rest against solid wooden blocks as pillows. Their ankles feel strangely heavy as well.

Every character recovers one wound taken in the last scene when he awakens. Any wounds or burns are expertly bandaged, and covered in a healing poultice.

Any character who looks under the covers quickly discovers they are totally naked. Male heroes taking a peek realize the source of their heavy limbs—they have been manacled together! A long length of chain connects them to an iron ring in a nearby wall. The manacles are held in place with crude padlocks. A Lockpicking roll suffers a –2 if a hero has a hair pin or similar item, and cannot be attempted if no such items are carried.

Give the party chance to adjust to their new surroundings. After a few minutes, or as soon as someone heads for the door or window, the door opens. Framed there is a young woman, perhaps in her late teens, clad in a leather skirt and bikini top, and knee-high leather boots. At her hip rests a short sword. She speaks to the party.

The language is a variant of Greek, debased with strange pronunciations and words in an alien language, but still understandable. If no one in your group speaks Greek, the language is based on Latin, Egyptian, Aztec, or some other foreign tongue. In the event there are no female player characters, check the sidebar.

"Ah," she smiles to any female characters, "you have awoken at last. Our healers were worried you might not survive. Please, my lady, wash and refresh yourself. When you are ready, I shall take you to meet the others."

The girl is happy to talk more, but only to females. She simply ignores questions put to her by men. Possible questions, and the girl's answers, are detailed below.

Q: Where are we?

A: *"You are on the island of Gynaikokratumene* (Guy-ny-ko-krat-oo-maynay)*, lady. You are quite safe."*

Gynaikokratumene is Greek for "ruled by women." Any character with Knowledge (History) can make a roll. Other heroes use Common Knowledge at –2. Success means the character recalls the Greek myths about the Amazons, a tribe of ferocious warrior women.

Q: Who are you?

A: *"I am Cassandra, daughter of Antiope* (ant-EYE-oh-pay)*, former handmaiden to our late queen, Hypsipyle* (Hype-sip-ee-ly)*."*

Q: How did the queen die?

A: *"She was old. Her due time had come. We do not mourn those who die at the appointed hour."*

Q: What happened to us?

A: *"You were found upon the beach, half-drowned and unconscious. The healers said you had been in the water with your slaves," she says, indicating the male characters, "for many days. A hunting party found you and brought you here."*

Q: Where are our clothes and equipment?

A: *"Your clothes were torn and ruined. We burnt them. But I bring you fresh clothing, lady. Your other equipment will only be returned if the new queen decides."*

Cassandra has only brought clothes for the female heroes. The outfits are identical to the Amazon's garb. In their culture, men are kept naked. Naturally, male characters may take objection to this tradition.

Acquiring clothes (a simple loin cloth and sandals) requires a Persuasion roll. Female heroes who invent a suitable reason for clothing male slaves, such as, "In my culture things are different," receive a +2 bonus. Any male making the request automatically suffers a –4 penalty.

Q: What happens to us know?

A: *"You have come at a fortunate time. We are about to choose a new queen. She will decide your fate. Please, follow me."*

Cassandra: As Henchman Amazon warrior (page 19) but with no ranged weapon.

ELECTION TIME

Clothed or otherwise, the characters are led outside. The village dominates a large jungle clearing and is surrounded by a stout palisade. Most of the buildings are simple wooden affairs, though two are much larger. Cassandra says these are the queen's house and the great temple to Athena, their principal goddess.

Gathered outside the temple are perhaps a hundred attractive and scantily clad women. Appearances are deceptive, for each is a hardened warrior, not a beauty queen. Heroes with wayward eyes, or hands, are swiftly rebuked for their insolence. Cassandra guides the party to the front of the crowd.

The temple doors swing open, and out steps a dark-haired Amazon of outstanding beauty. She raises her arms and addresses the throng. "In accordance with our ancient laws, I, Athena, champion of the late queen, state my claim to be your next ruler. Do any oppose me?"

If a female character doesn't step up, someone standing behind a female character (pick one at random if you have more than one) shoves them forward into the space between the crowd and the temple steps. Athena has heard about the arrival of outsiders and senses a possible threat. By having the character "nominate" herself, she hopes to kill her in the arena.

Athena's look is one of disgust. "So, the outsider thinks she has what it takes to rule? The laws are clear, however. Any female may nominate herself for queen, but when more than one steps forward, ritual combat must ensue. Prepare the arena! You," she snarls at you, "must pick the slaves who will accompany in the fight."

Protestations of innocence and trying to backtrack on the "nomination" do not go down well. Such an act is an affront to the gods, and punishable by immediate death. With a hundred armed Amazons ready for blood, hopefully the characters do the wise thing and face their fate.

Cassandra takes the party aside and explains the rules while a hasty arena (four long ropes laid on the ground) is prepared.

"It is very simple," she says. "You and your slaves must face Athena and her slaves in a fight. No weapons are permitted, except your hands, feet, knees, elbows, and so on. A slave who leaves the boundary of the arena is forbidden from returning to the fight. Unfortunately," she grimaces, "only one contender for the throne leaves alive."

NO FEMALES?

Without any female characters, this part of the scene (Election Time) unfolds slightly differently. Cassandra is prodded forward. By law, her stepping forward cannot be retracted, so she is forced to fight. Athena never liked the girl, so she has arranged for one of her minions to push her forward, thus giving her a chance to kill her in the fight.

Cassandra is low ranking and has no slaves of her own. She picks the characters to aid her. By law, they have two choices—become Cassandra's slaves or die a horrible death."

A loud horn blast echoes through the village, indicating everything is prepared. The only slaves the heroine has to hand are, of course, her comrades. Athena, who holds an important position, has picked a large number of brutish thugs from her harem.

Deal action cards and run the fight!

The arena covers an area 8" to a side. The party begins adjacent to the southern edge, while the Amazon and her thugs start adjacent to the opposite side. As a Wild card, Athena gets two bennies. She won't need them later in the adventure, so the GM should ensure she uses them.

Pushing someone from the arena first requires a Fighting roll. Damage is based purely on Strength, and is opposed by the target's Strength. Success pushes the foe back 1", while a raise moves him back 2". This special attack causes no actual damage. A character forced beyond the boundary is forbidden from re-entering the arena on pain of death. Heroes who try are attacked by the crowd (who use weapons).

The thugs make use of this maneuver whenever they are adjacent to a hero near the edge of the arena. They Gang Up where possible, and combine their Strength using the rules for Cooperative rolls.

Athena has no intention of playing fair. She wants the throne and is willing to go to any lengths. Once half her slaves are out of the fight, or when she takes a single wound, she signals to the crowd.

At the start of the next round, weapons are thrown into the arena at the feet of the Amazon and her slaves. Athena is armed with a battle axe (Str+d8), while the slaves each receive a short sword or hand axe (Str+d6). Whether or not they reach them before the characters can all depends on the action cards. Picking up the weapon is an action as normal, though Athena can use her Quick Draw to offset this.

Once Athena reaches Incapacitated, she slumps to her knees (don't roll on the Incapacitation Table). She looks up at the female character and says, *"Earn your throne. Take my life!"* Since this is a pulp game, it's hoped the hero refuses to deal a Finishing Move.

Should the female hero reach Incapacitated first, Cas-

NO FEMALES - 1

Cassandra refuses to hand her slaves any obvious weapons, such as melee weapons, bows, throwing knives, a slingshot, and so on, for slaves may never be armed in Amazon society.

She has no idea about guns or Weird Science gizmos, though, so she asks her slaves what the devices are. If they reply they are weapons, they are forbidden from carrying them, at least for now. A plausible lie sees them armed. Athena, if victorious, is none the wiser, either, and asks the same question.

Should Cassandra be defeated during the fight, she quotes the ancient law and swears featly. Athena leads the attack on the fishing village, though the heroes are still expected to come along and fight with their bare hands.

sandra shouts out an ancient law, which permits the loser to survive if she swears fealty to the new queen. Athena then offers the explorer a simple choice—total subservience or death. The latter *will* result in a Finishing Move.

In the event the fight is lost, Athena becomes queen. The characters still get to be heroic and aid in the defense of the village in the next scene. However, rather than Athena going to free the Aztecs, she charges the heroes to complete the rescue, thus enabling the adventure to continue almost as written.

Athena: See page 18.

Amazon Slaves (2 per hero): See page 19.

VICTORY

Once the character is crowned queen, the party's gear is arrayed before her. The explorers' weapons are largely intact. Unless a character had a heavier weapon as a Trademark Weapon, only pistols survived the trip to the island. Worse still, half the ammunition they party was carrying has been lost. Remember, bullets cannot be replaced during this adventure.

Any Weird Science gizmos are intact, though currently out of Power Points (they recharge at the start of the next scene as normal). If the characters didn't retrieve their gizmos at the end of the previous adventure, fate has reunited the heroes with their devices.

The crowd reacts angrily if any male is given an obvious weapon. Pacifying them requires either a Persuasion roll at –2, or pulling rank ("I am queen, and I have changed the law."). The Amazons haven't seen a firearm, so they don't react if guns are handed out.

Healers (Healing d8+2) tend the characters' wounds if the party is victorious, though each hero gets only a single roll.

SCENE 3: AZTEC RAIDERS

The victory celebrations are cut short by the arrival of an Amazon warrior from outside the village. She falls half conscious at the queen's feet, her head bowed. Blood pours from a wound in her left arm. "My queen," she gasps, "the Chicomoztoci have attacked our fishing village! There were too many for us. Please, you must send help! They are taking captives to feed their vile gods' hunger!"

Athena raises her arm and points in the direction of the distant shore. She is about to speak, when she suddenly pauses. Instead, she lowers her arm and looks at the queen.

The Amazons do not immediately rush off to help—they look to their new queen to give the order. Cassandra informs the characters the village is only a mile or so away through the jungle. If they run, they should be able to get there before the raiders depart.

Although the fight involves many dozens of combatants, this scene focuses on the heroes and a small number of Amazons pitted against a larger Chicomoztoc force. If the queen is an NPC, reduce the combatants to 2 raiders per hero and no Amazons—the larger battle was to help reinforce the notion that the hero really does rule the roost.

The characters have their firearms and Weird Science gizmos, and melee weapons can be taken (as an action) from any defeated raiders.

The jungle suddenly gives way to a short area of grassland, a narrow strip of sand, and then a massive expanse of water. Two large ships are beached at the water's edge. Burly men wearing feathered headdresses and armed with crude axes are hacking their way through the village's remaining defenders. Far out to sea you can just make out four sails—it looks like the raiders managed to take some prisoners.

After the run, have each hero make a Vigor roll. Those who fail suffer a level of Fatigue until the beginning of the next section (**Athena's Plot**).

The battlefield is 24" long and 16" deep. The northern edge of the map is shallow water for a further 4". Movement through this is treated as difficult ground. Place four round huts at least 4" from any edge. Use Large Burst Templates or objects of roughly similar size to represent the structures.

The characters and their allies begin on the southern edge, while the raiders are dotted throughout the village as the GM sees fit.

Again, healers (Healing d8+2) are available after the fight.

Chicomoztoc Raider (4 per hero): As Chicomoztoc warrior (page 19), but with no blowguns or poison darts.

Amazon Warrior (2 per hero): See page 19.

ATHENA'S PLOT

The characters may wish to set sail after the raiders. Despite being queen, the heroine can't get any to follow her into the large ships. The Amazons just tend to their wounded and then return to the village. The ships require a crew of 10, meaning the heroes alone cannot sail them.

Cassandra tells the characters the Chicomoztoci will offer to ransom the captives back. Amazon law, laid down centuries ago, forbids this, however. The Amazons also lack the military might to challenge the Chicomoztoc on their home territory. So the prisoners will end up as sacrifices to the dark gods of the savage Chicomoztoci. According to survivors, the raiders took 10 captives.

On returning to the main village, the party is confronted by Athena, her bodyguard of Amazons, and a wizened old woman, the high priestess.

"New queen," cackles the elderly priestess, "it seems fate and the laws of our land have come together. By the ancient wisdom of the gods, a new queen must undertake a quest before she can fully claim the title and enter her home as our ruler. The gods have given me a vision regarding the nature of your quest—you must travel to the land of the Chicomoztoci and free the prisoners!"

Athena's smirk is all-too obvious. "Before that," Athena says with an evil grin, "you and your slaves must face the Trial of Dedication. Succeed, and the gods will bless your quest. Fail, and we shall be seeking a new ruler before the sun sets."

Should any male explorers openly display captured weapons, Athena demands the queen order them to dispose of them, quoting the law that forbids males to carry weapons. Whether or not the queen acquiesces is up to her (Cassandra does so if queen, though reluctantly).

SCENE 4: TRIAL OF DEDICATION

The trial takes place beneath the Temple of Athena. As usual, the queen may nominate slaves to accompany her. The slaves share the risks, but also the rewards. No weapons are allowed during the challenge. Don't worry if the group has their firearms, they are soon nullified for this encounter.

The elderly priestess leads you into the temple. At the far end, flanked by a pair of burning braziers, is a life-sized statue of Athena. The crone shuffles forward, and then drops to her knees. She digs her claws into the wooden floor, and lifts up a trapdoor.

The characters spot a ladder descending into a small chamber. The priestess gestures for them to step forward and descend the ladder. Once everyone is down, she slams the door shut. From above, they can just make out her words. *"The door will only open again if you are victorious!"*

NO FEMALES - 2

This section (Athena's Plot) does not occur if Cassandra is not queen and there are no female heroes. Instead, Athena orders Cassandra and the heroes to fetch back the prisoners. She believes it is a suicide mission, thus ridding her of her enemies in a perfectly legitimate manner.

If Cassandra is queen, she is forced to undertake the trial. She chooses the heroes to accompany her.

The stone-lined chamber is large, maybe 20 yards to a side, yet completely empty. There aren't even any engravings on the walls. Suddenly a bright green light begins strobing. After just a few seconds it suddenly stops. Your arms and legs feel extremely weak. Emerging from the walls are ghostly figures, dressed in strange costumes, which appear to be a mix of Egyptian, Aztec, and Babylonian attire.

The green ray has weakened the characters, dropping their Strength to d4. It also disables their firearms and any Weird Science gizmos.

The name of the trial refers not to physical prowess, but to mental strength. Instead of Strength, Spirit is used for damage. But there is a catch—if the Spirit die comes up a 1, regardless of Wild Die, the character's Spirit die drops one step, to a minimum of d4. Lost dice return as soon as the test ends.

Characters with Arcane Background (Psionics) find their powers work perfectly well. The original chamber was built by Atlantean survivors as a testing ground for their psychic warriors and to build mental resolve. How the Amazons found it and discovered its purpose is unknown, but it has served to judge their queens for many generations.

After the last specter is defeated, the trapdoor opens by itself. No one rushes to greet the characters as they emerge from the darkness, but the entire tribe, even Athena, bows low and praises the new queen. Custom dictates the details of the trial never be discussed—that the queen emerged is proof enough that she is fit to rule.

Atlantean Specters (2 per hero): See page 19.

REWARD

Victorious heroes are indeed rewarded by Athena. Give each player three colored gaming stones, poker chips, or other marker—one red, one white, and one blue.

The white stone acts like a regular benny, except any roll it is spent on has a +2 bonus (this includes Soak

rolls). Cashing in the red marker allows a hero to roll two Trait dice and one Wild Die and pick the best for a single die roll. The blue stone allows a character to roll as extra d6 and add it to any Trait roll. This can be spent after the initial roll is made. These benefits are good only until the end of Act 2, however.

ACT 2: REALM OF THE BLOOD GODS

No feast is held to honor the new queen. Instead, the queen is outfitted with a leather breastplate, greaves, and bracers (+1 Armor) and given a bronze long sword (Str+d8). The slaves are not armed, nor do they accept weapons if offered. The party is then escorted down to the fishing village, where a number of slaves wait in one of the captured Chicomoztoc ships.

The heroes are given a crude map, which details the crossing in terms of landmarks and wind directions, rather than miles, and provisions for two weeks.

SCENE 1: PIRATES ON THE PORT BEAM

For five days you have made good speed across the sea. Now a fog has risen, muffling sounds and making the lookout's job tricky. According to your map, you should be a day or so from your destination. It also indicates you're entering an area of reefs and sandbars.

Two distant explosions are clearly heard through the mist. Seconds later, twin plumes of water, one on each side of your craft, erupt into the air, covering you in spray. Looking behind, you can just make out the masts of a sailing ship!

A voice, distant and faint, calls out in Spanish. "Strike yer colors and prepare to be boarded!"

The characters have two real choices—they can try to board the pirate ship (either openly or by pretending to surrender) or they can try to outrun her. Both situations are covered below. In either case, if the characters are captured, they are disarmed, manacled, and sold to the Chicomoztoci. Unless the characters devise an escape plan, proceed straight to Scene 3.

The scene takes place in fog, and the lighting is Dim (–1).

FIGHT

Boarding the pirate vessel is quite easy—the characters can row against the wind, and the seadogs aren't expecting a small ship to pull alongside and instigate a boarding action. However, the characters do not gain any surprise. Climbing the side rigging takes an action.

Should the characters surrender, the wily pirate captain orders them to drop their weapons into the sea before they approach too close. He knows enough about firearms to recognize a modern gun for what it is, so they must be dumped as well. Of course, the characters can hide pistols and small melee weapons on their person, but unless they board and immediately begin fighting, they are quickly searched.

The male slaves only provide assistance if a female hero makes a successful Intimidation roll as an action. Even then, they are reluctant to engage armed foes. They count as Unarmed Defenders, will *not* pick up dropped weapons, and immediately surrender if Shaken.

The deck is 20" long and 8" wide. The small craft has no raised rear deck, and only a cargo hold beneath (the crew sleep on deck).

If the captain is slain, the remaining pirates immediately surrender. The first mate approaches the heroes and tells them their code demands whoever slays the captain take his place. Whether they trust the pirates or not, the group now has an armed ship at its disposal.

Fortunately, the pirates have dealt with the Chicomoztoci many times, and know the location of their city. However, their code doesn't require them to follow their captain on shore (the adventure is also about the heroes' brave deeds, not their hired helpers). If the characters take control of the vessel, the pirates drop them off at a secluded cove an hour's walk from the Chicomoztoc city and then retreat to a safe distance and drop anchor.

CHASE

The pirates begin 3 Range Increments behind the heroes' ship. Each Range Increment equates to 50". GMs will note the characters are faster, so they get +1 to Boating rolls. However, their ship has a short Range Increment, meaning there is a –1 penalty. The modifiers thus cancel out.

The chase takes place in and around a reef. As well as rocks on which to run aground, there are strong currents and sandbars. These are treated as Sparse Obstacles. Instead of an automatic collision on a failed roll, consult the table below for what occurs.

Card	**Result**
2–10	Rock (use the regular Obstacles rules).
Jack–Queen	Strong current. Failure gives –2 to next Boating roll.
King–Ace	Sandbar. Failure causes the ship to lose one Range Increment, representing the time it takes to free the ship.

Eager for treasure and slaves, the pirates prefer to close the distance and board, rather than blast their prey out of the water. A successful Parallel stunt brings the pirate ship to come alongside, allowing boarders to drop down into the character's craft. Until then, the pirates fire their cannons, hoping that a single hit will encourage their victims to strike their colors.

With no weapons capable of damaging the pirate ship, the only ways for the characters to end the chase are to move more than 10 Range Increments from the

pirates, turn around and board their ship, surrender, or have their ship sunk.

- **Pirate Captain:** See page 20.
- **Pirates (4 per hero):** See page 20.

PIRATE SHIP

Due to the vagaries of positioning a ship to fire cannon, the pirate vessel can only fire one-quarter of its gun in any combat round. If the captain succeeds at a Force maneuver at –2, he can present a broadside, allowing her to fire four guns in the same round. However, using this maneuver gives a –2 penalty to Boating rolls on the next round.

Acc/Top Speed: 2/6; **Toughness:** 16 (2); **Crew:** 16+40
Notes: Heavy Armor
Weapons:
8 cannon (Range: 50/100/200, Damage: 3d6+1, AP 4, HW)

RAIDER SHIP

Acc/Top Speed: 3/9; **Toughness:** 14 (2); **Crew:** 10+20
Notes: —

SCENE 2: NETS AND NOOSES

Whether they arrive on the Chicomoztoc vessel or the pirate ship, the only easy anchorage is a small, secluded cove. The male slaves are too fearful of the Chicomoztoci to venture onto land. Instead, they wait just offshore in the ship for the characters' return.

The jungle is quiet, although there are signs of animals and birds. After some 20 minutes of walking, the party enters an area patrolled by Chicomoztoci warriors.

The hero leading the party triggers a concealed noose trap (see below). If the group doesn't have a "marching order," deal each character a card. Whoever draws the lowest card is caught. He must make an Agility roll at –2 to avoid being snared and strung up by one leg.

As soon as the trap is sprung, whether it catches someone or not, a band of Chicomoztoci warriors burst from the undergrowth and attack. Check for Surprise as normal. The warriors begin 1" into the undergrwoth (see below).

The battlefield is 24" square. A 3" wide strip running through the center indicates a cleared trail. On either side is light jungle. Movement through this is treated as difficult ground and attacks at targets more than 1" away while in the bush are made at –1.

Any character dealt a deuce as his first action card in a round has stumbled into a carefully concealed trap. He must make an immediate Agility roll at –2 to avoid being caught in the trap. A red deuce indicates he has been caught in a net. The net fills a Medium Burst Template centered on the unfortunate victim. He and any other characters under the template are affected by the trap. A black card means his foot has been snared in a noose. In both cases, he is hauled 20 feet into the air.

The Chicomoztoci know the location of the traps and how to avoid activating them, so deuces do not affect them (although they can accidentally be caught in nets). The warriors use their blowgun against characters caught in the traps (Medium Range). Heroes in traps do not benefit from the Dodge or Improved Dodge Edges.

The nets and nooses have Toughness 7, but can only be damaged by slashing weapons. Fighting roll are made at –4 due to the difficulty of movement or reaching the rope. Acrobatic heroes suffer only a –2 penalty. Heroes who free themselves drop 20 feet to the earth below, taking 2d6 damage (from an Extra).

The aim of this scene is to have the heroes captured. The Chicomoztoci have the advantage in numbers and can weaken heroes with poison darts, so it shouldn't be too hard. If necessary, bring in reinforcements to ensure captivity awaits the explorers.

Heroes who surrender are pelted with enough darts to ensure their Traits drop to a d4. They are then disarmed, bound with hemp rope, and lead back to the Chicomoztoc city.

- **Chicomoztoc Warriors (3 per hero):** See page 19.

SCENE 3: GLADIATORS

Regardless of whether the explorers were captured by the Chicomoztoci or brought here as prisoners of the pirates, the adventurers are dragged through the city and into an arena. A large crowd of Chicomoztoci are seated on raised terraces, baying for blood. A tall figure weaing a feathered cloak and elaborate headdress sits in what they assume is a royal box.

The feathered figure rises to his feet and the crowd falls silent. A gate in one of the arena walls slides open. Another person is roughly bundled in the arena by armed guards, who quickly retreat back behind the gate. It's Colonel Stampfer!

The Nazi quickly hurries over to your side. "We meet again, Amerikaners," he says, snapping his heels together and bowing his head.

The robed figure begins to speak in an unknown tongue, at least one unknown to you. Stampfer, it seems, speaks the local language! "A dialect of Nahuatl," the Nazi says quietly, the language of the Incas. "It appears we are not worthy of being sacrificed to the gods. Instead, we are to provide entertainment for the natives. Ignorant savages," he murmurs. "And to think, I thought they would be a race of enlightened beings possessed of fantastic technology.

"Despite my having tried to kill you," Stampfer says, "I think it is in our best interests to work

together to escape our current predicament. Shall we call a truce to any hostility?"

Stampfer may be a dastardly Nazi, but he is an honorable man. He also has a good point—there is safety in numbers.

A number of gates slide open, releasing your opponents. No men stand before you. Oh no, the Chicomoztoci have delivered a far more dangerous foe—large velociraptors!

The arena is square, and measures 20" to a side. The walls are 3" high and covered in downward pointing spikes to prevent escapes. The floor is a mixture of sand and gravel.

The number of velociraptors includes one for Stampfer as well. Without any weapons, this is going to be a tough fight for the party. Clever tactics (Tricks and Ganging Up) and wise use of bennies (saving them for Soak rolls rather than wasting them on failed attacks) should see them through.

Don't spend any bennies for Stampfer during the fight—he needs them later. His survival is virtually guaranteed, though, as the dinosaurs concentrate more on the heroes.

At some point during the fight, however, Stampfer should require saving. Perhaps he loses his footing and falls, a velociraptor towering above him and about to go in for the kill with its curved toe claw. Rescuing a villain from certain death is a pulp staple, and shows that the heroes really are the good guys. That and the Heroic Hindrance doesn't differentiate between helping innocents in danger and unarmed bad guys who are at least trying to make amends.

There are only two ways out of this fight—victory for the characters or a bloody end, as the 'raptors tear them limb from limb and devour their flesh.

Colonel Stampfer: See page 18, but with no gear.

Raptors (1 per hero): See page 20.

SCENE 4: BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD

The crowd, which was wildly cheering during the fight, falls silent as the last velociraptor drops. Within seconds they are howling and screaming, apparently angry they did not see your blood and guts spread over the arena.

The cloaked figure rises again, but this time the crowd does not cease their rowdy behavior. He shouts above the din, his words translated by Stampfer. "The gods have given us a sign! Such brave souls have been declared prime sacrifices and will appease the gods for many moons! Prepare the temple! Prepare the Amazon sacrifices."

The Nazi gives a broad grin. "You must admit, Amerikaners, he knows how to please his people."

With that, a large number of warriors enter the arena and surround the characters while porters drag away the battered velociraptors. The adventurers are again bound with hemp rope, as is Stampfer.

After being hauled through town, the heroes are roughly shoved up a flight of steps, which front an enormous pyramid. Standing on the blood soaked platform at the very top is the priest they saw in the arena and a handful of guards. Far below, and perhaps a 100 yards away (beyond the temple boundary), a large crowd of citizens has gathered to watch the bloody spectacle about to unfold.

Lying in a heap on top of the pyramid is the characters' gear and Stampfer's sword. Unsure as to what many of the artifacts are, the priest intends to have them melted down and mixed with the sacrifices' blood as offerings to the goods.

The priest begins chanting. Stampfer quietly whispers that if the heroes have a plan to escape, they should think about implementing it very soon.

Arrogant in the extreme, and with the characters in the center of their city, the Chicomoztoci do not anticipate an attempted escape. As such, any bid for freedom means the guards are caught be Surprise, giving the characters one complete round of actions before their captors can respond. As soon as a hero makes a break for freedom, the Amazons join in.

Escaping the bonds requires either an Agility or Strength roll at –1 as an action. Alternately, a comrade can slice through them with a blade as an action. Bound characters can still perform Tricks and Tests of Will, and they can use the rules for pushing on page 5 to knock foes back.

The top platform of the temple is 6" to a side. The next tier down is 8" to a side, and so on down to the base, which is 40" wide. Each tier is 1" higher than the one below. Climbing to a new level requires an action unless the characters use the steps, which run down the eastern face. The steps are 2" wide.

The characters and Stampfer are on the top platform, along with the priest and six guards. Standing in two columns on the steps are the Amazons. The remaining warriors stand on the next three lower tiers, on either side of the steps.

Colonel Stampfer: See page 18, but with no gear.

Chicomoztoc Blood Priest: See page 19.

Chicomoztoc Warriors (3 per hero): See page 19.

Amazons (10): See page 19.

SCENE 5: JUNGLE CHASE

Shocked at the bloodshed atop the pyramid, and rattled by any gunfire, the citizens take a long pause before they respond to the heroes' escape. If they're quick to act, the characters can reach the bottom of the

pyramid and be halfway out of town before the Chicomoztoci react. Should they elect to hang around, the party will face over 100 warriors, not to mention the baying mob.

The mob begins three Range Increments behind the characters. Each Range Increment in this scene represents 5". The mob, which is very large, covers five adjoining Range Increments and moves as one. Since the mob comprises hundreds of individuals, all rolls are made as Group rolls.

The mob does not use any stunts, but it does use the Push maneuver if the heroes get too far ahead. If the mob ends up on the same marker as a hero, or moves ahead of him, the explorer suffers 2d8 damage (from an Extra) at the *end* of the current round. This rule exists to make the action cinematic—not reduce the heroes to a bloody pulp.

Example: *Brent moves on the fifth marker, and the mob moves to the fourth position after scoring two raises in the previous round. Next round, Brent wins the initiative but fails his Agility roll, gaining no distance. The mob rolls a 5, and moves one position, bringing it level with Brent. He suffers 2d8 damage when the round ends.*

Next round, the mob draws a higher action card and gets a failure. Brent scores a raise! He rushes ahead of the screaming savages, emerging from a flurry of raised fists. Since he's ahead of the mob at the end of the round, he takes no damage.

Attacking the mob has absolutely no effect. Shots or blows may take out individuals, but their place is instantly filled by another citizen. Likewise, Distract and Force maneuvers do nothing to halt their progress. This is basically a drag race.

Ideally, Stampfer should survive. However, if he is caught by the mob and Incapacitated, the last the heroes see of him is the Nazi being dragged to the ground and pummeled. As written, the adventure assumes he makes it safely to the ship. See the sidebar, **Stampfer Falls**, for guidelines on how to change the adventure.

In order to escape, the heroes must move a *total* of 10 Range Increments. The first nine of these are on land, and so use Agility as normal. The final one, however, requires them to swim out to their ship (the slaves won't come closer and the pirates can't). Swimming rolls are required to move the last marker. Fortunately, the mob can't swim very well (roll unskilled).

Should the characters have secured the pirate ship, the crew spots the heroes and their pursuers approaching. They load grapeshot into the cannons and let loose a broadside when the character reach the 9th Range Increment. The blast shreds the front rank of the mob, effectively moving the horde back one Range Increment.

- **Colonel Stampfer:** See page 18, but with no gear.
- **Amazons (survivors from last scene):** See page 19.
- **Mob:** Use stats for a Chicomoztoci warrior when required (page 19).

ACT 3: THE WILD EARTH

Once aboard the ship, Stampfer hands over any weapons he has acquired and offers his surrender. All he wants to do now is return to Germany and report the failure of his mission. Technically he hasn't committed any crime, and Germany is not at war with the world yet. He knows the party will never fully trust him, so he asks to be placed under house arrest when they reach their destination until the heroes are able to escape the Hollow Earth.

On the journey back, the characters get chance to make one natural Healing roll.

SCENE 1: THE QUEEN IS CROWNED

A week after escaping from the Chicomoztoci the ship docks safely at the Amazons' island. The queen is greeted like a returning hero so long as at least one Amazon was rescued. The former prisoner confirms the story of the rescue attempt and the chase from the city. Athena makes snide comments about how the queen found time to acquire new slaves if Stampfer or the pirates are present.

The pirates have no wish to live out their lives as slaves, however, and ask their captain if they can "go about their business elsewhere." It's left to the characters to decide whether to have them enslaved or set them free—their role in the adventure is over now.

A lavish feast is thrown in the queen's honor, both to welcome her back from her quest and seal her role as monarch of the warrior women. Take a break from the action and let the heroes enjoy their celebratory status. At least one Amazon should take an interest in an adult male character. She offers to buy him from the queen.

During the feast, the Amazons' ceremonial garb is brought forth and presented to the queen. Among the items are a silver scepter, a golden headband, and a cloak on which is embroidered a map of the Hollow Earth as known to the Amazons. One part of the map stands out as rather strange. A squat building of some sort has rays emanating from it.

If asked, Cassandra (or another Amazon) says the building is an ancient ruin located on the northern continent. It is much feared, for strange beams of light sometimes shoot forth from a tall spire, scorching the ground for miles around. The Amazon has no idea who built the temple, but knows it is very old.

Assuming Stampfer returned with the party and was placed under arrest, he escapes during the night. Intrigued by the new slave, Athena went to visit him. He

NO MEN

If Athena won, she has already been crowned. Returning heroes catch site of the cloak as Cassandra, or a defeated female character, makes her report. Events then unfold as below.

STAMPFER CAPTURED

Stampfer's capture by the Chicomoztoci requires a few changes to the adventure.

The Nazi is dragged back to the Chicomoztoc city. He convinces the blood priests he can give them the weapons to destroy their enemies once and for all. Eager for more captives, they agree to listen to him (planning on sacrificing him later).

As written, the adventure assumes the Chicomoztoci don't know the location of the Atlantean ruin (see page 14). In this tweak, they already know its location but have never entered it. Stampfer leads an expedition to the site.

Athena still disappears in the night with her warriors, though. She becomes convinced only something within the ancient ruin can secure her position as queen.

In the final battle (Act 4, Scene 3), the positions of the various forces is switched. Chicomoztoci warriors and blood priests are already present. A blood priest (there are two present) is sent flying into the air, but instead of hanging over the lava he is incinerated. The remaining blood priest orders his forces to attack Stampfer *and* the heroes.

Replace the Chicomoztoci who arrive shortly afterward with Athena and her Amazons. Athena quickly realizes that power corrupts and her actions and desires were unjust. She orders her warband to side with the heroes. She can still kill Stampfer if the need arises, as she is still a minor villain seeking redemption.

spoke to her of his reasons for coming, and the Amazon told him of the ancient Atlantean ruin. After convincing Athena he could provide her with weapons to become queen, Stampfer, Athena, and a number of her closest supporters slip out of the village during the night and head for the ruin. Unless the characters perform regular checks, his absence goes unnoticed till the morning.

The party's interest should be piqued by the cloak-map. Stampfer's disappearance, along with Athena, should also be motive enough to head off in search of the ruin. After all, Stampfer has always admitted he came here in search of ancient technology, and the scorching rays seem to fit the bill. Cassandra, who journeyed near to the temple years ago, offers to act as guide.

When the characters are ready to depart, a ship sails them across the ocean to the northern continent. The voyage takes three days.

SCENE 2: THE FUNGUS FOREST

The scrubland beyond the beach quickly gives way to spongy moss and fields of mushrooms. Further on, the ground fungus begins to grow thicker and the mushrooms begin reaching chest height. Soon you are standing on the edge of a veritable mushroom forest, with stalks towering dozens of feet and tops wider than a bus. The ground is moist with rotten fungus, bulbous puffballs, and fungal growths. It doesn't look like a pleasant place, but Cassandra assures you it is the only route to the ruin.

Cassandra warns the heroes not to touch any of the fungi as they release poisonous spores, if disturbed. Likewise, they should move slowly through any ground growing fungus to avoid triggering an explosion of nasty spores.

Have the heroes make Notice rolls as they walk through the forest. Those who fail are Surprised when a host of fungus-covered humanoids, fungal zombies, spring out from the undergrowth and attack. Half the fungal zombies emerge from the spongy vegetation 5" away from the character. The others begin 10" away.

The battlefield is 24" to a side. Mark twenty squares with gaming stones, or other objects, to represent the stalks of the towering mushrooms. No movement is possible through a square containing a stalk. Half the remaining area should be highlighted to show it is covered in ground fungus, such as puffballs.

A roll of 1 on an attack die, regardless of the Wild Die, while adjacent to a mushroom causes it to vibrate. This may be because the attack missed and struck the stem, or the victim of an attack which succeeded because of the Wild Die was knocked into it. Regardless, a cloud of spores filling a Medium Burst Template centered on the mushroom fills the air.

Characters under the template must make a Vigor roll or gain a level of Fatigue from inhaling the spores. One level of Fatigue is removed at the end of each scene. The fungal zombies are immune to this effect.

Creatures that run through an area of ground fungus, and who roll a 1 on their running die, have triggered a cloud of spores. This fills a Medium Burst Template centered on the hero. Roll a d4 and consult the fungal zombie table on page 20 to determine the spore type. Again, fungals are unaffected, though they can trigger a spore cloud.

Cassandra: As Henchman Amazon warrior (page 19).

Fungal Zombies (2 per hero): See page 20.

SCENE 3: JUNGLE SWINGERS

The fetid fungus forest slowly gives way to towering trees covered in long, snakelike vines. The ground becomes increasingly boggier. Stinking pools of bubbling mud and quicksand of unknown depth makes the going hard. Suddenly, Cassandra is whisked off her feet into the air in a graceful arc! A half-naked man has her clutched in his arms as he swings through the trees on a vine. A low undulating cry, perhaps some sort of victory shout, echoes through the forest.

This scene is a Chase and uses our alternate Obstacles rules. Agility is used to swing from vine to vine. The villain begins three Range Increments ahead of the heroes, and each Range Increment represents 5". Movement on a vine counts as an Unstable Platform. Two-handed weapons cannot be used easily while swinging. All attacks with such weapons suffer a –2 penalty.

Heroes who can *fly* don't need to swing. They use Piloting as their skill. Power Points must be spent as normal each round to remain airborne. Flyers use the regular Obstacles rules (Sparse), which represent flying into trees or becoming tangled in branches.

Characters who would rather run are in for a hard time. The soil is extremely boggy, which reduces Pace by half, and prevents running. As such, those on vines gain +2 to Agility rolls (for moving more than double the walker's Pace) and the walker suffers a –1 penalty to his Agility roll as he has a lower Range Increment (1").

The wild man has Cassandra clutched close to his body. She provides him with Medium Cover (–2). Any shot which misses due to the Cover, automatically strikes Cassandra. This should hopefully deter the characters from taking shots.

At the start of round two, the wild man lets loose a long and undulating cry. Other wild men swing down from the trees and give chase to the characters. They begin two Range Increments behind the characters.

Rather than making an attack against a foe, a Parallel character can try to cut the swinger's vine. Vines have Toughness 6. A vine which takes a wound snaps, dumping the unfortunate character into the mire. He is automatically Shaken *and* drops back two Range Increments (to account for him having to climb a tree).

If the wild man chief escapes with his captive, proceed to Scene 4. Otherwise, move on to Act 4.

- **Cassandra:** As Henchman Amazon warrior (page 19).
- **Wild Man Chief:** See page 20.
- **Wild Men (2 per hero):** See page 21.

OBSTACLES

Deuce (–4) That's Not A Vine: What the hero thought was a thick vine turns out to be a large snake! With failure, the character panics and lets go of the annoyed serpent. He is automatically Shaken *and* drops back two Range Increments.

Three (–2) Slippery: The swinger's hands have difficulty maintaining grip on the slick vine. With failure, the character slips and lands in the swamp. He is automatically Shaken *and* drops back two Range Increments.

Four (–2) I Thought It Was Closer: The next vine is a little further away than the hero thought. With a failed roll, he fails to grasp the vine. He drops back one Range Increment as his arc reaches its zenith and carries back the way he just came.

Five (–2) Too Long: The vine is longer than the hero anticipated, and his arc takes him dangerously near the ground. A failed roll causes a collision with a soft Obstacle.

Six (–2/0) Angry Bees: The swinger has a choice of two routes. One is a longer route, but it's safer than the shorter, alternate one, which is swarming with angry bees. Ask the character which way he wants to go. The wild man opts for the safer route unless the heroes are within 2 Range Increments. The lesser wild men always avoid the bees.

Taking the long but safe route carries a –2 penalty. A failed roll simply means the swinger failed to make any real headway, due to the longer route.

Swinging through the bees carries no penalty to the Agility roll. However, a failed roll means the character has been stung multiple times, as well as gaining no distance. He gains a level of Fatigue until the end of the scene.

Seven (–2) Too Short: The vine the character has just grabbed is short, limiting his arc. A failed roll causes him to drop back one Range Increment, as he makes several attempts to increase his arc to reach the next vine.

Eight (–2) Corkscrewing: The vine actually wraps around a nearby tree. Unless the swinger is really careful, his movement carries round and round the tree, before smashing him into the trunk. A failed Agility roll causes a collision with a hard Obstacle.

Nine (–1) Left or Right: The explorer's arc is taking him straight toward a tree trunk. On a failed roll, the hero collides with the trunk and is Shaken.

Ten (–1) Ants: Brightly colored ants are swarming all over the vine. With failure, the hero has been bitten multiple times on his hands, as well as gaining no distance. He suffers a –1 penalty to Agility and Agility-linked skill rolls until the end of the scene.

Jack (–1) Unraveling Vine: As the character grabs the vine it begins to unravel! A failed roll causes him to slam into the mire. He is automatically Shaken *and* drops back two Range Increments.

Queen (–1) Trap: The vine is attached to a trap. As the character tugs on the creeper, a net swings upward into his path. With a failure, the hero crashes into the net and is entangled. Next round, he must make an Agility or Strength roll (his choice) to escape. Until he does, he cannot take any other actions. He may take a multi action penalty in the hope of escaping and moving in the same round.

King (0) Nuts: Two rival tribes of monkeys are throwing large nuts at each other. The character's arc takes him right through the center of the monkey war. Roll 3d6. For each die that comes up 1, the adventurer is hit by a nut. He takes 2d6 damage (from an Extra) for each hit.

Ace (0) Weak Vine: A thin vine snaps halfway through the explorer's swing. He lands facedown in the dirt on a failure. He is automatically Shaken *and* drops back one Range Increment (his arcing fall actually carries him further forward than normal).

SCENE 4: ON TOP OF THE WORLD

The wild man chief carries Cassandra back to a treetop

village. It takes the party several hours to track it down, by which time a celebratory feast is in full swing.

The village comprises a number of circular platforms constructed around tree trunks and on sturdy branches. These stand 8" above the forest floor. Platforms erected around trees are the same size as a Large Burst Template, with a 2" hole in the center (the trunk). The smaller ones are the same size as Medium Burst Templates. Small Burst Templates are used to represent guard platforms or areas where multiple catwalks and bridges connect.

Connecting these are 1" wide wooden catwalks and rope bridges. Catwalks extend for 4", whereas rope bridges go as far as 8". The GM can make the village as large as his tabletop allows. Rope bridges count as an Unstable Platform. The ropes have Toughness 8, but can only be severed by slashing or cutting weapons.

The wild men use rope ladders to reach the village, which drop down through holes in the platforms. However, the ladders are currently bundled up on the platforms. Gnarled branches allow an easy climb, though. Climbing rolls are made at +2.

Lone sentries (inactive) are posted on each platform, on the outskirts of the village. The majority of the revelers are on a large, central platform, dancing and chanting in honor of their chieftain's forthcoming wedding! Cassandra is standing beside the chieftain, too frightened to try and escape.

Characters wishing to plan a night assault are out of luck—the sun never sets in the Hollow Earth! The dense vegetation of the forest floor allows the characters to sneak beneath a platform unseen, though. The party is outnumbered, but the village layout actually favors them. Wild men can only cross the rope bridges and catwalks in single file, which limits their ability to use Gang Up tactics.

The scene need not end in a bloody massacre. The chief, who first saw Cassandra many years ago, is simply a man in love. Destiny brought the two together again, and he acted to claim her, as is the way of his people. As an Amazon, though, Cassandra has no love for the man (or any man, come to that). If this cultural difference can be explained to the chief, he reluctantly allows her to leave with the heroes.

- **Cassandra:** As Henchman Amazon warrior (page 19).
- **Wild Man Chief:** See page 20.
- **Wild Men (3 per hero):** See page 21.

ACT 4: THE ATLANTEAN TEMPLE

After rescuing Cassandra, the party continues on. The forest grows thicker, but the ground dries as it begins to climb into rolling hills. A day later, the heroes cut through a dense patch of brambles and catch sight of their goal.

SCENE 1: DISCOVERIES OLD AND NEW



The forest ends abruptly. Ahead, the ground is blackened, scorched, and cracked. Standing no more than a dozen feet away is the start of a paved road, its slabs black and glistening, reflecting the sun like a dark pool of still water. A long row of stone sphinxes with bearded, human heads and squared headdresses, face each other along each side.

The causeway leads to the base of a tall hill, atop which sits a wondrous site—an ancient city or temple complex of unknown age, yet seemingly undamaged by nature or attack.

The sphinxes are 20' long and stand 10' tall. The pathway glistens because the stones are scorched black to an almost supernatural sheen.

Heroes making a Common Knowledge (–2) or Knowledge (History) roll recognize the sphinxes as having distinctive Babylonian features, notably the beard and headdress. The body, however, is leonine, like many Egyptian and Greek edifices. The architecture of the buildings mixes elements of Babylonian, Egyptian, Greek, and Persian design. It is impossible to date them with accuracy, but given their architecture, a rough estimate is at least 5,000 years! In truth, the structure was erected around 11,500 years ago, by survivors of the Atlantis disaster.

INTERIOR

The interiors of the buildings are in pristine condition, and look like they were abandoned only recently, despite being devoid of any furnishings or trappings commonly associated with inhabited structures. Murals depicting winged sphinxes of similar design to those outside, gigantic statues of animal-headed humanoids, carvings of fleets of warships, and so on adorn every wall. The floors are tiled in elaborate patterns, resembling Celtic knot work designs.

There are numerous inscriptions on the walls and floors, and on bases of statues, but the language is unknown to the heroes. It has elements of many ancient languages mixed together but, rather than being a later invention, actually seems to be a precursor to these hoary tongues, for it looks fully developed.

Several rooms, possibly ancient bathhouses, contain large pools of steaming water, which emit a sulfurous odor. The water is warm to the touch. The water bubbles up from geothermal springs beneath the hill, and flows into the former bathhouses through stone-lined channels.

In the highest temple, the party discovers the first signs of damage. Part of the floor has been smashed, revealing a flight of steps descending into the craggy hill below. The shards of stone are sharp and fresh, but given the state of the rest of the edifice, it is impossible to tell whether the damage is recent or was caused in antiquity.

DARK WATER

The stairs lead to a tunnel (no light), which extends northward for a dozen feet before opening into a large chamber. A stone pathway, 1" wide and 16" long, runs through a flooded, rough-hewn chamber. The floor was once many yards below, a natural fault in the rock the Atlanteans chose to leave as nature designed and bridge the gap. At some time in prehistory, a thermal spring broke through the lower area, bringing with it the water. It also brought something else.

Deep within the chamber dwells a monster. Its great, bulbous body never rises from the cavern floor, and normally it slumbers, occasionally waking to snatch a blind, white fish. But the recent passage of human feet above has awoken it, and it is hungry. Sensing vibrations on the water, it shoots out long tentacles.

Have each hero make a Notice roll. Those who fail are Surprised, as the black, snaking tentacles burst from the surface and begin flailing wildly. It's unlikely the party is complacently ambling along, but if they are, the tentacles also get the Drop on the first round.

Characters who enter the water don't touch the bottom. The liquid is extremely dark, and visibility beneath the surface is treated as Pitch Darkness (–6). An action is required to clamber back onto the causeway.

The heroes don't have to defeat the tentacles. If they reach the far end of the bridge and proceed into the area beyond, the tentacles cannot reach them. The creature places spare tentacles across the bridge, though, to try and prevent escape. Adventurers can pass through a square containing a tentacle, but leaving it counts as Withdrawing from Melee.

Cassandra: As Henchman Amazon warrior (page 19).

Tentacles (3 per hero): See page 21.

GHOSTS OF THE PAST

The chamber beyond has rows of stone benches facing a raised dais. Surrounding the dais is a semi-circular stone railing, giving it a similar look to a church pulpit. Atop the railing is a hand-shaped indentation. Inspection of the dais reveals inscriptions, the language identical to that in the ruins above, which adorn the walls. There are no obvious exits.

If a character sits on a bench, a ghostly figure suddenly appears on the dais. It is human, though its culture is hard to determine. Like the statues and inscriptions, its clothes are a blend of many ancient cultures.

The specter begins speaking, though the language is total gibberish until a hero places his hand in the indentation. At that instant it switches to the character's native tongue (regardless of whether others can understand it).

"…abandoned Atlantis, the greatest of our cities, and moved to the underworld to begin again. Great and long were our labors, for much had been lost. Yet of our treasures, we saved our most powerful, the psychic enhancer. But you," the ghostly figure says, pointing directly at you, "are not of our blood, and will never reach it!"

At that moment panels slide open in the floor beneath your feet, sending you tumbling into the darkness below…

SCENE 2: BURN, BABY, BURN

The characters have landed on a fast-moving conveyor belt inside a cramped, metal-lined tunnel. The panel above has shut, and cannot be opened from down here. The party appears to be at the end of some sort of industrial process, for the conveyor belt is rapidly carrying them toward an open blast furnace door! Uniformly

STAMPFER

Stampfer had played his cards carefully during his captivity, and had told the blood priests of the likely existence of technology which could make them rulers of the Hollow Earth. Although they didn't believe him initially, his escape (and the likely use of firearms) convinced them there may be some truth in his story.

As such, after the escape, they sent a ship to the Amazon isle. It arrived just in time to see Stampfer and Athena depart. Following at a discrete distance, the warriors reached the northern continent and followed their foes.

At first awed by the size of the Atlantean ruin, they choose to wait and watch, fearful of what might lie within. When they saw the characters enter, whom they hate beyond measure for offending their gods, revenge overcame fear, and they set off in pursuit.

shaped slabs of steaming rock are being transported into the furnace.

Peering the other way (against the movement of the conveyor belt), the characters see slicing blades, smashing hammers, and a strange sort of gas! Beyond the gas is the dull glow of molten rock, which seems to mark the start of the process, and possibly the way out.

Characters who make a Weird Science roll, or Common Knowledge at –4, deduce the process takes molten lava and converts it into something else, perhaps the strange heatproof and lightweight metal used to construct the mining carts in the previous adventure.

In order to escape the machinery, the characters must complete the tasks below in the order they are written. Characters who can fly, and who wish to go airborne, use Piloting instead of Agility.

Unfortunately for the explorers, the heat is stifling, and moving against the motion of the conveyor belt is energy draining. Unless the heroes escape within six rounds, they suffer a level of Fatigue at the start of each round thereafter. Once Incapacitated, they are carried one stage back along the process. Since they cannot avoid the machinery, damage is taken automatically. The round after they pass through the saw, they are dumped in the furnace and vaporized! Fatigue from this source is removed once the scene ends.

* Powerful saws dart out from the walls, slicing large metal blocks into smaller sections. Heroes who fail an Agility roll suffer 3d6 damage (from an Extra) and fail to make any headway. They must repeat the roll next round.

* Blobs of cooled rock are beaten into a long rectangle by powerful blows from huge hammers. Avoiding the blows, which beat to a strange rhythmic pattern, requires an Agility roll at -4. A hero who uses a complete round to study the pattern can make a Smarts roll. With success, he calculates the hammers' beat. On the next round, he can make an Agility roll with no penalty.

A failed Agility roll causes 2d10 damage (from an Extra) and the hero fails to make any headway. He may repeat the roll next round.

* Now near the beginning of the process, the characters can see the rock begins as molten lava. The irregular blobs of red-hot goo pass through gas nozzles, which squirt a constant cloud of freezing gas. A hero who fails an Agility roll at –2 is partly frozen, and suffers from intense shivers. All Agility and Agility-linked skill rolls suffer a –1 penalty until the hero draws a Joker (or the adventure ends).

* At the start of the process is a large, heavy blade. Lava emerges from a tunnel and is cut into rough shapes. Above this is a ladder (a maintenance ladder) leading up into a shaft. Bright light can be seen shining down from the hole.

Grabbing it requires an Agility roll. Even flying heroes must make a Piloting roll, as the rising heat causes buffeting. A failed roll leaves the character on the conveyor belt (or hovering in mid air). A critical failure means he has landed on a blob of lava, suffering 2d10 damage (from an Extra). Flying heroes are instead caught by a spray of lava from the rising blade, and suffer the same damage.

Cassandra: As Henchman Amazon warrior (page 19).

SCENE 3: A NEW BREED OF GOD

Clambering up the ladder, you emerge into a large chamber formed of two concentric walkways and open platforms. You stand on the outermost ring. The walkways and platforms are raised above the floor, a bubbling pool of lava. Poking through the ceiling you can see what looks like a mechanical drilling machine. It seems someone else has reached the Hollow Earth from the surface, or at least almost succeeded.

Armed Amazons stand on four small platforms on the inner ring. Their attention is focused on events elsewhere in the chamber.

Squinting through the bright light, you can just make out Colonel Stampfer standing in the middle of a large, circular platform in the center of the room. Above him is a long, metal cylinder. A glowing crystal in the base bathes the Nazi in intense light. He has a look of sheer ecstasy on his face. Athena stands nearby, watching eagerly.

Heroes who pass a Common Knowledge roll at –2, or a Knowledge (History) roll, deduce the concentric rings and inner platform roughly match Plato's description of Atlantis, with its circular walls and canals.

Stampfer is immune to damage at this point, protected behind a power psychic energy field. Any shots simply drop to the floor, inches from him (and alert the Amazons to the characters' presence). However, the

cylinder can be targeted. It has no Toughness—any hit causes the light to suddenly cease.

The colonel is connected to an Atlantean machine, which boosts mental strength and psychic ability. In a bid to gain as much power as possible, he has cranked it to full capacity. As the light dies down, whether because of a ranged attack or because the characters let the scene run its course, the Nazi staggers from the machine, clutching his head.

"Yes, YES!" he shouts. "I can feel it, inside my head, growing, changing me. Such power! Through this contraption, Germany shall rule the world, and I shall rule Germany as a god!"

Athena runs up to the Nazi. "What of me? You said you could make me queen of the Amazons if I helped you."

Stampfer tilts his head back and laughs a long, hollow laugh. "Did you really think I have any interest in helping a barbarian? Insect! You were nothing more than a pawn." With that, he flicks his hand gently toward her, as if dismissing a servant.

The Amazon flies across the chamber, as if picked up by some invisible hand. She lands hard, slides, and plummets into the lava. At the last second, she reaches out a hand and grips the edge. She hangs there, her knuckles white from the strain, as Stampfer continues his laugh.

The heroes gain Surprise over the Amazons if they launch an attack (and haven't already fired at Stampfer), though not the Drop. Stampfer, with his newfound psychic powers, is not caught unawares. Deal only the party and Stampfer action cards on the first round of combat. Stampfer's first action is to activate his special form of *barrier*. He then uses his other powers, as appropriate, to rid himself of his foes.

Should they not act, Stampfer automatically notices them through his Danger Sense, which represents the ability to sense minds. He activates his *barrier* while moving closer, and then fires a psychic *burst* at them, which should force them into action.

TERRAIN

In the center of the chamber is a circular platform the size of a Large Burst Template (6" diameter). Hanging down over the center is a metal cylinder with a large crystal at the end (the psychic machine).

Four metal catwalks, each 1" wide, extend 4" toward the cardinal points. At the end of each is a smaller platform (the size of a Medium Burst Template, or 4"). These are linked together by a circular catwalk (1" wide).

Each smaller platform also has a 4" long and 1" wide catwalk projecting from it. The northern platform's catwalk goes north, the western one west, and so on. These extend to another circular catwalk, which marks the edge of the chamber.

Neither the catwalks nor platforms have any form of railing.

The floor, some 10' below the platforms and catwalks, is a bubbling pool of lava (used by the Atlanteans to power their machines). The metal used to construct the platforms and walkways doesn't conduct heat, and its melting point is exceptionally high.

STAMPFER'S GROWING POWER

The power Stampfer gains through the machine continues to grow each round. Changes to his stat block occur at the start of the round listed below, and are thus available when his action card is called.

Round 1: Arcane Background (Psionics), Psionics d8. Stampfer has no Power Points—he can use his abilities at will and maintain powers indefinitely, though he still suffers appropriate penalties for maintaining multiple powers. Such is his power that he can use multiple Psionic powers in the same round, though he suffers a multi action penalty as normal. His psychic powers are detailed in his stat block.

Round 2: Psionics d10, Spirit d12.

Round 3: Psionics d12, Mentalist Edge.

Round 4: Professional (Psionics), Psionics d12+1.

Round 5: Expert (Psionics), Psionics d12+2.

Round 6: Master (Psionics), d10 Wild Die when using Psionics.

THE FIGHT

Stampfer begins under the cylinder. The heroes enter on the outer catwalk, in line with the small platform. Divide the Amazons equally among the other platforms.

Athena is dangling over the lava on the southern edge of the small platform below where the characters begin, and cannot rescue herself (it's a pulp thing). This is an opportunity for a hero to set aside Athena's duplicity and do the right thing—rescue her. Dragging her to safety requires a Strength roll as an action from an adjacent character. At the start of the next round, Athena realizes the error of her ways and orders her Amazons to attack Stampfer.

Chicomoztoc Warriors: At that exact same time, a group of Chicomoztoc warriors, led by a blood priest, bursts into the chamber. (See the sidebar.) Half emerge onto the northern part of the outer catwalk, and half to the south. The final fight thus ends with a three-way battle—Stampfer versus the heroes and Amazons versus the Chicomoztoci! Let the players control the Amazons (even Athena, for now).

Overload: Once the Chicomoztoci arrive, things start going badly awry. Stampfer's use of the machine at full power has caused the system, which has suffered through lack of maintenance over the millennia, to go into overload and meltdown. Electricity arcs along its

length, and it begins emitting bolts of psychic energy in random directions. Deal it an action card.

On the machine's card, roll a d8 and count clockwise around the adjacent squares, with the square directly above counting as 1. Place a Cone Template pointing into the indicated square. Anyone under the template must make an Agility roll at –2 or suffer 2d10 damage.

Athena's Sacrifice: With his new powers, Stampfer is a tough opponent. His *barrier* must be knocked down before he can even be harmed, and the Nazi can simply use an action on the following round to activate it again.

In true pulp tradition, Athena decides to make amends for her previous errors in a dramatic and fatal way. In the 7th round, assuming Stampfer hasn't already been defeated, she throws herself at him while shouting, *"For the Amazons and their true queen!"* She knocks them both into the lava, killing herself and Stampfer instantly.

Stampfer is Dead: If Stampfer reaches Incapacitated before then (don't roll on the Incapacitation Table), he falls into the nearest pool of lava, and is instantly sucked under. An earth tremor causes the strange drilling machine to break free from its lofty position and plummets to the earth. It splashes into the lava, submerges briefly, and then bobs back to the surface. Its thick shielding protects it from the worst excesses of the heat.

However Stampfer dies, the structure begins to collapse as he perishes. Large chunks of the ceiling fall into the lava and crash onto the floor. Cassandra, if alive, urges the characters to use the strange machine to escape back to their own world before they are trapped here forever. Allow the party chance to say their farewells (which might include promoting Cassandra to queen). Cassandra then leads her Amazons to safety.

Should the characters *not* use the machine, they're trapped in the Hollow Earth. The entire Atlantean ruin collapses around the characters as they flee on foot, preventing any further exploration. The GM will have to create an adventure allowing them to escape back to the surface world.

- **Cassandra:** As Henchman Amazon warrior (page 19).
- **Colonel Stampfer:** See page 18.
- **Athena:** See page 18.
- **Amazon Warriors (3 per hero):** See page 19.
- **Chicomoztoc Blood Priest:** See page 19.
- **Chicomoztoc Warriors (3 per hero):** See page 19.

RUN AWAY!

The interior of the machine contains six passenger seats and a small cabin filled with dials and levers. Except for a battered satchel, there is nothing else of any interest. Engraved on it are the letters, "J.C." and "HEX." They're meaningless to the characters. Inside the satchel is an original copy of Jules Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth*.

Operating the machine requires a character with the Driving skill to take the helm, but no roll is required. With a roar, the engine kicks into life. The machine tilts at an angle of 45 degrees and the drill begins to spin. Blasting through the lava, the device begins cutting through the surrounding stone and back toward the surface of the Earth. After a relatively short but bumpy ride, the machine breaks through the Earth's crust.

The characters have surfaced in a farmer's field in Mexico, much to the surprise of the locals.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

SS-COLONEL REINHARDT STAMPFER

After fulfilling his dream and reaching the Hollow Earth, Stampfer is disgusted to discover the inhabitants are technological primitives. He still suspects there is ancient technology here, however, and will do anything to retrieve it to secure Germany's ascendance.

Abilities in italics are available only in the final scene of the adventure. Stampfer has no Power Points—he can use his abilities at will and maintain powers indefinitely, though he still suffers appropriate penalties for maintaining multiple powers.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (History) d10, Persuasion d10, Psionics dX (see text), Shooting d8, Streetwise d8, Survival d8, Tracking d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Cautious, Greedy (Major), One Eye

Edges: *Arcane Background (Psionics; see text)*, Block, Command, *Danger Sense*, Fervor, Improved Dodge, Improved Frenzy, Improved Level Headed, *Quick*, Strong Willed, Woodsman

Powers: *barrier** (wall of psychic energy), *burst*** *(telekinetic force), deflection (telekinesis), entangle (telekinetic grip), puppet (mind control), telekinesis*

Gear: Long sword (Str+d8)

* The *barrier* completely surrounds the space Stampfer occupies and cannot be cast to affect anyone else. It moves with him. He can make physic attacks through the shield, but cannot use mundane weapons.

** Victims are also knocked back 1" and sent prone. Characters pushed into the lava are left hanging on the edge. A Strength roll is required as an action to climb back onto a catwalk or platform.

(WC) ATHENA

Athena served the late-queen Hypsipyle as her loyal champion. With the old queen dead, Athena covets the Amazon throne. She is ruthless, conniving, and totally dedicated to her goal. Should she ever become queen, she would be a dictator, removing her enemies through fair means or foul.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d10
Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Shooting d10, Stealth d10, Survival d8, Taunt d10, Throwing d10, Tracking d6
Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 10; **Toughness:** 7
Hindrances: Loyal, Mean, Overconfident
Edges: Acrobat, Combat Reflexes, Command, Improved Block, Improved Dodge, Improved Frenzy, Improved Sweep, Level Headed, Quick Draw, Strong Willed, Very Attractive, Woodsman
Gear: Battle axe (Str+d8), throwing spear (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: Str+d6), short bow (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6)

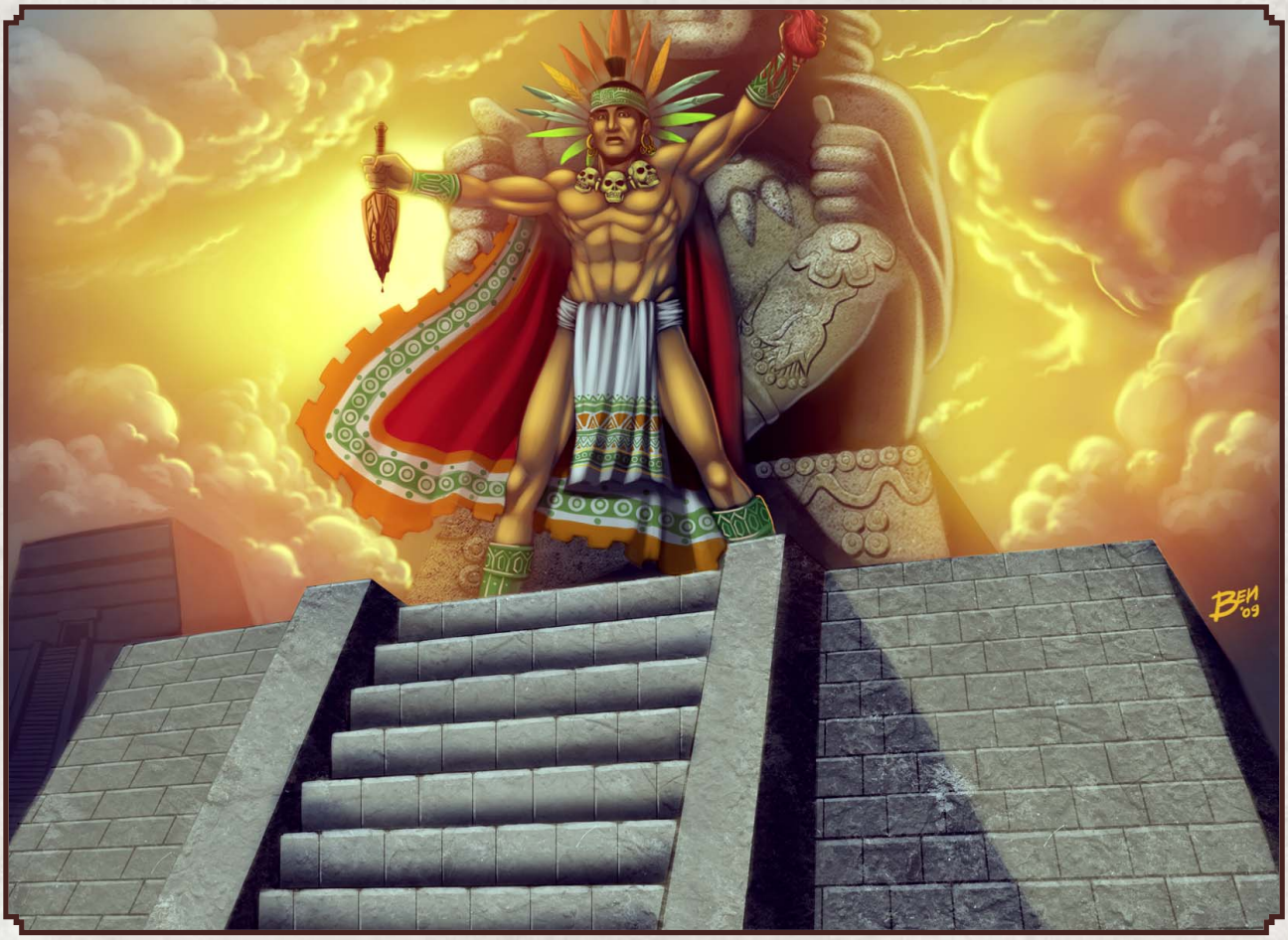
AMAZON WARRIOR

Attractive and deadly, every Amazon woman over the age of 10 receives training as a warrior and hunter. By the time they reach 16, they are well-trained fighters. By law, an Amazon can only take slaves once she passes her Rite of Adulthood, which can occur anytime after her 16th birthday.

Cassandra uses these stats, but is a Henchman.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Throwing d8, Tracking d6
Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Illiterate, Loyal
Edges: Attractive, Combat Reflexes, Woodsman
Gear: Short sword or hand axe (Str+d6), throwing spear (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: Str+d6), short bow (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6)

AMAZON SLAVE

Well-muscled, hairless, and completely naked, Amazon slaves are all male. They have no rights and few privileges. Their only duty is to serve their mistresses in whatever way they desire. Male children born to an Amazon are sold as slaves to other families. No maternal bond exists between mother and son.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6
Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Illiterate, Loyal
Edges: Brawny
Gear: —



 CHICOMOZTOC BLOOD PRIEST

One of the ruling council of priests, the priest wears a feathered robe and elaborate headdress. Around his belt are the shriveled hearts of previous victims. His spells are the equivalent of 25 Power Points (with no maintenance).

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Spellcasting d10

Charisma: –4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7(1)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command, Improved Frenzy, Sweep

Powers: During the encounter the priest can use the following spells: *3 x bolt* (rips out heart; 2 *bolts* for 2d6 damage), *1 x deflection* (spectral skulls intercept attacks), *1 x fear* (shrieking screams of previous victims), *5 x zombie* (each use animates one corpse. He can cast multiple spells with a single die roll, but not decide in advance how many spells he will use before he rolls). Spells that can be maintained are instead fixed at 3 rounds per casting.

Gear: Feathered cloak (+1), obsidian dagger (Str+d4)

CHICOMOZTOC WARRIORS

Dressed and equipped much like Aztecs, the Chicomoztoci are relentless in their quest to provide sacrifices for their gods. Should they fail in their duties, they know only too well one of them may be chosen to have his beating heart ripped from his chest and offered up on a plate.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Throwing d8

Charisma: –4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Frenzy, Sweep

Gear: Obsidian hand axe (Str+d6), 3 x throwing spear (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: Str+d6), blowgun (Range: 2/4/8, Damage: 2d4 + poison)

Special Abilities:

* **Poison:** Victims hit by a dart, whether or not they are injured, must make a Vigor roll at –1. With failure, they lose a die of Strength, Agility, and all Agility-linked skills (minimum d4). The effects wear off after an hour.

ATLANTEAN SPECTERS

The specters are not creatures of flesh and blood, but psychic projections powered by ancient Atlantean technology. They have no feelings of any sort, and cannot be communicated with.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities:

* **Limited Immunity:** +2 to resist opposed Psionic powers and +2 Armor against damage-causing Psionic powers. Immune to *puppet* (they have no minds to speak of). Completely immune to all other forms of arcane attack.
* **Psychic Blows:** The specters are armed with a variety of one-handed melee weapons. Regardless of type, they cause Str+d6 damage.
* **Psychic Projection:** The specters are psychic projections, and are immune to Smarts Tricks and Tests of Will.

 PIRATE CAPTAIN

The captain is not the original commander of the vessel, which was sucked into the Hollow Earth centuries ago while navigating the Bermuda Triangle, but he is a direct blood relation. A scurvy seadog if ever there was, he preys on unarmed merchant ships, selling their precious cargoes across the Hollow Earth and selling prisoners to anyone willing to meet his price.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Boating d10, Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Taunt d8, Swimming d8

Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Greedy (Major), Mean

Edges: Command, Improved Frenzy

Gear: Cutlass (Str+d6), flintlock pistol (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 2d6 +1, 2 rounds to reload), 20 rounds

PIRATE

Most of the seadogs are descendants of the original mariners, but a few are natives, turned to a life of crime and debauchery.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Shooting d6, Swimming d4

Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Greedy (Minor), Mean

Edges: —

Gear: Cutlass (Str+d6), flintlock pistol (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 2d6 +1, 2 rounds to reload), 10 rounds

VELOCIRAPTOR

Unlike the *eoraptors* from the previous adventure, these are much bigger dinosaurs, more akin to the velociraptors in the Jurassic Park movie trilogy. Fast and deadly, their instincts are simply to kill and eat whatever they see.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8(A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Special Abilities:
* **Bite/Foot Claw:** Str+d8
* **Pounce:** A velociraptor can leap up to 4" to gain +4 to its attack and damage. Its Parry is reduced by –2 until its next action when performing the maneuver however.

FUNGAL ZOMBIES

Fungal zombies, also known as fungals, aren't actually undead, though it's hard to tell just from looking at them. Victims of certain spores, the creatures are now part plant and part human. Their skin is a mass of bulbous fungus of many hues, prone to exploding suddenly and releasing a cloud of spores.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Stealth d8
Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6
Special Abilities:
* **Claws:** Str+d4.
* **Immunity:** Immune to poison and disease.
* **Plant:** +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called Shots do no extra damage.
* **Shuffling Gait:** These fungal abominations roll a d4 running die, instead of a d6.
* **Spores:** Once a day, a fungal zombie can release a cloud of spores. The spores fill a Medium Burst Template centered on the fungal, and last until the fungal's next action. Any creature in the cloud must make a Vigor roll or be affected. (A victim caught in multiple clouds must roll for each one separately.) The nature of the affliction depends on the type of spore released. Each cloud contains only one type of spore. Roll a d4 and consult the table below. Fungals are immune to these spores.

FUNGAL SPORES

d4	Spore Type
1	**Paralysis:** The victim is paralyzed for 2d6 rounds, during which time he can take no actions.
2	**Choking:** Victims are Shaken for 1d6 rounds. This does not count as a physical attack and cannot be removed with a benny.
3	**Blinding:** The victim is blinded. He has –6 to all trait rolls involving sight, and his Parry drops to 2. He may make an Agility roll each round as an action to rub the spores free of his eyes. With success, the spores are removed but it consumes the entire round. With a raise, the hero regains his sight and may act as normal.
4	**Berserk:** The victim automatically goes berserk (as per the Edge) and attacks the nearest creature, friend or foe, with a Wild Attack. If there are multiple targets available, roll randomly to see which one the victim attacks. Calming down is as normal for the Berserk Edge.



WILD MAN CHIEF

The strongest, smartest, and most agile member of the tribe, the chief rules the tribe through charisma, not force of arms. His kidnapping of Cassandra is not an evil act. Indeed, the chief first caught sight of her years ago, when she visited the Atlantean ruin, and set his heart on capturing her. Now, years later, fate has delivered him into his arms.
Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10
Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Survival d10, Tracking d10, Swimming d8
Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8
Hindrances: All Thumbs, Clueless, Illiterate
Edges: Acrobat, Beast Bond, Beast Master, Brawny, Charismatic, Combat Reflexes, Fleet Footed, Woodsman
Gear: Knife (Str+d4)

WILD MAN

Although they lack the basic trappings of civilization, these are not mindless savages. Rather, they have, through choice or necessity, chosen to live a simple life.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Tracking d8, Swimming d6
Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: All Thumbs, Clueless, Illiterate
Edges: Acrobat, Woodsman
Gear: Knife (Str+d4)

TENTACLES

Long, snakelike, and powerful, each tentacle is treated as an individual Extra. Wounds do not harm the creature lurking beneath. When a tentacle is wounded, it sinks beneath the water and does not return.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d10, Stealth d8
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5
Special Abilities:
* **First Strike:** Each tentacle may make a free Fighting roll against one opponent who moves adjacent to it.
* **Mindless:** The tentacles are immune to Smarts Tricks and Tests of Will.
* **Size –1:** The tentacles are long but thin.
* **Slam:** Str. On a raise, the creature has grappled the victim. An entangled victim may only attempt an opposed Strength roll each round to escape. Once grappled, the tentacle does its Strength damage automatically by crushing its prey.

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DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

THE HANDS OF KALI



OFFICIAL SAVAGE WORLDS LICENSED PRODUCT

PAUL 'WIGGY' WADE-WILLIAMS

DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

11

THE HANDS OF KALI

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THE HANDS OF KALI

The Thuggee are perhaps one of the best-known criminal gangs in history. Operating for centuries in the backwaters of India, their *modus operandi* (strangulation) and links to the goddess Kali have made them popular pulp villains.

In truth, the Thuggee were not a vast, organized network of killers, but rather independent gangs who shared a common methodology and history. Ranks were informal, and often Thuggee could trace their ancestry back along lines of murderers.

In 1835, William Sleeman, a British official, was appointed head of the "Thuggee and Dacoity Department." Through the use of intelligence and informants, Sleeman began to systematically eradicate the Thuggee. By 1870, Thuggee had vanished, and the roads of India were safer than they had been for many generations. The Thuggee and Dacoity Department remained in force until 1904, after which time it was superseded by the Central Criminal Intelligence Department.

Eradicating Thuggee did not only ensure safer travel through the subcontinent. Sleeman's work also helped secure Indian support for the British Raj, and was thus as much a political victory as one over criminality.

The year is now 1937 and times are changing rapidly. After centuries of British dominance, India now has independent provincial assemblies. Although full independence is still a decade away (1947), the seeds have been sown.

This has not gone down well with every British official. One in particular, Sir Walter Sleeman, a distant descendant of William Sleeman and head of the CCID, has taken great offense at the possibility of a free India. Sleeman is a colonial through and through, and one of the worst kind. In his eyes, only the British are fit to rule the subcontinent. To that end, he has taken steps to ensure British rule remains in force.

A former engineer and student of Weird Science, Sleeman has used his advanced technical knowledge to create a number of mechanical hands. Wrapped in black bandages, his inventions have been used in a dozen murders, leaving no sign of a break in and a victim obviously strangled with extreme force. Sleeman, acting through agents, has started rumors of a Thuggee resurgence. Rumors are also rife that the ancient cult is using vile black magic rituals to reanimate the hands of former Thuggee.

Following the deaths of a number of British government officials and minor Indian nobility, India is rapidly descending into chaos. Many important Indian nobles and officials have already asked the British for military support in stamping out the Thuggee, exactly as Sleeman hoped. British officials have begun eying the Indians with suspicion, creating tension across the land. All is exactly as Sleeman planned.

Knowing that India failed to eradicate the Thuggee cult before without British help, he hopes that the killings will prompt an increased British military presence in India and a firmer grip over political affairs, resulting in eternal British rule.

But now something has caught his eye which threatens to derail his plans. A group of famous American adventurers are en route to India to collect historical artifacts for their museum. At first, Sleeman seeks to kill our heroes, blaming the deaths of "foreign tourists" on the Thuggee, but as the adventure unfolds, he makes them scapegoats in an assassination attempt.

THE CHARACTERS

This Savage Adventure contains a pulp tale based around the exploits of four pre-generated characters. The full character sheets are available for free at **www.tripleacegames.com**.

The heroes have all their leveling opportunities from Seasoned (at which they begin) into Legendary mapped out in advance. Each published adventure in this line earns the heroes a fixed 5 Experience Points, guaranteeing them an advance every mission. All the players need do is tick the appropriate box and start making use of the new upgrade.

Characters: 75 XP.

The GM also needs the pulp setting rules from the TAG website.

ACT 1: LOCO IN LAHORE

The Boston Museum has hired the heroes to go to India and oversee the final stages of an archaeological dig sponsored by the Museum. Their first stop is Lahore, where they are scheduled to meet a British official. From there, their plans involve a train journey to the dig site, which lies near to the Khyber Pass.

SCENE 1: DANGER IN THE SKIES

After arriving in Delhi you switched planes for the hop up to the mountainous northern region of India and your first destination—Lahore. The plane, a DC-3, is crowded with human passengers and a number of goats and chickens. The temperature is abominable, the smell of the animals overpowering, but at least the food is good.

After serving you, the steward vanishes into the cockpit. The plane suddenly sways violently from left to right, before the nose tips down at a steep angle! Six gunshots reverberate through the plane! The steward emerges from the cockpit, a smoking revolver in one hand, a long dagger in the other, and a look of maniacal glee in his eyes.

Deal action cards.

Both pilots have been killed—one stabbed and the other strangled. Worse, the shots were not fired into the pilots, but into the control panel. Hydraulic fluid is leaking everywhere and sparks are spitting from the shattered instrumentation. One engine is in flames, having suffered a severe case of over revving due to a fractured throttle cable.

There are only six rounds until disaster! Landing requires a Piloting roll at –8 and only one roll is allowed. There a few things the adventurers can do to make landing easier, though they also have to deal with the Thuggee threat in the same timeframe. Note that the pilot must use an action to keep the plane flying—he can help with other tasks in the cockpit, but suffers a multi action penalty.

The interior of the plane is, for game purposes, 3" wide and 10" long. The cockpit is 1" deep. All movement counts as difficult ground due to the number of passengers and animals aboard and the motion of the aircraft.

Use of firearms is hampered by the Unstable Platform rule, and there is also a chance a stray shot could hit an innocent. All shots use the Innocent Bystanders rule, and there is an innocent adjacent to everyone not in the cockpit at all times (Toughness 5). It's time for a fistfight!

Although there is only one obvious Thuggee (the guy with the empty revolver), there are three more hidden among the passengers. Unless the heroes keep a careful eye on the passengers once the action begins, the concealed Thuggee gain the Drop on their first attack.

(Sleeman has used a variation of the method used by the Assassins to ensure total loyalty and no fear of death. The men were drugged, pampered to excess by "heavenly maidens," and told that their deaths in the greater cause would ensure a swift trip to heaven and eternal pampering. It's crude brainwashing, but effective.)

If the Piloting roll to land hasn't been made before the end of the sixth round, the remaining engine erupts in flames from the stress, and the plane slams into the dirt. The violent impact causes injuries to many passengers and inflicts 4d6 damage (from a Wild Card) on the heroes.

* **Flap Lever Damaged:** The flap controls are damaged. Making a quick repair first requires the instrument panel to be unscrewed (Agility roll at –2) or ripped off (Strength roll at –2) as an action. Following this, a Repair roll at –2 is needed to jury-rig a patch. With success, the pilot has +2 to his Piloting roll.

* **Trim Unresponsive:** A shot has severed several cables, limiting the plane's ability to perform maneuvers. By shifting the passengers left and right or forward or backward along the fuselage, a hero can make the pilot's job much easier.

This requires an Intimidation or Persuasion roll at –2. Both suffer a further –2 penalty unless the character giving the orders speaks Indian. Success gets the passengers cooperating, and grants the pilot a +2 bonus to his roll.

* **Wheels Jammed:** The wheels won't respond to automatic controls. Unless someone hand cranks them into place, the plane is going to hit belly first.

In order to perform this backbreaking task, a hero must make Strength rolls. He needs to score a total of four successes (a raise counts as two successes, but no more than one raise per roll counts). When the total is achieved, the pilot gains +2 to his Piloting roll.

Thuggee (1 per hero): See page 20.

SCENE 2: THE RUNAWAY BOMB

At the bottom of the steps stands a European. Despite the oppressive heat, he wears a full tweed suit, hat, and leather gloves. As you descend, he approaches and offers a hand in friendship.

"Good morning," he says politely. "I'm Sir Walter Sleeman, your man in Lahore, so to speak. If you'll hurry this way, we'll get you to your lodgings. I'll explain things on the way. All a bit of a bloody mess, don't you know."

Characters who mention the in-flight trouble are simply told, *"Really? Well, you better come and make a report."* Any Thuggee taken alive are dragged away by

the authorities. Interrogation by the characters reveals nothing of use—the thugs have no idea whom they serve, except Kali, the goddess of death,

Sleeman takes the party to the official in charge of the airport, and has them tell their story, prompting them to leave out no details. Copious notes are taken in silence. Afterward he looks at Sleeman and says, *"Damn Thuggee again, eh, Sir Walter?"* Sleeman nods in response, before ushering the characters out onto the airstrip and toward his waiting car,

Sleeman's driver, a hulking Indian with bulging muscles, picks up the heroes' bags like they are feather pillows, and loads them carefully into the trunk.

On the short journey into town, Sleeman tells the characters the following:

"Sounds like your trouble on the plane is related to events elsewhere," Sleeman sighs as he wipes a handkerchief across his brow. "Have you ever heard of the Thuggee? They were a murderous band of stranglers who plagued India for centuries. The British, actually one of my ancestors, put a stop to their foul play back in the 1870's, but it seems like they've popped back to the surface. A dozen British government officials and Indian nobles have been found strangled in the last few months.

"Dashed disgraceful, and causing no end of problems for us. You know India is getting a degree of autonomy, don't you? No? Well, I imagine it takes time for news to cross the Atlantic. Anyway, this Thuggee business is threatening to put the stoppers in that process. Forcing His Majesty to send more troops and crack down on criminal activity. It's souring Anglo-India relations to no end.

"As for you, not many Americans out in these parts," Sleeman grins. "Killing a few rich foreigners would really put the kibosh on things, and upset our former colony's government, eh?"

If the characters mentioned Sleeman's leather gloves, he holds up his hands. Under no circumstances will he take his gloves off to show his "scars."

"Vanity," he smiles, "I used to be an engineer, until an industrial accident left me badly burned. I have limited mobility, but the scars have never healed. Don't like to upset folks, so I keep them covered."

Sir Walter Sleeman: See page 19.
Sleeman's Bodyguard: See page 19.

BOMB TRUCK

The car pulls up outside a small building atop a steep hill. "Your train to the Khyber Pass doesn't leave until tomorrow morning," Sleeman says, stepping onto the crowded street. "There's a small amount of formal paperwork you need to sign, but then you'll have the run of this place." He gestures toward the building. "We use it to put up guests of His Majesty's government. Quite grand inside, really, and much cooler. I'm sure you'll be very comfortable."

Sleeman looks down the hill toward a government office and points. "Ah! That," he says, "is the young Maharaja. He's likely to be an important figure in Indian politics in years to come." Following his gaze, you spy a young lad of about 12 years dressed in fine silks emerging from the office with a number of heavies at his side.

As the driver unloads your bags from the trunk, he is forced to leap aside as a truck comes hurtling down the hill at breakneck speed. "My God!" shouts Sleeman. "It's going to ram the colonial offices! Save the maharaja!"

As the truck barrels along, the driver leaps out and vanishes into the crowd. All you saw of him was a distinctive red turban.

Have the heroes make a Notice roll. Those who succeed spot the tarpaulin on the back flap up in the wind to reveal a number of crates. All are labeled nitroglycerine!

Unless the characters want to watch a very large explosion, this is their cue to leap into action. In order to stop the truck, the characters have to perform four tasks in order within six rounds. At the end of the 6th round, the vehicle smashes through a wooden barrier, slams into the government office, and explodes!

Heroes who failed their Notice roll may begin chasing the truck one round *after* those who succeeded. In the event no one passed, Sleeman spots the nitroglycerine and informs the heroes. The dastardly official actually arranged this whole event. Knowing the heroes' reputation, he hoped they would try to stop the truck, and in doing so be blown to pieces.

* The first thing the characters must do is draw level with the truck. This requires an Agility roll if running or a Driving roll if someone thinks quickly and uses Sleeman's car. Despite the truck's speed, a running hero always has chance to catch it—it's good pulp.

* Next, they must get aboard the truck by making an Agility roll at –2. This gets them either onto the back of the truck or onto the hood. Drivers should note that the route of their vehicle will cause it to crash into a sturdy building if they abandon it to leap onto the truck, so it won't cause any injuries to innocents.

The street is crowded. Throwing the nitroglycerine off the back *will* kill people. Also, the truck is far too heavy for the car to knock off course. There is also the chance the impact will detonate its deadly cargo. Make sure the heroes understand this.

* The door is locked! Characters aboard the truck have to make a Strength roll at –2 to either smash the windshield or rip open the door. It's their choice which route they use.

* Now inside, the likely action is to pump the brakes. Unfortunately, the brake hose has been severed! Steering the vehicle away from the office and onto an uphill slope (which will slow its speed) requires a Driving roll at –2.

Should the 6th round expire and the truck not be stopped, it explodes on impact. Anyone aboard suffers 4d10 damage from an Extra. We're assuming the hero realizes the futility of the task at the last minute and rolls clear, rather than riding the bomb to destruction. Fortunately, the maharaja is bundled to safety by his bodyguards in time to escape serious injury.

Soldiers from the compound surround any heroes near the scene, their rifles readied for use. Sleeman quickly appears on the scene and orders the guards to lower arms, explaining that they have just saved the maharaja's life.

A few moments later, the maharaja appears with his bodyguard. He eyes the heroes up and down for a moment, and then deigns to speak about them. He only makes eye contact with the characters if there is a female in the party. The young king is looking for a beautiful bride, and the childish part of his personality seeks a feisty woman of adventure.

"Sir Walter," the youth says in a quiet, distinguished voice, "it seems I owe you and your guests my life. Invite them to the ball I am hosting this evening at the governor's mansion." With that, the youth walks away, flanked by his guards.

Sir Walter turns to you. "Well," he smiles broadly, "you've been here for barely an hour and already you've got an invite to the most prestigious social event in India. Best we get you some suitable clothes, eh?"

Sir Walter Sleeman: See page 19.
Sleeman's Bodyguard: See page 19.
The Maharaja: See page 20.

SCENE 3: PARTY WITH THE MAHARAJA

Sleeman arranges for tuxedoes and dresses, as appropriate, to be sent to the heroes ready for their attendance at the ball. The Englishman, and his ever-present bodyguard, are also attending, and insist the characters share the same car.

A servant announces each of the guests in turn by their full title. When it comes to the heroes, who don't have a written invitation with their names and titles on, the servant quietly asks for the information. If you're using the pre-generated characters, the servant commits a slight *faux pas*, introducing Brent and Amelia as "Lord and Lady Valentine." He introduces any others by their proper name, any title they are to use, and the epitaph, "an American."

The ballroom is packed with Indian noblemen and ladies in fine silks, British officers in their scarlet jackets, and tuxedo-clad officials, complete with ladies on their arms, in ball gowns adorned with peacock feathers.

The party, held in a colonial mansion, mixes Indian and European traditions. The banquet is all Indian food, whereas the dancing that follows is European. GMs who want to have some fun should feel free to have chilled monkey brains and constrictor stuffed with live baby snakes on the menu—not particularly Indian, but amusing nonetheless.

The first part of this scene is a chance for the players to roleplay their characters. The GM should invent a few NPCs for the characters to converse with. A pilot might meet a former British ace of the Great War with whom to share stories, a noble could meet fellow gentry, a ruffian may end up talking to a clergyman about the sinful nature of mankind, while a movie star might meet an adoring fan. At some point, the maharaja will order (not ask) a female adventurer to dance with him (see below).

Dancing: Check the Reaction Table if a hero asks a lady to dance to determine her initial reaction. Her Charisma is 3 minus the roll of 1d4 (giving a range of 2 to –1).

The hero then makes an Agility roll to determine how well he dances. His partner has a d6 Agility and grants bonuses as per a Cooperative roll. Heroes likely to know ballroom dances should receive a small bonus (+1 or +2), whereas those who think the Charleston is still the height of fashion should suffer a penalty (from –1 to –4).

With success or a single raise, the pair enjoys themselves without making any major mistakes, and may even turn a few heads. Two or more raises wows the crowd. A failure means the hero embarrasses himself somehow, such as bumping into other couples or stepping on toes. A Critical Failure leads to a major social faux pas.

Female characters should be asked to dance at least once by a male guest. Roll Charisma as above, but do not roll on the Reaction Table—how the hero reacts to the gesture is up to her.

UNHAND THAT WOMAN

Before the players get bored with socializing, an Indian gentleman rushes past them, blood streaming from his nose. If approached, he says that a group of British army officers are harassing his sister, Indrani. He tried to intervene, but received a punch in the nose for his trouble.

The officers are bored and drunk. They've turned their amorous attention to a young Indian noblewoman, blatantly ignoring the Indian caste system and government restrictions about dallying with the natives while in uniform. They are led by one Captain Gerald Hastings, a frightful bore of a man who laments missing the Great War and how he'd have sent "the Bosch fleeing in terror."

Any attempts to protect the woman result in a fistfight. The officers do have swords and pistols (heightened

security after the recent strangulations), but they only draw them if a hero is stupid enough to do so first.

Heroes who want to pack a heftier punch can use crockery (Str+d4, smashes after one use) or silver serving trays (Str+d4 if one-handed and Str+d6 used two-handed). The officers make a grab for such items once the rumble begins. Picking up one of these improvised weapons is an action unless a hero has Quick Draw.

Once one side is incapable of continuing, Sleeman and an army colonel arrive on the scene to break up the fight. The soldiers are duly admonished for disgracing the uniform, while the characters receive a rebuking for getting into a fight at the maharaja's ball. Sleeman asks the heroes to apologize to the maharaja in person.

Perversely, the maharaja is very excited and intrigued if a female adventurer has joined in the fight. At the GM's discretion, he may be overheard to say, *"She is like a tigress! She would make a very good wife and mother of the many children I wish to sire. Arrange things in the morning to make it happen."*

Whether the heroine simply avoids the young king or approaches him and makes her feelings known is left to the player to decide. The latter does not have the desired effect—it only makes the maharaja want her more!

- **The Maharaja:** See page 20.
- **British Officers (1 per hero):** See page 20.

SCENE 4: THE RED TURBAN

In the morning, Sleeman and his hulking, silent bodyguard escort the characters to the train station. Among the many passengers waiting on the platform are crowds of Indians, British army officers and their wives, government officials, hawkers pushing all manner of wares, and so on.

Sleeman shakes your hands and wishes you a safe journey. "I would stay to see you off," he says, "but other duties mean I'm required back at the office as soon as possible. Oh, before I forget, you'll have a guard on the way back. Sepoys, native Indian lads serving the Crown. All men I handpicked myself and deem very trustworthy. Do telegraph me immediately if there are any problems. I've got a bit of political clout in these parts. I look forward to seeing you on your return." With that, the official and his bodyguard depart.

The crowd on the platform grows larger, as the time to the train's arrival nears. Across the throng you spot a distinctive red turban. Whether it is the truck driver or not is swiftly answered as the wearer, an Indian man of middling years, spots you. He promptly turns toward the exit and begins fighting his way through the crowd.

This scene uses the Chase rules and our alternate Obstacle rules. The turbaned man begins three Range Increments ahead of the heroes, and each Range Increment equates to 1". The Indian seeks only to escape, having no interest in starting a fight with four foreigners in public.

Whatever happens, he must either escape or die. Should a hero close the gap to one Range Increment, the Thuggee throws himself under a passing train. He dies instantly and messily.

(M) Red Turbaned Man: Treat as a Thuggee (page 20) Wild Card.

OBSTACLES

Deuce (–4) Surge: A vast throng of passengers surge toward an arrived train, crossing the hero's path. On a failure, he is caught in the surge and swept back two Range Increments.

Three (–2) Urchins: A crowd of urchins swarms around the character in search of charity. The hero has two choices—hand over some money or try to push past them. The thug always takes the second option.

Generosity is a noble trait, but in this case it can backfire. A failed Agility roll means the hero gains no distance this round. Worse still, his act attracts more beggars, giving him a –2 penalty to his next Agility roll. Heroes who try to push through simply gain no distance on a failed roll, as per normal.

Four (–2) Time Check: An English gent accosts the hero and asks for the correct time. He keeps blocking the character's path until he gets an answer or is pushed aside. Either way, a remark about, "Rude foreigners," can be heard after the character rushes past.

Five (–2) Steam Blast: A waiting train lets loose a blast of steam from the wheels, temporarily creating a cloud over the platform. A failed roll means the hero is momentarily confused and makes no ground.

Six (–2) Left or Right: A rotund gentleman blocks the hero's path. As the character goes left, so does the man. The same thing occurs when the adventurer ducks to the right. This could take a while! Failure means the hero drops back one Range Increment due to the added delay.

Seven (–2) He Went That Way: A helpful youth points out the route of the villain as he momentarily vanishes from sight. Unfortunately, the lad got the wrong direction and the hero must waste time recovering old ground. A failed roll moves the hero back one Range Increment.

If the Thuggee draws this card, he simply gets caught up in a crowd of pedestrians.

Eight (0/–2) Baggage Train: A long line of baggage trolleys stacked with suitcases cuts across the runner's path. He must either try to jump them or go around. The Thuggee tries to jump them only if his pursuers are within two Range Increments.

Jumping incurs no Agility penalty, but a failed roll leaves the hero tangled up in spilled cases and surrounded by angry porters. He is automatically Shaken.

Going around incurs a –2 penalty due to the lateral distance the character must use before he can move forward.

Nine (0/—) Pickpocket: As the character passes by a youth, he snatches something from the character's pocket. The adventurer feels the item being lifted and sees the kid run off into the crowd. He can either ignore the thief or give chase. The Thuggee doesn't care about losing a few rupees, and so always ignores the pickpocket.

Ignoring the child means the roll is made at no penalty. The stolen item is never seen again. The GM should decide what has been lifted by the light-fingered rogue.

If he elects to chase the kid, who thinks his act went unnoticed, he makes no Agility roll this round. Instead, he automatically loses two Range Increments due to the delay of hounding the lad and retrieving his belongings.

Ten (–1) Vendor: A food vendor with a small cart pushes his trolley in front of the hero. A failed roll causes the hero to knock over the cart. The character is left Shaken and covered in curry sauce.

Jack (–1) Crowds: A small crowd has gathered, blocking the only clear route. Failure causes the hero to drop back one Range Increment.

Queen (–1) Stray Dog: A vicious stray dog decides to take a bite at the adventurer. Make a Fighting d8 roll. With success, the hero has been bitten, suffering d6+d4 damage (from an Extra), before he makes his Agility roll.

King (0/–4) Autograph Hunter: By this stage in their career the heroes are widely known, at least among Americans and Europeans. An attractive lady (or handsome man if the hero drawing this card is a woman) asks the hero to sign an autograph and pose for a photo. Ask the character if he wants to ignore his fan or take time out to shake hands. The Thuggee is merely caught up in a crowd.

Ignoring the fan gives no penalty. Stopping to sign something and pose for a photograph imparts a hefty –4 penalty, but he is rewarded with a kiss. This "lucky charm" earns the character a benny.

Ace (0/–2) Trolley Surfing: Porters are pushing an empty trolley through the station. Ask the hero whether he wants to run around the trolley or try to surf it. The Thuggee always goes around.

Going around the trolley gives no penalty and failure has no special effect beyond temporarily thwarting forward movement.

Trying to use it as a giant roller skate gives the character a –2 penalty to his Agility roll, but if successful he gains an *extra* Range Increment. This bonus (and the penalty) stacks with the Push maneuver. Failure causes him to move out of control. He smashes into a wall and is Shaken. The trolley can be used for this round only.

ACT 2: A TRIP OF TROUBLES

The journey to Peshawar, the nearest town to the dig, takes two days. Fortunately, Sleeman has booked them a sleeper compartment. The heroes' seats are in a first class carriage.

SCENE 1: THE BLACK HAND OF KALI

After the long journey, the heroes reach the train station at Peshawar, the nearest major town. From there, it is a three-day mule ride into the mountains and the site of the dig. On arriving, they are greeted by an English archaeologist, Doctor Mortimer Fitzstanley Watson-Hume.

"Bit of a mouthful, I know," the doctor says after introducing himself. "Most people just call me Mortimer. I don't hold to titles, so please don't call me doctor. Frightfully stuffy and old-fashioned. Anyway, welcome to my little dig. You are from the Boston Museum, aren't you? Thought so. Unmistakable accents, you Americans have.

"Anyway, we're just crating up your artifacts. Shouldn't be more than a few hours at most. Until then, grab a trowel and feel free to have a dig. Afternoon tea is at 5 o'clock sharp."

The site is little more than a jumble of walls and excavated foundations. If asked, the doctor informs the characters the site is an old temple of Kali. According to Indian folklore, it has stood for centuries before succumbing to Afghan raiders only a few decades ago. The expedition is here to rescue any finds before the bandits claim the rest.

Should the heroes elect to nose around, they find a quiet corner of the temple devoid of any diggers. One hero (chosen at random) accidentally steps through a paving slab, revealing a void below. A little excavation reveals a set of worn stairs.

Mortimer, if informed, replies that it's just likely another storage cellar, but the character should feel free to nose around. They might, he jokes, find an undiscovered treasure trove. He reminds them to take flashlights.

KALI'S TEMPLE

The stairs lead down to a very long corridor. At the far end is a stone door, engraved with the image of Kali. The icon shows her with four arms, holding a sword, trident, severed head, and a bowl in which to catch the head's dripping blood. Characters who inspect the image closely may make a Notice roll. With success, they detect faint traces of dried blood on the bowl.

Any adventurer making a Common Knowledge roll (–2) or a Knowledge (History) roll can identify the goddess. According to myth, she is associated with death and destruction. More revealingly, the Thuggee worshipped her as their patron.

Opening the door can be achieved through destructive force, such as using pickaxes (there are plenty at the dig site) or by rubbing a small amount of blood onto the bowl. The latter causes the door to slide sideways, revealing a dank chamber beyond.

The dark chamber is 50 feet long and half that wide.

Thick cobwebs cover the ceiling and walls. At the far end stands a tall statue of the goddess, her skin jet black, a necklace of white skulls (real human skulls) around her neck, and bright, red lips to show she has recently feasted on a victim. At the feet of the statue is a plain wooden box.

Inside is a large mummified hand. The appendage is twice the size of a regular hand. Any hero who makes a Common Knowledge (–4) or Knowledge (History) roll recalls an old legend concerning an item just like this one.

The story goes that the hand was discovered by a group of British explorers in the late 19th century, who took the hand back to England. However, Thuggee cultists, to whom the relic was sacred, hunted down the expedition members and slew them. That the hand was returned to India seems evident, unless there is more than one in existence.

Should the roll fail, Mortimer tells the tale if shown the artifact later. Except as a scientific curiosity it's worthless, so he happily lets the explorers retain possession of the object for the Boston Museum.

ROLLING, ROLLING, ROLLING

As the party is on its way toward the exit tunnel they see a heavy stone block sliding down over the exit. Unless they are quick, the only way out will be sealed shut, trapping them in. From the outside, it looks like the stairs descend to a dead-end, so it may be days before they are discovered, if at all.

In order to escape, the heroes must score four successes on Agility rolls. They only have four attempts, though. A raise counts as two successes, but only one raise per roll counts. If they reach the total in four goes, they dive through in time and can ascend the stairs. Otherwise, they are trapped in the corridor.

Unfortunately, the door activates another trap when it closes. A huge stone ball bursts through the far wall of the temple and begins thundering down the tunnel. There isn't time to run back into the temple, so they'd better be quick in searching for a way out.

At the end of the 6th round, the ball crushes the heroes, inflicting 3d10 damage (from a Wild card source). To escape, they must complete the following tasks in order.

* First they must make a Notice roll. With success, they detect a slight breeze coming from a section of wall halfway down the tunnel.

* Having found a possible exit, the characters must smash down the wall to reveal whatever lies beyond. This requires a Strength roll at –2 (–4 if they don't have any heavy tools), but may be done as a Cooperative action by a maximum of three characters. With success, a small crawlway is revealed.

* Each hero must make an Agility roll to squeeze into the narrow tunnel. There is a cumulative –1 penalty for *each* additional hero after the first who wants to make the roll in the same round. In addition, Brawny and Obese characters suffer a –1 penalty, whereas Small heroes have a +1 bonus.

The cramped tunnel leads at a right angle to the entrance tunnel for a few dozen yards, before ending at a stone wall. A few kicks cause the thin brickwork to collapse. Sunlight and fresh air stream into the darkness as the character emerge from a low hill on the far side of the dig. Mortimer is working nearby. As the dusty characters crawl out, he turns and greets them with a cheery wave and says, *"Looks like you've had a fun time! Find anything of interest?"*

SCENE 2: NO TICKET

After any discussions with Mortimer, the archaeologist shows them to the crates, which have already been loaded onto mules. Inside are a few gold beads and coins, but the vast majority of finds are statuettes, pieces of pottery, and inscriptions. After a bite to eat, Mortimer bids the characters farewell. An escort of sepoys (equal to two per hero) falls in behind the mule train. The soldiers are taciturn, but follow any orders loyally.

The journey back to Peshawar is dull and dusty. After a brief wait, the cargo is loaded onto the train to Lahore. Unfortunately, Sleeman didn't book first class tickets on the return trip, so the characters are halfway down the train. Luckily, there aren't many passengers yet, so the heroes and sepoys have a car all to themselves.

As the second day dawns, the characters have passed the city of Rawalpindi and are on their way to Gujarat, the next place the train will stop for any length of time. Breakfast, supplied by a food vendor who joined the train at the last stop, is interrupted by gunfire and smashing windows. The train is under attack!

Looking out the windows, the characters see a throng of horsemen galloping along the train, firing rifles one-handed into the compartments. Heroes who have completed *Daring Tales of Adventure #4: The Talons of Lo-Peng* instantly recognize them as Afghan tribesmen, though sadly not a tribe they are friendly with.

Deal action cards.

Round 1: The attack is being conducted by Afghan tribesmen. They're incidental to the plot, seeking only to rob the train of its valuables. There are a lot more attackers than those mentioned below—those detailed here are the only ones bothering the heroes, though. All along the train, the Afghans are firing into the cars, while British soldiers and government officials are firing back.

Heroes standing in a window and shooting back receive Medium Cover, while those crouched down receive Heavy Cover.

Round 3: The sepoys reveal their true colors. Although they are soldiers, they are also part of Sleeman's new Thuggee sect. Their orders were to strangle the characters at an opportune time, so Sleeman could blame the resurgent Thuggees for their deaths. The middle of a fight in which the characters are distracted seems like the ideal opportunity. The thugs have the Drop on the first round.



Don't stop the Afghan attack while this is going on! With the Thuggee trying to strangle their foes, the Innocent Bystander rule is likely to get a lot of use.

Round 5: The Afghans have a "secret weapon"—a stolen British staff car and Vickers machinegun! The staff car's roof has been cut off, and the large, water-cooled machinegun mounted in place of the back seats. The gunner doesn't have Rock and Roll, but that doesn't stop him using full auto. Bullets smash through the remaining windows and pepper the side of the carriage!

The car is considered indestructible (the heroes will need it soon). In the event the driver is killed, a horsemen leaps into the driver's seat and takes control.

The machinegun has Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3, AP 1. There are three Afghans in the car: the driver, the gunner, and a loader.

Round 7: The train appears to be slowing! A hero who looks out of the window sees their carriage has been uncoupled from the head of the train and is already falling behind. Up ahead, he sees the driver fall from the engine, obviously dead. To emphasize that all is not well, the character spots a sepoy leaping after him!

As if that wasn't bad enough, the train is heading for a bend along a gorge, and it's steaming far too fast. The engine is still pulling several carriages packed with innocent commuters, so leaving it to go over shouldn't be an option. Naturally, the only people who can stop a disaster are the adventurers.

The train flies off the rails at the end of the 6th round. In order to prevent this, the characters have to complete the following tasks in order.

While all this is going on, the Afghans stop their attack on the apparently fleeing train and turn back to the decoupled wagons. Any heroes not taking part in the action to slow the train can keep fighting the tribesmen.

* The characters must secure some means of catching the train. There are two options. First, they can leap from the carriage (which is still moving) onto the car. Second, they can try to commandeer a horse using the same tactic. Either method requires an Agility roll at –2. With failure, the adventurer is either hanging off the back off the car or from the saddle. A Strength roll is required as an action to drag himself onto the vehicle.

Characters who want to wait until the carriage stops don't suffer the penalty, but they automatically lose two rounds of action—they have just four rounds to prevent an accident.

Should the heroes fail in their endeavors, the train

flies over the edge of the gorge. Luckily for them, and the other passengers, the gorge isn't actually very deep. Characters on the engine suffer 3d6 damage (from a Wild Card). The passengers suffer cuts, bruises, and a few broken limbs. Either way, the engine has been damaged by the Thuggee and isn't going anywhere fast.

* Once aboard some means of transportation, the characters must remove the Afghans. This requires a Fighting roll against the Afghan's Parry. With success, the heroes have control of the vehicle.

* It's time to put the pedal to the metal, or whip that horse into a full gallop. Catching up with the engine requires either a Driving or Riding roll at –2, as appropriate to the mode of transportation chosen.

* Now level with the engine, the characters have two choices how to slow it. The first involves a daring leap onto the engine and the application of the brake. This requires the hero to make an Agility roll at –2. Again, failure means he is left dangling from the engine, his feet scraping along the tracks. A Strength roll is required as an action to reach the engine proper. A hero aboard the train can apply the brakes as a free action, bringing the train to a rapid halt.

The second is to shoot away the coupling. This requires a Shooting roll. Remember any penalties for the Unstable Platform and autofire!

- **Thuggee (2 per hero):** See page 20.
- **Afghan Tribesmen (3 per hero):** See page 20.

YOU GO AHEAD

By the time the train is saved, the Afghan's have fled. Passengers flee from the cars, dragging belongings, valuables, and livestock with them. The senior British officer on the train, who just happens to be Captain Hastings, approaches them.

"Dashed good show, chaps," he says. "Look, it seems the engine is badly damaged. You've got that car, so how about who drive into Rawalpindi and summon reinforcements. Me and my men will guard the passengers in case those tribesmen come back for a second look. If you leave us that Vickers, we'll be able to keep them at bay for ages."

SCENE 3: A HANDY BATH

Rawalpindi is a bustling city. Like all large settlements, it contains both a telegraph office and a British government office. If Sleeman is telegraphed, a reply comes back very quickly. He orders the heroes to stay put while he makes arrangements to have the train dealt with and arrange alternate transport for them. In the event the characters don't contact the villain, a local official does so once the attack on the train is reported.

Within the hour, an open-top car pulls up outside the office. Driving it is a studious-looking man by the name of Winston Caruthers, one of Sleeman's aides. Parked beside his car is a truck full of British soldiers.

"Hello!" the man beams. "Name's Caruthers. I'm one of the local bureaucrats working under Sir Walter. Listen, these army chaps are going to go and guard the train while things out are sorted out with the trains.

"Damned nationalist rebels have blown the tracks between here and Lahore, so it'll be days before the train can take you back. Sir Walter has ordered me to chauffeur you back to Lahore immediately. Can't have important guests getting into any bother. Won't look good for the Raj."

Caruthers tries to dissuade the characters from going back to the train for the artifacts, promising the British army will take good care of them, and informing the adventurers the journey to Lahore is going to take the best of two days as it is.

However, if the characters are pushy, he caves in and drives them to the scene of the fight. Whether or not they collect the artifacts is irrelevant—they don't come to any harm.

Caruthers is a pleasant chap and is happy to talk with the heroes. He lets nothing slip about Sleeman's plans to create chaos in India, but instead goes on about cricket, the weather, and the state of affairs in Europe.

THE HANDS APPEAR

That night, Caruthers stops over in Gujarat. He knows a decent hotel that caters to Westerners. He refuses any offers of payment, saying it is the least the Crown can do for the characters after their heroic efforts. The hotel is almost full, but Caruthers manages to book two rooms—one for male characters and one for females. He isn't staying at the hotel, but instead is lodging with an old friend just a few streets away.

While waiting in the lobby for their rooms to be prepared, the characters are approached by an Indian in a porter's uniform.

"Good evening, ladies and gentlemen," he beams. "My name is Sanjeev. I am pleased to let your Excellencies know that your rooms are ready. I have taken the liberty of preparing baths for you. Mr. Caruthers has told us of your most troubling day, and thought you might like to wash away the dirt before you dine."

Sanjeev is actually a Thuggee (Sleeman has agents all throughout this part of India), sent by Caruthers. That won't stop him holding out his hand for a tip once he shows the guests to their rooms.

The rooms, which have an adjoining door, are well appointed. The furnishings are a blend of Indian and European, with stout, solid furniture of English oak and

portraits of the king, contrasting with brightly-colored silk cushions. The baths are in the middle of the rooms and full of luxuriant, fragrant bubbles.

Lurking in two of the baths (one in each room if there are both sexes in the party) is a hand of Kali, a mechanical killing machine of Sleeman's invention. They respond to movement, and do nothing until a hero enters the bath. When this occurs, check for Surprise.

Attacking the creature while it's in the bath gives the attacker a –2 penalty due to the bubbles concealing it. Tipping over the bath requires an action, but no die roll.

The hands don't show any signs of being mechanical unless the damages are cut open. Should an autopsy be performed, their technological nature becomes readily apparent. Any character making a Repair roll at –4 or a Weird Science roll realizes they are cutting edge technology, and definitely in the realm of "weird science."

There is no sign of Sanjeev anywhere in the hotel. If described to the manager, he denies having anyone fitting that description on staff. Caruthers, when informed, smoothes over any ruffled feathers due to gunshots or damage to the room. He knows nothing about the hands, and is as shocked as the characters if shown one (with or without its bandages).

In the morning, Caruthers bustles the characters into the car for the final leg of the journey back to Lahore.

Hand of Kali (2): See page 20.

SCENE 4: TRUNK CALL

Caruthers' next stop is at Gujranwalla, a large town halfway between Gujarat and Lahore. There's a local festival taking place, and the official wants to show the heroes a bit of Indian culture before they grab a bite to eat. In truth, the sneak received orders from Sleeman last night to bring the characters here, where an ambush has been arranged.

The town is awash with pilgrims and holy men. Within minutes of leaving the car, the heroes are wearing garlands of red flowers and carrying incense sticks given them by smiling pilgrims. Small donations (money or food) to the holy men are accepted, but are not required.

Caruthers explains that the festival is to honor Ganesha, a four-armed deity with an elephant's head. He further tells that elephants are sacred to Ganesha, and it is customary for holy elephants to be present at his festivals. In return for offering them sweets, the elephants touch the head of pilgrims with their trunk, so bestowing the deity's blessing.

Indeed, there are a number of elephants further down the street, bedecked in red flowers (red is Ganesha's favored color) and body paint. As pilgrims place sweets in a bowl, the elephant blesses them.

Should a hero accept a blessing, he receives a free benny. However, only the first character is blessed in this way. The second receives a swipe from the elephant's trunk, knocking him sideways and inflicting d12+3 damage (from an Extra). When this occurs, read the following text to the players.

> *The powerful swipe sends you tumbling into a nearby stand. Before you can recover, the elephant's foot stamps down hard, just inches from your head. From somewhere nearby, you can hear Caruthers shouting, "They've gone berserk! Run!" It looks the pilgrims are taking his advice.*

Ideally, the characters should take this opportunity to run. If they don't, they're likely to end up badly wounded. Once fleeing starts, run the scene as a Chase.

The characters are just two Range Increments ahead of the rampaging elephants, and each Range Increment equates to 5". The elephants have a base Range Increment of 5", which makes them faster than the heroes (Range Increment 1"). To that end, the characters have a –1 penalty to their Agility rolls.

Caruthers has just two stats—Agility d6 and Toughness 5. Whatever happens, he *must* die in this scene. Whether he is shot or crushed depends on the dice.

Things aren't going in the adventurers' favor. The crowd counts as Thick Obstacles (–4). Cards of the Club suit don't indicate a collision, though. The penalty merely increases the chances a hero will be stymied by the wall of heaving flesh and fail to make any headway. The elephants don't suffer any penalties for Obstacles—they just charge through the crowds, sending pilgrims flying in all directions.

Elephants can make Force (using their trunks to knock a hero aside), Distract (throwing things with their trunks or simply running close enough to a hero to put fear of being crushed into him), Parallel, and Push maneuvers.

An elephant successfully using the Parallel maneuver doesn't make a Fighting roll to inflict damage. Instead, the emphasis is on the hero avoiding harm. Avoiding being trampled requires an Agility roll at –2 (because the character is likely to want to run in the same round).

Shooting the elephants is an option, but only if the characters want to risk hitting innocent pilgrims. The Innocent Bystander rule is in strict force. Any shot automatically invokes the rule, such is the size of the crowd. Innocents have Toughness 5. Targeting the riders, however, incurs no such penalty, as they are far above the screaming crowd. Once both Thuggee on the elephants are dead, the beast stops rampaging.

Elephants (1 per 2 heroes): See page 21.

Thuggees (1 per hero): See page 20. The Thugs are divided equally on the backs of the elephants. Each has a pistol concealed in his robes, which they will use against the heroes (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1). The Innocent Bystander rule still applies to them—they just don't care about the pilgrims.

ACT 3: THE HANDS OF KALI

Caruthers may be dead, but the heroes still have his

car. The local police, aided by a detachment of British soldiers, bring the situation under control, while medics attend the many injured. Routine questions are asked of the characters, but they are not detained long. As far as the authorities are concerned, the whole scene was an unfortunate accident.

Talk of a Thuggee attack is dismissed with a nervous laugh and a quiet whisper—*"Hush now, sir. We don't want to frighten the locals any more than they have been already."*

SCENE 1: WHOSE HAND IS IT?

The characters are likely to want to speak to Sir Walter on their return, if only to inform him of his aide's untimely death. A true Englishman, Sir Walter takes the news stoically and merely says, *"Poor chap. He was a good bureaucrat."*

If questioned about his handpicked men actually being Thuggee, Sir Walter puts on a show of feigned shock and alarm.

> *"Dear Lord!" the noble exclaims. "Those men served the Crown loyally for years! It looks like the threat is more prevalent than I first imagined. I'll order a full review of the situation, immediately."*

The train carrying the artifacts won't arrive for a few days, so the characters can't leave India just yet. Sleeman informs the group that various papers need to be signed before the relics can leave the country. He instructs them to visit Reginald Peregue, "the man who handles this sort of thing." He allows them to use Caruthers' car and provides the address. Peregue, he adds, is expecting the characters.

On arriving at Peregue's office, an Indian servant opens the door and welcomes the heroes inside. While they wait in the foyer, he scurries off to inform his master of their arrival. Moments later, a scream pierces the air!

> *Reaching the office, you discover the servant standing in the doorway, his hands clasped to his mouth. He gestures into the room. Slumped back in a chair is a middle-aged man dressed in a smart suit. Heavy bruising around his neck points clearly to the cause of death—strangulation. There are minimal signs of a struggle—just a spilled ink pot and an overturned decorative jar.*

The office measures 8" by 8". The desk is located on the eastern wall, in front of a large window. Arranged along the northern wall are bookshelves and filing cabinets. The jar is in the northwest corner, beside a small circular table.

The killers are still lurking in the room. One is under the desk, while the other has crawled back into the jar in which it was delivered. When the characters enter the room, have them check for Surprise. Deal action cards as appropriate. The hands don't get the Drop unless the adventurers are completely blasé about the killer still being present and enter without any concern of being attacked.

🐾 **Hand of Kali (1 per 2 heroes):** See page 20.

A CLUE

If the heroes question the servant about the jar, he explains it was delivered just before Peregue entered his office. A letter accompanied it. The servant has no idea who sent it, but it was delivered as a gift.

The latter is still on Peregue's desk, though it is soaked in black ink. All that can be seen is the sender's name—Gupta Singh. The servant, if asked, explains that Mr. Singh is a very prominent businessman in Lahore.

SCENE 2: THE POTTERY

Mr. Singh is present if the heroes visit (or telephone) and agrees to speak with them. He is openly and honestly shocked by Peregue's death. He has heard of the resurgent Thuggee, for whom he has no love. As far as he is concerned, the Thuggee were a blight on the good name of India.

He explains that he operates a pottery in downtown Lahore, specializing in traditional ceramics. This is merely one of his businesses, and he leaves the daily running to the manager, Nagendra Chakravarti. When a new line of pottery is produced, gifts are automatically sent to all the British officials in Lahore.

THE POTTERY

The characters' refusal to die is a thorn in Sleeman's side. Fearing they might actually be clever enough to discover his role in the Thuggee attacks, he has contacted the warehouse and informed the manager (a Thuggee) that they might come snooping. Orders have been given to ensure the foreigners never leave.

The business operates day and night. If the characters approach by day, use the following text as written. A nighttime excursion runs a little differently. The Thuggee are waiting in ambush behind crates. Check for Surprise once the characters enter the building.

As the heroes arrive, they spot a delivery truck, bearing the company logo, disappearing around a corner. Several workers are outside smoking, having just loaded the truck. They don't speak any English, and simply gesture into the warehouse if spoken to.

On entering, Chakravarti approaches them with a warm smile. He asks if they have come for a guided tour of the facility or are seeking to buy in bulk. Talk of animated hands and Thuggee cultists is dismissed with a nervous smile.

> *"Oh no, sir, you must be mistaken. The Thuggee were wiped out many, many years ago by the British soldiers. A bad time for India, indeed,*

but things are much better now. This is a time of peace. Come, come, I shall brew tea, and you can tell me more."

Once the heroes reach the center of the warehouse, Chakravarti whistles loudly. A number of workers cease their activities and draw knotted scarves from their belts. Deal action cards!

The GM should space the Thuggee evenly around the pottery. Remember, until the signal was given they were engaged in their jobs.

The Thuggee are not mindless thugs (no pun intended). Much of the terrain in the pottery can be used in some manner. Show this to the players by having the Thugee throw ash in their faces, topple crates, and so on, rather than just telling them what props can be used.

Once half the Thuggee are incapacitated, one of them rushes to the back wall and tips over the stack of porcelain jars. Each contains a hand of Kali! The vile constructs quickly form a swarm. Deal the swarm an action card at the start of the next round.

The swarm does not distinguish between the heroes and Thuggees. Rather, it automatically moves toward the nearest person who moved during this round or the previous one and attacks. This is an ideal time to reveal the hands' weakness, if the heroes haven't yet discovered it.

The Thuggee who tips over the jars pauses in terror. The swarm passes him by on the first round, seeking a target who has moved. On the next round, the Thuggee panics and flees. The swarm doubles back and mauls him down, *even if there is a closer target*. This should hopefully give alert players an important clue on how to stay alive (the swarm is quite tough).

TERRAIN FEATURES

The factory measures 18" in length and 12" wide.

Kilns: Against the east wall (one of the long ones) stand three huge kilns (each fills a 2" square). Even with the doors closed, the heat in the warehouse is intense. The kilns are fuelled by wood, coal, and dung (basically whatever is to hand), which is shoveled into the bottom of the oven. Inside is a hot layer of charcoal and ash. This can be used as a weapon.

Opening the door requires an action, as does scooping up a shovel of hot coals (there is a shovel beside each kiln). Chucking the coals is treated as a Throwing area effect attack. Range is 1/2/4, and the coals fill a Small Burst Template. Victims suffer 1d10 damage (from an Extra) and have a chance of catching fire. The bandages of the hands of kali cause them to catch fire on a roll of 4+ on a d6.

Ash Bin: Beside each kiln is a large bin of cold ash (used to help fertilize the local fields). A handful can be scooped up as part of an Agility Trick to blind a foe. Alternately, a shovel full can be used to affect a group of foes. This works as an Agility Trick, but fills a Small Burst Template and can be used on foes up to 1" distant. Grabbing a shovel counts as an action, however.

Crane: Dangling over the center of the warehouse is a large crate, held aloft by a crane. The controls are near the entrance (in the south wall). As an action, the crane can be moved 3" in any direction. Releasing the crate, also an action, causes it to smash onto the floor. It fills a Medium Burst Template and inflicts 3d6 damage to anyone beneath. This is an ideal weapon for use against the hand swarm.

Shovels: The shovels can be used as weapons. They cause Str+d6 damage and require 2 hands to wield.

Crates: Against the west wall (opposite the kilns) are stacks of crates. Each contains finished porcelain. The crates are stacked three layers high. Climbing them is treated as difficult ground. A crate shoved from the second layer fills a 1" square on impact and inflicts 2d6 damage. One toppled from the highest layer fills a Small Burst Template on landing and causes 2d6 damage to everyone in the template.

Potter's Wheels: Two dozen potters' wheels are lined up in two rows in the center of the building. Assume each fills a 1" square. Movement through these squares is difficult ground. Nearby are lumps of clay which can be used as part of an Agility Trick or as thrown weapons (Range: 1/2/4, Damage: Str).

Finished Jars: Near the back wall are a number of porcelain jars. These are identical to the one found in Peregue's office. See above for how they are used.

Chakravarti : Treat as a Henchman Thuggee (page 20).

Thuggee (3 per hero): See page 20.

Hand of Kali Swarm (1): See page 20.

AFTERMATH

Once the Thuggee and swarm have been dispatched the heroes can search the pottery for clues. Amid a pile of papers are two vital pieces of evidence.

The first is a list of British officials. The top six all have dates and ticks by their names. Peregue's name is the last one so marked. A hero making a Common Knowledge roll recalls the other names—Sleeman mentioned them as all having been strangled! The name below Peregue's, Samuel Phelps, has today's date, but has not yet been ticked. If the characters don't figure out the delivery truck might have been heading for Phelps' residence, allow them a Common Knowledge roll.

The second document is from Sleeman to Chakravarti. It orders him to fire the workers and replace them with men "loyal to the cause." It is dated a few weeks ago, just before the strangulations started.

Should the heroes contact Mr. Singh, he informs them that he had seen a few new faces at the pottery, but Chakravarti told him several of the older workers had left suddenly. Singh is an innocent dupe in this affair, not a co-conspirator.

SCENE 3: TO THE RESCUE!

The pottery has a phone, but the characters don't

know Phelp's phone number, only his address. The switchboard is busy, anyway, so the adventurers can't reach an operator to connect them. If they want to save Phelps, they'll have to drive!

The clock is ticking. If the characters rush, they might just reach Phelp's house in time. It's too far to run to his abode, so taking the car through the crowded streets is the only option.

Shortly after the characters head into the busy streets of Lahore, several Thuggee on motorbikes appear behind the characters. They were watching the pottery, and have orders to kill the heroes in the unlikely event they escape.

This scene is run as a Chase using our alternate Obstacles rules. The Range Increment is 5", the chase begins at Medium range, and there are Rough Obstacles (other road users). The motorbikes are twice as fast as the heroes' car, so the Thuggee have +2 to their Driving rolls.

There are four motorbikes, each carrying two Thuggee. The bikes should be divided into pairs for the purposes of initiative. Unless the passenger is killed, the driver focuses on driving, leaving his comrade to open fire. Should the bikes move within one Range Increment of the car, the driver tries the Parallel maneuver, while his colleague on the back leaps into the car and tries to throttle the heroes.

Thuggee (2 per hero): See page 20, but armed with pistols (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1)

HEROES' CAR

Acc/Top Speed: 8/16; **Toughness:** 11 (2); **Crew:** 1+5

MOTORBIKES

Acc/Top Speed: 20/36; **Toughness:** 8 (2); **Crew:** 1+1

OBSTACLES

Deuce (–4) Sacred Cow: A cow has wandered onto the road, causing the traffic ahead to break suddenly. Success means the driver has spotted a gap in the traffic. A failed Driving roll causes a collision with a stationary hard Obstacle *and* the vehicle drops back one Range Increment, as it waits for the blockage to clear.

Three (–2) Potholes: A series of potholes force the vehicle to swerve violently. A failed roll causes the vehicle to go Out of Control as it bounces into a particular deep hole.

Four (–2) Buy A Chicken: Two youths on a moped pull alongside the vehicle. The kid on the back shoves a live chicken into the driver's face, shouting, *"You buy chicken! Very good!"* The distraction gives a –2 penalty to the Driving roll, but no specific penalty for failure—the driver simply has to slow down until he can get the flapping bird out of his face.

Five (–2) Road Works: Traffic forces the vehicle into a lane closed for road workers. The construction workers leap clear, but there's still the matter of the wooden fencing blocking off the site! A failed roll causes a collision with a soft obstacle.

Six (–2) Dangerous Drivers: A car pulls out right into the path of the vehicle, forcing it to take evasive action. A failed Driving rolls means a collision with a soft obstacle and the loss of one Range Increment, as the vehicle reverses and maneuvers around the obstruction.

Seven (0/–2) Traffic Cop: A policeman directing traffic holds up his hand for the vehicle to stop. Characters have the choice of stopping or ignoring his signal. The Thugs always ignore the cop.

Stopping causes the car to drop back two Range Increments due to the delay. Tearing past the junction the cop is policing requires a Driving roll at –2. Failure leads to a collision with another vehicle. Since this is a "T-bone" collision, only the speed of the vehicle involved in the Chase counts.

Eight (–2) No Brake Lights: The vehicle in front suddenly comes to a complete stop, forcing the car to swerve to avoid a collision. A failure leads to a collision with a stationary hard Obstacle.

Nine (–1) Dangerous Overtaking: A truck pulls out to avoid a parked car right into the path of the oncoming vehicle! Failure leads to a head-on collision. The truck is moving 10" per round.

Ten (–1) Smoking Incense: As the heroes' car slows for a junction, a street peddler shoves a bundle of burning sticks of incense into the car, and then holds out his hand for money. The smell and smoke give a –1 penalty to all Driving rolls until the sticks are thrown out. This requires an Agility roll from either the driver (as a multi action penalty) or a passenger.

A passenger can throw the incense at nearby thugs as a special Distract maneuver. This requires an opposed roll of the hero's Throwing against the thug's Driving.

If the thugs draw this card, they simply run into heavy traffic for a single round.

Jack (0/–2) Sheet of Glass: Two workmen are gingerly carrying a large sheet of glass across the road. The heroes can either drive straight through the glass or swerve to avoid the men. The Thugs always hit the glass, though the driver does pull a wheelie (so the front tire, not his head, hits it).

Heading straight into the glass gives no penalty to the Driving, but a failed roll causes everyone aboard to make a Vigor roll or be Shaken as they suffer small cuts from the shattered glass or shield their eyes.

Swerving around gives a –2 penalty, but failure simply means the vehicle made no ground this round.

Queen (–1) Road Debris: Something sharp falls from the back of the vehicle in front. This could be a sheet of glass which shatters on impact, a box of tacks, or maybe even a garden rake. Whatever the object, the driver must take evasive action.

On a failure, one of the tires is punctured. The car suffers the effects of a Locomotion Critical Hit (but no actual wound) and automatically goes Out of Control. A bike hitting the object is automatically Wrecked as the

front tire explodes, sending driver and passenger car wheeling through the air.

King (0) Sudden Turn: A vehicle pulling out from a side road forces the driver to make a sudden turn. Success means the vehicle avoids the obstacle and for the remainder of this round cannot be targeted by enemies. Next round it rejoins the chase. Failure causes a collision with a hard Obstacle. It's a T-bone crash, so only the speed of the vehicle in the chase is used.

Ace (0/–2) A Ramp: A truck is parked with its rear tailgate down, forming a handy ramp. Ask the players whether they want to drive around it or aim for the ramp. The thugs take the safe option unless the heroes are more than three Range Increments ahead.

Going around the truck gives no penalty and failure has no special effect beyond temporarily thwarting forward movement.

Trying to hit the ramp gives the driver a –2 penalty to his Driving roll, but if successful he gains an *extra* Range Increment. This bonus (and the penalty) stacks with the Push maneuver. Failure causes him to ram the truck, which is a stationary, heavy obstacle.

SCENE 4: TOO LATE!

Knocking at Phelps' door quickly brings the attention of a servant.

"Oh, goodness me," he says, apparently startled. "I saw your car and thought you were the master returning. You are looking for Mr. Phelps', I presume? You are too late, I am afraid. The master just left for work in his car. It is very similar to yours, hence my confusion."

If asked, the servant says that a porcelain jar was delivered just before Phelps left for work. The servant distinctly recalls Phelps placing it in the back of his car and saying he'd place it in his office.

This scene uses the Chase rules. Apply the standard Obstacles rules, but only to the heroes—Phelps is driving slowly and not taking any risks. Because of this, the characters have +1 to their Driving rolls.

Phelps' car is three Range Increments ahead, and each Range Increment is 5". For the first three rounds, Phelps makes Driving rolls (d8) as normal. He ignores any shouts or beeping horns, thinking the characters are simply annoying foreigners, out for a joyride.

At the start of round three, have the characters make a Notice roll as a free action. With success, they see a pair of black hands crawling up the back of Phelps' seat! The heroes get this round only to safely shoot at the hands.

Starting on round four, the hands attack! Phelps is busy fighting them off, and in his panic rams his foot onto the accelerator. Don't make Driving rolls for him from here on, but do deal him an action card. His car automatically moves forward one Range Increment each round. However, the vehicle is heading straight toward a junction. Unless the characters can reach it in six rounds, and either take control of the car or kill the hands, it smashes into the wall at high speed, knocking Phelps unconscious.

Once the hands attack, they begin crawling over Phelps. Both melee and ranged attacks use the Innocent Bystander rule. Phelps has Toughness 5.

Phelps won't be killed by the hands, but the characters shouldn't know that. Rather, they should be hell-bent on saving the bureaucrat's life.

One option is to have the driver use the Parallel maneuver so as to allow passengers to leap over into Phelps' car or try to grab a hand. The latter requires a grappling roll. As noted above, unless someone takes the wheel, a collision is imminent. Fortunately (for Phelps at least), the hands turn their attention to any hero in the car. Phelps passes out through fright as this point, so he can't take the wheel.

If the adventurers' vehicle is on the same Range Increment, one of the hands could even leap into their vehicle! In the interests of an exciting scene, the leap automatically succeeds.

Note that throwing a hand from the car isn't a particularly wise move. While the construct suffers damage as normal, unless it is killed it begins hunting down the nearest innocent bystander. This could force the party to split its attention between the rogue hand and Phelps' car.

Once saved, the Englishman is grateful for the assistance, but demands to know what is going on. Any accusations against Sleeman are instantly dismissed—*"Sir Walter? In league with Indian murderers? That's preposterous! The man's ancestor spent years wiping out the Thuggee. I think you must have the wrong man."*

The heroes will get no help from Phelps with regard to hunting down Sleeman. The same applies if they contact any other British official. If the heroes want to stop the plot, they have to do so on their own.

Hand of Kali (1 per hero): See page 20.

ACT 4: GLORY TO THE RAJ

Arrogantly convinced that Chakravarti and his men have killed the meddling foreigners, Sleeman has gone ahead with his master plan—to kill the maharaja! However, part of him suspects the Americans are more resourceful than they appear, so he has prepared a surprise at the obvious place they will come looking for him if they uncover any evidence against him—his house.

In the event the heroes phone ahead (to check if Sleeman is present), a servant says he is taking a bath, but will be available shortly. This is a lie.

SCENE 1: I'M A MUSCLE FAN

Whether they call ahead or just turn up, Sleeman's butler (an Indian) answers the door. He invites them inside and takes any hats. As is polite, he asks them to leave any weapons by the door. Whether or not they comply,

the servant bows and shows them toward Sleeman's office. As he opens the door, the servant says, *"I shall inform the master you are here."*

No sooner has the door closed it opens again, this time splintering off its hinges! Framed in the doorway is Sleeman's man mountain bodyguard, with four Thuggee behind him.

Deal action cards.

The office has a few furnishings, like an inkpot, sheaves of paper, and a water jug, which could be used as part of Agility Tricks. There are three chairs, which can be used as weapons if the heroes handed over their weapons. A chair inflicts St+d6 damage and must be used two-handed. It breaks on a roll of 1 on the Fighting die, regardless of the Wild Die. However, if the Wild Die indicates a success, it smashes *after* inflicting damage.

WIN OR LOSE

Should the heroes lose the fight, they are bound, taken to the maharaja's place, and secretly thrown into the dungeon. Proceed straight to Scene 3 below. Otherwise, they discover a letter on Sleeman's desk from the young maharaja. It reads as follows.

Sir Walter,

Following recent disturbances and slayings, one would be pleased to accept your generous gift of a handpicked bodyguard of sepoys to protect oneself from the vile threat of the Thuggee. With a guard provided by your good self, one is sure one will be in safe hands. One looks forward to your visit at three o'clock, promptly.

It is now shortly after 1 o'clock. If the characters hurry, they can reach the maharaja's palace in time. The young king doesn't have a telephone, so there is no way to alert him of Sleeman's plot in advance.

- **Sleeman's Bodyguard:** See page 19.
- **Thuggee (2 per hero):** See page 20.

SCENE 2: GUILTY AS CHARGED

Surprisingly, the maharaja is expecting the heroes. They are welcomed as guests, though because of the king's importance, they must hand over all their weapons. A squad of the maharaja's guards (treat as Thuggees equal to three times the number of heroes if a fight occurs) pats them down, and then escorts them into the throne room.

The young maharaja is sat upon a throne carved to resemble a crouching tiger. Beside him stands Sleeman, his face devoid of any emotion. Flanking the aisle on either side are the maharaja's guard, each armed with a halberd. "How may one help you?" asks the maharaja.

Naturally, the heroes are likely to want to tell their story about animated hands, Thuggee murderers, the pottery factory, and Sleeman's role in all this. The maharaja listens attentively, and then turns to Sleeman.

"You see, Your Majesty," says Sleeman, "it is exactly as I told you. A story concocted to conceal the identity of the true villains—these foreign assassins! My sources have revealed that the Americans hired the truck which almost killed you. Their attempt to stop it was nothing more than a ruse to get close to you. At your ball a number of British army officers came close to uncovering their plan, hence the fracas which developed.

"Fortunately for Your Majesty, the fight created enough uproar to dissuade these killers from making an attempt on your life. And now they come here to accuse me of complicity in a murderous plot, just as I said they would."

"Why would they want me dead?" asks the maharaja.

"Majesty, there are many American companies which would like to see the Raj gone. Without the British presence, they would be able to move in and secure lucrative business contracts. I'm afraid, great king, that as with many crimes the root of the plot if purely financial."

Give the characters time to voice their likely vocal disapproval of Sleeman's claims. Should they try to step closer to the maharaja or Sleeman, the king's bodyguards move to intercept them.

"Your Majesty," Sleeman continues, oblivious to your cries of innocence, "I have proof of my words." He hands the maharaja a bundle of papers. "Receipts for the hire of a truck and purchase of nitroglycerine, sworn testimonies from the officers at the ball that these foreigners were plotting against you, a witness statement which says they pushed one of my aides into the path of a rampaging elephant after he discovered their true reason for being in India, and so forth. I think you'll see the evidence is rather damning."

All the paperwork is forged, but the heroes can't prove anything. The maharaja flicks through the documents briefly, and then turns to Sleeman.

"What do you propose one does with them?" The young maharaja looks uncomfortable.

Sleeman smiles briefly. "Majesty, despite the evidence against them, a confession would be in order to ensure no trial is required. A public trial would cause great embarrassment to the

Raj, and possibly serve their goals just as well as your death,

"If you would permit, I will interrogate them down in your dungeon. There is no need to tarnish your good name by having you personally involved in the questioning. Give me an hour, and I shall bring you signed confessions of their guilt."

The maharaja sighs heavily. "Make it so, Sir Walter. But do not harm the female too badly. It is not our way to inflict harm on women, even a treacherous tigress like this one. Guards! Arrest them!"

The characters are outnumbered and short on weapons. Those spoiling for a fight should be allowed a Common Knowledge roll to realize Sleeman has them over a barrel—any attempt to fight the guards could easily be twisted to look like an attempt on the maharaja's life.

Should a fight occur, more guards equal to the number of characters arrive each round. Eventually the heroes will be pummeled into submission.

Sleeman: See page 19.

The Maharaja: See page 20.

Maharaja's Guards (4 per hero): Treat as Thuggee (page 20), but armed with halberds (Str+d8, Reach 1, 2 hands)

SCENE 3: TIGER, TIGER BURNING BRIGHT

The characters are escorted through the palace and down into the dungeon. Although the young king hasn't used the place for its intended purpose, his grandfather was rather fond of inflicting pain on captives. The heroes are led past numerous rooms containing instrument of torture, down stairs, and along several corridors before being deposited in an unadorned room with no door. The characters are then manacled to the wall by their hands.

"I would curse you for interfering with my plans, but I shall instead take satisfaction in knowing that your meddling achieved nothing.

"My plan was remarkably simple yet effective. A new wave of Thuggee activity sweeps across India, targeting British officials. The Crown responds by sending more troops and imposing a firmer grip. When the attacks keep occurring, the grip tightens further. Indians will be removed from positions of power, following the discovery of evidence linking them to the attacks.

"Eventually, Great Britain will stamp her authority on this land once and for all. This isn't India, you see. This is the British Raj, and it will be a cold day in Hell before I see the jewel of the Empire handed back to these ungrateful fools!

"As for the maharaja, his death will cause a tremendous backlash. The young whelp is immensely popular with the locals. When he is found strangled a few days later by British-trained sepoys, the Indians will revolt, and we will crush them!

"But you will never see what comes to pass. I have some ceremonial duties to attend. Now," he says, gesturing toward the second exit, "I suggest you start praying. In just a few moments the guards will release a pair of very hungry tigers. Good bye."

Sleeman isn't joking about the tigers. Shortly after he departs, growls and roars can be heard echoing through the dungeon.

The characters have four rounds to escape before the beasts enter the room. Slipping free of one manacle or ripping it from the wall requires an Agility or Strength roll at –2 (character's choice) as an action. With success, one hand is freed. Removing the manacle from around the other wrist requires pulling out a holding pin. This takes an action, but requires no die roll.

Freeing a trapped comrade takes an entire round, but can only be achieved by a hero who has escaped *both* his manacles.

If the heroes have all escaped before the 5th round begins, they can, if they so wish, make a dash through the dungeon in the hope of finding an alternate exit. Otherwise, the tigers enter the room at the start of round five. Either way, it's time to deal action cards.

Those who made a Strength roll to escape have pulled the manacle and a short length of chain from the wall. Used as a weapon, a chain inflicts Str+d4 damage. It is quite short, and grants no Reach modifier.

Adventurers still chained to the walls can kick the tigers. However, due to their lack of mobility such captives suffer a –2 penalty to their Parry score. Remember, the Unarmed Defender rule doesn't apply in our pulp adventurers, so don't add that on top.

In the event the characters make a run for it, they begin two Range Increments ahead of the tigers plus one extra Range Increment for each round of running before the 5th. For instance, if the heroes manage to escape during round three, they begin three Range Increment ahead (2 base + the fourth round).

The big cats have only one tactic—chase down their prey, and then leap on them so they can bite and claw them to shreds. This is achieved through the Parallel maneuver as normal.

In the event the big cats are defeated, or the prisoners manage to move beyond ten Range Increments of the tigers, they locate a spiral staircase in a gloomy back corner of the dungeon complex. This leads to the upper palace, and brings them out through a long-forgotten secret door near the main foyer.

Tiger (2 per hero): See page 21.

SCENE 4: THE PLOT THWARTED

After escaping from the deathtrap, the heroes can

sneak back into the palace. Their weapons (and gizmos) are in the main foyer where they left them, and are unguarded. Unfortunately, so has the maharaja! Sleeman has convinced him to remove his personal bodyguard and have them secure the distant grounds in case more assassins are lurking nearby.

Assuming they rush to the throne room, the heroes discover…a lone servant mopping the floor. The room is otherwise empty. Frightened by the characters' sudden appearance, and the likely presence of openly held firearms, he drops to his knees and begs for his life to be spared.

On being questioned, he reveals that Sleeman and the maharaja are in the garden, inspecting the new sepoys. He provides directions for the shortest route.

Sleeman is in the final stages of presenting his handpicked sepoys to the maharaja when the adventurers finally reach the garden. They are stood to attention in a line, the young king and Sleeman inspecting them. Once the characters make their presence known, Sleeman shoves the young prince to the ground and snarls out orders.

"Kill them!" the Englishman shouts vehemently. "Kill them all! I will take care of this spoiled brat! Don't worry, your majesty," he snarls, "this won't take long!" With that, he rips off his gloves to reveal fleshless, mechanical hands. Flexing his steely fingers, he advances on the boy-king, who is futilely trying to crawl away.

Deal action cards. Hand the players an Ally Sheet for the maharaja. He isn't a fearsome fighter, but he is on their side now.

The garden measures 24" to a side. In the centre is an ornamental pond the size of a Large Burst Template. It contains a number of large fish, which can be used in a Trick or as a weapon (Range: 2/4/8, Damage: Str+d4). Treat movement through the shallow water as difficult ground.

There are two beehives near the ornamental pond (one on the side the heroes enter and one on the opposite side). Each fills a 1" square, and movement through them is difficult ground. Position a number of statues,



benches, and topiary to provide Cover and help break up the battlefield.

The heroes begin along one edge. Sleeman and the maharaja are on the opposite side of the pond, 3" from the edge of the battlefield. Standing between the pond and the villain are the Thuggee sepoys.

The maharaja keeps a number of elephants as pets, which roam the garden area freely. Startled by gunfire, they stampede. Starting the round after a gun is discharged, any draw of a deuce as a character's first action card in a round means an elephant charges across the battlefield.

It enters at a point and angle determined by the GM, and moves across the tabletop in a straight line (it knocks aside any standing obstacles). Anyone in its way risks being trampled. Multiple elephants can be involved in the fight on the same round, and there are effectively an unlimited number.

A hero who wishes to mount an elephant must make an Agility roll as an action. He must then try to soothe the beast. This requires either a Persuasion roll at –4 or a Riding roll at –2. With success, the elephant is now under his control.

The beehives can be used as part of a Trick. Alternately, knocking them over or shooting them causes the angry inhabitants to swarm! They count as Innocent Bystanders in the event a foe is standing adjacent. Deal the swarm an action card the round after they are aroused.

The bees don't have any set tactics. Instead, each round the GM should roll a d12 for each active swarm and read the result as a clockface. The bees move their full Pace in the indicated direction, attacking everything in their path (the elephants thick skin makes them immune for the purposes of this scene). If they reach the edge of the battlefield, they "bounce" back into play.

Finally, the GM has the option of bringing a tiger into play. If the heroes are being badly mauled as a result of poor dice, a lone tiger enters the battlefield near a group of Thuggee and attacks. Should the characters be having too easy a time, it moves into play close to them. Each round, it attacks the nearest creature, except for the swarm (which it cannot harm) and any elephants (of which it is afraid).

- **Sleeman:** See page 19.
- **The Maharaja:** See page 20.
- **Thuggee (2 per hero):** See page 20. They are armed with rifles (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d8, AP 2), which they use in the fight.
- **Elephant (variable):** See page 21.
- **Bee Swarm (1 per hive):** See page 21.
- **Tiger (1):** See page 21.

AFTERMATH

Once Sleeman is killed, the maharaja's real bodyguards arrive on the scene. Any remaining thugs quickly surrender in the face of overwhelming odds.

The maharaja thanks the heroes profusely, showing his true age for once. To show his thanks, he gifts each hero $1000 in gold and silver coins, and offers a female hero to whom he has been attracted a chance to become his bride. Accepting removes the character from the game, but it's a good way to go. Otherwise, letting the youth down gently is advisable—he is a king, after all. A huge feast is thrown in their honor.

British officials are quickly summoned and informed of recent events. Sleeman, if alive, is hauled away to face trial. He is quietly found guilty and locked away for a long time to come (or at least until the GM wants to bring him back as a recurring villain), but that doesn't happen until long after the characters have returned home.

Before they depart the country, a senior British diplomat takes the characters aside for a quiet chat.

"The Maharaja has asked that you do not speak of this incident. India is making slow steps toward independence, and this story could lead to terrible uprising and bloodshed. I'm sure you understand it's for the greater good."

CAST OF CHARACTERS

SIR WALTER SLEEMAN

A product of the old colonial rule, Sleeman is arrogant and jingoistic. In his eyes, only the British are fit to rule, and not just in India. As far as this dinosaur of Imperialism is concerned, Britain should rule the world.

Following an industrial accident, Sleeman lost the use of his left hand and his right one was badly burned. Putting all his technical knowledge to work, he created a mechanical hand. It provided him with limited dexterity, but great strength. As his master plan unfolded, he replaced his right hand with a similar device. No one knows about his mechanical appendages, as he has worn gloves for many years.

Although technically a Weird Scientist, Sleeman does not have any powers. Instead, his gizmos are the animated hands (page 2) and his own mechanical limbs, which are strong enough to parry blows.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Mechanics) d12, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Streetwise d10
Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Arrogant, Delusional (Major: diehard colonial)
Edges: Block, Combat Reflexes, Command, Dodge, Fervor, Improved Level Headed, Noble, Sweep
Gear: Mechanical hands (Str)

SLEEMAN'S BODYGUARD

Sleeman's bodyguard is a brute of a man. A mute from

birth, he stands by Sleeman's side like a giant sentinel, always alert for danger.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d12, Intimidation d10, Notice d10
Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 10; **Toughness:** 9
Hindrances: Loyal, Ugly (terrible scar on face)
Edges: Brawny, Combat Reflexes, First Strike, Improved Block, Improved Nerves of Steel, Level Headed, Mighty Blow, Quick, Strong Willed, Tough as Nails
Gear: —
Special Abilities:
* **Crush:** The bodyguard's favorite method of killing foes is to crush them to death. He gains +2 to make and maintain grapple attacks. Damage is Str+d6 due to his knowledge of how to apply pressure.

THUGGEE

Sleeman's so-called Thuggee are nothing but common killers hired to play a specific role. None know whom they ultimately serve, and very few have any religious allegiance to Kali.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d8
Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Loyal, Mean
Edges: Combat Reflexes
Gear: Knotted scarf (Str+d4), long dagger (Str+d6)
Special Abilities:
* **Strangulation:** Thuggee prefer to strangle their foes. For the purposes of this adventure, this functions as per the grappling rules, except damage is Str+d4 if the Thuggee has his knotted scarf to hand.

THE MAHARAJA

Although only 12 years old, the maharaja is head of the local province. His rule is not absolute, for the British control these lands by law. As such, the youthful king is aided by a Resident, a diplomatic official assigned to the court.

His position has made him arrogant, though at heart he is still a child. Indeed, part of him yearns to play like normal children, but the burden of responsibility for his subjects is a heavy one, and prohibits anything resembling a normal lifestyle.

Play him as a stuffy nobleman, who sees all those beneath him as worthless chattel. Only when in the presence of females does his attitude become more relaxed and childish.

The maharaja is a Henchman. His Young Hindrance gives him a single benny.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Riding d8, Shooting d6, Streetwise d10, Taunt d8
Charisma: +4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Arrogant, Young
Edges: Charismatic, Command, Fervor, Hold the Line, Noble, Very Rich
Gear: Dagger (Str+d4), army of servants

BRITISH OFFICER

These young men are still very much for the upper classes. India remains a hotbed of colonial attitudes, and these men share most of those beliefs. With no war to fight, their lives are spent playing polo and attending social events, with a little military drill thrown in to keep up appearances.

They are all Henchmen.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Survival d4
Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: Command
Gear: Heavy revolver (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, AP 1), dress sword (Str+d6)

AFGHAN TRIBESMEN

Fiercely loyal, highly territorial, and distrustful of outsiders, the tribesmen defend their lands the old-fashioned way—with violence.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Riding d8, Shooting d6
Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Loyal, Mean
Edges: Steady Hands
Gear: Rifle (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8), sword (Str+d6), riding horse

HAND OF KALI

Ancient legends speak of a "Black Hand of Kali," a mummified appendage of enormous size, which could animate and throttle the goddess' foes. Sleeman used that legend to create mechanical hands. Covered in black bandages, they are miniature versions of the legendary artifact. Sleeman uses them to murder his chosen victims.

All hands of Kali are Henchmen due to their unusual nature.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d10
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5 (1)
Special Abilities:
* **Armor +1:** Swathed in bandages.
* **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; immune to poison and disease; no additional damage from Called Shots.

* **Crush:** Str.
* **Leap:** The hands can leap by propelling themselves with their fingers. This allows them to reach a victim's neck.
* **Mindless:** Immune to Smarts Tricks and Tests of Will.
* **Size –2:** Each hand is the same size as a human head.
* **Small:** Attackers are –2 to attack rolls, due to the creature's size.
* **Weakness (Movement):** The hands of Kali are attracted to movement through primitive sensors. A hero who does not make *any* movement in a round (an attack involves movement) is not attacked. This typically means the hero must be on Hold unless he wishes to forfeit his action.

HAND OF KALI SWARM

The swarm fills a Medium Burst Template and is treated as a Henchman.
Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8
Skills: Notice d8, Stealth d10
Pace: 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7 (1)
Special Abilities:
* **Armor +1:** Swathed in bandages.
* **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; immune to poison and disease; no additional damage from Called Shots.
* **Crush:** The swarm hits victims automatically and causes d10+6 damage to everyone in the template, so long as they have moved in this round or the previous one.
* **Leap:** The hands can leap by propelling themselves with their fingers. This allows them to reach a victim's neck.
* **Mindless:** Immune to Smarts Tricks and Tests of Will.
* **Swarm:** Parry +2. Cutting and piercing weapons do not real damage to the swarm. Area-effect weapons work normally, and a character can stomp to inflict his Strength damage each round.
* **Weakness (Movement):** The hands of Kali are attracted to movement through primitive sensors. A hero who does not make *any* movement in a round (an attack involves movement) is not attacked. This typically means the hero must be on Hold, unless he wishes to forfeit his action.

ELEPHANT

Elephants are Henchmen due to their size.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+5, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 13 (1)
Special Abilities:
* **Armor +1:** Leathery hide.
* **Large:** Attacks are +2 to all attack rolls when targeting an elephant.
* **Size +6:** Elephants weigh over a ton.
* **Trample:** Elephants can trample creatures of Size +3 or smaller. If the elephant runs, anyone in its path must make an Agility roll or be crushed. Victims take damage equal to the elephant's Str (d12+5) and are knocked prone.
* **Trunk:** Str+d4.
* **Tusks:** Str+d6.

TIGER

Tigers are the largest of the big cats. These are Indian tigers, and so have the typical black and orange markings. They are also rather hungry.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+1, Vigor d10
Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d10
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9
Special Abilities:
* **Bite or Claw:** Str+d6.
* **Improved Frenzy:** Tigers may make two Fighting attacks each action at no penalty.
* **Maul:** A tiger that succeeds in a Grapple attack has knocked its prey to the floor and may make a Fighting attack with no multi action penalty. So long as the victim remains prone, subsequent attacks are made at +2.
* **Pounce:** Tigers often pounce on their prey to best bring their mass and claws to bear. It can leap 1d6" to gain +4 to its attack and damage. Its Parry is reduced by -2 until its next action when performing the maneuver however.
* **Size +2:** Male tigers can weigh over 800 pounds.

BEE SWARM

The swarm fills a Medium Burst Template.
Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10
Skills: Notice d6
Pace: 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7
Treasure: None.
Special Abilities:
* **Distracting:** Anyone in the swarm must make a Spirit roll or be Shaken as they frantically try to swat the stinging insects. This is a non-physical effect.
* **Mindless:** Unaffected by Tests of Will, Tricks, or arcane powers like *puppet*.
* **Sting:** Swarms inflict hundreds of tiny stings every round to their victims, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone in the template. Damage is applied to the least armored location.
* **Swarm:** Parry +2. Because the swarm is composed of scores, hundreds, or thousands of creatures, cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Area-effect weapons work normally, and a character can inflict his damage in Strength each round by swatting them. The bees can be foiled by jumping in water.

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DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

LEGACY OF TUNGUSKA



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PAUL 'WIGGY' WADE-WILLIAMS

DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

12

LEGACY OF TUNGUSKA

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LEGACY OF TUNGUSKA

On June 30, 1908 an event occurred in Siberia which would, nearly a decade later, put a small region of Siberia on the world stage. Early that morning eyewitnesses reported seeing a blue streak moving across the sky. Shortly afterward, a huge explosion knocked people off their feet and shattered windows over a hundred miles away.

No one paid much attention to news of the event, for Tunguska was at that time an extremely remote region. In the years which followed, the Great War and the Russian Revolution took precedent over launching scientific expeditions to some remote wasteland to study an event which occurred years ago.

The first expedition to explore the phenomenon reached Tunguska in 1921. The party leader, Leonid Kulik, a mineralogist, was not lured there by thoughts of scientific glory, but by the prospect by uncovering huge quantities of meteoric iron for use in Russia's expanding industry.

Instead of the huge impact crater they had anticipated, all the party found was a circular pattern of flattened and scorched trees, some 30 miles in diameter. Three more expeditions by Kulik over the next decade found no evidence of an impact point, leading him to conclude the explosion had occurred in the air. However, he remained confident there would be some traces of meteoric iron, and scheduled an aerial survey for 1938, a year from now.

But this is recorded history. Our tale begins shortly after the impact.

In the winter of 1910, a trapper working in the area became caught in a blizzard. In trying to find his way back to his cabin, he inadvertently stumbled into the devastated area. Half-blind and near frozen, he suddenly saw a greenish glow amid the fallen trees, pale but distinct. Crawling forward, he discovered the object was a misshapen rock. Fascinated, he held out a gloved hand, only to discover the object radiated heat. Curling up around it, he weathered the storm thanks to the "blessed rock."

The trapper took the rock back to his village and showed it to the local priest, who declared it a miraculous object sent by the angels. Over the years, the glowing rock slowly moved up the theological ladder, finally ending up in the main church in Irkutsk in 1918.

Civil war spread rapidly across the great state, and in 1920 the city was a battleground between Red (Communist) and White (Tsarist) Russians. Fearing for the safety of the holy relic, a priest smuggled it out of the city. It then vanished from history for almost two decades.

Last year (1936), a German researcher accidentally stumbled across a reference to the stone and its apparent powers. Word soon reached the Nazi hierarchy, who confiscated all the researcher's notes and forbade him to discuss the situation again.

The Nazi scientific elite of the *Sonderwaffen Abteilung* (Special Weapons Division, first introduced in *Daring Tales of Adventure #8: Terror of the Z-Bomb*) discussed the nature of the rock. After months of debate they reached a conclusion—the rock was made of a mineral which existed only in deep space, it was likely a radioactive isotope of some form, and it could thus be turned into a devastating weapon. All they had to do was locate the space rock and retrieve it, and potentially unlimited power would be in German hands.

However, two key obstacles blocked their path. First, Germany and Russia, while not at war, were far from friendly toward each other thanks to diametrically opposed ideologies. Any activities inside Russia would have to be kept low-key to avoid alerting the NKVD (a forerunner to the KGB). Second, they had no idea where the rock ended up after it left Irkutsk.

But fate, it seemed, was on the German side, for only a few weeks ago, word reached the Gestapo of a priest hiding out from Stalin's secret police in the wilds of Russia. This priest had seen the fabled stone in 1927, seven years after it disappeared. An expedition was quickly launched to kidnap the priest and return him to Germany for "questioning." Things did not go entirely to plan…

THE CHARACTERS

This Savage Adventure contains a pulp tale based around the exploits of four pre-generated characters. The full character sheets are available for free at **www.tripleacegames.com**.

The heroes have all their leveling opportunities from Seasoned (at which they begin) into Legendary mapped out in advance. Each published adventure in this line earns the heroes a fixed 5 Experience Points, guaranteeing them an advance every mission. All the players need do is tick the appropriate box and start making use of the new upgrade.

Characters: 80 XP.

The GM also needs the pulp setting rules from the TAG website.

ACT 1: ALASKA

Our brave heroes have been hired by the US government to track down a group of mobsters running a union protection racket in Anchorage, Alaska. After conducting investigations, the party tracked the mobsters to their hideout. Unfortunately, some wise guy tipped them off, and they made a break for it.

As the adventure begins, the characters are involved in a high speed chase across a frozen lake in the middle of winter.

SCENE 1: GOING FOR A SPIN

"A simple job," said the government man who hired you. What he forgot to mention was it involved tracking down mobsters in Alaska in the middle of winter. It's below freezing outside, and the car's heater has stopped working.

But you're as good as your reputations. You found the mobsters running the union protection racket. You even tracked them to their backwater hideout. But they knew you were coming, tipped off no doubt by some no good scum back in Fairbanks.

So here you are, freezing your butts off and driving across a frozen lake in chase of mobsters. What a life!

This scene works as a Chase and uses our alternate Obstacles rules. The terrain is slippery ice. However, the cars are fitted with snow chains, which reduce the difficult ground penalty to Driving rolls to –1. This is on top of any other modifiers. Remember that any Driving roll of 1 or less causes a vehicle to go Out of Control. Spinning and sliding is going to be very common.

Nights in Alaska in winter tend to be dark, very dark. Right now, it's twilight, so the lighting is Dim (–1). This doesn't affect Driving rolls, only Notice and attack rolls.

The villains are in two sedans, while the characters are in a single sedan. Divide the mobsters equally between the two vehicles. Both begin three Range Increments ahead of the heroes, and each Range Increment equates to 5". Deal each car a separate action card.

The mobsters want to get away, although they happily spray their pursuers with lead. They're not comfortable driving on the ice, so only use Distract and Force stunts if all their passengers are dead.

In the event the chase devolves into a tabletop battle, all movement is treated as difficult ground. A hero who runs and rolls a 1 on his running die slips and falls at the start of his run. Any Agility rolls, such as Agility Tricks or rolls to avoid area effect weapons, suffer a –2 penalty. In addition to any other effects, the character also slips and falls prone.

Once the last mobster is dealt with or escapes, proceed immediately to Scene 2. Don't give the heroes any chance to catch their breath.

- **Giuseppe Marconi:** See page 19.
- **Mobster (2 per hero):** See page 19.

SEDAN

Acc/Top Speed: 10/20; **Toughness:** 12 (3); **Crew:** 1+5

OBSTACLES

Deuce (–4) Thin Ice: The ice ahead is dangerously thin. A failed roll means the vehicle has plowed straight onto the ice, which promptly collapses. The car is dangling over the ice, the front bumper touching the icy water.

In order to reverse out, the driver must make a Driving roll as an action. Success frees the car, but doesn't allow any movement in the same round. Until the roll succeeds, the car is stuck on the ice.

Three (–2) Boulders: Large boulders, no doubt sitting atop a small island in the lake, present a dangerous obstacle. Failure on the Driving roll indicates a collision with a stationary, hard Obstacle.

Four (–2) Really Slippery Ice: An area of ice as flat as glass makes the going treacherous. There is no unique penalty for failure—the penalty simply increases the chances of going Out of Control as the vehicle loses traction.

Five (–2) Uneven Ice: Deep cracks and high ripples in the ice cause the car to bounce and buck as it speeds along. Failure on the Driving roll causes 2d6 damage to the vehicle, as the suspension creaks and groans under duress and the underside scrapes along the surface.

Six (–2) Logs: Lumberjacks hauling logs across the lake appear to have left some floating in place when winter set in. Now they're frozen in place, and the car is heading straight for them. A failed Driving roll causes a collision with a stationary, hard Obstacle.

Seven (–2) Snow Drifts: Powdery snow dunes criss-

cross the car's path, forcing it to zig and zag to avoid hitting them. A failed roll means the car slams into one. It doesn't take any damage, but it automatically drops back one Range Increment, as next round the driver has to restart its stalled engine and reverse.

Eight (–2) Elk Herd: A herd of elk pick a fine time to take a shortcut. Only an idiot would try to drive through a herd of large, muscular elk, so the Driving roll indicates a rapid turn to avoid them. There is no unique drawback for failure—the penalty simply increases the chances of going Out of Control as the vehicle suddenly swerves.

For comic value, a car which goes Out of Control could be described as spinning through the herd. Lots of startled elk peer in through the windows, and one may even catch a short ride on the hood before it is thrown clear (unharmed).

Nine (–1) Slippery Ice: It isn't quite a sheet of glass, but it's enough to cause a sudden loss of grip. There is no unique drawback for failure—the penalty simply increases the chances of going Out of Control as the vehicle loses traction.

Ten (–1) White Out: a brief but violent snow flurry temporarily blinds the driver. A failed roll causes him to drop back one Range Increment, as he slows to a more sensible speed or heads into the flurry and comes out facing the wrong direction.

Jack (–1) Bright Light: A glint of light from the setting sun strikes the ice at just the wrong angle, momentarily blinding the driver. This is no specific penalty for failing the Driving roll associated with this card—it's an unexpected event, rather than an Obstacle to avoid.

Queen (0) Cough and Splutter: The engine takes an intense dislike to the freezing temperatures and begins to cough and splutter. Until the driver or a front-seat passenger takes an action to work the choke, subsequent Driving rolls are at –1.

This is no specific penalty for failing the Driving roll associated with this card—it's an unexpected event, rather than an Obstacle to avoid.

King (0) Frozen Windshield: A thin layer of ice forms over the windshield, obscuring the driver's view. Until it is cleared by hand (an action from the driver or a passenger in the front seat), there is an additional –1 penalty to all Driving rolls for this vehicle.

This is no specific penalty for failing the Driving roll associated with this card—it's an unexpected event, rather than an Obstacle to avoid.

Ace (0/–2) Ramp: A mass of ice forms a handy ramp. Ask the players whether they want to drive around it or aim for the ramp. The thugs always take the safe option.

Going around the obstacle gives no penalty, and failure has no special effect beyond temporarily thwarting forward movement.

Trying to hit the ramp gives the driver a –2 penalty to his Driving roll, but if successful he gains an *extra* Range Increment. This bonus (and the penalty) stacks with the Push maneuver. Failure causes him to ram the ice block, which is a stationary, heavy Obstacle.

SCENE 2: LOW FLYING AIRCRAFT

WHOOSH! An airplane drops through the leaden clouds, skims the lake just above the top of your car, and hits the ice with a heavy thump. The undercarriage buckles, creating a shower of ice and snow as the propellers snap and buckle, and the fuselage rakes along the ice. Coughing black smoke from its twin engines, the craft finally comes to a halt some 200 yards away.

Small plumes of ice stitch across the lake surface toward you, narrowly missing. A host of flying men descend from the heavy clouds, SMGs spitting lead.

Characters with Piloting skill can make a Common Knowledge roll to identify the make of airplane. With success, they recognize it as a Russian Tupolev ANT-9, a high-wing monoplane capable of carrying nine passengers and two pilots.

If the heroes played through *Daring Tales of Adventure #8: Terror of the Z-Bomb* they've met these guys before—Nazi *SS-Raketentruppen* (Rocket Troops). Otherwise, the appearance of flying Nazis makes a nice change from the regular ones the characters have likely faced in their adventuring careers.

Should the characters be out of their car (perhaps it's crashed or been wrecked), they quickly discover they are standing on thin ice—literally. Whenever a hero draws a deuce as his first action card in a round, the ice beneath him gives way. The unfortunate soul must make an Agility roll at –2 (this already includes the modifier for the icy surface) or fall into the freezing water.

Characters hitting the drink are automatically Shaken by the intense cold. Scrambling out requires a Strength roll at –2 as an action. Each round the hero is in the water, he must make a Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue. This can lead to Incapacitation, but never Death—unconscious heroes are left half in and half out of the water. Recovering Fatigue is as per the standard rules for Cold.

Note the Nazis, who are airborne, don't suffer this problem until they land, or are forced to land.

If the heroes elect to hop back into their car and drive away, use the Chase rules. The notes and Obstacles from the previous scene apply, but only affect the characters—the Nazis fly above the lake. They're also moving at twice the speed of the characters' car, so they have +2 to their Piloting rolls.

At some point during the engagement Ritter can be heard shouting, *"Hand over the priest and we will let you live."* The Nazis reply to questions with a burst from their SMGs.

Ritter, the Nazi commander, is a skilled combatant and overconfident, but he isn't stupid. Once he takes two wounds, he flees, using the Recurring Villains rule if necessary to ensure his survival. A simple burst of his rocket pack carries him 10" straight up and well out of

range of the characters' weapons (he's also hidden by clouds).

Once half the Nazis are dead (there can be no survivors) or Ritter flees, the remainder immediately fly up back into the clouds. At the end of the turn in which they flee they are out of sight, concealed by the low clouds, and back to their zeppelin, which is flying high overhead.

SS-Sturmbahnführer Ritter: See page 19.

Raketentruppen (2 + 1 per hero): See page 19. One has a *Raketengewehr*.

THE PLANE! THE PLANE!

On approaching the plane, it is startlingly obvious it didn't fall out of the sky without a little assistance. The fuselage is peppered with bullet holes. There are two pilots in the cockpit. Both are dead—one has been shot several times, while the other broke his neck during the crash landing.

The flight log and maps show the airplane left Anadyr, a town in the extreme northeast of Russia, a distance of 1038 miles from Anchorage. A check of the fuel gauge reveals the tanks are virtually dry (the ANT-9 has a maximum range of 1118 miles).

Among the few items in the fuselage are spare sets of winter clothing, three parachutes, skis, and a well-thumbed Russian Orthodox Bible inscribed with the name Viktor Rogachova. A check of the pilots' identity cards quickly indicates the Bible belonged to neither of them.

With nothing else of interest in the airplane, there is little else for the heroes to do but return to Anchorage, contact Washington, and wait for their flight home to arrive.

SCENE 3: ROUGHNECK RUMBLE

Alaska in 1937 is a US Territory, and has been since 1912. It doesn't become a State within the Union until 1959. The entire Territory boasts a population of less than 100,000 souls, and Anchorage barely tops 3,000. A sizeable portion of Alaska's population belongs to the Russian Orthodox Church, a leftover from when the Territory was owned by the Russians (1741–1867).

The town's economy centers on the railroad, and is beginning to boom. The only airfield is Merrill Field, which was constructed in 1932 and lies on the east end of 5th Avenue.

Still a rough and ready sort of place with a strong frontier feel, Anchorage has several bars to cater to the growing number of railroad workers and teamsters. It is in one of these, a dive known only as Davey's, that the group has its lodgings. Its cozy enough, but the food is lousy, and the patrons are about as rough as they come.

After contacting Washington, the characters are "enjoying" a meal and a drink in the bar. Several of the locals have been giving any female adventurers the eye since they arrived and, emboldened by drink, are ready to make their move and work their "irresistible charms."

In the event there are no female heroes, the locals take a dislike to the characters and decide to start a brawl to teach the "city boys" a lesson.

> *A small group of rowdy workers staggers over to your table. One, a burly chap with a beard down to his waist, suddenly grabs <insert female adventurer's name> and hauls her to her feet. Holding her close to his barrel chest, he slurs, "Time you and me found a new way to keep warm, darling."*

Any attempt to intervene, whether through threats, polite conversation, or offers of drink results in a fist being thrown. It's time for a barroom brawl!

The bar is 12" to a side. Mark at least 20 squares containing tables. Movement through these or through adjacent squares (which contain chairs) is difficult ground.

Note that the entire bar erupts into a huge skirmish once a punch is thrown. The thugs attacking the characters are just one small part of a much larger battle. Divide the thugs into pairs for action card purposes.

Any character dealt a deuce as his first action card in a round risks being struck by a wild punch or thrown object from elsewhere in the bar. At the start of the round, before actions are taken, roll a d6 Fighting against the victim's Parry. Success means he takes d6+d4 damage from an Extra.

Half the locals have guns, but they only draw them if the heroes use firearms first (or when the Nazis arrive). Otherwise, they are quite content to batter each other unconscious.

At the start of round four, the door crashes open. Staggering in from the howling wind and snow is a large, bearded man in a fur coat. He staggers across the floor and collapses in the arms of the nearest character. Before he passes out, he mumbles (in Russian preferably, although he can use poor English if needs be), *"I…Rogachova…don't let them…*

At the start of round five, some more gatecrashers join the party. A small explosion rips away a chunk of the wall, sending splinters of wood flying. Charging through the gap is a number of *SS-Raketentruppen.* They were on patrol over Anchorage when they spotted their quarry. Without waiting for orders, they swooped in to attack.

Divide them into groups equal to the number of characters for the purposes of action cards. The low ceiling prevents them from using their rocket packs. However, a character can activate one as an Agility Trick. The likely outcome is a goon smashing into the ceiling.

Faced with obvious outsiders brandishing SMGs, the local heavies decide to put their fight on hold and turn on the newcomers! Hand out Ally Sheets for the heavies among the players. Regardless of how many the party has put down, enough are still standing in the bar to bring the number of allies up to one per character.

Again, the Nazis flee once half their number is out of

the fight. In this instance, they must reach the outside before activating their rocket packs and blasting off into the night sky. Heroes who follow them spot lights far overhead—the Nazi zeppelin.

The bar is a veritable arsenal. Most of the furnishings can also be used in Agility Tricks.

Bottles: Range 3/6/12, Damage: Str+d4. Bottles automatically smash after a single use.

Chairs: Str+d6 damage, require 2 hands. A Fighting roll of 1, regardless of Wild Die, indicates the chair breaks. If the Wild Die indicates a success, the chair breaks after damage is rolled.

Elk Antlers: Several stuffed elk heads adorn the walls. As an action a character can snap off one set of antlers. These inflict Str+d4 damage if used as a weapon and grant +1 Parry.

Heavies (2 per hero): See page 20.

Raketentruppen (2 per hero): See page 19. Two Nazis carry *Raketengewehr*, but are loathe to use them if Rogachova falls in the template—they want him alive, not blown to pieces.

AFTER THE FIGHT

All being well, the fight ends with the Nazis dead, fled, or unconscious. The locals, pleased with the results of the fight, decide to let bygones be bygones. The characters are swiftly brought drinks, congratulated for "being alright," and allowed to continue their evening in peace.

Most of the town drunks head home, leaving the barkeeper to clean up (he's used to it) and the characters to deal with the wounded man.

SCENE 4: THE PRIEST'S TALE

The man who entered just before the Nazis is suffering from hypothermia and has some frostbite, but nothing severe. A Healing roll or the patience to wait a few hours brings him back to consciousness.

Any hero who checks his skin sees plenty of old scars. A Common Knowledge roll identifies two as bullet wounds. Rifling through his pockets turns up an identity card in the name of Vladimir Ivanovich (an alias), half a pack of Russian cigarettes, a poor quality photo of a man and woman, and a plain wooden cross.

Once Rogachova is awake the heroes can question him. Likely questions and Rogachova's answers are given below. If a hero speaks Russian, read the answers below as written. Otherwise, the GM will have to break them up a little to represent the monk's poor grasp of English.

When Tunguska is mentioned, have the characters make Common Knowledge rolls at –4. The event isn't yet well-known outside the Soviet Union. Rogachova responds to any blank stares by filling in the few details currently known (see the first four paragraphs of the introductory text).

Q: Who are you?

A: *"First tell me where I am. Have I reached America?"*

Once he is convinced this isn't some elaborate German plot, he replies, *"My name is Rogachova, Viktor Rogachova. I am a priest of the Russian Orthodox faith."*

Q: Your identity card says otherwise. Why the deception?

A: *"Religion is not welcome in the Soviet Union these days. We supported the Tsar during the Revolution. Persecution, imprisonment, and death are our lot now. The identity card is a fake."*

Q: Were you in the plane? How did you get here?

A: *"I managed to persuade a pilot with Tsarist sympathies to fly me out of the Soviet Union to America. We were attacked. Rather than risk being captured, I jumped out without a parachute. God was with me, because I landed in a snowdrift."*

Q: Why are the Nazis chasing you?

A: *"It has something to do with the Tunguska stone. I was captured a few weeks ago by Nazis. They beat me while asking questions about the stone. I managed to escape. Since then I have tried to reach America."*

Q: What is the Tunguska stone?

A: *"A holy relic. It was found in the Tunguska region shortly after the explosion in 1908. The stone is very special. It glows in the dark and radiates heat. This I can say for fact. Some say it is a holy item, sent by God. I am not so sure. Whatever its origins, the Nazis want it."*

Q: Why did they kidnap you in particular?

A: *"The stone was placed in the church in Irkutsk for safekeeping in 1918. In 1920 it was moved so it would not fall into the hands of the Communists. Then it vanished. I was fortunate enough to see it in 1927, when a priest visited the village where I was hiding. Somehow the Nazis discovered this and supposed I knew where it was being hidden.*

"If I did, I would have brought it with me to America for safekeeping. Please, you must help me. The stone cannot fall into the hands of either the Soviets or the Nazis. Come with me back to Russia and help me save our heritage. I have little to offer in return, but surely you can see that my cause is just."

Q: How did you get your bullet wounds?

A: *"I fought against the Germans in 1916. Eighteen years old and sent to war. It seems a lifetime ago now. Then, when the Church decided to back the Tsar, we priests became embroiled in the Revolutionary War. I did my part for liberty as both a priest and a soldier. My wounds were the physical price I paid for defending my beliefs and rights. I think you Americans can understand that, yes?"*

Q: Who are the people in the photograph?

A: *"My parents. Both are dead now. They did not live to see the Communists overthrow the Tsar, thank God. Do you have the photograph? May I have it back, please?"*

Viktor Rogachova: See page 19.

ACT 2: IRKUTSK, RUSSIA

Assuming the adventurers accept the challenge of entering Soviet Russia to fight Nazis, Rogachova suggests they begin their investigation in Irkutsk, the last known location of the Tunguska stone. The priest says the Epiphany Minster, where the stone was housed, is now abandoned, but there may be clues to the stone's current whereabouts somewhere inside.

Irkutsk lies approximately 3,500 miles from Anchorage as the crow flies. Soviet Russia isn't exactly welcoming of foreigners right now, but fortunately this is a pulp game and such details can be hand waived (especially true if a hero speaks Russian). The journey should be treated like any other—a red line appears on a map, and the characters arrive at their destination. Whether they fly or go by boat to Vladivostok and then catch a train is up to the GM.

During the journey, Rogachova brings the adventurers up to speed on the city. Irkutsk is a former trading city, founded in 1652. It prospered and grew, though it has had a checkered history. During the early years of the 19th century it was a place of exile for artists, nobles, and military officers who took part in a revolt against Tsar Nicholas I. Due to this influx, the city became a thriving center of intellectualism and culture. A fire in 1879 destroyed many civic and public buildings, but the city was quickly rebuilt.

Fierce clashes between Red and White Russians in 1920 wrought more destruction. A large Communist military presence still remains, partly to ensure no White Russians remain in the region, partly to keep trade flowing, and partly to guard the trains which are bringing in the men and materiel necessary required to turn Irkutsk into an industrial center. One such industry is the Irkutsk Aviation Industrial Association (known simply as Irkut), which was founded in 1932.

SCENE 1: DING, DING

The Epiphany Minster is boarded up, but not guarded. A sign on the door says the church was closed by the order of Stalin to thwart "rebellious Tsarist elements within the Church." Cracking open the main door, which is on a busy thoroughfare, isn't a wise move. There are plenty of windows around the back, which is sheltered by trees from a public park.

Inside all is silent and dark. A decade of dust lies on every surface. All of the icons and religious tracts have been taken away (and destroyed), and many of the pews have been smashed into kindling.

Have the characters make a Notice roll as they search the church for clues. Should they fail, Rogachova uncovers the clue they seek. The altar stone, long-stripped of its finery, contains a small hollow space behind a loose stone. Inside is a scrap of parchment containing a series of letters and numbers.

Have the characters make Common Knowledge (–2) or Investigation rolls. With success, they recognize the code as a library archive. Rogachova informs the party Irkutsk has a large archive building.

As the band leaves the church and heads onto the street, they see two bright flashes. A man standing next to a trolley car has just taken two photographs of them. The photographer quickly leaps onto the trolley, which then starts up.

The heroes don't have to give chase to the man—it's their call. If they do, run this scene using the Chase rules and our alternate Obstacles rules. The trolley isn't affected by Obstacles—things get out of its way as it trundles along on its tracks.

The Range Increment is 5" and the trolley begins three Range Increments ahead. Because the trolley car has a higher base Range Increment, the characters suffer a –1 penalty to their Agility rolls.

The trolley car driver doesn't make Driving rolls—he isn't technically involved in the scene—but he does get an action card. On the trolley's turn, it automatically moves one Range Increment for two successive rounds and then Holds Steady on the third round (representing it stopping to let passengers on and off). It repeats this procedure for the duration of the scene.

At the start of the 4th round, the lead player character has the option of borrowing a car. A motorist has stopped to post a letter, but has left the engine running. Commandeering the car counts as an action. Other heroes can jump into the vehicle, but only when they reach the same Range Increment as the driver.

Should the car be used, the controlling skill becomes Driving and the –1 penalty for base Range Increment differences is ignored. The standard Obstacles rules apply if the *driver* is dealt a Club. Passengers don't have to check for Obstacles.

The photographer isn't armed, nor is he a combatant. If a character leaps onto the tram (which requires the Parallel maneuver, as normal), the photographer quickly surrenders. No other passengers interfere—they assume the heroes are NKVD agents after a traitor.

He claims he is just a tourist, but quickly caves if any pressure is applied (or a character makes an Intimidation roll). Sobbing lightly, he reveals he was paid to keep an eye on the church and take photographs of anyone who passed. His orders were to develop the pictures and send them to an address in Moscow. In return, he gets money sent to him.

The photographer isn't particularly bright, and hasn't checked the Moscow address. An Investigation roll made in the archive in the next scene reveals the location is the German Embassy.

Viktor Rogachova: See page 19.

OBSTACLES

Deuce (–4) A Parade: A street parade of Soviet workers looms into view as the car turns a corner! Success means the hero notices a side street just in time and emerges back in the chase. Any failure causes the hero

to inch forward through the workers, costing him two Range Increments.

Three (–2/—) Long Trolley: A long trolley bus moves in front of the character. Ask the hero whether he wishes to try and jump onto the trolley, move through the passengers, and leap out the other side, or move around it.

Moving through the trolley gives a –2 penalty to Agility rolls. With success, the character moves an extra Range Increment this round (this stacks with Push, but so does the penalty), as the trolley carries him in the same direction as his quarry before turning down another street. Any failure means the character couldn't get off the trolley before it turned. He drops back one Range Increment.

Running around the trolley doesn't require a roll—the hero simply doesn't gain any distance due to the delay.

Four (–2) Mistaken Identity: The character thinks he sees the man leap off the trolley and gives chase before realizing he has the wrong man. Any failure means the hero drops back one Range Increment.

Five (–2) Soldiers: The character spots a group of armed soldiers on a street corner. His run is reduced to a hurried walk to avoid drawing unwanted attention. Any failure results in a loss of one Range Increment, due to the reduced pace.

Six (–2) Slippery: A storeowner has been washing his floor, and the sidewalk is covered in soapy water. A failed Agility roll indicates the hero slips and falls. His Agility roll next round is made at –2 due to the time lost having to regain his footing.

Seven (–2) Sudden Surge: A surge of passengers leave another trolley, sweeping a hero up in their exodus. If he fails his Agility roll, the character is forced back one Range Increment by the crowd.

Eight (–2) Damn Drivers: As the adventurer tries to cross an intersection, a car pulls to a halt right in front of him. Failure indicates the character slowed too late and slams into the car for 2d6 damage (from an Extra).

Nine (–1) Stray Dog: A vicious stray dog decides to take a bite at the adventurer. Make a Fighting d8 roll. With success, the hero has been bitten, suffering d6+d4 damage (from an Extra), before he makes his Agility roll.

Ten (–1) Left or Right: A rotund gentleman blocks the hero's path. As the character goes left, so does the man. The same thing occurs when the adventurer ducks to the right. This could take a while! Any failure means the hero drops back one Range Increment, due to the added delay.

Jack (–1) Distracting: Running down the road brings a series of beeps and rude calls, distracting the hero. There is no specific penalty for failure beyond not gaining any distance (perhaps the adventurer spent time shouting abuses back).

Queen (–1) Old Friend: The hero is mistaken for a passing Russian's long lost friend. The Soviet grabs the character and begins hugging him, jabbering on about the "old days." Any failure causes the character to drop back a Range Increment, due to the delay.

King (0) Road Works: Workers have left their wooden barricades in the road overnight to stop cars driving into a utility trench they're digging. Success avoids the road works, while a failure leads to the hero upending into the trench and being Shaken.

Ace (–2/0) Catching a Ride: The character has the opportunity to leap onto a car's running board as it zooms by. Ask the character if he wants to try to catch a ride or keep moving on foot.

Catching a lift requires an Agility roll at –2. With success, the hero moves an additional two Range Increments. This *doesn't* stack with Push. Failure means the hero falls from the running board. He takes 2d6 damage (from an Extra) and suffers a –2 penalty to his Agility roll next round as he gets to his feet.

Characters who elect to keep moving on foot simply roll their Agility die as normal.

SCENE 2: ARCHIVE ANARCHY

Whether the explorers captured the photographer, lost him, or ignored him, their next port of call is the city archive building. Although the building looks neat from outside, within it is a multi-galleried sprawl of narrow corridors, small rooms, and towering bookcases.

Unfortunately for the heroes, the Soviets destroyed many books after the Revolution and rearranged the remaining documents. The index number they have takes them to an empty section. The characters can hunt the correct section themselves (an Investigation roll at –2) or ask one of the staff. The dour-faced archivist they ask points them to the relevant section, and then promptly calls the NKVD (having heard foreign voices or detecting something wrong about the adventurers' mannerisms that made her suspicious).

Once the right section has been found, the characters quickly locate the relevant bundle of documents. It's a collection of old maps covering northern Siberia. On one map a small red X has been drawn. Rogachova doesn't know Siberia at all, but he suspects it is likely a small village or summer hunting camp.

Read the following aloud when the characters go to leave. If the receptionist didn't contact the NKVD, then an informer in the archives who overheard the heroes speaking non-Russian did.

As they near to crack open the door, a burst of machinegun fire rakes across the ground in front of their feet. Peeking through the hap, you see, parked outside, three light armored cars with a squad of soldiers, with rifles at the firing position, kneeling in front of them.

"Enemies of the State," calls a voice over a loudspeaker, "surrender now. You will be treated with civility and kindness. This is your final warning."

Rogachova's face goes white. "If they catch us," he

says, "they will torture us. They will learn of the Tunguska stone, and we will spend the rest of our lives mining salt for Stalin. Please, we must find another way out of the building."

This really isn't one of those scenes where the characters are supposed to surrender. The Soviets have no intention of using kindness. As far as they are concerned, the characters are White Russians or foreign spies. All that awaits them is brutal interrogation and a trip to a gulag.

The archive measures 40" long and 18" wide. The GM can design the interior as he wishes, but it should be a maze of corridors, requiring numerous turns to reach the back door. Some of the corridors are formed by walls, but most should be bookcases.

Firing through a bookcase grants heavy cover. In true pulp style, any missed shot should either rip apart books or blow chunks from the walls. Flying scenery looks good on the big screen.

There are effectively an unlimited number of soldiers. The aim of the scene is to force the characters to run, not kill them. Hence, the Soviets are poor shots. At the start of the fight, two soldiers per hero and one officer enter the archive. Each round thereafter, another squad equal to one per adventurer joins in the battle. The first two groups also contain an officer. All enter through the front door.

When the heroes reach the back door, they find it is locked. It has Toughness 10. Alternately, a Lockpicking roll as an action cracks the lock. Proceed to the next scene.

- **Viktor Rogachova:** See page 19.
- **NKVD Officers (3):** See page 20.
- **NKVD Soldiers (unlimited):** See page 21.

SCENE 3: TANKS ON THE STREETS

Parked out the back is a BA 3 armored car. Although lightly armored, it packs a 45mm gun and two machineguns. The crew is currently out of the vehicle and a little way up the street, warming their hands over a trashcan filled with hot coals. They aren't involved in the fight, and their being here is a lucky coincidence.

As the characters emerge from the archives, two light tanks trundle around the corner, accompanied by a squad of infantry. These are part of the NKVD detachment after the characters! If the characters want to flee on foot, Rogachova suggests they take the tank instead. Likewise, heroes who want a standup fight are prompted to flee. *"There are more of them than us, and they likely have bigger tanks available. Please, trust me on this. Head north quickly, out of the city. There is an airfield there. This tank won't get us very far, and all the trains will be alerted. We can fly to Siberia!"*

Unfortunately, the armored car can only hold four crewmembers—someone is going to have to ride on top! Because it's dull having a character do nothing in an action scene, Rogachova suggests he act as loader for the main gun. Anyone riding the armored car gains Medium Cover by crouching behind the turret.

Since one machinegun is fixed firing forward, a character can elect instead to lean out of the armored side door and fire behind him with a hand weapon. He gains Medium Cover when doing so.

Any adventurers atop the vehicle or leaning out the door must make an Agility roll if the armored car goes Out of Control. A failure means the passenger has fallen out or off the vehicle, as appropriate, and is how hanging on for dear life as the ground rushes past. A Strength roll is required, as an action, to get back onboard. Until this is done, the hero has no Cover protection.

This scene works as a Chase. The Soviet forces are three Range Increments behind the characters, and each Range Increment equates to 10". The normal Obstacles rules apply. The obstacles could be cars, buildings, or small kiosks. Since the vehicles are heavily armored, they're unlikely to suffer much damage from a collision unless they ram each other.

The infantrymen have a base Range Increment two steps lower than the armored vehicles, and thus suffer a –2 penalty to Agility. It's likely they'll drop back very quickly. Divide them into squads equal in number to the player characters.

In the unlikely event the characters are captured, the GM will have to devise a scene allowing them a chance to escape from the local police station, retrieve their gear, and continue the adventure.

- **Viktor Rogachova:** See page 19.
- **NKVD Officers (1 per 6 soldiers):** See page 20.
- **NKVD Infantry (3 per hero):** See page 21.
- **NKVD Tank Crew (3 per tank):** Treat as NKVD infantry (page 21).

BA 3 ARMORED CAR

Acc/Top Speed: 4/16; **Toughness:** 13 (4); **Crew:** 4
Notes: Heavy Armor
Weapons:

* 45mm gun, turret (Range: 75/150/300, Damage: 3d8, AP 4, HW)
* Light MG, forward facing (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3, AP 2)
* Light MG, atop turret (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3, AP 2)

BT-7 LIGHT TANK

Acc/Top Speed: 5/21; **Toughness:** 15 (4); **Crew:** 3
Notes: Heavy Armor, Tracked
Weapons:

* 45mm gun, turret (Range: 75/150/300, Damage: 3d8, AP 4, HW)
* Light MG, coaxial (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3, AP 2)

ONLY ONE PILOT?

In the event your party has just a single pilot, replace the two experimental fighters with a single bomber. It didn't really fly until 1941, so it's considered an experimental aircraft in our pulp universe, hence the "X" designation. Rogachova sits in the empty bomb bay.

TUPOLEV TU-2X

The Tu-2 has four weapons, two of which have fixed firing arcs—forward for the autocannons and rearward for the canopy-mounted machinegun. The two other MGs can fire in either direction. However, because of maneuvering limitations, only one per round may fire at the same target as the cannons or canopy MG.

Acc/Top Speed: 15/130; **Toughness:** 16 (3); **Crew:** 4

Notes: —

Weapons:

* 2 x linked 20mm autocannon, pilot (+1 Shooting, Range: 50/100/200, Damage: 3d8+1, ROF 3, AP 4, HW)
* Light MG, rear canopy (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3, AP 2)
* Light MG, dorsal hatch (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3, AP 2)
* Light MG, ventral hatch (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3, AP 2)

SCENE 4: UP AND AWAY

The armored car turns off the road at Rogachova's request and bounces over fields and low hills. Cresting a small hill, you see before you an airfield. Two planes are parked near the chain link fence at one end of a long airstrip. Suddenly an alarm klaxon rings out. From a jumble of huts you see men in flying suits begin rushing toward the planes. It looks like the NKVD has called for reinforcements!

The obvious thing for the characters to do is gun the engine. Unfortunately, the armored car splutters and stops. It's out of gas! To make things worse, the armored car's guns are all out of ammunition! If a gun wasn't fired, then it simply wasn't loaded in the first place.

In order to reach the planes before the pilots, the characters have to perform four tasks in order. They have just six rounds in which to do these. So long as one character with a firearm makes it to the planes in time, the pilots turn tail and run back toward the huts, calling for soldiers to help them.

Line of sight to the pilots is blocked for most of the way by the planes, so the heroes can't just gun them down (which isn't very heroic).

* The first step is sprinting across the field outside the airbase. This requires an Agility roll at –2 unless a character is Fleet Footed, in which case he suffers no penalty. A failed roll means the character slipped or stumbled. He can repeat the roll next round.

* A previously unseen ditch blocks the way. Leaping it requires a Strength roll. With failure, the hero ends up in the ditch. Next round he must scramble up the slippery bank. This requires a Strength or Climbing roll (hero's choice) at –2.

* Getting through the fence can be achieved one of two ways. First, a hero can try to scale it. This requires a Climbing roll. The gaps in the links make good handholds, and grant a +2 bonus. Even unskilled heroes therefore roll an unmodified d4 (and Wild Die). Alternately, a hero can try to exploit a broken section of fence and make a Strength roll at –4 to rip it open. In either case, failed rolls may be repeated next round.

* The final task is a short sprint across the end of the airfield. This requires an Agility roll (+2 if a hero has Fleet Footed).

Viktor Rogachova: See page 19.

TOO SLOW

Should the characters fail to reach the planes in time, the aircraft begin taxiing down the runway. It takes them six more rounds to reach takeoff velocity. During that time, the adventurers need to find a way to stop the planes without destroying them. Fortunately, the handily placed jeep (see page 15 for stats if needed) allows them to at least give chase.

Suggestions for stopping the planes include pointing guns at the pilots and making an Intimidation roll (at +2), leaping onto the wing and ripping open the cockpit, or getting ahead and blocking the runway.

This is a fixed duration chase. Place six markers on the table to represent the runway. Each Range Increments equates to 5". Both planes and the jeep begin off the market track (their first movement takes them onto it).

Each round, the pilots make Piloting rolls while the character makes a Driving roll. At the start of round three, the planes are moving faster than the car, giving the pilots a +1 bonus. When round five begins, their speed increases enough to grant them a +2 Piloting roll bonus.

Instead of an infinite track of markers, there are just six. Should the planes move beyond the last one, they are airborne.

ACT 3: SIBERIA

Now in possession of two aircraft, the characters head north into the wintry depths of Siberia. Unfortunately, the planes haven't yet been tested in cold conditions, and quickly reveal a flaw.

SCENE 1: AN ICY TAIL

The temperature inside the cockpits is literally freezing. Suddenly the planes give a jolt. The nose tips forward and the craft begin screaming toward the ground. Pulling on the stick doesn't seem to work. The gunners have an excellent view of the problem—ice has formed on the tail and is jamming the controls!

Clearing the ice can't be done from inside. There are two options available. First, the gunner can crawl along the fuselage and smash the ice by hand! It's a daring maneuver, but unless it is done quickly the aircraft risks smashing into the ground. Second, the gunner can stand up in the rear seat and try to shoot the ice off!

Shooting the ice requires a Shooting roll. There is a –2 modifier if the character doesn't have Steady Hands and a –2 penalty for the ice being partially concealed by the tail. A missed roll of 1 or lower strikes the plane. Roll damage as normal. Treat Critical Hits of Engine or Locomotion as Controls instead. All other Critical Hit entries apply as normal, though applying them requires a little creativity from the GM ("You dropped the gun and shot the pilot!")

Clearing the ice in heroic fashion requires a character in each plane to perform the following tasks in order. In all cases, failed rolls may be reattempted in the next round. There is a time limit. After six rounds the planes don't crash—they are spotted by a patrol of light fighters sent aloft to hunt down the stolen prototypes. Check the **Aerial Combat** section below for details.

* Unless a hero is suicidal, his first task is to fashion a makeshift safety line. He can use Common Knowledge at –2 (gathering up seat straps and bits of parachute) or Repair (ripping out "unnecessary" cables).

While Repair has no penalty, a critical failure causes problems, as part of the control cabling is snapped. All Piloting rolls are made at –1 until the wiring is repaired (an hour on the ground and a Repair roll).

* Next the character must open the canopy and crawl out along the fuselage. This requires a Strength roll at –2 due to the wind and freezing temperature.



* Now at the rear end, the character has to smash away the ice. This requires a Strength roll at –2, or –4 if he forgot to bring something sharp or heavy.

* Finally, the hero must crawl back into the canopy. The procedure is identical to the second task detailed above.

Soviet Pilots (2 per hero): See page 21.

Viktor Rogachova: See page 19.

AERIAL COMBAT

This combat uses the Chase rules. There are a number of Soviet aircraft equal to number of player characters. They begin at Far Range, and each Range Increment represents 10". Their orders are simple—shoot down the thieves before they can deliver the prototypes to an enemy nation!

If the ice isn't cleared (task three must be completed) by the time the Soviets arrive, the pilot has a –2 penalty to all Piloting rolls. If the gunner isn't back inside (after step 4), the rear machinegun cannot be fired.

Should an adventurer still be clinging to the fuselage when the chase begins, he's in for a very rough ride. Each round, he must make a Strength roll or lose his grip. If the aircraft is Out of Control, there's a –2 penalty. A failure means the character is now dangling underneath the plane! Each round, he must make a Strength roll to drag himself back up the tether and onto the wing.

Linked guns roll one set of Shooting dice as appropriate to their rate of fire. Bonuses to the Shooting dice and damage for firing linked weapons are listed in the weapons' stats. Guns mounted on the aircraft don't give the gunner a penalty for firing on full auto—the operator doesn't have to counter the recoil.

ILYUSHIN IL-X3

These planes are (fictional) prototypes of the Sturmovik, an anti-tank/ground attack aircraft which would enter service in 1938. It requires two crew—a pilot, and a gunner who controls the rear-facing machinegun—though these prototypes have a third seat installed for an engineer. The pilot can fire either the autocannons or linked machineguns each round, but not both.

Acc/Top Speed: 15/100; **Toughness:** 14 (3); **Crew:** 3
Notes: —
Weapons:

* 2 x linked 20mm autocannon, pilot (+1 Shooting, Range: 50/100/200, Damage: 3d8+1, ROF 3, AP 4, HW)
* 2 x linked light MG, pilot (+1 Shooting, Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8+1, ROF 3, AP 2)
* 1 x heavy MG, gunner (Range: 50/100/150; Damage: 2d10; ROF 3, AP 4)

POLIKARPOV I-16 TYPE C

The I-16, introduced in 1934, forms a core part of the Soviet air force. It has a few mechanical issues and limited firepower, all of which are addressed in later models.

Acc/Top Speed: 15/116; **Toughness:** 11 (2); **Crew:** 1
Notes: —
Weapons:

* 2 x linked light MG (+1 Shooting, Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8+1, ROF 3, AP 2)

SCENE 2: GAS POCKETS

Several hours later your charts indicate you're in the right place marked on the map. About time too, because the fuel gauges are nearing empty.

Dropping through the clouds you see a small village below. It looks like there's something going on. Standing against the wall of a large building is a group of people, possibly peasants. Arrayed before them are soldiers, their rifles held ready to fire. Two men are crouched behind a machinegun. It looks like a firing squad!

Each plane can make a strafing run against the NKVD soldiers (the officer and brute are currently in a house). Have the pilot make a Shooting roll as if he was making a Suppressive Fire attack. The attack is conducted at Short Range. Success means the area is filled with hot lead. Roll each victim's Spirit normally (just grab a handful of d6s). A failure on the attack means the gunner fired too early or was simply off target.

If the planes loop back round for a second run, each attack can catch only half the soldiers—the may not be trained warriors, but they're clever enough to disperse. Ask the heroes at what range they wish to open fire this time. This is important, because the Maxim returns fire, as do any surviving infantry (but not the brute or officer). Conduct these attacks normally.

A third attack run hits nobody—by the time the planes get into firing position the Soviets and citizens have all fled for cover in the houses. The adventurers have lost the tactical advantage and must now fight a house-by-house battle.

The village contains a dozen small cottages, each measuring 4" by 3". They have thatched roofs and thin, stone walls, covered in a thick layer of plaster. Each building has a single door with two small windows on either side. There is also a communal barn, 9" long and 5"wide. It has two large doors at the front. Inside is a variety of farming tools, a broken tractor, a few cows, and bales of hay and straw for the animals.

When the heroes elect to land, they can position their planes anywhere on the battlefield. If they land after making one or two strafing runs, the NKVD don't respond until the characters are down—they're hugging the dirt in fear of another attack. Deal action cards normally once the planes stop.

Leaving the airplanes requires an action from a crewmember to open the canopy, and another to unbuckle the harness and jump down. The planes are treated as

Innocent Bystanders, so using them for cover isn't necessarily a wise move.

- **NKVD Brute:** See page 20.
- **NKVD Officer (1):** See page 20.
- **NKVD Soldiers (2 per hero):** See page 21. The squad has a maxim machinegun mounted on a wheeled chassis. Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3, AP 2, Snapfire penalty).

HE'S ALREADY GONE

An elderly man greets you suspiciously. "I am Ivan Korasnikov, headman of the village," he says. "What brings you to Siberia, strangers?"

Let the characters tell their story. Rogachova translates if necessary. The headman looks a little doubtful at the tale, but after a few moments he invites the party into his cottage. Over a bowl of hot stew and shots of burning, home-made vodka, he tells his story.

During his tale, the local women dress any wounds their saviors have suffered. Each character benefits from a single d8 Healing roll.

"We know the man you seek. Father Dmitri Banchenko. A good man, a good man. He was born here, you know. Our fathers were friends and we new each other as boys. Father Dmitri arrived here in 1931. He wouldn't say much at first, only that he was on the run from the Communists and needed shelter. We weren't going to turn one of our own away.

"He never spoke of any stone, but he often gazed west long into the night, toward Tunguska. He joked often that it was where God has come to Earth to deliver a powerful gift. Anyway, Dmitri lived here until just a few hours ago.

"Those men you killed were part of a larger force. They came in trucks and armored cars. The trucks were full of men and women. They only stopped to rob us of food and drink, but one of them was nosey. He discovered Dmitri hiding. Oh, the uproar! They called us traitors and threatened to send us all away to the gulags.

"In one way we were fortunate—the trucks were all full. But these were cruel men, evil men. The officer gave orders we were to be executed. They rounded us up and left us out in the cold to await our fate while they ate our food and stole our few valuables. Then you arrived to save us.

"If you're thinking of rescuing him, you can take the soldiers' jeep. It is outside. The truck will only be a few miles up the road by now. They probably heard the shooting and thought we had been killed. They won't be back anytime soon."

It may occur to the characters to swipe uniforms off the dead soldiers as part of a deception. Any tears due to wounds can be easily patched up. However, Brawny, Obese, or Small characters don't find one which fits convincingly.

The headman offers to cover the planes in hay while the characters are gone. First, this keeps the engines from freezing, and second, it hides them from any passing aircraft that might be snooping around.

Once the characters are ready to leave, the villagers supply the characters with a number of bottles of clear liquid. The necks are stuffed with rags. An elderly citizen winks at the characters and says, *"Burns quickly whether you drink it or light it."*

These homemade Molotov cocktails can be thrown to a range of 3/6/12. On impact they explode in a Small Burst Template and inflict 2d6 damage, ignoring all armor. Targets have a chance of catching fire.

Before they depart, one of the villagers speaks hurriedly to the headman. The characters see the discussion going on, but are too far away to hear what is being said. The headman seems to have won the argument, for the other citizen walks away, his head hung low. Only if directly asked does the headman say what occurred.

"Yuri owns the only tractor in the village," he sighs. "It is broken and we can't fix it. He asked if you knew how to repair tractors, but I told him your task was more urgent than our tractor."

Staying to repair the tractor requires an hour's work and a Repair roll. It doesn't change the next scene one bit, but the characters won't know that. If they agree to delay their chase for a while, reward them with a benny. Promising to return isn't worth a benny (even when they do come back), as the interlude was designed as a minor moral quandary.

- **Viktor Rogachova:** See page 19.
- **NKVD Soldiers (2 per hero):** See page 21.

SCENE 3: WE GOT US A CONVOY

Roaring through the Siberian countryside, the jeep catches up with the Soviet convoy some 20 miles north of the village.

The convoy comprises four trucks, each one with a driver up front and two soldiers sitting near the tailgate, and two BA-20 armored cars, one at each end of the convoy. The trucks do not have coverings—exposing the prisoners to the biting wind reminds them that escape in Siberia is futile.

Run this scene as a Chase using the standard Obstacles rules. The Obstacles are Light. The characters begin four Range Increments behind the BA-20, at the rear of the convoy. One vehicle is positioned one Range Increment ahead of the vehicle behind, so the entire

convoy stretches for six Range Increments. Each Range Increment equates to 10".

The heroes' jeep is faster than all the Soviet vehicles, which grants the driver +1 to Driving rolls.

Due to the narrow road and limited visibility, attacks against vehicles further ahead suffer penalties. Attacking past a single vehicle gives the target Light Cover (–1). Through two vehicles is Medium Cover (–2), and three vehicles provides Heavy Cover (–4). Missed shots harmlessly splatter into the road.

The NKVD men don't react to the characters' presence until the heroes open fire, try to snatch the priest, or overtake a vehicle and aren't dressed in Soviet uniforms. If any characters are wearing ill-fitting uniforms, make a Group Notice roll for each vehicle the jeep passes. With success, the soldiers spot the deception and open fire.

The soldiers in the back of the truck can only fire at targets behind them. Both the BA-20 and truck drivers will use Force maneuvers to knock the characters' jeep off the road if they get a chance.

Heroes who indiscriminately open fire on the trucks with *automatic* weapons should be threatened with the loss of a benny—every truck contains a number of innocent men and women. Single shot weapons garner no penalty, but Innocent Bystander rules apply for automatic weapons.

The priest the heroes are looking for is in the second truck down from the start of the convoy. Peering into the back of a truck requires the jeep to be within one Range Increment. At this range, a passenger (or the driver if he takes a multi action penalty) can make a Notice roll at –2 as an action. There is no penalty if the jeep and truck are on the same marker.

Dragging the priest across to the jeep requires the use of the Parallel maneuver. A character must then make a Fighting roll at –2 to reach over the side of the truck and grab the captive. Once grabbed, the character must make a Strength roll as another action to physically pull the elderly priest from the truck.

Once the priest is saved the characters can try to escape. While they may like to free all the prisoners, Rogachova points out that the NKVD would likely launch reprisals once it became apparent political prisoners were rescued from an armed convoy. Many more innocent citizens will be murdered because of the adventurers' good deed.

The trucks don't give chase, but the BA-20s will. The BA-20s handle very poorly off-road, as Rogachova is quick to point out—their off-road speed is one-quarter the usual Top Speed (rather than half. The difference in speeds gives the characters +2 to Driving rolls. Remove the trucks from the chase as the characters head to open country but keep the BA-20s and jeep on the same Range Increments.

Note that Father Dmitri doesn't have any stats—they aren't required. When Dmitri is saved, the characters soon realize he's a very sick man. Unfortunately, radiation sickness hasn't been studied yet, so the cause of the illness cannot be determined. What's obvious is that he's dying. He's also unconscious, and can't be wakened.

- **Viktor Rogachova:** See page 19.
- **NKVD Officer (1):** See page 20. He acts as gunner in the lead BA-20.
- **NKVD Vehicle Crew (7):** Treat as NKVD infantry (page 21).
- **NKVD Soldiers (8):** See page 20.

JEEP

Acc/Top Speed: 10/25; **Toughness:** 7 (1); **Crew:** 1+4

BA-20 ARMORED CAR

Acc/Top Speed: 5/20; **Toughness:** 12 (2); **Crew**: 2
Note: Heavy Armor
Weapons:
* Light MG in turret (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3, AP 2)

TRUCKS

Acc/Top Speed: 10/20; **Toughness:** 12 (1); **Crew**: 1+20

SCENE 4: CAPTURED

Your journey back to the village is rudely interrupted by sprays of bullets stitching the ground close to the jeep. Several explosions send plumes of snow into the air. Looking up, you see a large squad of Raketentruppen descending through the clouds. A voice calls out for you to surrender or be killed.

The characters are free to put up a fight, but they are heavily outnumbered. Assuming they surrender, a number of *Raketentruppen* land around them while others keep vigil overhead. Once the adventurers are disarmed, Ritter lands to address his captives.

"A wise move, Amerikaners," says the masked figure. "I am SS-Sturmbahnführer Ritter. We met briefly in Alaska, where you managed to thwart me. Fate, it seems, is on Germany's side, though. Our scouts spotted your battle with the Russians, and so we came to investigate."

The major orders two of his men to attend to the sick priest. As they approach, Dmitri's eyes open briefly. He clutches <insert hero's name> leg briefly, then lapses back into unconsciousness. You're not sure, but you think he pushed something into your boot.

"Do you know what the Tunguska stone is?" Ritter asks. "No, of course you don't. You probably think it is some religious icon, like this one does." He

gestures at Rogachova. "That stone fell from the heavens, but it was not sent by God.

"This old man is sick, not from any terrestrial illness but from exposure to the stone. It is an energy source of great power, one which can be turned into a weapon of terrifying power. Once it has been turned into a weapon, no one will dare stand against Germany!

"I imagine about now you are waiting for me to have you shot, or stripped naked and buried in the snow to die of cold, or maybe to have you taken to a great height and dropped. No, I will do nothing of the sort. I am not a butcher or a cold-blooded killer. I am letting you go. Go. Now, before I change my mind."

With that the Nazis, carrying Dmitri, blast off into the sky. A few seconds later, several objects land in the snow nearby. It seems Ritter either has a great sense of irony or a sick sense of humor—he's returned your weapons.

Inside the boot of the character Dmitri grabbed is a scrap of fabric with a painting of the Virgin Mary on one side. On the rear face is a set of numbers—map coordinates! The heroes likely don't have a map on them, but the planes have detailed charts. Once they check, they discover the coordinates indicate a mountainous region a few hundred miles away.

- **Viktor Rogachova:** See page 19.
- **SS-Sturmbahnführer Ritter:** See page 19.
- **Raketentruppen (4 per hero):** See page 19. Four are equipped with a *Raketengewehr*.

JEEP

Acc/Top Speed: 10/25; **Toughness:** 7 (1); **Crew:** 1+4

ACT 4: SHOWDOWN

What the Nazis don't know, of course, is that the heroes' planes are safely stored away in the village. A character making a Survival roll can deduce the settlement lies only around 20 miles to the southeast. A few hours hard walk through the snow will give the heroes a fighting chance to catch the zeppelin.

SCENE 1: RUDOLPH'S RAMPAGE

The sound of thunder rumbles across the snow-covered plains. Strangely, the sky is clear, save for a few wispy clouds. Behind, you catch sight of a rising cloud of snow, kicked up by something on the move. The sound gets closer and closer. Something bounds over a hill. It's a…solitary reindeer. Your sigh of relief is quickly cut short.

Another reindeer appears, and another, and another. The horizon is suddenly filled with hundreds, maybe thousands of reindeer, and they're stampeding toward you!

Run this scene using the Chase rules. Each Range Increment equates to 5". Since humans have a lower base Range Increment, the characters suffer a –1 penalty to their Agility rolls. The reindeers are faster then the adventurers, so they get a +1 bonus.

The herd doesn't have stats—they're a mobile hazard to outrun, not something the party can kill. Both sides use Agility as their skill (d8 for the reindeer). The herd is large, and, while treated as a single entity, extends over three adjacent Range Increments.

Running sideways to escape the herd isn't much use. It extends over a wide area and consists of hundreds of beasts.

If the herd gets within one Range Increment of the heroes, they always try a Force stunt. This is a *free* action, so they also make an Agility roll to increase their distance as normal. This isn't a conscious attack, but instead represents the animals trampling the unfortunate humans, or goring them with antlers. Although not technically an area effect attack, the herd is treated as such, so heroes with Dodge and Improved Dodge receive appropriate bonuses. Characters who fail the opposed Agility roll suffer 3d6 damage (from an Extra).

On round six, the chase moves into a forest. Characters who wish to climb to safety must forfeit their Agility roll (they are Holding Steady), and instead make a Climbing roll. Success means the character is safely in the branches, far above the herd.

Alternately, an adventurer can take cover behind a tree and hope for the best. This grants him Heavy Cover, meaning the herd has –4 to its Force stunt roll.

The cause of the stampede becomes apparent unless the characters manage to escape the panicked reindeer. When the herd moves past every hero (and is thus no longer a threat), a pack of Siberian timber wolves, hungry and desperate, comes bounding through the snow. While normal wolves rarely bother humans, this is a pulp game, so two-legged prey is fair game.

The battlefield is covered with trees. Each fills a 1" square and is impassable terrain.

- **Wolves (2 per hero):** See page 21.
- **Viktor Rogachova:** See page 19.

THE VILLAGE AGAIN

Once the wolves have been dealt with, the characters can continue their march back to the village. The headman greets them warmly, but is dismayed to hear Dmitri has been captured again. He does have some good news, though—he's refilled the fuel tanks with a mix of petrol and vodka. *"It will probably burn out the engines," he*

admits, "but you'll have enough life to rescue Dmitri a second time. Good luck, comrades."

Before they leave, each character receives a single Healing d8 roll from the village women (if required).

SCENE 2: ANGRY BEES

The planes' engines scream like banshees as you urge the aircraft to go faster. Clouds, dark and heavy, are illuminated briefly by brilliant flashes of lightning as you roar over the forests far below. There it is! Through the clouds you can just make out the zeppelin. Strangely it seems to be getting closer much quicker than you anticipated. And what are those small flying dots between you and it? Raketentruppen! It looks like the Nazis were waiting for you!

Although this is a dogfight, it's easiest to run this scene using the Chase rules. That said, if you've got plenty of miniatures and enjoy tabletop battles, you can play it out in full. For a full skirmish it's best to divide speed and weapon ranges by at least a factor of 10 (20 is better for a smaller playing surface) or you'll have planes and *Raketentruppen* screaming across 100+" of table each round.

Don't worry if the characters are shot down. The Nazis assume the heroes die a horrible death and don't bother checking the wreckage. Fortunately, the crash site is only a few miles from the place where the Tunguska stone lies.

Each Range Increment in the chase equates to 10". The lighting is Dim (–1) due to the storm. This affects both Piloting and Shooting rolls.

The zeppelin begins eight Range Increments from the characters, but it's moving toward them. Screening it is a flight of *SS-Raketentruppen*. These are five Range Increments ahead of the heroes, and again are moving to intercept. As with engagements in melee, the *Raketentruppen* can turn on a dime. Hence, they can always bring weapons to bear on the heroes.

The *Raketentruppen* don't have to use their weapons to be a danger to the adventurers. They can, and should,



use Distract stunts, like lying across the cockpit (they can't attack, as they're holding on tightly), blasting the cockpit with exhaust fumes, landing on a wing to change the plane's balance, or holding the rudder in place to prevent the aircraft turning smoothly.

If they want to actually land on the plane and engage in melee or shoot the crew through the cockpit (Toughness 6), they need to perform the Parallel maneuver first and then make an Agility roll at –2, just as if they were on the ground. Although the tabletop shows flat travel, in the game the vehicles are moving at high speeds and maneuvering.

The zeppelin and its gunners share a single action card. Split the *SS-Raketentruppen* into pairs for action cards. This reduces the odds of them all acting before the characters and creates a more challenging engagement.

When the zeppelin takes its 4th wound, it bursts into flame and plummets toward the ground. A handful of Nazis manage to bail out in time, but they pose no threat to the heroes or their quest.

Although there are no solid obstacles to hit this high in the air, there is a risk of being hit by lightning. When a Club is drawn by a player character pilot (not a passenger or gunner), the zeppelin, or one of the *SS-Raketentruppen*, check the table below. This works as the regular Obstacles rules except the damage for a failed roll is fixed. All lightning damage is caused by an Extra.

Value	Penalty	Damage
Deuce	–4	5d6
3–10	–2	4d6
Jack–King	–1	3d6
Ace	0	2d6

Viktor Rogachova: See page 19.

SS-Raketentruppen (2 per hero): See page 19.

Zeppelin Crew (15): The zeppelin crew has just a few key stats, since they do not appear in person—Agility d8, Piloting d8, Shooting d8, Toughness 5.

ZEPPELIN Z-32B

The Z-32B is small but fast and well-armed. Originally designed to provide static defense against fighters, it was modified by the *Sonderwaffen Abteilung* to function as a mobile base for the *SS-Raketentruppen*. An armored gondola protects the crew, while the troops sit inside the envelope, waiting for the signal to drop out through large hatches in the underside.

The zeppelin has four turrets, two on each side split. In any round, the airship can maneuver so one of these can target an individual foe. Thus, if the airship is attacked by two planes, each aircraft can be fired upon by a single set of guns.

Acc/Top Speed: 5/55; **Toughness:** 23 (3); **Crew:** 15+24
Notes: —
Weapons:

* 1 x light MG, left aft (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3, AP 2)
* 1 x light MG, left fore (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3, AP 2)
* 1 x light MG, right aft (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3, AP 2)
* 1 x light MG, right fore (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3, AP 2)

ILYUSHIN IL-X3

Acc/Top Speed: 15/100; **Toughness:** 14 (3); **Crew:** 3
Notes: —
Weapons:

* 2 x linked 20mm autocannon, pilot (+1 Shooting, Range: 50/100/200, Damage: 3d8+1, ROF 3, AP 4, HW)
* 2 x linked light MG, pilot (+1 Shooting, Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8+1, ROF 3, AP 2)
* 1 x heavy MG, gunner (Range: 50/100/150; Damage: 2d10; ROF 3, AP 4)

SCENE 3: DMITRI'S PASSING

After several hours flight, the heroes arrive at their final destination. Circling around the area indicated by the coordinates, the characters spot a cave entrance in the permafrost. The nearest landing area is several miles away, due to the forest surrounding the cave.

On approaching, the characters spy a small group of *Raketentruppen* on guard outside the cave. Lying beside them is Dmitri. Although they heard engines overhead, the Nazis think it was their zeppelin. As such, they are inactive sentries and can easily be taken by Surprise.

The prone figure is Father Dmitri. He's almost dead of radiation sickness, but he's currently conscious and lucid.

"I know you," the elderly priest smiles as you approach. "You saved me. And you," he points at Rogachova, "I saw you years ago. You saw the stone, before I hid it. I was arrogant," he whispers, blood bubbling on his lips, "believing it was sent by God. For that sin I have paid dearly."

"The stone is a tool of the Devil. It made me sick. Its power eats away at me from inside. I should have destroyed it years ago, but part of me always held to the belief I was wrong. By the time I knew the truth, I was too sick too travel and too fearful to entrust others to the task. But now you are here and all will be well.

"It must be destroyed. Swear you will destroy it. Mankind faces a terrible plague if you do not."

Once the characters swear to destroy the stone (whether they mean it or not), Father Dmitri gives a final cough and dies.

Viktor Rogachova: See page 19.

Raketentruppen (1 per hero): See page 19. One has a *Raketengewehr*.

SCENE 4: THE ICE CAVE

The cave leads steeply down into the frozen earth. The walls and floor are seemingly made of solid ice, making the going treacherous, and the temperature is well below freezing.

After a few hundred yards, the characters catch sight of two Nazis ahead of them, facing away from the party. At first glance they look like sentries, but it should occur to the adventurers they're looking the wrong way!

It's likely the characters will want to make a stealthy attack. Have them make Stealth rolls, but don't roll the *Raketentruppen's* Notice. When the heroes get within 5", have them make Notice rolls. With success, they realize the Nazis are frozen solid! In front of the goons is a wide hole filled with icy slush. This is a slush geyser, which erupted and froze the Nazis solid in an instant. It's a forewarning of what's to come, as well.

As you advance forward and deeper, the ground beneath you wobbles. Suddenly a huge section of the floor cracks and slips forward. You're being carried forward by the ice sheet, which seems to be floating on a secondary layer. It's an avalanche!

Have each hero make an Agility roll. Those who fail suffer a level of Fatigue from Bumps and Bruises. The slide deposits them in a large chamber, in which are Ritter and his cronies. Ritter holds in his hands a glowing lump of rock about the same size as his head.

The sudden appearance of the characters gives them a full round of Surprise. However, they start prone, having been rudely dumped in the now crumbled ice.

Divide the *Raketentruppen* into groups equal in number to the player characters for action card purposes. This not only prevents them all going before the heroes, but also makes it more likely they will draw a Club (see below).

The cavern measures 24" long and 18" wide. Columns of ice, each 1" wide, stretch from floor to ceiling. These can be used as cover and are considered indestructible. The Nazis begin at one end of the cavern and the explorers at the other.

The floor was once solid, slippery ice. Now, thanks to the heat radiating from the Tunguska stone, it is covered in slush. Movement is unimpaired unless a hero runs. Anyone who rolls a 1 on his running die slips and falls prone. The Nazis can all fly, of course.

The presence of the heat-radiating stone has caused structural weakness in the ice cave's ceiling and floor. Ancient stalactites of frozen water, which had hung and grew for centuries, are now extremely fragile, and prone to breaking off. Beneath the ice floor is a deep pool of near-freezing slush. Sporadically, pressure builds up, sending a geyser of slush high into the air through the weakened floor.

Such events occur whenever a Club suit is used for initiative, so they are frequent. See below for details. For the Nazis, pick *one* Extra whenever a Club is drawn to suffer the effects, not all of them!

In all instances, everyone in the template must make an Agility roll at –2 as a free action or suffer the listed effect. Those who succeed in their roll should be moved just outside the affected area. This is free movement and does not provoke attacks due to Withdrawing from Combat or First Strike.

Deuce (Freezing Geyser): A column of icy slush shoots up through the floor. The jet fills a Medium Burst Template, centered on the hero (or one Extra picked at random).

The water rapidly freezes, causing victims to seize up. A failed roll means the victim is affected as per the *entangle* power (–2 Pace and skills linked to Agility and Strength). A critical failure means he is affected as if the spell scored a raise (no movement, cannot use any skills linked to Agility or Strength). Shrugging off the effects requires a Strength or Agility roll.

Mark the area through which the geyser erupted in some manner. This is now a hole in the floor. Characters cannot walk through the affected area, but they can jump or fly over it.

3: As above, except the area affected is a Small Burst Template.

4: As deuce, except only a single 1" square is affected.

5–6 (Falling Icicle): One of the stalactites snaps off and falls. Place a Large Burst Template over the character holding the Club. Damage is 3d6. When Extras draw a Club, the GM should pick one Extra at random as the intended victim. Once the "attack" has been dealt with, the area covered by the template is treated as difficult ground for the remainder of the scene.

7-10: As above, except the area affected is a Medium Burst Template and damage is 2d8.

Jack–King: As a result of 5–6, except the stalactite smashes over a Small Burst Template and inflicts 2d6 damage.

Ace: As a result of 5–6, except the stalactite fills only a single 1" square and damage is 1d10.

Viktor Rogachova: See page 19.

SS-Sturmbahnführer Ritter: See page 19.

Raketentruppen (2 per hero): See page 19. One has a *Raketengewehr*.

AFTERMATH

The Nazis have been thwarted! Getting home isn't necessarily easy for the heroes, for it doesn't involve and life-or-death situations. What the party does with the Tunguska stone is up to them. Being radioactive, it's not

the sort of souvenir one typically wants in one's house. Naturally, the US government would take it off the party's hands for a suitable fee.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

VIKTOR ROGACHOVA

Viktor Rogachova is a 39-year-old idealist. When the Revolution came, he was already a trainee priest within the Russian Orthodox Church. Favoring liberty over Communism, like most of his brethren, he took up arms against the Red Russians, earning praise for his marksmanship. When the Tsarist forces were defeated, Stalin ordered priests to be rounded up and executed. Rogachova has been on the run since 1921.

The Nazis found him a few weeks ago, but underestimated the resourcefulness of the priest. Overpowering his two captors, he quickly fled, using what little cash he had to hand and calling in favors from Tsarist sympathizers to reach Anchorage. Rogachova only knows the Nazis want the Tunguska stone—he has no idea why.

Rogachova speaks Russian and a little English. Treat him as a Henchman.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d10
Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Shooting d8, Streetwise d6
Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8
Hindrances: Cautious, Enemy (Minor; Soviet state)
Edges: Brawny, Charismatic, Marksman
Gear: Wooden cross

SS-STURMBAHNFÜHRER ADOLF RITTER

A member of the *Sonderwaffen Abteilung*, Ritter is a specialist in the field of cryogenics. Hideously scarred after a liquid oxygen tank exploded, Ritter hides his visage behind a leather mask.

Strapped across his back are two small tanks. One is an experimental rocket pack, similar to those worn by the *Raketentruppen* but powered by liquid oxygen, and the other is a liquid oxygen tank which powers his weird science. The mad doctor has one gizmo, a flamethrower-like device. He has a pool of 50 Power Points, shared between his powers. This is fully recharged each scene in which he appears.

His bulky gear means he is encumbered, and so suffers a –1 to all Strength, Agility, and linked skill rolls. He also suffers –1 to Pace on the ground and rolls a d4 running die, since his armored suit prevents swift mobility.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Piloting d10, Shooting d10, Weird Science d12
Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (2)
Hindrances: Loyal, Overconfident, Ugly (scars)
Edges: Arcane background (Weird Science), Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Level Headed, Power Surge, Wizard*
* **Powers:** *Barrier* (wall of ice), *burst* (jet of freezing vapor), *deflection* (weapons freeze up as they near), *entangle* (freezes victims), *speed* (ice slides under foot)

Gear: Thermal insulated armored flight suit (+2), pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1)
Special Abilities:
* **Weakness (Gizmo):** The storage tank on Ritter's back is a Small target (–4). Reduce Ritter's Power Points by the damage inflicted by the attack.
* **Weakness (Rocketpack):** The rocketpack may be targeted. It is a Small target (–4), with Toughness 8 (2). A wound causes the pack to explode in a Medium Burst Template for 2d8 damage. Even if the wearer isn't killed, he cannot maintain altitude.

** This Edge isn't normally available to Weird Scientists. It simply represents his ability to achieve effects with less liquid oxygen.*

GIUSEPPE MARCONI, MOB BOSS

Marconi is a low-ranking mob boss. Powerful enough to operate his own gang, but not so powerful he really controls any territory. He's a mean shot, something many of his enemies learned to their cost.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Shooting d10
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Greedy (Major), Loyal
Edges: Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Rock and Roll, Steady Hands
Gear: Tommy gun (Range 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, ROF 3, AP 1), knuckleduster (Str+d4)

MOBSTER

Some folks call them "Goodfellas," but there isn't much good about these wise guys. Armed with Tommy guns and wearing smart suits, mobsters are the elite troops of the criminal gangs, hired to mow down nosey cops or Feds and keep the other hoods in line.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8
Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Loyal, Mean
Edges: Dodge, Rock and Roll
Gear: Tommy gun (Range 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, ROF 3, AP 1), knuckleduster or knife (Str+d4)

SS-RAKETENTRUPPEN

An elite company, the *SS-Raketentruppen* serve only with the *Sonderwaffen Abteilung*. Armed with advanced

rifles, clad in armored flight suits with full head protection, and wearing an experimental rocket pack strapped to their backs, the *Raketentruppen* are trained to drop from the skies into the heart of enemy installations, achieve their objective, and depart back to the heavens before an alarm can be raised.

Their bulky gear means they are encumbered, and so suffer a –1 to all Strength, Agility, and linked skill rolls. They also suffer –1 to Pace on the ground and roll a d4 running die, since their armored suits prevent swift mobility.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Piloting d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Throwing d8
Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (2)
Hindrances: Loyal, Mean
Edges: Combat Reflexes
Gear: Thermal insulated armored flight suit (+2), *Raketengewehr* (see below), knife (Str+d4), SMG (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, ROF 3, AP 1), 2 x potato masher grenades (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 3d6–2, Medium Burst Template), experimental rocket pack (Pace 100, good for 20 rounds of continual use).
Special Abilities:

* **Weakness (Rocketpack):** The rocketpack may be targeted. It is a Small target (–4), with Toughness 8 (2). A wound causes the pack to explode in a Medium Burst Template for 2d8 damage. Even if the wearer isn't killed, he cannot maintain altitude.

HEAVY

Life on the railroad in Alaska is tough. When the laborers aren't working, they like to spend their time drinking and fighting in no particular order.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Shooting d6
Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7
Hindrances: Mean
Edges: Brawny
Gear: Improvised small weapon (Str+d4), pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1)

NKVD BRUTE

Well-muscled, bald, and as mean as sin, this thug loves inflicting pain on others. His preferred weapon of choice is a short, wooden club, which he uses with great efficiency.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Shooting d8
Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9
Hindrances: Mean, Overconfident
Edges: Brawny, Combat Reflexes, Improved Frenzy, Improved Nerves of Steel, Improved Sweep, Mighty Blow, Tough as Nails
Equipment: Baton (Str+d4), pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1)
Special Abilities:

* **Crippling Blow:** If the brute inflicts a wound with his club, he has struck a sensitive area or rendered a limb temporarily useless. The victim must roll on the Injury Table. The injury lasts until the end of the current scene.

NKVD OFFICER

Fear is the main weapon of the NKVD, as this officer knows full well. His men may not like him, but they obey his orders to the full. Officers are treated as Henchmen.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Shooting d8
Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Loyal

RAKETENGEWEHR

The "rocket rifle" is essentially a bulky, two-handed rifle with a revolver-like magazine. Six light armor-piercing warheads are stored in the cylindrical magazine. When fired, one warhead is launched at relatively low speeds. This helps reduce the already immense recoil. Once clear of the barrel, a secondary booster ignites, propelling the round to tremendous velocity. Its primary drawback is the slow reload time (one action per warhead).

A built-in safety feature prevents the warhead from detonating until it has traveled at least 12 yards (6"). Damage at less than 6" is 2d6 to a single target (a result of kinetic impact).

Each squad (10 men or part thereof) carries one Raketengewehr. This replaces the soldier's usual weapon. On this mission, the soldiers carry no reloads.

Type	Range	Damage	ROF	Weight	Shots	Min Str	Notes
Raketengewehr	20/40/80	3d8	1	20	6	d8	Medium Burst, AP 4, HW, Snapfire, 2 hands, see notes

Edges: Command, Strong Willed
Equipment: Steel helmet (+2), pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1)

NKVD SOLDIER

Irkutsk is a major trading city even under the Soviet regime. Guarding the town is a company of NKVD soldiers backed up by armored cars and light tanks. Fortunately for the heroes, even the NKVD is poorly trained at this stage in Soviet history.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: —
Equipment: Steel helmet (+2), bolt-action rifle (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8, AP 2), bayonet (Str+d4), 2 grenades (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: 3d6, Medium Burst Template)

SOVIET PILOT

Although the USSR has pilots fighting in the Spanish Civil War, most of its aircrews have never seen active combat. Many are young, idealistic, and poorly trained. Note they don't have Steady Hands, so they suffer a –2 penalty to Shooting rolls while flying.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Piloting d6, Repair d6, Shooting d6
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: —
Gear: Flying jacket (+1), pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1), knife (Str+d4)

WOLF

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d10
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4
Special Abilities
* **Bite:** Str+d4.
* **Fleet Footed:** Wolves roll a d10 when running instead of a d6.
* **Go for the Throat:** Wolves instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's most weakly-armored location.
* **Size -1:** Wolves are relatively small creatures.

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ITS GETTING HOT IN SIBERIA!



Chasing mobsters over a frozen Alaskan lake might be fun, but when an airplane suddenly drops from the sky and the heroes are attacked by Nazi rocket troops you know it's not a normal day! And when a Russian priest staggers into their lives with a tale of a holy relic from Tunguska being sought by the Nazis, it's definitely a day to remember!

Following the clues, our intrepid heroes visit the vast expanse of Mother Russia. Here they must unravel the location of the sacred Stone of Tunguska while avoiding ruthless NKVD agents, the trigger happy Soviet airforce, and the evil machination of a Nazi weird scientist with a love of cryogenics. The former exile city of Irkutsk and the frozen wastes of Siberia form the backdrop for the frantic chase.

Can the adventurers uncover the *Legacy of Tunguska?* Find out in this two-fisted tale of action and adventure!

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DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

THE DEVIL'S CHALICE



OFFICIAL SAVAGE WORLDS LICENSED PRODUCT

PAUL 'WIGGY' WADE-WILLIAMS

DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

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THE DEVIL'S CHALICE

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TRIPLE ACE GAMES

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THE DEVIL'S CHALICE

The ancient Greeks wrote of ambrosia and nectar, the food of the gods. The Spanish sought the Fountain of Youth in vain. Crusaders waged war in their search for the Holy Grail. Alchemists labored long over their apparatus but failed to find the elusive secret. Ironically, men have killed and expended vast fortunes to learn the secret of immortality, but those sacrifices were in vain, for no human has ever discovered the path to eternal life.

But now the path to eternal life is a step closer thanks to the legend of one man. Five centuries ago, a warlord rose to power in Eastern Europe, a warlord history would label a madman, a butcher, a vampire; a warlord known today as Dracula.

The story of Dracula's life is well-known, but his death and vampirism are shrouded in mystery. Most scholars claim he died centuries ago after being beheaded by his foes. A few, those on the fringe of scholastic circles, claim he discovered a dark path to immortality, and rose as the first vampire. It is the latter who are closest to the truth.

After the death of his beloved wife through an act of treachery, Dracula's fury knew no bounds. He ranted against God, believing the Almighty had done him an injustice after his battles against the invading Turks. In an unholy mockery of the legend of the Holy Grail, Dracula seized a golden chalice from the altar in his castle's chapel, filled it with blood, and drank deeply, all the while forsaking Christ.

Cut off from God's grace, Dracula became a tool of the Devil. Satan made the warlord an immortal, but one whose existence would require the blood of others. For years, Dracula waged war against God through his inhuman existence, until he suddenly vanished from history a century or so later.

Between his rebirth and disappearance, many legends grew up around Dracula. Only one concerned itself with his golden chalice of blood, and it was largely forgotten after the 17th century. But now the story has been uncovered.

Word of the cup has reached the ears of one Adolf Hitler. Though the German dictator has not yet mobilized his armies, he has already designed the blueprint for his Thousand Year Reich. Aware of his mortality, and believing only he has the strength of will to lead Germany for the full duration of the Reich, Hitler has ordered the chalice be found by any means and at any cost.

To lead the Nazi expedition, Hitler appointed Doctor Wolfgang von Drachenstein, a notorious medical practitioner jailed for his sick experiments involving diseases of the blood and an expert on vampire lore. Freed from incarceration, von Drachenstein was given a laboratory to continue his experiments and the rank of Sturmbahnführer (Major) in the SS.

The mad doctor quickly mobilized a personal army of hardened SS soldiers and began his quest. He tracked down a small, archaeological expedition in Romania (not yet an ally of Germany) and interrogated the scientists. To his disgust, he discovered a vital clue had been sent to a Romanian folklore expert, now living in Boston, via steamer.

Commandeering a U-boat, von Drachenstein set sail after the steamer. Fog and foul weather hampered his efforts, and it was only just before the ship entered American waters that it was stopped. After finding what he came for, von Drachenstein killed the crew.

Realizing his own knowledge of Romanian folklore would not be enough to complete Hitler's quest, the Nazi set a trap to lure the folklore expert into the open. In a twisted imitation of Bram Stoker's novel, von Drachenstein lashed the dead skipper to the wheel, while he steered it into harbor. Just before it reached the wharf, he leapt overboard into a waiting dinghy.

GM's Notes: The use of a chalice in Dracula's transformation into a vampire is based on events in the movie, *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, not the novel by Bram Stoker.

While there are supernatural elements in this adventure, it remains firmly rooted in the pulp mentality. Try to remain focused on the action, rather than promoting an overt air of mystery and horror. A little creepiness is cool, but too much and the characters may develop a touch of

hesitancy and forget the reckless bravado. With regard to the movies and atmosphere, this is *Van Helsing* horror, not *Bram Stoker's Dracula*.

THE CHARACTERS

This Savage adventure contains a pulp tale based around the exploits of four pre-generated characters. The full character sheets are available for free at **www.tripleacegames.com**.

The heroes have all their leveling opportunities from Seasoned (at which they begin) into Legendary mapped out in advance. Each published adventure in this line earns the heroes a fixed 5 Experience Points, guaranteeing them an advance every mission until they reach Legendary. After this time, they gain an advance every second adventure (when the XPs are a multiple of ten). All the players need do is tick the appropriate box and start making use of the new upgrade.

Characters: 85 XP.

The GM also needs 20 gaming stones (with 5 of a different color) and the pulp setting rules from the TAG website.

ACT 1: BOSTON

The morning newspapers all carry the same front page—the story of a ship, the *Dmitri*, which steamed into Boston Harbor and failed to stop. The story would likely be minor news, except an undisclosed police source said the crew was missing. With nothing else of interest on their plates that morning, the adventurers have descended on the crowded docks to take a look.

SCENE 1: HARBORING A MYSTERY

It looks like half of Boston has crowded into the harbor area. As you work through the crowd, talk of smugglers, ghost ships, Nazi spies, a failed American Navy experiment, a terrible storm, and other rumors are already circulating wildly.

Finally you reach the waterfront and catch your first sight of… nothing. No, wait; there's a small ship, possibly a passenger steamer, far out into the water and surrounded by police boats. A policeman stationed on the waterfront calls out to you in a gruff tone, "You've had your look, now move along."

Asking the policeman what happened requires a Persuasion roll at –2. With success, he reveals a ship steamed into harbor at full speed late last night and crashed into a wharf. It's been towed out into the harbor so the police can check it over before the insurance agents arrive. The crew has been detained, and there were no passengers. A failure results in the constable tapping his nightstick and gesturing the party toward the back of the crowd.

Whether they stay or attempt to leave, a grubby hobo tugs on their arms a few moments later. *"Spare a dime," he says, his breath rank with the stench of strong spirits, "and I'll tell you what I saw. I was here when it happened, I was."*

The hobo, who goes by the name Archie ("just Archie"), was indeed on the waterfront when the ship collided with the wharf. He was also under the influence at the time, and his story is a blend of fact and alcohol-induced errors. Once paid, Archie tells his story.

> *"Me and Benny," he gestures to his side and pats his hand on thin air, "my dog, were walking here last night when we saw lights out in the harbor. They were moving real fast, straight toward the wharf. Then I saw them, I did, I saw them.*
>
> *"A giant bat, big as a man, flew off the ship into the night sky. I didn't get a clear look, 'cause right at that moment the ship banged hard into the stone wall. Fearsome noise it was, like artillery going off. That's when the other man jumped off and ran away. Big chap, he was, all covered in hair and with evil eyes."*

Archie's story is a truth of sorts. The "giant bat" was in fact the villain of our story—Wolfgang von Drachenstein—leaping from the ship and into a waiting boat. The bat wings were just the Nazi's leather coat flapping in the wind. His view blocked by the steamer, Archie never saw the murderer land in the small craft, so his mind invented a few details. The other man, the sole survivor of the crew, fled in terror into Boston. The characters encounter him later.

The police at the harbor has heard Archie's story, but dismissed his account as drunken ramblings.

CONTACTS

Characters with Connections to the police, a reporter, or the harbormaster's office can acquire more information, as can a hero who uses a Contact. Information is revealed only on the understanding that it isn't broadcast to the public—the police don't want to alarm the citizens of Boston.

The police found six bodies onboard, all drained of blood. The blood loss seemed to have occurred through two puncture wounds in the neck, spaced about an inch apart, but very little blood was found at the crime scene. Identifications have yet to take place, but the manifest indicated six crewmembers, so the police believe they have all been accounted for. There was no passenger manifest. The police have taken this to mean there were no passengers, but in truth the manifest has simply not been found.

The strangest thing was the captain. He was found lashed to the wheel. The coroner has yet to make his

report, but by all accounts he too was drained of blood, and therefore incapable of steering the stricken vessel through the harbor mouth and around moored ships.

SCENE 2: WATERFRONT CHASE

As the adventurers return to their car, they spot a shabbily dressed man, hurrying away from the waterfront. He keeps glancing back at the distant steamer, and is obviously very nervous.

Before the heroes can approach him, a convertible sedan squeals to a halt beside him. Words are exchanged with the four passengers. The pedestrian seems about to make a run for it, but his eyes catch sight of something in the car. Reluctantly, he climbs into the vehicle. Characters who succeed at a Notice roll spot the distinctive muzzle of a Schmeisser (a German SMG) pointed at the man. The car then screams away, tires smoking (yes, we know the MP-38, erroneously called a Schmeisser, wasn't available in 1937, but it's an iconic weapon so we've included it).

Even if the Notice rolls fail, the characters should have their curiosity piqued and decide to follow the car. The Nazis quickly realize they are being tailed and open fire!

The fleeing car begins three Range Increments ahead of the heroes, and each Range Increment equates to 5". This Scene uses Triple Ace Game's alternate Obstacles rules.

The Nazis are desperate to escape, not get involved in a lengthy chase. Caring nothing for innocent bystanders, the passengers happily spray the heroes' car with lead from their SMGs. They don't have Steady Hands, so their attacks suffer a –2 penalty.

Flying characters, such as Doc Davenport, can fly through the streets using Piloting. Despite the vague nature of how much distance is covered during a round in a Chase, the character must burn Power Points each round to maintain his flight as normal. In addition, a flying hero moving at his Pace has a base Range Increment of just 1" (as if he were running), so he suffers a –1 penalty to Piloting rolls. Moving at double Pace negates this.

The Nazi's car is a convertible, and the roof is folded down. If the heroes' driver can pull alongside using the Parallel maneuver, a hero can try to reach over and pull the captive into their car (though it'll be a very tight squeeze).

Performing this stunt requires a Grapple attack against the professor to grab hold of him. Instead of the usual effects, the hero then makes a Strength roll at –4. With success, the hostage is dragged across. Otherwise, the hero retains hold of him. Should the vehicles move apart, the grabber must decide whether to release the man or pull himself (a free action) into the Nazi's vehicle!

Once the professor has been rescued, the Nazis turn their attention to their secondary orders—if they can't kidnap him, they must kill him!

- **Professor Tomic Iordanescu:** See page 17.
- **Hardened SS Driver (1):** As SS soldier (page 18), except he has a Wild Die when making Driving rolls.
- **Hardened SS Soldiers (3):** See page 18.

VILLAIN'S SEDAN

Acc/Top Speed: 10/20; **Toughness:** 12(3); **Crew:** 1+5

AMELIA'S ROADSTER

Acc/Top Speed: 15/30; **Toughness:** 10(3); **Crew:** 1+2

OBSTACLES

All damage from Obstacles is as from an Extra.

Deuce (–4) Fish Out of Water: A spillage at a fish processing plant has resulted in a river of slippery fish across the characters' path! On a failed Driving roll, the vehicle automatically goes Out of Control. Flying heroes instead must avoid a pile of crates which tumble as the flyer nears them.

Three (–2) Crates: Stacks of crates don't leave much room for maneuvering. On a failed roll, the vehicle suffers a collision with a soft Obstacle.

Four (–2) Delivery Truck: A truck pulls out from a warehouse, partially blocking the road. A failed Driving roll results in a collision with a stationary hard Obstacle.

Five (–2) That's Tacky: Tacks, broken glass, pieces of twisted metal, or some such object have spilled into the road from a nearby warehouse. A failed Driving roll results in a punctured tire (halves the vehicle's Top Speed) and causes it to go Out of Control.

Flying heroes instead must perform a tight turn to avoid becoming tangled in a laundry line, which clogs their flying device in some manner.

Six (–2) Look Out Below!: A crane has dropped its cargo. This could be a crate of fish or machine parts, or perhaps a steel girder. Whatever the load, a failed Driving roll causes 3d6 to the vehicle (as from an Extra), as the object smashes onto the hood.

Seven (–2) Newspaper Stand: In order to avoid a truck the car must mount the sidewalk. Doing so puts a newspaper stand right in its path! Failure causes a collision with a soft Obstacle and scatters papers everywhere.

Eight (–1) Leaky Hydrant: A faulty hydrant has left a deep pool on the part of the road the car is driving along. A failed Driving roll causes the vehicle to go Out of Control as it skids on the standing water. A flying character is hit by the water jet if his Piloting roll fails.

Nine (–1) Blocked Windshield: A seagull drops something onto the windshield or a flying hero's goggles, blocking the driver's view. A failed roll means the car drops back one Range Increment while the obstruction is cleared.

Ten (–1) Flocking Birds: A flock of squawking sea birds takes off to avoid the oncoming vehicle, but in doing so obstructs the driver's view. A failed roll causes the car to go Out of Control.

Jack (0/–1) Long Vehicle: A truck hauling a fishing boat to the harbor blocks the hero's lane. The characters have the choice of staying behind it until it turns off or risking an overtaking maneuver, which takes them onto

the wrong side of the road. The Nazis try to overtake only if the characters are two Range Increments or closer behind them or if they are trying to pursue the adventurers.

Staying behind the truck requires no roll. Instead, the car automatically drops back two Range Increments due to the delay.

A failed roll while overtaking causes a head on collision with a hard Obstacle (a car). The other vehicle is moving at 10" per round.

Queen (0/–2) Red Light: The traffic signal turns red. Characters have the choice of stopping or running the light. The Nazis always try to run the light.

Stopping causes the car to drop back two Range Increments due to the delay. Running the light requires a Driving roll at –2. Failure leads to a collision with another vehicle. Since this is a "T-bone" collision, only the speed of the vehicle involved in the Chase counts.

King (0/–2) Bridge: A short but steep bridge over a waterway gives the opportunity to put some air under the tires! Ask the driver whether he wants to take the bridge at normal or full speed. The Nazis take to the skies only if the characters are within two Range Increments or if they are now chasing the characters. Flying heroes treat this card as a normal Piloting roll.

Taking the bridge at normal speed gives no penalty to the Driving roll, and no special result if it fails.

Hitting the bridge at speed, though, has a –2 penalty. With success, the car moves ahead an extra Range Increment, as if the driver Pushed. This stacks with the Push maneuver (so do the penalties), for a possible increase of five Range Increments this round. On a failure, the vehicle automatically goes Out of Control when it lands.

Ace (0/–2) I Know A Shortcut: A hero swears he knows a shortcut. Ask the driver whether he wants to stay where he is or take the shortcut. The Nazis don't know Boston, so they always take the known road.

Staying on the same road gives no penalty to the Driving roll, and no special results for a failure.

Taking the shortcut gives a –2 penalty (due to traffic and narrow alleys), but a successful Driving roll moves the characters ahead an extra Range Increment, as if the driver Pushed. This stacks with the Push maneuver (so do the penalties), for a possible increase of five Range Increments this round. Failure means the characters are temporarily lost, and automatically drop back one Range Increment when they eventually get back on the Nazis' tail.

THE ROMANIAN SCHOLAR

The rescued professor is Tomic Iordanescu (tom-itch eeyor-dan-eshku), a Romanian scholar. He speaks passable English. After recovering his wits, rattled during the frantic chase, he can be questioned. Possible questions posed by the adventurers and the professor's answers are given below.

Q: Who are you?

A: *"I am Professor Tomic Iordanescu, a Romanian Jew. I live in America now to escape persecution in my homeland."*

Q: What were you doing at the harbor?

A: *"That ship, the Dmitri. I was expecting a crate of Romanian artifacts sent to me for study by compatriot in Romania. When I heard about accident, I went to investigate, to retrieve my cargo. But I was turned away by police."*

Q: Why did those men try to kidnap you?

A: *"I have no idea. I only assume it has something to do with the cargo for which I was waiting."*

Q: What's in the cargo?

A: *"I do not know. I receive telegram from an old friend, telling me he discovered something wonderful regarding Prince Vlad III."*

Q: Who is Prince Vlad III?

A: *"A warlord. He ruled Romanian in 15th century. A very interesting historical figure. I think you Americans know him better by other name—Dracula. Yes, he was very real, though he was not vampire. That author, Bram Stoker, merely used name in novel."*

Q: We heard the crew was found drained of blood.

A: *"Please, do not be having joke with me. You are not joking? That is terrible, terrible. Someone has very sick sense of humor."*

After the questioning is over, Iordanescu asks the characters to help him sneak onto the ship that night and search it for the cargo he was expecting. The police have refused to let him onboard until damage and insurance assessors have done their job. Should the characters refuse, he points out that someone has tried to kidnap him already, and the only reason he can think of is because of something contained in the ship's hold.

CAPTURED NAZIS

Any Nazis taken alive prove to be tight-lipped when it comes to revealing information. Unless a hero uses torture (which costs him a benny for being unheroic), no information can be gained. Even with physical persuasion, all that is revealed is the Nazis were ordered to kidnap the professor and take him to Romania. They have no idea why, nor do they care about their superior's motive.

SCENE 3: THE SHIP OF DEATH

No amount of Intimidation or Persuasion allows the heroes onto the ship legally. Until the various assessors have done their work, it remains under police guard out in the harbor. Likewise, no cargo can be removed before the insurance agents have performed a thorough inspection.

Although the police claim the ship is guarded, no one wants to watch over the vessel at night. The murders have the men spooked, and rumors of vampires are already circulating around the precinct. By day, the officers laugh and mimic Bela Lugosi's accent (Tod Browning's *Dracula* movie was released in 1931 and proved a box

office success, and there was a hit play on Broadway before that), but at night they lose their bravado, and wait out the long hours on the waterfront.

The heroes can easily hire a small rowboat and row out to the wreck under cover of darkness.

As they near, the see the ship is listing badly to port. A large gash in the port bow has been hastily repaired to prevent the vessel from sinking. Due to the listing, and the partially flooded hold, all movement on the stricken ship is treated as difficult ground.

There are four important clues on the *Dmitri*, and one red herring (the rats), though none need be discovered for the adventure to continue.

* Investigating the bridge, the characters automatically see the telegraph machine was smashed. A Repair roll made while studying the wreckage reveals the cause was nothing supernatural—it was a 9mm slug, the sort fired by a Schmeisser.

* The ship is crawling with rats. Although rats are often linked to vampires in Western myth, these are merely stranded vermin, unwilling to leave the vessel until it is towed nearer to the harbor. There appears to be a lot of them, but that's because a lot of the lower ship is underwater and the rats prefer to remain dry.

* The captain's cabin contains a small strongbox secured to the wall. The police have not yet opened it, preferring to wait until the ship is watertight before conducting a full investigation. Opening the box requires a Lockpicking roll at –2 or inflicting more than 12 points of damage.

Inside are a few personal items (small photo of a woman, letters, and such like), and the passenger manifest. The list reveals there were two passengers—Marku Nicelescu and Carol Stanescu. Neither is known to Professor Iordanescu, though he can confirm both are Romanian names.

* The crates in the forward and aft cargo holds are lashed in place by sturdy ropes and remain locked in position despite the severe tilt of the floor. None of the crates bare any markings indicating Romanian origin. A Notice roll reveal the outline of a small crate in the dirt and rat filth in the rear hold. A cursory examination of the hold reveals no loose crates, hopefully leading to the conclusion that a crate has been removed.

Professor Iordanescu is distraught when he realizes his crate is not among those in the cargo holds. He becomes (correctly) convinced that whoever stole the crate did so to prevent the contents from reaching him.

* A search of the forward hold reveals a hatch. This leads to the bilges beneath the cargo deck. Looking in, the characters' flashlights reveal a pale corpse floating in the filthy water. Seeing this requires a Spirit roll to avoid the effects of Fear.

The corpse has been nibbled on by rats, but the cause of death is readily apparent—two small puncture wounds on the neck! A waterlogged identity card reveals this to be Carol Stanescu.

Professor Tomic Iordanescu: See page 17.

THAT SINKING FEELING

Once the characters have searched the ship, the vessel gives a sudden lurch. The makeshift repairs have failed, and it is starting to sink! Ideally, this occurs while the characters are in the lower cargo hold.

In order to escape, each character has to perform the following tasks in strict order at the rate of one per round. Until a task is completed, the heroes cannot progress. Failed rolls may be repeated.

At the end of the sixth round, the vessel capsizes and floods. Any heroes already in the water are pulled down by the suction (despite this not being very scientifically accurate). In addition to any other rolls, adventurers still aboard must make a Vigor roll as a free action or suffer a level of Fatigue from drowning. Panic, the freezing water, and moving objects slamming into the hero prevent him from holding his breath properly.

Worse still, the rats decide that hanging around is no longer the right thing to do. In a screeching panic, they too try to abandon ship! At the end of each "round," the rats automatically advance one task, starting with the first, without requiring any Trait rolls. Heroes on the same task automatically suffer 2d4 damage (from an Extra) from bites and claws.

For instance, at the end of the first round, the rats advance to the first task. Any heroes yet to escape the moving cargo are attacked. When the second round ends, the rats advance to the second task, mauling any heroes in their path.

* The ship tilts to over 45 degrees to port. The ropes securing the cargo snap! Avoiding them requires an Agility roll at –2. Heroes who fail suffer 2d6 damage (from an Extra) and are pinned. Escaping requires a Strength roll at –2. This can be a Cooperative roll, but only allies who are not pinned and who remain on this task can assist.

Once free, the character (and any helpers) must still make his Agility roll at –2 to avoid being crushed again and reach the next task.

* With the ship at such a precarious angle, the heroes must wade through the debris to reach the ladder. This requires an Agility roll due to the water, debris, and disorientation caused by the vessel as it turns in the water.

* Clambering up the ladder, which is almost horizontal and thus all-but submerged, requires a Strength roll. From here, the heroes can slide into the water.

* Getting far enough away from the vessel to avoid being struck by debris or sucked under when it sinks requires a Swimming roll. Failure inflicts 2d6 damage (from an Extra) from debris sliding off the deck and sucking in water during the panicked swim.

Once every character has escaped, the vessel disappears from view beneath the water. The heroes can doggy paddle to their rowboat and return to shore, wet but alive.

Professor Tomic Iordanescu: See page 17.

SCENE 4: A REAL VAMPIRE?

The night is not yet over, though, and another encoun-

ter awaits the waterlogged heroes. Professor Iordanescu asks to be taken home. He plans to collect his papers and books and move to a new locale, at least until the current situation has resolved itself.

On the journey home, the heroes spy a young woman stagger into the street and collapse to her knees, one hand clutching her neck, the other waving frantically at the characters. The lady, Miss Emily Spoon, is in a state of shock.

"A man," she sobs, gesturing back to a dark alley, "jumped out; attacked me. He bit me on my neck! Oh God, I'm bleeding! I'm going to die!"

Miss Spoon is a long way from death. The wound is superficial, though it is still bleeding. Investigation reveals not a set of twin puncture marks, as the heroes likely expect to find, but the impression of a full set of teeth. Any hero making a Common Knowledge roll spots bruising around the wound. It looks much like a hickey.

The woman is too distraught too give an accurate description of her attacker, not that it matters. The clattering of trash cans from the alley alerts the heroes just as a shadowy figure emerges from the gloom, snarling and spitting as he lunges to attack! Miss Spoon promptly faints, thus removing her from the fight.

The attacker is Marku Nicelescu, a Romanian student. He is deranged, having witnessed the murders on the ship. Confused and delusional, he believes he is a vampire, and set out after dark to stalk the streets of Boston. Of course, he has no vampiric powers, though his mania and adrenaline rush gives him certain abilities he would not normally possess.

During the fight, any hero in melee combat with their assailant can make a Notice roll as a free action. With success, they realize the man's breath is steaming in the chill night, hardly typical for an undead. His flesh is also warm, and his eyes, while bloodshot, seem perfectly normal. Hopefully these clues are enough to reveal the man is not one of the undead, but a normal, albeit deranged, human.

When the "Boston Vampire" reaches Incapacitated, he falls unconscious. Don't roll on the Incapacitation Table.

The Boston Vampire: See page 19.
Professor Tomic Iordanescu: See page 17.

QUESTIONING THE VAMPIRE

Nicelescu regains consciousness a few minutes later. He rants and raves for a few minutes, before fatigue reduces him to a defeated slump. Possible questions put to him and his answers are given below. He only speaks Romanian, so Iordanescu translates. Nicelescu has seen an import version of the Dracula movie, from where he gained most of his vampire knowledge.

Q: Who are you?

A: *"I am Marku Nicelescu. Flee while you can, for I am a creature of darkness, a vampire!"*

Q: You don't seem to have any fangs or powers...

A: *"I…I am newly turned to darkness. I will develop powers later."*

Q: How did you get here?

A: *"Aboard a ship, the Dmitri. I was in my coffin, filled with grave dirt from my homeland."*

Q: We didn't find a coffin. Where is it?

A: *"I…it…I hid it. You'll never find it. Now let me go, mortals!"*

Q: Did you see anyone take a crate from the ship?

A: *"Yes. I was hiding in the darkness, waiting to feed. They took the crate, the ones in black, like Satan's soldiers. Black, black with silver streaks. Two streaks, like lightning."*

Q: What was in the crate?

A: *"Artifacts from my homeland. Dracula! Yes, Dracula! I was sent to watch over them, to make sure they…Dracula, my master, ordered me to guard them! They are important to him! He returns!"*

Q: Did you witness the murders aboard the ship?

A: *"I killed them! I…it was… the man in black! Bat-like wings! Pale skin, oh such pale skin. He sucked their blood! I saw him drain their blood! He killed them! He killed them! Vampire! VAMPIRE!"*

Q: Why are you afraid of the cross?

A: *"It is an accursed symbol! No…not feared. The man, on the ship, he had one around his neck. The squared cross, black and silver, the mark of the Devil!"*

The squared cross refers to the German Iron Cross military decoration, while the twin silver streaks on the men in black are SS runes. The heroes have by this stage in their careers fought more than a few Nazis. A Common Knowledge roll at –2 allows a character to deduce this is what Nicelescu means if the players don't figure it out.

The characters can't get anymore useful information from the lunatic. Aside from biting Miss Spoon, who never saw his face and therefore can't positively identify him, and entering America without going through proper immigration channels, he has committed no crimes. However, he is a danger both to himself and the public. If the heroes don't think of it, Iordanescu suggests he be handed over to the police, who should also be informed about the mysterious man on the ship.

The local police take statements from the heroes, but don't detain them for long. As far as they're concerned, until evidence to the contrary comes to light, Nicelescu is their chief suspect. The other man is, they assume, a convenient alibi, invented because the authorities cannot disprove his existence.

SCENE 5: THE DEVIL'S MINION

After Nicelescu is dealt with, the professor asks to be dropped off back at his house. Offers of a safer place to stay are gratefully accepted, but he is insistent he collect some papers and books first. Iordanescu brings up the subjects of the attempted kidnapping, missing crate, and multiple murders if suggestions are made he collect his belongings in the morning.

The car pulls off the main road onto the street where the professor has his home. Flames and smoke are billowing from a brownstone halfway along the block. Iordanescu cries out, "My house! They have set fire to my house!" In the glow of the fire, four goons, armed with SMGs, can be seen.

The road is 4" wide, and there's a 1" sidewalk on either side. It runs north-south. Mark five squares (or a 5" strip if you don't use a battlemat) along one edge as being the professor's burning house. Three cars, each 2" wide and 3" long for game purposes, are parked along the street, and can be used as Cover.

The SS soldiers begin adjacent to the burning building, after having just thrown a few more petrol bobs into the inferno. Von Drachenstein starts 4" to the north of them. He wears a long, leather coat, which flaps in the wind like a bat's wings.

The characters begin 20" from the southernmost soldier. If they drove to the harbor that evening, they're in the vehicle when the fight begins. Assume the car is moving at 10" per round, having just rounded a bend.

The fire is already out of control. Iordanescu's house is completely ruined, as are all his research papers and books. Any character foolish enough to enter the building takes 2d10 damage per round from a Wild Card and has a chance of catching fire.

During the fight, von Drachenstein let's slip an important clue. While attacking a hero, he hisses, *"Too late, Americans! The chalice is as good as ours!"*

This scene serves to introduce the heroes to their antagonist. To that end, von Drachenstein must escape the scene. Use the Recurring Villain's rule to ensure this happens. One easy way is to have the fire brigade turn up, having been alerted by a neighbor. A fire tender pulls to a halt right in front of the villain, allowing him to make his escape unseen.

- **Professor Tomic Iordanescu:** See page 17.
- **Doctor von Drachenstein:** See page 18.
- **Hardened SS Soldiers (2 per hero):** See page 18.

HISTORY LESSON

If the characters mention the chalice, Iordanescu thinks for a moment, and then goes very white.

"Dear Lord," he mutters. "Can it be true? I'm sorry," he says, "let me explain. There is old legend that Dracula did not die but became vampire. This is legend Bram Stoker used in novel. In story, Dracula is given immortality by Satan after having head removed. But there is older legend about how he became vampire.

"In old legend, Dracula's wife was tricked into suicide. In rage, Dracula renounced God and drank blood from holy chalice. According to story, this made Dracula vampire. Anyone who drinks from chalice also becomes vampire, an immortal being. If Nazis want chalice, then story perhaps is true, yes?"

Iordanescu knows very little else about the chalice. Until now, no scholar has ever researched it, for the tale was too far-fetched to attract academic interest. There are no stories about what befell it after Dracula faded from history, and the object is never mentioned in any later accounts of Dracula's successors, nor the Turkish invaders. If it existed, it must have been hidden during the years Dracula was active.

However, the professor suspects that a clue to its whereabouts, or indeed, whether or not it even exists, might be found at Snagov monastery in northern Romania. According to Romanian legend, the monastery is where Dracula was buried after being beheaded. Iordanescu has never been able to see inside the tomb, despite his academic credentials.

ACT 2: THE TRAIL BEGINS

Like much of Europe, Romania is suffering hard times. Although it regained lost territory after the Great War and enjoyed a brief period of stability, fascist, ultranationalist, and communist political parties are on the rise. One such party, the anti-Semitic Iron Guard, won over 15% of the votes in the 1937 general election.

Although the current political situation plays little part in this adventure, history buffs may be interested to know that in 1938, King Carol II abolishes parliament and becomes a dictator. Over the next few years, Romania loses part of its eastern territory to Russia, and then sides with Germany after the forced abdication of the king and the rise to power of Ion Antonescu, a military dictator.

SCENE 1: SNAGOV MONASTERY

Snagov Monastery lies some 20 miles north of Bucharest in the middle of Lake Snagov. It can only be reached by boat. Suitable rowing boats can be hired from the local village, which is also called Snagov.

On landing, the heroes are met by an elderly monk, who introduces himself as Alexandru, the monastery's custodian. He welcomes them to the island, and then politely inquires as to their business. When Dracula is mentioned, he smiles briefly, and gestures for them to follow him into the chapel.

The elderly monk shows the party into the main chapel. In the center of the floor is an engraved marble slab, beside which are four short, stone columns.

"This," the monk says, gesturing to the marble slab, "is the marker of Dracula's grave. But there are no bones inside. A German archaeological expedition came here a few months ago and found nothing. We protested, but they had official authorization. I am sorry your journey has been wasted."

The monks are willing to lift the slab over the grave if the characters ask. Beneath is a 6' deep hole, lined in marble. Any hero who taps around inside the grave hears a hollow thump as it knocks the floor—it sounds like there is a cavity below the chapel.

While the monks are generally opposed to excavations in the chapel, they are also pragmatic—a discovery of any kind could mean increased sponsorship and possibly even pilgrims if any finds are religious in nature. As such, they reluctantly agree to allow the party to smash a hole in the floor of the grave.

After some hard work, the characters uncover a rusted metal ladder descending deep beneath the island, possibly below the level of the lake bottom.

BREATH OF THE DRAGON

The shaft leads down 50 feet, before ending in a damp chamber measuring 11" wide and 24" long. On a dais at the far end is an upright metal plate covered in sharp spikes. The walls are unadorned. A character who gazes upward sees a number of stone dragon heads, their mouths pointing toward the flagstone floor.

Writing on the spiked plate reads, *"Those who seek immortality must first embrace death."* A close inspection of the device reveals small holes in the floor. This is a trap for foolish treasure seekers. The "obvious" thing to do is impale someone on the spikes and let their blood seep into the holes. In fact, any liquid poured down the holes works just fine. A hero who elects to become a human pincushion suffers an automatic wound (which he can Soak).

Whether blood or some other liquid is used, filling the holes causes an adjacent flagstone to rise a few inches from the floor. Beneath is a small cavity, in which sits a small chest.

Within the chest is a gold seal, formed to resemble a dragon biting its own tail, and a scrap of parchment. Heroes who succeed in a Common Knowledge roll at –4 or a Knowledge (History) roll recognize the symbolism as that of the Order of the Dragon, a medieval chivalric order of which Dracula was a member.

The parchment reads, *"The dead of Sighişoara hold the key."* Professor Iordanescu knows Sighişoara well, as it is Dracula's birthplace. He claims there is an old cemetery a few miles to the north.

The journey back across the floor is not as uneventful as the first crossing. Deal every character an action card as normal until their movement takes them onto the ladder. Heroes who draw a Club suit are targeted by a flaming gout, which spews forth from one of the stone dragon heads. There is no pattern to their activation, hence the use of a card suit. They are not activated by ground pressure, either, so flying heroes are equally affected.

Place a Medium Burst Template over the victim. He and everyone else in the template must make an Agility roll at –2 or suffer 2d10 damage (from an Extra) and have a chance of catching fire.

Professor Tomic Iordanescu: See page 17.

SCENE 2: BATTLE OF THE LAKE

After leaving the monastery, the heroes must row back across the lake. Unfortunately, the Nazis have been keeping tabs on the monastery. They figured that anyone else on the trail of the chalice would likely visit here at some point.

As the rowboat heads out into the water, two motorboats appear from behind a small island. A burst of machinegun fire rips through the water just in front of the rowboat.

The characters' boat starts three Range Increments from its pursuers. Each Range Increment equates to 10". See below for Obstacles. Since all the boats are open, crew and passengers may be targeted. The boat gives them Medium Cover. Missed shots either whiz overhead or cause superficial damage to the watercraft.

Moving the rowboat requires either brute force (Strength) or technique (Boating). Which Trait the characters use is up to them. Characters can Cooperate at this task, but doing so counts as an action and all participants must use the same Trait.

The two Nazi boats are each equipped with a small motor. The rowboat has a base Range Increment of 1", while the motorboats have 5". Since they have the higher Range Increment, the characters suffer a –1 penalty to their Trait rolls at the start of each round. The Nazis get +2 to Boating as their vehicles are twice as fast. The Nazis also have an MG34 on each boat, although the Unstable Platform penalty applies.

Professor Tomic Iordanescu: See page 17.

Hardened SS Soldiers (2 per hero): See page 17.

ROWBOAT

Acc/Top Speed: 1/3; **Toughness:** 9 (2); **Crew:** 1+6

MOTORBOAT

Acc/Top Speed: 2/6; **Toughness:** 8 (2); **Crew:** 1+6
Weapons:

* 1 x MG34 (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3, AP 2)

OBSTACLES

There are no really dangerous Obstacles in the lake. However, if a deuce is drawn as the pilot's action card in a round, consult the table below. These events occur at the start of the round, before other actions are taken.

Suit	Result
Club/Spade	**Mosquitoes:** A swarm of biting insects finds a tasty meal among the crew and passengers. Each character aboard the ship must make a Spirit roll to avoid the numerous bites or be Shaken as he frantically tries to swat the bugs.

Diamond/Heart	**Water Plants:** The craft has drifted into floating vegetation. A failed Boating (or Strength) roll means the boat is entangled. Subsequent rolls are made at –2 until a success is scored, at which time the craft breaks free.

SCENE 3: THE GRAVEYARD

Sighişoara lies just over 100 miles from Snagov, in the province of Transylvania. The old cemetery has been abandoned for centuries. In the days of Vlad III, it served as the resting place for his slain enemies, and local legends say the warlord placed a curse on the grounds, though the exact details of the curse are subject to much variation depending on who is telling the tale and who is listening.

The graveyard is ringed by a spiked, metal fence. A lone gate emblazoned with the emblem of a dragon biting its own tail provides easy access. Shunned by sensible folk, the cemetery is overgrown with weeds. Cracked and weathered headstones are visible through the long grass and choking vines. Several mausoleums are clustered in the center of the cemetery.

Moments after the characters enter, a pack of wolves, half-mad with hunger after the harsh Romanian winter, bound into the cemetery and attack. Deal action cards. The wolves use Gang Up tactics to bring down their prey.

The graveyard is 24" to a side. Place a dozen markers to represent gravestones. These do not impede movement, but a hero who steps onto one while he has a black action card puts his foot through the thin soil and into a rotten coffin. He must make an Agility or Strength roll as an action to free himself. Until he does, he cannot move.

There are three mausoleums, each measuring 3" by 4". Two of the doors have been smashed in antiquity, revealing an empty chamber within. The third door is solid stone. In the center is an indentation, which perfectly matches the seal found at Snagov Monastery. Placing the seal in the indentation causes the door to swing open.

All that lies within is a hole in the floor and a metal ladder. It descends into darkness for 30 feet, before ending in a crypt.

Professor Tomic Iordanescu: See page 17.

Wolves (2 per hero): See page 19.

SCENE 4: IN FOR THE CHOP

The crypt measures 13" in length and 7" wide. The



ladder drops down into the central square at the southern end. Stone grave markers, each inscribed with curses in Romanian, stand in both long walls, about a yard from the floor. Several are broken. Inside is a narrow, stone-lined space. The stones have deep gouges in them. Characters who check discover the marks are the same width as human fingers.

These are the graves of former henchmen and vampiric minions who offended Dracula, walled up as eternal punishment. Directly opposite the ladder, against the northern wall, lies a gilded coffin secured sealed with sturdy bolts.

Removing the bolts requires a little effort, but no Trait roll. As the last bolt slides open, or if one of the grave markers is smashed (Toughness 12), piercing screams fill the room. Bursting through the grave markers is a number of scrawny, bestial forms! Check for Surprise. Half the brides and spawn emerge from each side of the crypt, spaced as equally apart as possible. Spawn and bride count as separate forces with regard to action cards.

The GM must deal the crypt an action card as well. This should be kept secret from the players, even if you normally display cards openly. Showing the card in advance will enable the heroes to avoid the deadly trap.

When the crypt's card is called, large blades swing down from the ceiling like pendulums, before locking back in place in the ceiling. They affect all squares along a given row, indicated by the card's value. Treat the topmost row as a deuce, and count down from there. Since the crypt is 13" in length, that covers deuce through Ace.

Every character in the row affected is attacked (Fighting d8). This functions like the Improved Sweep Edge, so just make one attack roll and compare it to individual Parry scores. Those struck suffer 2d8 damage, as from as Extra.

In the event a Joker is drawn, draw a second card immediately to determine which row is targeted. The trap automatically goes first in the round, unless a hero has an action card, in which case he can act first. Attack and damage rolls for the blades are made at +2. If the second card is a Joker, draw a third card and make attack and damage rolls at +4!

Professor Tomic Iordanescu: See page 17.

Brides of Dracula (1 per hero): As vampire spawn (page 19), but with the Alluring Special Ability.

Vampire Spawn (2 per hero): See page 19.

INSIDE THE COFFIN

Inside the gilded coffin is a long sword. The hilt takes the form of a dragon standing on its hind legs, while the wings form the crossbar. The dragon's clawed feet are spaced apart, as if they once gripped something. The golden orb is too large to fit between them.

Along the blade are inscribed words in the old Romanian tongue. They read, *"Those who seek immortality must impale the tower of the moon."* The words mean nothing to Professor Iordanescu. However, he knows somewhere the answers might be found—the Black Library.

There is nothing else in the coffin.

ACT 3: THE LOCATION REVEALED

The Black Library, a part of the Bistriţa Monastery, a Romanian Orthodox Church building, lies in the eastern Carpathians, in the province of Moldavia. Strangely, it is on the opposite side of the mountains to the town of Bistriţa. The nearest town is actually Piatra Neamţ, which lies five miles east of the monastery.

The monastery was an important center for calligraphers and chroniclers throughout Romanian history, and today houses an impressive collection of Romanian works dating back to the 12th century. The monastery and Black Library dates from the early 1400s.

The library takes its name from the interior walls, which according to local legend were ravaged by fire in 1538. However, the books were saved from destruction by the intervention of Saint Anne, to whom the monastery is dedicated.

Unfortunately for the heroes, the library's collection has already attracted the Nazis. Having locked up the monks in the basement, the Nazis are posing as the religious scholars in a bid to uncover vital clues in their search for the chalice.

Leading the party is SS-Hauptsturmführer (Captain) Karl Steiner, one of von Drachenstein's henchmen. He speaks fluent Romanian, which made him an ideal candidate. His men only speak German. However, German is spoken by many citizens in the region, thanks to the immigration of Saxons during the 12th century. Professor Iordanescu knows this full well, and thinks nothing of it.

SCENE 1: THE BLACK LIBRARY

On arriving at the Black Library, the party is met by Father Constantin (actually Steiner in disguise). The "monk" greets them cordially and asks their business. He listens attentively, and then welcomes them inside.

The library is in a bit of a mess, many books having been taken from their shelves. Steiner apologizes for the chaos, and explains that many of the manuscripts are centuries old and require conservation to ensure they last many more centuries.

He places himself at the party's beck and call, ordering his "monks" to fetch various tomes requested by the adventurers. Unless deliberately shooed away, he tries to remain as close as possible to the characters, so as to eavesdrop on their conversation. He feigns a lack of understanding of English, though he actually speaks it fluently.

Make Steiner out as helpful, not a nuisance or as someone who asks too many questions. The characters should believe he is simply a monk interested in Romanian history.

After an hour or so of laborious searching, Iordanescu stabs a finger at a paragraph in an ancient tome.

"Here it is!" exclaims the professor excitedly. "Direct reference to tower of moon! Apparently, when Dracula built castle in Borgo Pass, he raised one tower higher than others. This he called Tower of the Moon. I must have visited castle a dozen times, but I never knew this. Quickly, my friends, we must get to tower by nightfall!"

"Not so fast, Herr Professor," snarls a voice from behind. Turning, you see Father Constantin flanked by four monks, all armed with SMGs! "Did you honestly think we did not know about this place? Bah! Typical untermenschen! Oh do not fear, I am not a Nazi collaborator." He chuckles grimly. "My name is SS-Hauptsturmführer Steiner. The real monks are alive and well, but currently indisposed in the basement.

"Now, hand over any items you have discovered so far. Slowly! One false move and the professor will be the first to die!"

Whether or not the characters comply (they might think this is one of those times when surrender is a good idea), Steiner has no intention of letting them go. If they have handed over their finds, they'll need to fight to get them back.

"Now that you have uncovered this clue," the Nazi sneers, "you cannot be allowed to leave here alive. Kill them!"

It's time to deal action cards.

The characters begin against the north wall, while the Nazis are 4" away. At the start of round two, the remaining soldiers enter through the door and join the fight. If the characters handed over the sword and orb, they should be very keen to retrieve the artifacts. Ideally, they'll succeed, as Steiner isn't vital to the plot.

The main library measures 12" wide and 10" long. The only door is in the center of the southern wall. Place markers, indicating long tables, rows of tall bookcases, and chairs, liberally around the tabletop. Heavy curtains and tapestries adorn the walls.

Various props include the following. Encourage heroes to use what is around rather than instantly going for their guns by awarding bennies for clever use of props.

* Bookcases. The bookcases provide Medium Cover to targets on the other side. Firing through two or more gives Heavy Cover. Any missed shots automatically destroy a book, scattering paper around the room. Each bookcase is 2" wide and 1" high.

The bookcases can be tipped over. This requires a Strength roll at –2. With success, the bookcase falls either to the floor or lands against an adjacent bookshelf. Victims under the bookcase suffer 2d6 damage. The squares it covers are now treated as difficult ground. On a raise, a bookcase hitting another one causes a domino effect. Bookcases keep falling into one another in a straight line, their contents smashing, until a shelf either hits a wall or there is only empty floor adjacent.

* Books. Light tomes have Range: 3/6/12 and cause Strength damage, whereas thicker volumes are Range: 2/4/8. cause Str+d4, but give –1 to Throwing

* Furniture. Chairs inflict Str+d6 damage but give –1 to Fighting. Tables can be tipped over as an action and used for Cover (Armor +3).

* Drapes: The drapes and tapestries can be pulled from the walls to cover adjacent foes. This is treated as an Agility Trick, except multiple targets can be affected. There is a cumulative –1 penalty for each intended victim after the first.

Professor Tomic Iordanescu: See page 17.

SS-Hauptsturmführer Steiner: See page 18.

Hardened SS Soldiers (2 per hero): See page 18.

THE MONKS

The Romanian monks are huddled in one of the cellars. A few of the younger ones sport bruises from failed attempts to overpower the Nazis, but all are in good health. They thank the heroes profusely for their assistance, but can do little to aid them in their quest.

SCENE 2: ROAD RAGE

Heading up into the Borgo Pass, the characters come across a Nazi convoy heading in the same direction. It looks like the Nazis are on their way to Dracula's Castle as well.

Run this scene as a Chase using the standard Obstacles rules. The Obstacles are Light. The characters begin four Range Increments behind the truck, the last vehicle in the convoy. The kübelwagen is one Range Increment ahead of that, and the two motorcycles one further on from the car (the bikes are on the same Range Increment). Each Range Increment equates to 10".

Due to the narrow road and limited visibility, attacks against vehicles further ahead suffer penalties. Attacking past a single vehicle gives the target Light Cover (–1). Through two vehicles is Medium Cover (–2), and three vehicles provides Heavy Cover (–4). Missed shots harmlessly splatter into the road.

For instance, the characters are behind the truck and car, but a hero wants to shoot at one of the bikes at the head of the convoy. Because there are two intervening vehicles, the attack is made at –2.

Note that all the German vehicles are faster than the heroes' car. The bikes and truck get +1 to Driving rolls. The kübelwagen is twice as fast, so it gets +2 to Driving rolls.

The Nazis don't react to the characters' presence until the heroes open fire or overtake a German vehicle. The goons in the kübelwagen can use their SMGs freely.

The soldiers in the back of the truck can only fire at

targets behind them, and even then a maximum of four per round may open up. Both the kübelwagen and truck drivers will use Force maneuvers to knock the characters' car off the road if they get chance.

Having forward-firing weapons, the sidecar gunners are limited to targets ahead of them. As such, the bike drivers apply heavy braking to drop back behind the characters once the shooting begins.

Note that although the characters are outnumbered and outgunned, they have just fought a bunch of Nazis. A few grenades in the right place (like into the rear of the truck or dropped into the kübelwagen) can quickly even the odds.

In the event the characters are captured, they are disarmed and bound. The Germans spend several hours fruitlessly exploring the castle, before setting up temporary barracks in the fortress. Two soldiers guard the prisoners. Hopefully the heroes can conduct an escape plan.

- **Hardened SS Drivers (1 per vehicle):** As SS soldier (page 18).
- **Hardened SS Soldiers (2 in kübelwagen):** See page 18.
- **Hardened SS Soldiers (1 in each sidecar):** See page 18.
- **Hardened SS Soldiers (2 per hero in truck):** See page 18.

HEROES' CAR

Acc/Top Speed: 8/16; **Toughness:** 11(2); **Crew:** 1+5

KÜBELWAGEN

Acc/Top Speed: 8/24; **Toughness**: 7 (1); **Crew**: 1+3

GERMAN TRUCK

Acc/Top Speed: 5/15; **Toughness:** 11 (1); **Crew**: 1+20

MOTORBIKE & SIDECAR

Acc/Top Speed: 14/28; **Toughness:** 8 (2); **Crew:** 1+1
Notes: Fixed Weapon
Weapons:
* MG34 (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3, AP 2)

SCENE 3: CASTLE DRACULA

The hour is already late when the heroes reach the castle in the Borgo Pass. Dilapidated and crumbling, the castle stands as a monument to older times, an age when Dracula impaled thousands of victims and ruled his domain with an iron fist.

Making their way through the courtyard and up into the castle, the explorers quickly emerge onto the flat top of the tallest tower. Throughout the long, spiral climb, they noticed no doors giving access to other parts of the tower. The view from the top is spectacular, and any lookout stationed here would see enemies approaching from many miles.

In the center of the rooftop is a stone pedestal, about a foot high and half that in diameter. In the top is a thin slot. When the sword found in the graveyard is inserted (tip first) under moonlight, the central section of the circular tower roof begins slowly descending into the tower. The platform isn't a trap—it's an elevator, which travels down through the entire length of the castle and into the hill on which the edifice stands. Professor Iordanescu is ecstatic.

> *"In all my years," he exclaims, clapping his hands, "never did I think tower was hollow! I always assumed it was solid structure, built as lookout post for sentries. This is very exciting, yes?"*

The elevator finally stops in a small chamber. A wooden door provides the only exit. Beside the door is another slotted dais. This is used to call the elevator down again after it rises. The platform rises to its normal position one minute (10 rounds) after the last character steps from it.

> *Beyond the door is a circular chamber. In the center is a low stone dais. Standing around it are armored figures, their long boar spears dipped as if in salute, resting lightly upon the dais. Protruding from the walls are metal spikes.*
>
> *Engraved on the floor in large letters is a riddle: The red eye in the dragon's claws shows the path to immortality. To gain what you seek, my supposed death must be duplicated. But if the warrior be destroyed by other means, thine quest shall end.*

The chamber is 11" across. The dais is 1" in diameter and sits in the center of the room. Any hero who gets within 3" of the dais notices a thin slot, similar to the one atop the tower. The skeletons stand adjacent to the dais, their spear tips resting upon it.

As soon as a single character moves within 3" of one of the skeletons, they animate and attack. Unless the heroes have stated they are being wary of such an event, they risk being Surprised. Deal action cards appropriately!

If a character is impaled, the skeleton tries to shove his victim toward the spiked walls. Make an opposed Strength roll. Success moves the victim and skeleton 1" toward the nearest wall, and 2" with a raise. Being shoved onto the spikes causes 2d6 damage (from an Extra). On subsequent rounds, the skeleton continues to use this maneuver, pulling back slightly and ramming forward again, causing more impalement.

The "red eye" is a ruby, which rests in the eye socket of one of the armored skeletons (the GM should pick which one). The "dragon's claws" refers to the hilt of the sword found in the graveyard. Dracula's supposed death occurred after he was beheaded. If the heroes don't come up with the solution, Iordanescu makes the suggestion

that the "eye" is probably contained within one of the skeleton's heads and it shouldn't be destroyed until the eye is removed.

Until the correct gem is located, the heroes are essentially reduced to defensive actions and Tricks. Of course, the skeletons aren't bound by such restrictions.

Unfortunately, *all* the skeletons have red gemstones for eyes, though only one is a ruby (the rest are just colored glass spheres). Due to their bucket helmets, spotting the right gem is far from easy. A character adjacent to a skeleton may make a Notice roll at –2 as an action to get a peek through the visor slit. Destroying a skeleton except by a Called Shot to the head (–4) also destroys the gems, which crumble to dust. If the head is severed, the stones can be scooped up as an action.

Another way to gain the gem is to first remove the skeleton's helmet, and then gouge out the stone. To do this, the attacker must grapple his foe. On subsequent rounds, he (or an adjacent ally) may use the Disarm maneuver to tear off the helmet. Someone must then make a Fighting roll at –2 to pull out the gemstone.

The ruby fits loosely into the clawed hilt (the others are too big). As soon as the two are combined, the claws snap shut around the stone. Nothing else happens, though.

Sliding the completed sword into the slot on the central dais causes the skeletons to freeze in place immediately. A dull glow emanates from the ruby, growing steadily brighter over the next few seconds. A crystal-clear image is then projected against one of the walls. It shows a river running through a steep-sided canyon, atop which stands a ruined castle. The image twists to reveal a small side canyon, which ends in a waterfall. Iordanescu recognizes the place immediately. *"It's Poienari Castle!" he shouts. "Chalice must be near Dracula's home along banks of River Argeş!"*

- **Professor Tomic Iordanescu:** See page 17.
- **Armored Skeletons (2 per hero):** See page 19.

ACT 4: LAND OF BLOOD

The Argeş River flows through southern Romania. It begins in the Carpathians, and ends its journey over 200 miles later when it joins the mighty Danube. For much of its course the Argeş is a wide, gentle river. However, near Poienari Castle, the valley narrows between steep, craggy cliffs, and rapids fill the narrow channel. Rowboats can be hired in any of the villages upstream for a nominal sum.

SCENE 1: HE WAS "THE IMPALER"

The towering cliffs finally give way to reveal a smaller channel with rocks on either side. At some point in the distant past the cliffs must have collapsed. The end of the channel is marked by a waterfall, which thunders down into the water, producing a spray of foam.

Behind the waterfall is a narrow recess. Carved into it is an indentation, which matches the dragon seal the group used earlier. Placing the seal in the indentation causes the wall to crumble away, leaving a dark opening. The seal dissolves into dust.

You pass through the gap and into a large cavern. The walls and ceiling are natural rock, but the floor has been worked smooth and covered with flagstones. Holes, hundreds of them, each as thick as a man's arm, dot the flagstones. The center of the room is dominated by a stone sepulcher, carved in the gigantic likeness of a beautiful woman of regal bearing. The far wall contains dozens of niches, each filled with a goblet or chalice. Dracula sure wasn't taking any chances!

The chamber measures 24" long by 18" wide. The stone sarcophagus is 2" long and 1" wide, and lies in the center of the cavern.

Inscribed on the tomb is a single name—Elizabeta. The sepulcher has Toughness 20(8) and has Heavy Armor. In the event the heroes manage to find a way inside, all that can be found in a skeleton dressed in the tattered remains of a fine velvet dress.

There are three goblets in each 1" wide section of the back wall. Checking the chalices requires an action for each one. The correct chalice is marked with the seal of the Order of the Dragon—a dragon biting its own tail. Each time one is checked, flip the top card of the action deck. If it's a Joker, the hero has discovered the correct one.

As soon as the first chalice is checked, deal action cards. Whenever a Club is dealt as a character's action card, long stakes, Dracula's torture implement of choice, shoot through the holes beneath and around the character. The stakes withdraw almost immediately.

The chance of hitting a character and the damage inflicted is determined by the card's value, as shown below. All damage is treated as being dealt by an Extra. The "Extras" column indicates how many Extras sharing the same action card are affected. Exactly which figures in the group risk impalement should be determined by the GM.

Heroes who are impaled should be pierced through an arm or leg. Impaled Nazis are punctured through the stomach, and lifted off the group, only to collapse in a bloody heap when the stake withdraws.

Value	Fighting	Damage	Extras
Deuce	d10	2d10	1
3–10	d8	2d8	2
Jack–Queen	d6	2d6	3
King–Ace	d4	2d4	4

At the start of the second round, a squad of Nazis arrives on the scene. They have been dispatched from the nearby castle, where von Drachenstein has made his lair! They don't know about the stakes. Because there are

so many Nazis, divide them into as a number of groups equal to the number of player characters.

- **Hardened SS Soldiers (3 per hero):** See page 18.

THE CHALICE TAKEN

Unbeknownst to the heroes, von Drachenstein and his cohorts chose to set up their headquarters in Poienari Castle, the mad doctor finding it a most fitting base. Sentries detected the heroes' arrival downriver, and then summoned their master. When the characters emerge from the waterfall, von Drachenstein and a squad of SS soldiers are waiting for them.

"Welcome to Romania. We are so glad you could join us in our hunt." The speaker is the same Nazi you fought outside the Professor's house. "My name is Wolfgang von Drachenstein, a medical man by trade, but one perfectly suited to locate Dracula's Chalice. I trust you have found it?"

It's only natural the heroes will lie. Von Drachenstein expects nothing less. Handing a fake chalice doesn't fool von Drachenstein—he's already worked out the real one would be marked in some special way.

"Oh come now," the Nazi sneers. "We can do this the hard way, by which I mean my men must gun you down where you stand and I can take the chalice from your twitching fingers, or the easy way. The choice is yours."

Von Drachenstein isn't joking. Further lies or attempts to bluff him result in a burst of machinegun fire ripping into Professor Iordanescu's body. The scholar slumps to the floor, bleeding profusely. Iordanescu is Incapacitated. Any hero with the Healing skill can see he won't last long without medical aid.

"Hand over the chalice now and my medics will attend to your friend. Are you really the sort of men who could watch an innocent die in front of your eyes? If you are, then perhaps we are on the same side." He lets loose a hollow laugh.

Any attempt to administer first aid to Iordanescu is met with another burst of machinegun fire, this time at the feet of the would-be medic. Continued attempts result in the character becoming the target.

Assuming the characters don't want to be responsible for Iordanescu's death, surrender is a wise option. They are badly outnumbered and outgunned, and a live hero has a much better chance of enacting revenge than a dead one. Still, the option is theirs. If a fight breaks out, run it as normal. Another squad of Nazis equal to four times the number of heroes arrives on the scene after six rounds.

Von Drachenstein is true to his word and has Iordanescu patched up once the characters surrender (the medic stabilizes the professor and removes two wounds).

- **Professor Tomic Iordanescu:** See page 17.
- **Wolfgang von Drachenstein:** See page 18.
- **Hardened SS Soldiers (4 per hero):** See page 18.

SCENE 2: INVOLUNTARY BLOOD DONORS

The Nazis disarm the heroes, and then escort them at gunpoint into Poienari Castle. Once there, they are lead down narrow winding steps and through cramped passageways in the dungeons.

Finally you are shoved into a room—a fully kitted out torture chamber! But there are no iron maidens or racks. Rather there are four tables, above which dangle dozens of flexible tubes tipped in sharp needles. Standing behind them is a large, glass tank, to which strange looking machinery is attached.

Your equipment is thrown in a pile in the corner of the room.

"My men discovered this room during a previous visit," von Drachenstein says casually, " but I had it modified for my own use. How foolish of me not to realize that fate brought me and my experiments to the very resting place of Dracula's chalice. "Still," he continues, "your end will be very fitting."

Von Drachenstein gives a curt nod. "Not this one," he says, pointing to the professor. "I think he will be better suited to aiding me in my final experiment. Use the others."

His goons manhandle you onto the tables and strap you down. Once you're securely bound by leather straps, the needles are roughly shoved into your flesh.

"This device is one of my own creations," the vile Nazi coos. "When I activate the machine, it will suck your blood into that glass tank. Do not be alarmed—you are aiding in the advancement of medical science. Although history will not record your names, your sacrifice will enable me to revolutionize the study of diseases of the blood. A noble cause, don't you think?

"Unfortunately, I have more pressing matters to attend to elsewhere, so I will not be able to witness your deaths. Still, I shall see the aftereffects when I return.

"As for this," he says, holding the chalice in front of his face, "this innocuous-looking trinket is the secret to immortality. Think what wonders one

could see while, all around, men wither to dust with old age. A thousand years and a thousand more! What great advances will mankind make in that time? Ah well, it is best you do not dwell on such matters. Your time is over!"

With that, the evil doctor begins fiddling with the machinery. A slow whine builds. Red fluid—your precious blood—begins flowing up the tubes and into the storage jar!

"Radio me when they are dead," he says to his men. With that, von Drachenstein departs, leaving just two guards behind to watch your demise.

In order to escape the fiendish device, the characters must first break or slip their bonds. This requires either an Agility or Strength roll at –2. Each character may make one attempt per round.

Each time the roll is failed, the guards mock the characters ("Don't struggle, it will only hurt more!" "Look, Hans, they flap like fishes out of water.") The heroes also suffer 2d6 damage from a Wild Card source as their blood is drained. With success, a hero frees his hands.

Deal action cards once the first hero has freed his hands.

The dungeon measures 8" by 8". The four tables (each is 1" long) occupy the center of the room. Movement through the squares they occupy is treated as difficult ground. The blood-draining machine fills a 1" square and is positioned against the northern wall. The two goons begin adjacent to the southern wall, one either side of a door. The heroes' gear lies in the southwest corner.

The Nazis are taken by Surprise the first round. Make individual Notice rolls to see if they react. They can't shoot the characters (it'll waste their blood and von Drachenstein will likely use them as guinea pigs), so they use their SMGs as clubs, instead (Str+d4).

Ripping off the straps from his legs or removing the needles requires an action but no die roll. Until the needles are removed, the hero continues to take damage.

Once a character is free, he can battle the Nazis or try to save his friends. Removing the straps from a single comrade requires a complete round—no other actions are permitted except movement up to the hero's Pace. Ripping out the needles requires just a single action.



Trying to switch off the machine requires a Weird Science roll. With failure, the machine goes into overdrive, and the damage increases one die step per failed roll (2d8, 2d10, and finally 2d12, it's highest setting). Smashing the device (Toughness 10) is an option, but a risky one. The first wound causes it to go into overdrive as above. The second wound generates a shower of sparks and stops it draining blood.

Hardened SS Soldiers (1 per 2 heroes): See page 18.

SCENE 3: THE TEMPLE OF BLOOD

Having escaped the dastardly machine and overpowered their guards, the heroes now have the run of the castle. Voices can be heard echoing up a nearby stairwell.

The distant voice of von Drachenstein reaches your ears. "This, professor, was Dracula's throne room. Here the Prince of Darkness dined and watched his enemies writhe in pain upon wooden stakes. This is where a new warlord shall rise to power. With this, Hitler will rule for eternity!"

"You're mad!" cries Professor Iordanescu. "You don't even know it works."

"Ah, that is true, but fear not. What point is there in giving Hitler the chalice if it does not work? No, I shall test it first. I shall become the first of a new breed of immortals!"

No matter how quickly the heroes react, they arrive a second too late.

Von Drachenstein, standing beside a fountain vomiting blood, drops the chalice to the floor and wipes the back of his hand across his lips. "Yes, yes!" he murmurs. "I can feel it! New strength, the strength of the undead! Come Professor," he smiles, turning to Iordanescu, "I shall give you the privilege of becoming my first victim!"

Von Drachenstein is deluding himself about feeling more powerful. He is gaining new powers, but not the ones he was expecting.

Moving up or down the various platforms is treated as difficult ground, as is wading through the rivers of blood. A hero who runs through the blood and rolls a 1 on his running die slips and falls prone in the crimson river.

The statues and pillars are impervious to non-Heavy Weapons (Toughness 12), though chunks can be blasted away by firearms. If the Blood Beast smashes a pillar and causes a wound, it collapses. Place a Small Burst Template over the pillar. Any character under the template when it is placed must make an Agility roll at –2 as a free action or suffer 2d6 damage (from an Extra) from collapsing rubble. Movement through the debris is difficult ground.

Transformation: When the fight begins, as surely it will, von Drachenstein is immune to *all* forms of damage. He can be Shaken by attacks, but never suffers an actual wound. However, each wound he would have taken causes a transformation, so the GM must record his "injuries." The Nazi's skin begins to bubble and boil as congealed blood breaks through from within, his arms lengthen, the fingers merging to form a leechlike mouth, and he grows in height and gains mass.

Whatever force controls the chalice has found the Nazi unworthy of eternal life as a vampire. Instead, it is transforming him into a Blood Beast.

Once von Drachenstein takes his fourth "wound" his transformation is complete. He uses the stats for the Blood Beast from the start of the next turn.

The Blood Beast is insane and eternally hungry. It attacks the nearest creature, whether hero or Nazi, using its most powerful attack form warranted by the situation.

When the Blood Beast is finally slain, the fountain sprays a thick jet of blood high into the air. Each of the four statues begins vomiting blood at an unbelievable rate. The chamber, vast as it is, is quickly filling with blood! Worse, a heavy stone block is sliding down across the doorway. The heroes have six rounds to flee the chamber before they are sealed in and drowned in blood!

Professor Tomic Iordanescu: See page 17.
Wolfgang von Drachenstein: See page 18.
The Blood Beast: See page 18.
Hardened SS Soldiers (2 per hero): See page 18.

VICTORY

After escaping, the characters discover the Nazis elsewhere in the castle have already fled. If they have the chalice, they must decide what to do with it. Despite its supernatural powers, it is a mundane object at heart, and can be destroyed. Melting it down is the surest way of guaranteeing it cannot be used again. A hero foolish enough to drink blood from it gets what he deserves—he too becomes a Blood Beast.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

PROFESSOR TOMIC IORDANESCU

Professor Tomic Iordanescu is a scholar, whose field of expertise is the reign of Vlad III, better known in the Western world as Count Dracula. A quiet, humble man, Iordanescu fled Romania a few years ago after being persecuted by the Iron Guard, an ultra-nationalistic fascist movement, for his Jewish ancestry.

Professor Iordanescu is a Henchman. He speaks German, Hebrew, Hungarian, Romanian, and passable English. His Combat Edges represent his ability to avoid blows, despite his low Fighting skill.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d4, Knowledge (History) d10, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Curious, Pacifist (Major)
Edges: Block, Dodge, Scholar
Gear: Pocket knife (Str+d4)

SS-STURMBAHNFÜHRER DR. WOLFGANG VON DRACHENSTEIN

A disgraced doctor fascinated with blood disorders, vampirism, and immortality, von Drachenstein was the perfect choice to lead an expedition to find Dracula's chalice. Pale skinned and gaunt, von Drachenstein suffers from a rare blood disorder, which requires him to have transfusions every few days.

Never one to rely on others, the mad doctor has created his own medical device for extracting blood from unwilling patients. Von Drachenstein's blood siphon comprises two needles attached to a powerful pump and blood reservoir. He wears this under his leather coat, the needles protruding along his right index and middle knuckle to allow him to punch foes. He has also created a number of blood serums, which when injected give him limited "supernatural" powers.

Von Drachenstein has no Power Points, not any true gizmos. Instead, he has a limited number of serums available, which provide him with his powers. Each has a finite number of uses per encounter. To activate them, he simply injects himself and makes a Weird Science roll as normal. Each power lasts for 3 rounds per dose. His power list is the equivalent of 30 Power Points.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d10, Healing d10, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Biochemistry) d10, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Taunt d10, Weird Science d12

Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Anemic, Greedy (Major; secret of immortality), Mean

Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), Improved Dodge, Improved Level Headed, Improved Nerves of Steel, Strong Willed

Powers: 4 x *boost trait* (no *lower*, various serums); 2 x *deflection* (heightened reflexes); 3 x *healing* (regenerative serum); 2 x *quickness* (adrenaline serum); 1 x *speed* (metabolic boost)

Gear: Pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1), magic amulet (grants him Arcane Resistance Edge)

Special Abilities:

* **Blood Siphon:** A successful Touch Attack (+2 Fighting) causes Str+d6 damage.

SS-HAUPTSTURMFÜHRER KARL STEINER

Steiner was raised in the circus, where he was a knife-thrower. Indeed, he is widely regarded among his compatriots as the best knife man in Germany, if not Europe. Despite being ordered to use a pistol, the weapon of choice for officers, he always keeps half a dozen knives on his person. Von Drachenstein, whose rank is honorary, doesn't care what weapons Steiner uses, so long as he achieves results. He speaks German, English, and Romanian fluently.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d12, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Taunt d8, Throwing d12+2

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Arrogant, Loyal

Edges: Acrobat, Combat Reflexes, Dead Shot, First Strike, Improved Dodge, Level Headed, Marksman, Master (Throwing), Quick, Quick Draw

Gear: 4 x throwing knives (Range: 3/6/12, Str+d4), pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1), dagger (Str+d4)

THE BLOOD BEAST

The Blood Beast is a vaguely humanoid fiend composed of nothing but congealed blood. Its numerous long, snakelike tentacles end in leechlike maws, which drain blood from victims.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8

Charisma: –4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 13

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Improved Frenzy, Improved Sweep

Special Abilities:

* **No Organs:** +2 Toughness; no additional damage from Called Shots; ignores wound penalties.
* **Regeneration:** Each wound inflicted by the Blood Beast removes one of its own wounds (if any).
* **Size +3:** The Blood Beast is 15' tall and weighs 400 pounds.
* **Slam:** Str+d8, Reach 2, Heavy Weapons. With a raise on a Fighting roll, the maw has attached to the victim. The victim automatically suffers damage each round. Removing the tentacle requires a Strength roll as an action by the victim.
* **Unstable:** The abomination is unstable. The more blood it drains, the more bloated it becomes. Eventually it reaches a point where it explodes. Record the number of wounds the Blood Beast inflicts on the heroes or the Nazi soldiers. For every three wounds it causes the creature takes a wound. This cannot be Soaked, nor can it be regenerated. Once it reaches Incapacitated, it explodes in a shower of blood filling a Large Burst Template. Anyone under the template must make an Agility roll at –2 or be Shaken.
* **Vomit Blood:** Once per round as a free action, the Blood Beast can spray a Cone Template of blood as a free action. Foes under the template must make an Agility roll at –2 or be Shaken.

HARDENED SS SOLDIERS

Although the Nazis have yet to unleash their war machine, many of these men are veterans of the Great War. Others are just brutal thugs, perfectly suited for the role Hitler envisions when he finally sets free his legions.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Loyal, Mean

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Rock and Roll

Gear: SMG (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, ROF 3, AP 1), dagger (Str+d4), helmet (+3), 2 x potato masher grenades (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 3d6–2, Medium Burst Template)

THE BOSTON VAMPIRE

Marku Nicelescu is a history student at Bucharest University. He agreed to accompany the crate of artifacts to Romania, both to see the wonders of the New World and meet the distinguished Professor Iordanescu in person. During the attack on the ship, he went unnoticed (he hid when he heard the disturbance), but witness von Drachenstein seeming to drain the blood from the crew.

Driven insane by what he thought was a vampire attack, he escaped the ship after it crashes and ran off into the night. After spending the day hiding, he has now emerged, under the psychotic belief he too must be a vampire!

Nicelescu's fear of the cross has nothing to do with his belief he is a vampire. The true villain, von Drachenstein, wears an Iron Cross around his neck. It is the similarity between a crucifix and this which causes his fear.

Trait, Edges, Hindrances, and Special Abilities marked "*" are a result of his current mania, not his usual personality.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10*, Vigor d10*
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8
Charisma: –4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7
Hindrances: Anemic, Bloodthirsty*, Delusional (Major; thinks he's a vampire)*
Edges: Berserk*, First Strike*, Improved Frenzy*, Improved Nerves of Steel*
Gear: —
Special Abilities:

* **Berserk*:** In addition to going berserk if wounded, Nicelescu *automatically* flies into a rage if he spots blood. This occurs if a character is wounded.
* **Bite*:** Str+d4.
* **Grapple*:** Nicelescu's preferred tactic is to grapple a foe, and then bite them. If the grapple is successful, he automatically inflicts Str+d4 damage on subsequent rounds as gnaws at his victim.
* **Weakness (Cross)*:** If presented with a cross, Nicelescu automatically cringes and starts hissing. He suffers a multi action penalty to all actions, even single ones, due to his fear of the object.

WOLVES

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d10
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4
Special Abilities

* **Bite:** Str+d4.
* **Fleet Footed:** Wolves roll a d10 when running instead of a d6.
* **Go for the Throat:** Wolves instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's most weakly armored location.
* **Size -1:** Wolves are relatively small creatures.

VAMPIRE SPAWN

Frail and mad with starvation after centuries of imprisonment, the vampire spawn and brides have lost many of the special powers and abilities, including their resistance to weapons. Indeed, these bloodthirsty fiends are actually more susceptible to damage than healthy vampires. Both types are feral-looking, though the brides retain an earthly beauty, with red eyes, long claws, and rags for clothing.

Both Dracula's brides and his vampiric minions use the same stat block, but the female vampires have the Alluring Special Ability.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d10
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7
Special Abilities:

* **Alluring:** Only brides have this ability. Male characters have –1 to all attack rolls against a bride.
* **Bite/Claws:** Str+d4.
* **Frenzy:** Vampires can makes two Fighting attacks each round with a –2 penalty to each attack.
* **Partial Invulnerability:** When injured, a vampire spawn makes a Vigor roll opposed by the damage. If successful, it ignores the damage. With failure, it disintegrates into dust.
* **Undead:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; +2 Toughness; no additional damage from Called Shots (except as noted below); immune to poison and disease.
* **Weakness (Holy Symbol):** A character with a holy symbol can keep a vampire at bay by displaying the symbol. A vampire who wants to directly attack the hero must beat her in an opposed test of Spirit.

ARMORED SKELETONS

Former soldiers in Dracula's employ, the skeletons now serve the warlord in death as they do in life.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d4
Pace: 7; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10 (3)
Gear: Plate armor (+3), bucket helmet (+3), boar spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands)
Special Abilities:

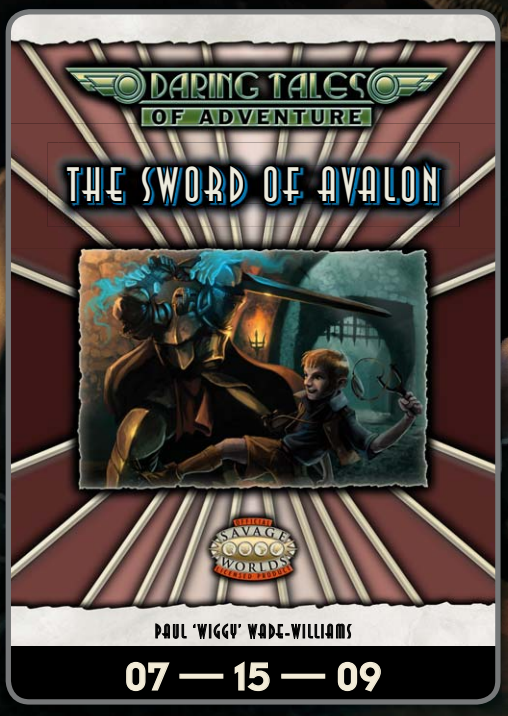
* **Bony Claws:** Str+d4.
* **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
* **Impalement:** Any hero wounded by a boar spear has been impaled. He cannot move while impaled. Breaking free requires a Strength roll as an action.
* **Undead:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; +2 Toughness; no additional damage from Called Shots (except as noted below); immune to poison and disease.

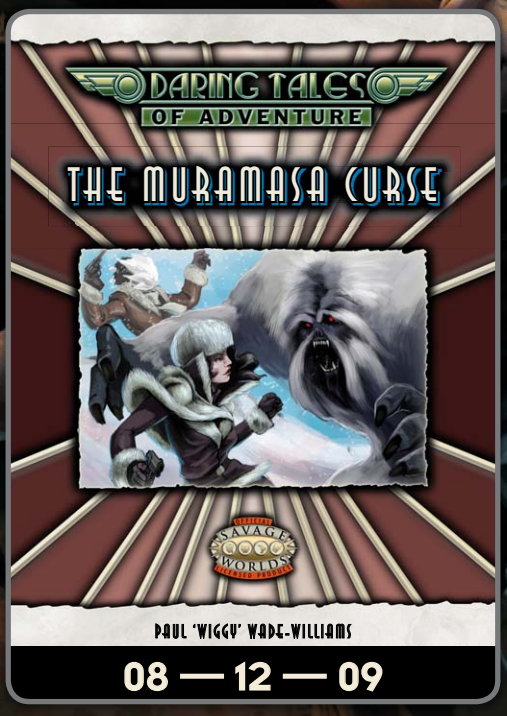
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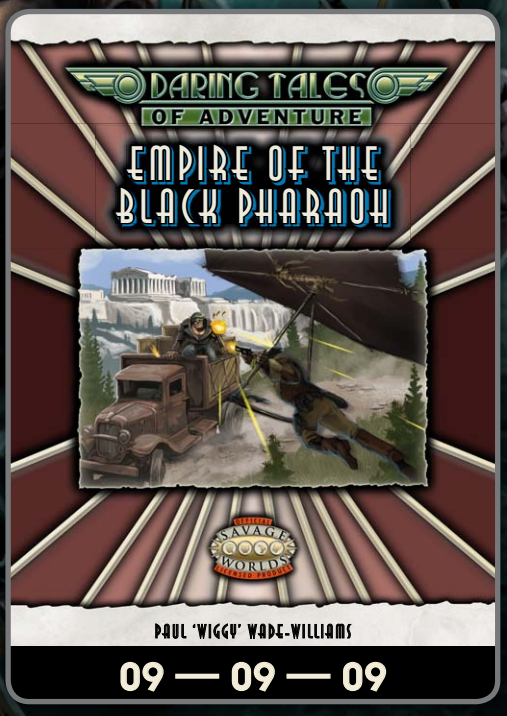
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Nazi agents who will stop at nothing to appease their master, fiendish traps set centuries ago to protect secrets, ancient clues, and nightmarish creatures from mythology all stand before the heroes and victory. The stakes are high as the hunt begins for *The Devil's Chalice*.

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OF ADVENTURE

THE SWORD OF AVALON



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PAUL 'WIGGY' WADE-WILLIAMS

DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

14

THE SWORD OF AVALON

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THE SWORD OF AVALON

King Arthur. The name has inspired kings and commoners, and poets and playwrights alike since the Middle Ages, when stories of the Round Table first began to circulate but our story begins not in the years after the Roman abandonment of Britain, but some centuries later.

The second king to wield Excalibur was Alfred the Great (849-899). He defended the Kingdom of Wessex, which was comprised of much of southern England, from marauding Danes. Where and how he discovered Excalibur was never spoken of by the king. Excalibur again disappeared into the mists of time.

King Richard I, also known as the Lionheart, took the Cross in 1187, when he was Count of Anjou, but delayed departing for the Crusades, so history records, until he was king of England.

What history does not explain is that the delay was not down to Richard's social position. Rather, the future king was questing for Excalibur, King Arthur's fabled sword. With this in his possession, he believed the Crusader army would be unstoppable. The blade was found in 1189, just a few months before Richard defeated his father's (Henry II) army in battle, a battle waged to ensure his succession over all of Henry's lands (some had been promised to John, Richard's younger brother).

Before he departed to battle Saladin's forces, Richard named his successor. With no heirs, the king chose his nephew, Arthur of Brittany, as the next king. This was not just a product of politics of the age, but a direct attempt to ensure an Arthur, wielding Excalibur, once again occupied the throne of England.

Richard's Crusade, while not disastrous, achieved little. The king retreated from the Holy Land in 1192, was imprisoned (first by Duke Leopold of Austria and then the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry VI, between late 1192 and 1194), and finally died in 1199 while besieging the poorly defended castle of a rebellious French vassal.

Although the stories of Excalibur are many, the true power belonged not to the sword, but to its scabbard. Imbued with magic power, it protected the wearer against physical harm. King Arthur did not wear it at the Battle of Camlann, his final fight, nor did Richard take it from the tomb in which he found the blade. Both kings died as a result.

In between his ransom and death, however, Richard returned to England, which had been governed in his absence by John (the John of *Robin Hood* fame, although those deeds occurred after he was actually king). Bowing to political pressure, Richard changed his succession, removing Arthur and naming John in his place.

Realizing his young sibling was a poor choice for king, Richard did not pass on Excalibur, whose existence he had kept secret from all but a handful of his most-trusted knights. Although Richard had intended to announce his possession of the blade when he arrived, tensions between the various Crusader lords prevented him. Any such claim could have shattered the fragile alliance, leaving Richard's army badly outnumbered. Rather than serve as a rallying point, Excalibur would have been the weapon of the Crusaders' undoing.

In 1197, Richard moved the bodies of King Arthur and his Round Table knights to a new tomb, and placed the sword back with its rightful keeper. Excalibur again vanished from history.

Between them, Alfred and Richard are responsible for the variations in the location of Arthur's Court. Caerleon (not Camelot) was listed as being Arthur's court in Alfred's time. However, he moved Arthur's remains to Somerset, placing them beneath Cadbury Castle, which has been associated with Camelot since the 1500s. This is where Richard discovered them.

Today, they lie under Glastonbury Tor, a famous landmark on the Somerset Levels (a large flood plain), Richard having deposited them there for safekeeping. In 1191, the same year Richard landed in the Holy Land, monks at Glastonbury Abbey "discovered" two graves, who they quickly claimed were those of Arthur and Guinevere. This was no coincidence, but a deliberate ploy machinated by Richard. Where better to hide the real King Arthur than just a few miles from a fake burial

site which attracted thousands of pilgrims? Arthur received the veneration he deserved, the monks grew rich, and no one sought to look at the tall hill on the horizon marked by a church.

Richard's death should have been the end of the matter. However, one of the few knights who knew of Excalibur wrote before his departure to the Holy Land about Richard's possession of the blade. That scroll was uncovered by the-then Viscount Wincanton hear Rouen, France, where King Richard's heart is buried.

Sir Percival Fanhard, the current Viscount Wincanton, believes he is the next rightful ruler of England. Having traced his bloodline back to King Richard I, albeit through a bastard son, the nobleman saw the discovery of the "Excalibur Scroll" by his family as further proof of his divine right to rule.

Using his vast fortune and worldwide contacts, Fanhard has sponsored dozens of expeditions across Britain, France, and the eastern Mediterranean coast in search of the burial place of the knight, though always under anonymity. The cad has no intention of sharing his prize with the academic world. With the scroll in his possession, he believes he will be shown the way to Excalibur.

One such dig is taking place in the Holy Land in the spring of 1937. A small Crusader fort, which would have been ignored by Fanhard were it not for the extensive, and previously hidden, crypt containing dozens of Crusader knights. Helping on this dig are our intrepid heroes.

THE CHARACTERS

This Savage Adventure contains a pulp tale based around the exploits of four pre-generated characters. The full character sheets are available for free at **www.tripleacegames.com**.

The heroes have all their leveling opportunities from Seasoned (at which they begin) into Legendary mapped out in advance. Each published adventure in this line earns the heroes a fixed 5 Experience Points, guaranteeing them an advance every mission. All the players need do is tick the appropriate box and start making use of the new upgrade.

Characters: 90 XP.

The GM also needs the Pulp Rules from the TAG website.

ACT 1: ISTANBUL

As written, the adventure assumes that you're using the pre-generated characters from our website. If not, you'll need to tweak the introductory text slightly. Perhaps one of the heroes is an archaeologist, in which case he could have been hired to partake in the expedition. Maybe they have strong ties to a museum, in which case they are invited along as diggers. Or it could be a Rich adventurer helped fund part of the dig.

SCENE 1: THE CRUSADERS' CRYPT

Who'd have thought little Jimmy could spare the time to enter a competition at the Boston Museum, yet alone win a trip to the western Levant States, the name for the French Mandates of Syria and Lebanon since 1920, to take part in an archaeological expedition? Of course, as a minor he needed his guardians along.

For the best part of a month you've all been scrabbling around in the dusty cellars of an old Crusader fort outside Antioch, carefully excavating a crypt full of stone sarcophagi. Leading the expedition is Marcel DuPont, a French renowned archaeologist and first-rate jerk.

The prize didn't say you'd get the best digging spot or any preferential treatment. DuPont has had you exploring and mapping the tunnels beneath the fort while his men do the real archaeological work in the crypt. So here you are, dozens of feet underground and bent double in what is probably little more than a medieval garbage chute.

CRACK! That didn't sound good. CRAAACK! The stone floor suddenly gives way, dropping you down into inky darkness!

The explorers have landed in a small chamber. Have each character make an Agility roll. Those who fail suffer a level of Fatigue for the rest of the scene from bumps and bruises.

The hole through which the party fell is ten feet above their heads and close to the back wall. A Climbing roll is required to get out, or an Agility roll from two people if someone balances on a comrade's shoulders.

The only feature in the room is a low passage, which heads west. Inscribed on the lintel, in Latin, are the words, *"Wisdom for those who know what they seek, death for those who do not."*

After several dozen yards of backbreaking, hunched shuffling, the heroes emerge in a stone-lined chamber. Seated on a simple stone-carved chair is the withered corpse of a knight, its flesh mummified in the airtight tomb. Rusted chain armor hangs from its bones, while a decayed long sword lies on the floor. Its mummy-like legs are outstretched, the feet resting on a large, smooth stone. On its lap rests a large stone tablet.

The Sword: A character who inspects the sword notices a number of strange notches along both edges. These aren't from damage taken in battle, instead being squared and deep, as if deliberately cut into the metal.

The Stone Footrest: Concealed in the stone beneath the mummy's feet is a slot. This will only be discovered if a character specifically says he is moving the feet.

The chamber is actually trapped (see below). The only way to disarm the trap is to shove the notched long

THE TRAP: DRAMATIC SUGGESTION

Since this scene could quickly devolve into a series of boring die rolls, here are a few tips for keeping up the feeling of suspense.

First, set out 10 gaming stones or poker chips. At the end of each round, take one away. This gives the players a visual reference as the clock ticks down.

Second, keep the rolls coming fast—don't stop play while the party has a discussion. Point to the lead crawler and demand they make their roll immediately. As soon as the results are checked, move onto the next character in line.

Third, describe the groaning as the ceiling moves lower, the trickles of dust down the characters' necks, and the shrinking exit ahead.

sword into the slot and twist the weapon in a complete circle in either direction (at which point it locks and can be withdrawn).

The sword functions as a key, the notches along its edge settling against pins which allow the blade to turn and the mechanism to be disarmed. Unless it is deactivated, the trap activates the *instant* someone lifts the stone tablet from the knight's lap.

The Tablet: The writing on the tablet is in Latin, however the words are gibberish to a character who happens to read the language. In fact, they are a form of primitive code. The alphabet is Latin, but the translated letters spell out Welsh Gaelic words. Thus, to understand the writing the heroes need fluency in both languages (unlikely).

Have each character make a Common Knowledge roll at –2. Those with Knowledge (History) may substitute that instead. With success, the adventurer knows of Professor Martin Fletchley-Parkes, Professor of Medieval Languages at Oxford University (in England), who might be able to help decipher the stone.

THE TRAP

As soon as the trap activates, the narrow tunnel through which the explorers entered the chamber begins to grow smaller as the ceiling starts to lower. Just to ensure would-be tomb robbers didn't send in a small party and then excavate them once the trap had been triggered, the ceiling in the main chamber beings to drop as well!

In order to escape, all the characters must crawl through the shrinking gap. To succeed, they must make three Agility rolls, one each round. As time passes, however, the crawlspace shrinks drastically. On round 8, there is a –1 penalty, on round 9 a –2 modifier, and on round 10 a –4 penalty. Characters with the Acrobat Edge or the Small Hindrance have a +1 bonus to all their Agility rolls in the tunnel. Brawny and Obese characters suffer an additional –1 penalty.

If all the explorers aren't out by the end of the 10th round, those left in the tunnel or chamber are *automatically* crushed to *death*. Well, that's what they should be told by the GM when the action begins. In truth, the trap jams at the end of round 10 (it is 800 years old, after all).

But there's a catch. The tunnel is only wide enough for one person at a time to move through. The characters have to move in single file. Place three tokens on the tabletop to represent the tunnel. Agility rolls are made in order, from leader character back down the line. On the first round, *one* character can try an Agility roll, while all the others can do is wait and pray.

Until the first crawler has reached the second marker, the next person in line can't try his first Agility roll to move onto the first marker. If a roll is failed, the explorer is temporarily stuck—he can try again next round, but no one behind him can advance to his position.

Once a hero is out, he doesn't have to sit around helplessly. He can reach in and help pull out his comrades from the third marker. This works as a Cooperative roll, except the puller uses Strength to augment the crawler's Agility. A maximum of two adventurers can help a crawling colleague in this way.

THE STONE STOLEN

When the dust-covered adventurers make their way back to the main crypt DuPont demands to know what all the ruckus was about. It isn't possible to conceal the huge tablet. Read the following text aloud when the characters reveal their discovery.

DuPont snatches the tablet from you and rushes over to the large lantern hanging near the stairwell. After a few moments he turns to face you. "Another worthless stone tablet," he scoffs. He hands it to one of the diggers. "Gibberish!" he scowls. "The work of some illiterate soldier trying to tell people how great he was in life."

"Not quite," snarls one of the diggers, a gun in his hand. "That stone tablet is extremely valuable. Valuable enough to kill for!" BANG. A single shot rings out, and DuPont drops dead.

Deal action cards. Split the thugs into two equal groups for the purposes of action cards—those with guns and those with melee weapons.

The thugs armed with tools have their weapons in hand and can attack immediately. The others, save for the one who shot DuPont, must draw their firearms before they can open fire. Half the thugs (a mixture of melee weapons and guns) begin near the southern end, where the exit is located. The rest begin scattered around the crypt. The characters begin 4" from the north wall.

The crypt measures 24" long and 8" wide. Two dozen stone sarcophagi are scattered throughout the tomb. Treat movement through squares containing one as

difficult ground. Missed shots due to cover simply blast chunks out of the stone work.

There are six lanterns scattered around the room. One hangs near the exit, while the others sit atop sarcophagi. The GM should place these at random. If two are smashed (use the Innocent Bystander rule), the lighting becomes Dim (–1). When four are wrecked it becomes Dark (–2).

A thrown lantern (Range: 2/4/8) smashes in a Small Burst Template for 2d6 damage. Victims also have a chance of catching fire. Leave the template in place for three rounds, after which the flames die down. During this time, any attacks through the template suffer a –1 penalty due to smoke.

Whatever happens, the tablet *must* be stolen. The thug holding it is near the stairs, so he has a good chance of fleeing. If he falls, one of the others picks it up and runs. Once he reaches the top, he slams the heavy wooden door shut and bolts it. It has Toughness 10. He then rushes through the castle, hops into a truck, and heads off into the desert. Even if the characters somehow manage to defeat the remaining goons in record time, the cur has taken the only truck!

Turkish Thug (3 per hero): See page 22. Only half are armed with pistols. The remainder use picks and shovels (Str+d6, requires two hands).

NOW WHERE?

Characters who have played through *Daring Tales of Adventure #6: The Palladium Peril*, already know an antiques dealer who might be able to help them—Stavros Papadopoulos. If they haven't met Stavros, or have forgotten him, allow a Common Knowledge roll. With success, they know of (or remember) Stavros. He's renowned as a man who can get his hands on anything, given enough time and money. He lives in Istanbul.

The adventure assumes the heroes have played *The Palladium Peril*. Stavros is more reserved and less prone to using "my friends" otherwise.

SCENE 2: MASSEUR MANGLING

If the characters phone ahead to Stavros, he greets them like old friends. He arranges to meet them in the Turkish baths. If he already knows them personally, he adds, *"Do not worry, my friends, I have switched to a new bath house since our last escapade!"* No amount of



persuasion can alter the venue-Stavros always conducts important business in the baths.

A modern equivalent of the Roman baths, Turkish baths are renowned for their steam rooms and the vigor of the burly masseurs. Women and men are usually forbidden from using the same bath. Let the heroes make a Common Knowledge roll. With success, they know that wearing clothes around the bath is prohibited—only towels are allowed! Should they all fail the roll, the receptionist points out the establishment's rules to them when they arrive.

As per last time, Stavros has booked a private bath. This allows mixed sex parties to stay together, something otherwise prohibited. Unless a hero has a derringer, the small towels reveal a tell-tale bulge if a character tries to smuggle in a weapon.

Stavros, a thin, white towel covering his groin, is lying on a marble slab when you arrive. Two large, hairy men, only slightly smaller than the hulking Stavros, are pummeling his flesh and twisting his limbs into unusual positions.

"Ah, my friends!" the shady antiques dealer exclaims loudly. "Close the door and come in. I've arranged for a massage for you all. It's very good for the circulation and unknots cramped muscles. You look like you need it. Come, come, lie down."

Stavros waits until the characters take their positions. If any refuse, he becomes insistent, claiming he has paid good money to have the characters pampered while they are in Istanbul. Once all are ready, more masseurs enter through a side door and begin giving the heroes a strong massage.

"Tell me, my friends, what trouble are you in this time? Is it the Nazis again? I have come to hate those guys. Don't worry about the masseurs," he says. "They are well paid to hear nothing."

Allow the characters the opportunity to tell their story. Stavros grunts and nods at appropriate times. When they are finished, he speaks again.

"Unless your thieves already have a buyer, they'll definitely try to sell the artifact in Istanbul. Tell you what, save your hotel fares. Come and stay with me and my family while arrangements are made to find the tablet you so carelessly lost." The room echoes with the sound of thunder as the big man let's out a powerful, roaring laugh.

"Until then, just lie back and…hey, not so rough!" As Stavros tries to turn to the masseurs, each of you feel your limbs being twisted and contorted into very unhealthy positions. Tendons begin to strain and pop as one of the masseurs says, "Shut up, dog! Now you die!"

Deal action cards. Stavros isn't afraid to get his hands bloody, so hand out an Ally Sheet for him to one of the players. Each pair of masseurs, including those on Stavros, receive their own action card.

The characters begin this fight in an unusual position—they are already grappled! Each round a masseur maintains his grip, which includes the first round, he does his Strength die damage. This damage can Ace—these guys know how to break bones and pop limbs out of joint! Only one masseur out of each pair has a grapple at the start of the combat. The other uses his fists to pummel the characters.

The heroes are likely very short on weapons, save for their fists and feet. While not exactly feared as a weapon, ripping off a towel, twirling it into a spiral, and flicking someone with the end is a great Agility Trick. Due to their current predicament, they can't use this stunt on the masseur grappling them.

There are small pots of oil lying around (one per party member, including Stavros), almost within reach of the grappled characters. Stretching out to grab it requires an Agility roll as an action.

Each can serve as a weapon (Str+d4 damage), but shatters after a single use. If thrown (Range: 3/6/12), place a Small Burst Template over the impact point. Until the end of the fight, this counts as difficult ground, and any hero who runs through it slips and falls if his running die comes up 1. A character can also use one in an Agility Trick, or empty the contents on himself. In the latter case, he gains a +2 bonus to break out of or resist grapples, but also suffers a –2 penalty to make grapples.

Once the last masseur drops, the door the masseurs entered by opens. Framed there is a swarthy man in a white suit and red fez.

"Have you finished them off yet?" he says. "The boss wants to…" His mouth drops as he sees you. Without further pause he spins on his heels and runs into the baths.

Stavros: See page 21.
Turkish Masseurs (2 per hero): See page 22.

SCENE 3: NAKED SPRINTING

No matter how quickly the characters give chase, the thug has dropped down an open hole in the foot of the small chamber behind the door into the vast network of tunnels which run beneath Istanbul. Some of these are part of the sewer, but others, including this one, link to the cistern system. Most of the tunnels date back to the foundation of the city under Emperor Constantine.

This scene is run using the Chase rules, but without any Obstacles. The thug is 3 Range Increments ahead of the characters if they give chase immediately. Each Range Increment equates to 1" distance between the parties.

Heroes who decide to give chase straight away shouldn't be reminded they are naked and unarmed. If they stop to grab their clothes *and* don them, they

begin an additional 3 Range Increments back from the fleeing thug (1 Range Increment if they just grab their clothes from the pegs). If they stop just for their gear, they begin an extra 1 Range Increment behind. These penalties stack.

Characters without a light source suffer a –1 penalty as they run through the dark labyrinth of tunnels using only the thug's flashlight ahead for guidance. An Agility roll of 1 or less doesn't cause a character to go Out of Control. Instead, he slams into a wall and is automatically Shaken.

If the characters catch the thug, they do so just inside the Basilica Cistern (see the next scene), the largest cistern in Istanbul and an architectural wonder. If they lose him, they blunder into the Basilica Cistern anyway.

Turkish Thug, with pistol (1): See page 22.

SCENE 4: THE BASILICA CISTERN

The Basilica Cistern is one of the underground wonders of Istanbul. Enlarged by Emperor Justinian circa 532, the cistern is 70" long and 25" wide. However, for the purposes of this scene you don't need the full length.

Its vaulted ceiling is supported by 336 stone pillars, constructed in a dozen rows of 28 pillars apiece. Across the width of the chamber, the pillars are placed every other square, starting 1" from the wall. Up the length, they are placed every third square. Movement through squares occupied by a pillar is impossible.

The ground is ankle-deep in water. This doesn't hamper movement, but it does reveal the location of any combatant. If a character wants to move more silently, he must halve his Pace and cannot run. Should this be done, the thugs don't try to interrupt (see below) until the adventurer gets within 5", whereupon any movement at all can be heard.

The cistern is a tourist attraction and is thus lit. However, the lighting is designed to invoke mood, not provide artificial daylight conditions. As such, the lighting is Dim (–1).

The thugs begin 36" into the cistern. If the characters caught the escaping thug, his comrades are sitting around talking when the scene begins. His cries quickly alert them and prevent them from being surprised. On the other hand, if the thug evaded his pursuers, he has alerted his friends, who are hiding behind pillars.

The goons are not stupid. They know the pillars provide excellent cover, and so use the tried-and-tested tactic of stepping out, firing, and ducking back into cover. If the heroes begin sneaking up through the columns, thus preventing the hired killers from effectively using their weapons, the thugs will go on Hold and attempt to interrupt.

Likely short of ranged weapons, the heroes' first actions should be to somehow acquire a gun and level the odds a little. The thug they chased, if captured, does have a pistol.

The acoustics are such that a hero can perform a Smarts Trick by calling out fake orders or throwing his voice so it sounds like it is coming from behind the goons. Using the Trick against more than one opponent is handled by the character placing a Large Burst Template anywhere on the battlefield. Those in the template can be affected by a single Trick of this nature, although they are allowed a Group roll to resist.

Turkish Thug, with pistol (1 per hero): See page 22.

Turkish Thug, with shotgun (1 per 2 heroes): See page 22.

Turkish Thug, with Tommy Gun (1 per 2 heroes): See page 22.

AFTERMATH

After the thugs are defeated, the characters can liberate the stolen relic. It must have some value—men have killed and been killed to acquire it. In the event no one knew Fletchley-Parkes' name, Stavros provides them with the details.

Sir Percival, who arranged for the capture of the stone so he could work on finding Excalibur in secret, had planned to keep the artifact hidden down here for several months, before having it secretly shipped back to England.

Captured goons know little of interest. Their orders were to keep the tablet safe until they saw a certain obituary in the Istanbul Times. They were then to deliver the tablet to the docks. Sir Percival never intended to go through with this plan. Instead, he was going to hire other thugs to murder these patsies and then bring him the tablet.

ACT 2: THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE

Knowing the mysterious stone tablet is worth fighting over, our heroes likely head to Oxford University next. If necessary, remind the party that Britain has very strict gun laws. Running around in public with weapons drawn is likely to attract a lot of unwanted attention.

SCENE 1: OXFORD UNIVERSITY

On arriving at Oxford University's main reception, the characters are given directions to Professor Fletchley-Parkes' office. The route is rather complex and soon the characters find themselves lost. They are standing in a long corridor, whose wood panel walls sport dozens of coats-of-arms, among them Amelia Valentine's family (or those of any British noble in your group).

Walking idly up the corridor, pipe in hand, is a middle-aged man, apparently lost in thought. If asked for directions, he politely provides them. As the heroes move toward the end of the corridor, a student comes bounding down a flight of stairs, calling out, *"Professor Tolkien! Wait up, Professor! I have a question about Beowulf!"*

Eventually, the group reaches the right office. There's

no sign of a secretary in the outer office. Noises can be heard from the inner office, as if someone is moving around. If the characters knock on the door or call out, they are greeted by total silence. On opening the door, read the following text aloud.

> *A white-haired man lies slumped on the floor, a dagger through his chest. Nearby, it looks like someone has been trying to burn papers in an open fire. A huge wad of burning papers have rolled out, and flames now engulf a sofa. A nearby window is open, the curtains flapping in the breeze dangerously near the fire.*

If the characters look out the window, a man can be seen running away across the grass outside. Heroes who give chase immediately must make an Agility roll to leap safely from the second-story window. A failure causes the character to begin the Chase (see below) scene Shaken.

Preventing the fire from spreading requires an Agility roll at –6. This can be done as a Cooperative roll. Using the curtain to beat the flames grants a +2 bonus. Each round of firefighting means the fleeing arsonist increases his distance by one Range Increment.

The man, Fletchley-Parkes, is dead. Checking him for a pulse takes a round.

Whether the characters chase or wait, they notice a page of an ancient manuscript caught on a nail on the windowsill. Grabbing it is a free action.

THE CHASE

Pursuers who don't stop to fight the fire begin 4 Range Increments behind the man. Lay out a line of marker stones as normal, but make the 5th and 8th of different colors (or position them so they stand out). Position the villain's playing piece on the 4th Range Increment. The characters begin not yet on the marker trail. Their first successful movement brings them onto the track.

The first eight markers equate to 1". After this, the distance increases to 10". This accounts for the various types of transport available in the chase.

When the killer reaches the 5th marker he hops onto a bicycle. Pedaling a bicycle uses Strength instead of Agility.

The 7th marker represents the banks of the River Thames. Once the villain reaches this point, he hops into a motor launch. The key skill now switches to Boating and the Range Increment increases. The heroes now suffer a –1 penalty to Agility and Strength if they are still on foot or bicycles. When the adventurers reach the riverside, they find the only vessels available are sleek rowing skiffs. The vessels are of varying sizes, the largest holding a maximum of four crewmembers.

Rowing requires a Strength (power) or Boating (technique) roll. Up to four heroes can Cooperate on this task. However, a character who wants to wait for colleagues to catch up and share the boat must Hold Steady until they reach the same Range Increment.

The motorboat has a higher base Range Increment, which gives the heroes –1 to their rolls. It is also faster, so the escaping villain adds +1 to his Boating rolls.

Although it completely bends historical accuracy into a knot (this is a pulp game, after all), the GM can, if he so chooses have the boat chase cut through the famous Boat Race, held between Oxford and Cambridge Universities each year. This actually takes place much closer to London. In 1937, Oxford won the race for the first time since 1924. Did the heroes have anything to do with this?

Any Obstacles in the entirety of the Chase represent students on foot or bicycles, or river traffic. Rather than use the regular rules, check the value of the Club card against the table below to determine the penalty.

Value	Penalty
Deuce	–6
3–5	–4
6–9	–2
Jack–Queen	–1
King–Ace	0

Penalties are applied to whichever skill is being used in the Chase. A failed roll causes the participant to suffer a –2 to his next roll. In the event of a shared rowing boat, one character per boat should be nominated as the strokeman (typically the one making the lead Strength roll). Only his suit counts with regard to Obstacles.

The GM should add descriptions of Obstacles as required. Perhaps a runner bumps into a professor (maybe Tolkien), a cyclist may have to avoid a party of attractive female students or slips on wet grass, or the motor launch might crash through an errant dinghy. Don't ever roll for collisions, though—none of the vehicles have statistics.

Killer: Use the stats for a Turkish thug (page 22), except the man is unarmed and is a Wild Card.

THE KILLER CAPTURED

Professor Fletchley-Parkes' killer is a London hatchet man by the name of Johnny Bowler. He received £500 (a substantial amount of money) to kill the professor and destroy his notes. He has no idea who supplied the money. As a hardened, career criminal, nothing the characters do can get him to talk further.

If the heroes didn't grab the piece of vellum on the professor's windowsill, Bowler has a similar page in his hands when he's caught. Bowler says he was specifically ordered to burn the tome by his patron.

SCENE 2: A COUNTRY FAIR

A character making a Knowledge (History) roll knows the manuscript page is written in Latin and probably dates from the 14th century. Discovering its meaning can be achieved through the university library (Investigation roll) or by asking an Oxford professor who specializes in that era (Streetwise).

With success, the adventures learn the page belonged to a work known as the *Roll of Kings*, a detailed work describing England's monarchs from 1066 (the time of the

Norman Conquest) through to Edward I (died in 1307). Only two copies are known to exist—the now destroyed one held by the university, and the other in the possession of Sir Percival Fanhard, Viscount Wincanton.

Lord Wincanton's residence can be discovered in *Who's Who*, a biography of British nobles, senior clergy, Members of Parliament, judges, distinguished academics, scientists, and authors, and so on, published annually since 1849. This requires an Investigation roll unless at least one of the characters is British (foreigners are unlikely to have even heard of the publication). If there's a British noble in the party, he's listed as well. Alternatively, any English noble in the party can recall his residence with a successful Common Knowledge roll at –2.

Although his title lists him as Viscount Wincanton (which is in the county of Somerset), his ancestral home is in Northumberland (on the border with Scotland). Handing out titles to nobles living far from their fief is an age-old practice in England.

THE POLO MATCH

On reaching Sir Percival's residence, a large stately home, the characters are informed by the butler (Jeeves) that his lordship is playing polo. He provides directions to the event, which is just a few miles walk from the house. If the heroes phone ahead, Jeeves tells them the same thing.

Polo is played on horseback and involves smashing a ball with a long mallet into the opposition's goal. First invented by the Persians some six centuries before the time of Christ, the version played by the English aristocracy was brought to Britain by officers serving in India a little under a century ago. Riders are mounted on what are called "polo ponies," although in fact they are regular horses.

Typically the reserve of the wealthy, it has long been a tradition that Viscount Wincanton holds a polo match in the local village open to spectators from the general public. Before the current Viscount, the villagers enjoyed a medieval-style joust. Over the many generations, the event has transformed into a spring fair, the polo match now being the showpiece of the gala. However, class divisions are strong in England during the 1930s, and tensions run high when bored young noblemen get drunk, as they frequently do, and begin harassing "the peasants."

Identifying Lord Fanhard requires a Streetwise roll. With success, a young man on a brown polo pony is indicated. He's in the middle of a game. Any hero making a Riding roll can see he's an excellent horseman.

Before the adventurers have a chance to meet the lord, they have two encounters. The first is with a seemingly crazy woman, the second is a disturbance of a more threatening nature.

THE CRAZY WOMAN

While enjoying the fair, a young woman approaches the characters. She's bespectacled, in her mid-twenties, has her hair in a tight bun that gives her a severe appearance, and wearing a tweed suit that makes her look several decades older. She latches onto the hero with the highest Spirit. In the event of a tie, decide randomly which character receives her attention.

> *"You have a very powerful aura," she says, in a soft, dreamy voice. "The spirits told me you'd be here, you know. Oh, I'm sorry," she says, sticking out a hand. "My name is Holly, Holly Hollingberry. My spirit guide led me to you. I sense you are on a very important quest, yes?"*

Holly isn't a charlatan, but she isn't exactly a powerful psychic, either. She does have some latent ability, mostly hunches rather than clear visions, but it's completely unfocused. Questions about the "quest" are met with vague answers about ancient treasure and spiritual energy.

After a while, she says, *"Tread carefully! This quest is a perilous one. The black-hearted ones will try to thwart you."* She then wanders off into the crowd.

Holly Hollingberry: See page 22.

TO THE RESCUE

Two examples of suitable disturbances which require heroic intervention are provided below, but the GM should feel free to create his own based on his group. Whichever event is used, the final outcome is the same—a brawl!

* A horse left on the sidelines by its rider startles and begins rearing up and kicking. Several small children are standing nearby, frozen with terror. Unless a hero calms it within four rounds, a young girl is kicked, leaving her unconscious.

Calming the beast requires just two steps. First, the character must make an Agility roll at –2 to get close to the beast. Each failure results in him taking 1d12 damage (from an Extra). Second, he must make a Persuasion (–4) or Riding (–2) roll. There is no specific penalty for failure, beyond another round passing.

* A dog rushes onto the polo pitch, followed closely by its owner—a young lad of about seven years of age. Polo is played at high speeds, and the riders, intent on the game, have not spotted the boy.

Any adventurer wishing to save the lad from being trampled must make two Agility rolls at –2 and a Fighting roll against Parry 4. The hero has just four rounds to achieve this.

Whatever the event and however it ends up, the characters are approached by a gang of drunken young gentry. They blame the heroes for the disturbance, and demand they clear off immediately. Make them very annoying and in your face types. They want a fight, but they want one of the "lower classes" to throw the first punch. One near-guaranteed provocation is to have one of them shove aside a female character, knocking her off her feet. Any male hero (especially those with Heroic or Loyal) should take this as an affront.

Once a fist is thrown, a brawl quickly develops. Deal action cards.

One of the drunks grabs a nearby polo mallet (Str+d6, one-handed weapon) during the fight. Once half the noblemen or the characters are out for the count, a loud voice calls out, *"Stop this at once!"* The voice belongs to a young man, maybe in his mid-thirties, sitting astride a polo pony. His mallet is casually resting on his shoulder. One of the remaining ruffians goes to take a swipe at the heroes, but the man calls out again.

"Reginald," the man says calmly, "stop this at once!" The mallet-wielding goon, obviously Reginald, looks up at the man. "They started it," he says. "I don't care if His Majesty started it," the horseman replies. "You will leave these good people in peace. Get home with you until you sober up." Reginald doesn't move at first, but after the rider says "now," he turns and leaves, as do his comrades.

"I do apologize," the man says, dismounting. "Too much free champagne, I suspect. I'm Sir Percival Fanhard, Viscount Wincanton if you want to be formal. Now, would you like some English tea? Least I can do by way of apology."

Fanhard asks the characters what they're doing in England (assuming he hears foreign accents). Any characters with Big Mouth are destined to spill the beans, leaving out no important facts. If there are any English nobles in the group, Fanhard recognizes them after a few moments pause. Whoever the character is, he recalls a few facts about their family.

Fanhard's Knights (2 per hero): See page 22.

HIS LORDSHIP

He appears genuinely shocked by news of Fletchley-Parkes death, though this is nothing more than a very good act. Fanhard had the man killed because Fletchley-Parkes had discovered a veiled reference to Excalibur in the *Rolls of Kings*. In order to ensure "his" prize could not be discovered by anyone else, the nobleman took drastic steps.

Fanhard admits to having spoken with the professor many times on matters of heraldry and history—*"The man helped me trace my genealogy back to King Richard I, you know."*

Once he learns about the burnt manuscript, his tone changes slightly. Although still very polite, he looks a little distant. Spotting this requires a Notice roll. The nobleman, if questioned on his change, comments lightly that he is rather shocked, and wonders if whoever did it will come looking for his family's copy. In truth, he feels his plans are in danger, what with the discoverers of Fletchley-Parkes' murder now standing before him.

On hearing of the existence of the stone tablet, his mood changes again, this time to barely-contained excitement. The nobleman, realizing his mistake, promptly composes himself. He apologizes for his excitement, but says he has been researching a knight serving Richard I who supposedly took to his grave the whereabouts of a great treasure captured in the Holy Land.

He invites the characters to stay with him at his manor for a few days while he makes inquiries into the stone and about having it translated through contacts at the British Museum. The man is very insistent, claiming he wishes to hear all about the adventurers' exploits and show them a little British tradition in the morning with the annual fox hunt on his estate.

There's actually nowhere else to stay in the area, as all the public houses for miles around are full thanks to the fair and forthcoming fox hunt.

SCENE 3: THE HUNTED

Sir Percival throws an elaborate dinner for his guests, and then asks to hear more about their adventures. Let the characters retell their many deeds in as much detail as they wish.

During the conversation, Fanhard, a learned historian, asks appropriate questions or makes astute comments. All the while he is plotting against the characters, realizing from their stories exactly how resourceful they are. One slip and his entire scheme could come crashing down around him. By morning, a plan has formed in the noble's mind.

THE HUNT

The following morning, the characters and Sir Percival attend the hunt. Fox hunting is not just a sport for the rich or landed gentry—it is as much a social event as anything else. Among the many attendees, all identically clad in black boots, white trousers, red jackets, and black riding hats, are the ruffians from the polo match, still sporting large bruises from the beating they took. They ignore the heroes.

Just before the hunt begins, one of the helpers throws a bucket of raw livers to the pack of baying hounds. *"Gives 'em the taste of blood,"* he comments to the characters.

Sir Percival explains that the characters can't participate in the hunt, but they are free to watch the start. After that he recommends they move back to his estate and watch from the West Field, as it gives a fantastic view over much of the estate, allowing the spectators to watch the hunt unfold. The hunt terminates back at the manor, anyway.

While walking back, the characters hear the sounds of horns and hounds. Strangely, they seem to be getting closer. Just at that moment, Holly Hollingberry comes running up the lane, blathering on about a change in the heroes' psychic energy. *"I've had a vision!" she shouts, approaching at a run. "I sense something bad is going to happen to you!"*

Sure enough, a pack of foxhounds quickly rushes into view. It looks like they've got the scent of prey, but it isn't a fox!

If the characters plan on engaging the dogs in melee, the fight runs its natural course. No one arrives to save them. The dogs use Gang Up tactics on their prey. They may be small, but there are a lot of them.

The other option is to turn tail and run. This is a Chase, with a base Increment of 5". The Chases use our Event Stages rules (see below). The heroes, having a lower base Range Increment, suffer a –1 penalty to their Agility rolls. Taking flight immediately places the characters 4 Range Increments ahead of the pack. Due to the number of hounds present, they make Group rolls when a Trait roll is required.

If the hounds get within one Range Increment of their prey, they try the Parallel maneuver. If successful, the hounds make a Fighting attack as a free action as the lead dogs nip at the hero. Make the attack as a Group roll.

EVENT STAGES

Unlike a regular Chase, this one has fixed encounters along the route as the heroes and pack move through the countryside. Space 20 markers in a line along the table to present the field system. Place a different color marker at the 6th, 9th, 12th, 15th, and 18th positions. These are the Event Stages. If the Chase carries on beyond the 20th position the GM may either elect to create his own events or assume the trail is clear.

Move each participant's playing piece along the track each time it moves one or more Range Increments. This way it is very easy to see where an individual person is in relation to the events. When a character reaches a Stage he must deal with an event. These are detailed below.

6th Increment: A narrow gap in a hedge is the only way forward. The character must make an Agility roll or suffer a level of Fatigue until the end of the chase. The same applies to the dogs.

9th Increment: Some farmers are blasting away at rabbits. The hero's path takes him between hunter and hunted. Roll four d6 individually. Each roll of 1 means the character has taken a hit for 2d6 damage (from an Extra). Roll three dice if the character has Dodge, and two dice if he has Improved Dodge.

Roll 4d6 for the pack. Each roll of 1 reduces the number of hounds by one. This reduction in pack size only comes into play if the hounds catch the characters and a fight ensues.

12th Increment: A stream crosses the character's path. He must make a Strength roll to clear the watercourse or slip and fall prone. Any movement for the round ends immediately if he falls. He also suffers a –2 penalty to his next Agility roll. If the hounds fail their roll, they end their current movement for the round and must Hold Steady next round while they search for the scent on the other bank.

15th Increment: Countless rabbit holes threaten to trip the runner. Each runner must make an Agility roll as a free action. A failed roll means he stumbles and is Shaken as he twists his ankle. The dogs suffer a –2 penalty to their next Agility roll if they fail, as the pack splits to avoid the holes.

18th Increment: A herd of cattle is grazing in the field. They pay little attention to the characters, forcing the runners to dodge and weave around them. The characters next Agility roll is made at –2.

When the dogs get here, the cattle stampede away from them. Naturally, this drives them toward the heroes! Any hero on the 18th or 19th Increments must make an Agility roll at –2 or suffer 3d6 damage (from an Extra).

OUTCOME

The two possible outcomes are the adventurers manage to outpace the dogs, or the pack catches up and begins ripping them to shreds. In the latter case, Sir Percival and part of the hunt arrive after six rounds, drawn by the frenzied barking. Unable to follow through with his plan now he is in plain sight of the characters (who might survive and put two and two together if he doesn't aid them), the nobleman reluctantly calls off the dogs.

"Dear God," Sir Percival exclaims loudly. He turns to one of his colleagues. "Have Walters report to me first thing in the morning. These people are my guests, and I will not have them attacked on my land by my hounds. Now take the dogs back to the kennel and signal the hunt to end!" He nods in Holly's direction, "Who is your new friend?"

Sir Percival suggests they retire to the manor. Holly graciously declines, saying she has other business to attend to on behalf of her spirit guides. He orders another colleague to go into the village and summon the doctor. Back at the house, each character benefits from a single d8+2 Healing roll.

- **Holly Hollingberry:** See page 22.
- **Hounds (3 per hero):** See page 23.

SCENE 4: HERE COME THE NAZIS

That evening, while sitting in the study enjoying an after-dinner brandy digestif, Jeeves delivers a note to Sir Percival. The nobleman reads the message and then turns to the characters.

"Excellent news!" he beams. "I've arranged for you to take the stone tablet to the British Museum tomorrow and have it translated. It's the least I can do giving all the frightful things that have occurred since you arrived. Train leaves at 7 o'clock sharp. I'll have Jeeves run you to the station in the car. More brandy, anyone?"

As Sir Percival goes to fetch more brandy (for himself if no one else wants a drink), the glass in the tall bay windows shatters inward and bullets rip across the drinks cabinet, sending glass flying in all directions. A split second later, the curtains are pulled aside, the door

to the study flies open, and in bursts a gang of MP-35 SMG-wielding goons.

Fanhard hasn't hired these goons. They are Nazi agents, also hunting for Excalibur. They learned of the lord's quest years ago and been secretly conducting their own investigations. Contacts in Istanbul alerted them to the existence of the stone after it was recovered, and they tailed the heroes. Now they have come to steal it and kill those who endanger their quest. Fanhard should be targeted by the Nazis. He can even take wounds, but he should not be killed.

The study is 6" to a side. In the center of the north wall is a fireplace. The fire is lit. The bay windows are directly opposite. The drinks cabinet is against the east wall, while the door into the study is in the west wall. Sofas and chairs occupy the center of the room.

The furniture provides cover, but not for long. The chairs have Toughness 9, while the sofa is Toughness 12. Sooner or later the characters are going to have to engage their foes, whether they want to or not.

Polite heroes won't be armed. Regardless of whether or not they are carrying weapons, Fanhard has a few weapons at hand. Two long swords hang above the fireplace (Fanhard goes for one of these), and there's an antique musket nearby. The musket is loaded (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 2d8), but it's only good for a single shot. The fire poker makes a handy weapon (Str+d4), and numerous items (like coal from the bucket, or snifters of brandy) can be used in Tricks.

The Nazis carry two sets of identity papers—one English and the other German (identifying them as SS-VT soldiers). Their SMGs are German MP35s, which should be enough of a clue that these are most definitely Nazis.

- **Sir Percival Fanhard:** See page 21.
- **Nazi Agents (2 per hero):** See page 23.

FANHARD'S LIES

Once the Nazis are dead, Fanhard admits he hasn't been entirely honest with the heroes. He had intended to have them attacked again, but the appearance of the Nazis has suddenly convinced him to use the heroes as lackeys for as long as he can.

"Look," he begins, "I haven't been entirely honest with you. Please, sit down on what's left of the furniture and I'll tell you the truth.

"I sponsored the archaeological expedition you were on, although anonymously. Several years ago I came across an old scroll in my father's collection. It was written by a knight of King Richard I, a knight who made mention of a rather special sword, discovered by the king before he took the throne. It seems that Richard planned to use the sword to rally the Crusaders, but politics got in the way.

"Since then, I've been sponsoring digs across England, France, and the Middle East in search of the knight's tomb, in the hope he took more information with him to the grave. I believe you have found what I've been searching for.

"The sword? Ah, I believe you'll think me mad, which is why I have refrained from telling you all this before, but I am convinced Richard found Excalibur, King Arthur's sword. Yes, I know, it sounds farfetched, but all the evidence so far greatly hints at that being the truth. I'm hoping the stone will reveal clues to its whereabouts.

"Everyone knows the Nazis are gaining strength each day. I don't care what Hitler or our politicians say, war is coming to Europe again. Maybe not this year, but soon, very soon, and England is going to get drawn in. Excalibur would serve as a symbol for the British, to unify them against whatever is coming. Hitler must know that. I guess he has learned the truth behind all the digs, and wants the sword for himself. They say he's a nut for all things occult.

"So, I need your help. Will you help me find Excalibur, assuming the tablet reveals its location? You'll be handsomely rewarded for your troubles, of course, and any travel expenses incurred in your quest I'll cover. Just keep me abreast of developments and I'll smooth over any red tape for you."

The story is mostly the truth. Fanhard has naturally omitted the real reason he seeks the sword.

Characters who comment on Fanhard's skill with a sword are told, *"Earned my fencing Blues at Cambridge. Father also ran a medieval joust some years on the estate. Insisted I take part to honor my ancestors."*

ACT 3: THE TRAIL BEGINS

The train journey to London is uneventful. Once in the city, a taxi quickly delivers the heroes to the imposing front edifice of the British Museum.

SCENE 1: THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Doctor Saint John (pronounced "sin-gin") Jones is waiting for the heroes when they arrive. After handshakes and introductions, he leads them through the exhibit galleries to his office.

"Now then," he says, taking a seat behind his desk, "how can I help you? Lord Wincanton mentioned you needed something translated. Do you have it with you?"

If shown the stone, Jones pulls a pair of spectacles

from his jacket pocket and begins studying it. For a few minutes he says nothing, and ignores any questions.

"Definitely Latin script of the early part of the Middle Ages," he mutters to himself, "but the words don't make any sense. They appear to be…Well, I'll be! Where did you say you found this tablet? Never mind, that can wait. It's a code! Look," he says, turning the stone so you can see the text. "The letters are Latin, but the words are Welsh Gaelic. Anyone who just reads Aramaic would be stymied. Fortunately I was born in Wales and speak the language fluently.

"Now, if I've got this right, it mentions King Richard I finding a sword before he went on Crusade. The only other notes of interest are lines from Chrétien de Troyes' story 'Lancelot', which was written just before Richard's death.

"Let me see, it reads, 'Upon a certain Ascension Day, King Arthur had come from Caerleon, and held a very magnificent court at Camelot as was fitting on such a day.'"

Have the characters make Knowledge (History) rolls. English heroes can use Common Knowledge, instead, if they prefer. With success, they know Caerleon contains the remains of a Roman fort once known as Isca Augusta. With a raise, they remember its name translates roughly as, "Fortress of the Legion." Doctor Jones can fill in both parts of the information is no one rolls well enough. Caerleon lies in southern Wales, a few miles from the city of Newport.

Doctor Jones hands the tablet back to you. "I'm not sure what it all means, I'm afraid. Likely part of a romantic fable. They were very popular at the time.

"Strange, though, it mentioning Caerleon. I was browsing through the Anglo-Saxon gallery just the other day when I saw the name on another stone. This one, just a fragment of a larger piece, dates from the time of Alfred the Great. Apparently it was discovered in a field near Caerleon, but that was long before my tenure here. I can show you it if you'd like?"

Jones leads the party back into the museum proper, and through a number of galleries. As the characters enter the Anglo-Saxon gallery, alarm bells begin ringing. Moments later, machine gun fire rakes across the room, sending museum patrons diving for cover.

Across the other side of the gallery are a number of thugs, dressed like the goons who attacked Sir Percival's house and carrying German SMGs. One of them holds a small stone tablet in his hand.

Deal action cards. Jones is a noncombatant. On hearing the gunfire he immediately ducks out of the gallery and runs for his life.

The gallery is 18" long and 5" wide. There is a doorway in the center at each end. Arranged in two columns up the length of the room are display cases. Each is 2" long and 1" wide. Place these in two columns up the center of the room, separated from the walls and each other by a 1" gap. The cases are approximately 3' high, allowing them to be used as cover. For convenience, assume any missed shots fired against a target cowering behind one smashes the glass and some of the objects inside.

At least one thug should escape with the tablet. Given the distance between the parties and the number of Nazis available, this shouldn't be too hard to achieve. Time is against the characters in this fight—each round they delay increases the gap between the escaping Nazi and the heroes in the next scene.

Nazi Agents (2 per hero): See page 23.

SCENE 2: LONDON CHASE

Hopefully the characters realize the Nazis have the "Alfred stone" and give chase. The Nazi has hopped in a getaway car and is making good his escape. Use the regular Chase and Obstacles rules. The Obstacles are Rough (–2) due to heavy traffic.

For each round the heroes were held up fighting off the goons in the museum, the distance between the Nazi car and the heroes is one Range Increment (to a maximum of 5—they were held up in traffic). Each Range Increment equates to 10".

There are a number of cars available for the adventurers to "borrow" outside the British Museum—taxis and those of the general public. For ease of play, they all share the same stats (which they share with the villain's car). In the event the heroes want to steal a double-decker bus (like they did in *Daring Tales #6*), we've included appropriate stats.

Doc Davenport can use his rocket pack in the chase, but it's assumed he's flying at street level (because flying above the action is just not the way of pulp action.) If he moves at his regular Pace, he suffers a –2 penalty to Piloting rolls (because his Range Increment is only 1" compared to the cars' 10"). Moving at twice his Pace reduces this to –1, but burns more Power Points on the initial Weird Science roll.

One Nazi is driving the getaway car, leaving the others free to blast away with their SMGs. Note that none of them have Steady Hands. Since the goons opened fire first, the characters should feel free to return fire at will.

It doesn't matter whether the Nazis escape with the stone or are defeated and the relic saved. In the former case, Professor Jones can provide a transcript of the text.

Nazi Agents (1 per hero): See page 23. The driver rolls a Wild Die for Driving rolls, but is otherwise treated as an Extra.

SEDAN

Acc/Top Speed: 10/20; **Toughness:** 12 (3); **Crew:** 1+5

DOUBLE-DECKER BUS

Acc/Top Speed: 5/15; **Toughness:** 15 (2); **Crew:** 1+50

ALFRED'S MESSAGE

The stone is written in Latin. Once translated, it reads:

I, Alfred, in the year of our Lord eight hundred and seventy seven, did stand beneath Caerleon and gaze upon a king and 12 knights of old. On his head he wore a golden circlet and in his hand he held a shining sword. From his hand I took the sword, with which to rally my men in preparations for the tribulations ahead. Then did I…

That's all the stone says. The rest of the text is missing. Anyone looking at the edges of the stone can tell it was damaged in antiquity—the edges are smoothed, not rough as you'd get in a recent break.



SCENE 3: FORTRESS OF THE LEGION

Caerleon, Isca Augusta to the Romans, served as the headquarters of the Legio II Augusta from shortly after Boudicca's rebellion until the early 4th century. The sizeable fortress once boasted an amphitheater, baths, and an extensive barracks complex. All that remains today are low stone walls of the rectangular buildings, the foundations of the outer defensive wall, and part of the circular amphitheater.

Geoffrey of Monmouth, writing in the mid-12th century, added to existing mythology from Welsh chroniclers when he wrote of Caerleon as being King Arthur's court, but he never called it Camelot. Indeed, it was de Troyes who first used the name, but even he did not label it as the main court. Rather, he too insisted that was at Caerleon.

Camelot's transposition to the place of Arthur's court began in the 13th century with French poets, but became cemented into folklore by Sir Thomas Malory, who wrote of it in his *Le Morte d'Arthur* during the 15th century.

Arthur did have a seat at Caerleon, and indeed was buried here along with his greatest knights at one time (as the characters soon discover) but de Troyes' line of the Crusader stone states the site cannot be Camelot. The writing quite clearly states that Arthur came to Camelot from Caerleon. Thus, they must be different places. However, Caerleon is the only lead the characters have right now.

THE TEMPLE OF MITHRAS

Today, modern Caerleon is a tourist attraction, but in the 1930s archaeologists haven't paid it much attention (what with the Middle East throwing up far more extravagant finds).

Any local can point the characters to the ruins, which lie on the edge of the village. Asking where the "Alfred stone" was recovered requires a Streetwise roll. With success, the adventurers are told to see Farmer Williams, who owns the field where it was found.

Dai ("dye") Williams, the farmer, is happy to let the characters snoop around the field, so long as they agree to split any money from selling artifacts 50/50. For a few shillings (about 50 cents), the farmer loans them pickaxes and shovels.

He shows them the exact position of

the find, adding that he's unearthed a number of Roman coins and pieces of pottery in the field. The farmer reaches into his pocket and withdraws a small shard of decorated pottery. *"Them archaeologists reckon this is a piece from some temple that once stood here,"* he says.

Part of a bull's head is clearly visible on the fragment. Characters making a Common Knowledge (–2) or Knowledge (History) roll recall that Mithras was a popular deity among the legions. The bull was part of the Mithraic mythology and iconography.

The only way the characters are going to find anything in the field is by digging near the spot the Alfred stone was found. After several hours, they eventually uncover a small flight of stone steps. These descend just a few feet before ending at a huge stone slab. Engraved on the slab is the word "Aelfred." (That's the Saxon spelling.)

An hour later, the soil above the slab is cleared and the obstacle levered to one side. Beneath is a dark hole, which drops down just six feet to a rectangular, stone-lined chamber.

Within the chamber are a dozen stone sarcophagi, arranged against the walls. One bears the inscription, "Artorius." The only artifact is part of a broken stone tablet. If the characters have the Alfred stone with them, they discover the two pieces fit together. The walls are painted with murals depicting Mithras slaying a bull, the most-common motif of the faith, although some early Christian symbols have been scratched over these.

As the party head back into Caerleon, they hear the sound of motorbikes behind them. Tearing across the field, guns blazing, are four Nazis on bikes. Ahead of them, stampeding toward the group, is an enraged bull!

THAT'S (A) BULL

The characters can either stand and fight, or they can run for the village.

If they stand and fight, the battlefield is 24" to a side. The terrain is predominantly grass, although there are a few low walls crouching characters can use for cover. Assume the walls are indestructible, and missed shots just ricochet off. The bull begins 15" away, and the bikers 20".

Fleeing uses the Chase rules. The heroes have a base Range Increment of 1", the bull and motorbikes 5". The characters suffer a –1 penalty to Agility rolls because of this. The bull is 3 Range Increments behind the characters and the bikes one behind the bull. Each Range Increment equates to 5".

There are Light Obstacles (–1). These are mainly lumps and bumps in the ground and low stone walls. Rather than suffer a collision, characters who encounter an Obstacle (and fail their roll) simply go Out of Control.

The bull uses the Parallel stunt to set itself up for a gore attack if *any* foe is on the same Range Increment as the creature or is one Range Increment ahead (it won't turn around and gore those behind it so long as the bikes are there).

When the chase begins, the motorbikes are sensibly trying to stay *behind* the bull, and so are moving slowly. If they draw a higher action card and are one Range Increment behind the beast, they automatically Hold Steady to avoid drawing level with the rampaging beast. Should the bull be taken out, the bikers increase their speed. However, the uneven terrain is difficult ground so they gain no bonuses or penalties to their Driving rolls.

Each motorbike is manned by just a driver. They use their SMGs, but suffer multi action and Unstable Platform penalties when firing. However, they have Rock and Roll and use full auto each round.

Bull: See page 23.

Nazi Agents (1 per hero): See page 23.

MOTORBIKE

Acc/Top Speed: 20/36; **Toughness:** 8 (2); **Crew:** 1+1

THE SECOND ALFRED STONE

The weathered stone fragment requires translation from Latin. Translated, it reads:

> *"…take the bodies of the great king and his knights to a place of new safety, burying them beneath the battle-fort by the River Cam, which overlooked the flooded lands. From where I raised my standard I could see this fortress. It gave me inspiration, knowing that I was continuing the tradition of defending this land from invaders."*

The last part is rather ironic, for King Arthur spent his life fighting the Saxons, from whom Alfred was descended. Of course, by Alfred's time the Saxons were effectively the native English population, their ties to Saxony being few and far between except for political and trading alliances.

Adventurers with Knowledge (History) can make a roll at –2. Knowledge of where Alfred raised his standard is hardly commonplace today. With success, they learn it was on the edge of the Somerset Levels. The site is marked with a folly (a stone tower) erected to commemorate the event in 1772. Professors Jones or Tolkien can provide this information if contacted.

SCENE 4: BOMBE FOR LUNCH

However they had the stone fragment translated, the adventurers are now destined for Somerset. The train, again the fastest way, takes them as far as Frome ("froom"), the nearest major town to Alfred's Tower.

Like a bad penny, Holly Hollingberry turns up again. She pushes into the compartment and takes a seat between two characters.

"Right again!" she squeals excitedly. "I sense you are close to your goal now. The spirits told me I'd find you here."

Just then, a steward from the dining car arrives push-

ing a trolley. A large metal serving dish sits atop, covered by a domed lid. He wheels it into the compartment and nods his head politely. *"Courtesy of your patron," he says.* He then leaves, closing the door behind him. Holly immediately cries out, *"I'm famished!"* and lifts the lid.

Whatever fine food the characters are expecting, they are likely surprised to discover a bomb beneath the lid! Holly simply says, *"Oops!"* as a thin wire between the lid and plate snaps.

Have each hero make a Notice roll (before some heroic type tries to throw it out of the window). With success, he notices a small device attached to it. A Repair roll identifies this as a trigger mechanism, set to explode if the bomb is moved. Lifting the lid activated the mechanism. The bomb, which comprises a dozen sticks of dynamite, has a timer—there are only seconds left!

Picking up the device causes an *instant* explosion. The heroes suffer 5d6 damage as if from an Extra.

Characters with the Heroic Hindrance should be reminded there are other passengers in the adjoining compartments—unless they are moved an explosion could endanger their lives. There are a total of four compartments within the bomb's estimated burst radius.

Getting the patrons to evacuate requires either an Intimidation or Persuasion roll at –2 in each compartment. One roll per hero taking part in this activity may be taken per round. Mentioning the bomb grants no bonus—*"No one blows up first class carriages in England, sir!"*—but brandishing a firearm openly gives Intimidation rolls a +2 modifier.

Opting to defuse the bomb requires the characters to complete four tasks in order before the end of the 6th round.

1) They must study the bomb mechanism to determine if there are any booby traps (there are). This requires a Notice (–2) or Repair roll. A success detects the booby trap. On a failure, the trap goes unnoticed. The characters can advance straight to step three.

2) Characters who detected the booby trap may attempt to deactivate it. This requires an Agility roll at –2. With success, the wire is safely snipped. A failure means the character was shaking too much and withdrew his hand in fear of setting off the charge.

3) A hero must identify the correct wire to snip in order to disable the timer. This requires a Common Knowledge (–2) or Repair roll.

4) If the heroes haven't activated the booby trap, it goes off as the hero moves in to snip the wire. The clock speeds up! Immediately reduce the number of rounds until detonation by one. If this is currently the 6th round, the bomb explodes! Assuming the charge hasn't yet exploded, the character can now make an Agility roll at –2 to snip the wire. Failure means he hesitated.

In the event the characters are unsuccessful, the bomb explodes.

Holly Hollingberry: See page 22.

BATTLE OF THE KITCHEN

Whether the bomb explodes or not, the characters are likely to want to hunt down the steward. He's in the dining car, serving food. The man is genuinely horrified if told about the explosives. He points back to the kitchen car, claiming a member of staff wheeled it out and ordered him to deliver it to the characters' compartment.

The kitchen car is 3" wide and 12" long (for game purposes). Only the central aisle is completely clear. Kitchen appliances and shelves occupy both sides, making the terrain difficult ground. The kitchen staff are bound and gagged at the far end. Standing nearby are Nazis, their SMGs in hand.

If the bomb exploded, the Nazis aren't expecting the heroes. Check for Surprise. No explosion causes them to be on their guard—they're ready for trouble (they plan to get off at the next stop, but that is several minutes away).

As well as whatever weapons they are carrying, the heroes have access to a veritable arsenal of weapons and objects to use in Tricks. Frying pans and knives inflict Str+d4 damage. Lumps of lard or sticks of butter can be used in Agility Tricks, as can bags of flour, vegetables (dried beans make handy ammo for a slingshot), or cuts of meat.

There's even a pot of boiling water handy. Using this requires a Fighting roll against an adjacent foe, or it can be tossed to a maximum of 3" with a Throwing roll. Victims suffer 2d6 damage.

Holly Hollingberry: See page 22.

Nazi Agents (1 per hero): See page 23.

ACT 4: CAMELOT UNCOVERED

The remainder of the adventure takes place in four different locations, all within 30 miles of each other in the county of Somerset. For those interested in history, Alfred's Tower, Cadbury Castle, and Glastonbury Tor are all very real places (and near the author's childhood home).

The characters can hire a car in Frome. The tower is some distance away and only reachable by taking minor roads. Fortunately the structure is visible at a great distance, which makes navigation relatively easy. There are no road signs, not even when you get close to the site.

Unless the characters really try hard, they can't ditch Holly. She sticks to them like glue. In the event they do somehow leave her behind, she appears again in the final scene. Holly enters the chamber, having been guided by the spirits, just as the fight kicks off.

SCENE 1: ALFRED'S TOWER

Erected in 1772 to commemorate Alfred's victory over the Danes, the end of the Seven Years' War, and King George III taking the throne, the tower sits on the edge of a bluff overlooking the distant Somerset Levels. Ac-

cording to folklore, it was here Alfred gathered his men before marching north to defeat the Danes. From the top of the 160 foot high structure one can see up to 50 miles on a good day.

The tower is open to the public. An elderly but spry local by the name of Montague Welkes sits outside on sunny days, and offers to take visitors to the top, where he points out local landmarks. He's present when the characters arrive, and happy to take them up the tight spiral staircase to the crenellated platform at the summit.

Standing at the top is a young man scanning the horizon with a pair of binoculars. An artist's easel and painting paraphernalia are nearby. It looks like he's painting the landscape to the north. He nods a greeting to the characters. *"Marvelous view up here," he says. "On a clear day you can almost see the Bristol Channel. Don't mind me," he concludes, turning his attention back to his painting.*

Paranoid characters might ask the painter to leave. He gets rather upset and begins commenting on how rude people are today, especially those "from the Colonies." He has no intention of vacating his seat unless physically threatened.

One clearly visible feature in the distance is a tall, conical hill with a tower atop. This is actually Glastonbury Tor, a famous landmark. If asked about "the battle-fort on the River Cam," Welkes gives them a funny look.

"Now that's not something you hear every day, now, is it," he chuckles. "See that tall hill with the tower on in the distance? Well, move around to the south more and you'll see a lower hill with a flat top and trees around it. See it there, just in line with that big tree?

"That's Cadbury Castle, that is. Only fort around here you can see, and it does sit near the River Cam. I reckon that fits your description plenty good. That's not the same river as you'll find in Cambridge, mind you. Cadbury ain't far from Queen Camel and West Camel, which were named after the river. Folk reckon that old hill fort was Camelot. You know, where King Arthur lived."

A DRIVE IN THE COUNTRY

As the characters pull away from the tower and drive back down the winding lanes, motorbikes appear in the rearview mirror, the passengers blasting away with SMGs. The Nazis are back!

The "painter" atop the tower is actually a Nazi agent. Although the Nazis don't know Alfred's Tower is important in the Excalibur quest, they do know it's got great views of Somerset, a region closely associated with Arthur. Unfortunately for the characters, the agent recognized them from circulated descriptions.

After they depart he runs back to his car and uses a radio set to summon help. If he was allowed to remain on the tower, he informs other agents to get to Cadbury Castle immediately. Otherwise he pops back to the tower and asks the guide what the characters were looking for. Old Welkes is only too happy to oblige.

Run this scene as a chase with 10" Range Increments and Sparse (–1) Obstacles rules. Soft obstacles indicate a tight bend and a scrape with a hedge or encounter, while hard obstacles might be tractors, horse and carts, or even a wild deer bounding across the lane.

The Nazis begin 3 Range Increments behind the characters. The bikes have a lower base Range Increment than the car, so the Nazis get a –1 Driving roll penalty. However, they are faster, which grants a +1 bonus, for a net result of no modifiers.

Each bike has one driver and one passenger. Only the passenger shoots initially, although he suffers the Unstable Platform modifier. If the gunner is killed, the driver takes over firing, although he incurs a multi action penalty.

The winding lanes and high hedges make sighting difficult. At a distance of one to three Range Increments, characters have a clear shot. Between four and six Range Increments, there is a –2 penalty to Shooting rolls as target vehicles are partially glimpsed. At seven Range Increments and beyond, the penalty increases to –4.

- **Holly Hollingberry:** See page 23.
- **Nazi Agents (2 per hero):** See page 23.

MOTORBIKE

Acc/Top Speed: 20/36; **Toughness:** 8 (2); **Crew:** 1+1

SEDAN

Acc/Top Speed: 10/20; **Toughness:** 12 (3); **Crew:** 1+5

SCENE 2: CADBURY CASTLE

The penultimate landmark on the characters' quest is the hill fort of Cadbury Castle. Despite the name, it has never had a castle on its summit. Situated on the southern side of the Somerset Levels and rising 500 feet above sea level, it has a commanding view of the countryside.

Although the four sets of earth ramparts were constructed around 500 BC, the hill fort remained in use throughout the Roman period and into the early Dark Ages, finally being abandoned around the end of the 6th century (save for a few decades of occupation in the early 11th century). It has been associated with Camelot since 1532.

Parking at South Cadbury, a hamlet at the bottom of the hill, the characters can begin the arduous climb up the steep and muddy slope. Should they stop to ask the farmer leaning on the gate at the foot of the slope about the hill, he says that there's nothing up the top except for an old well near the summit. *"Arthur's Well, folk call that," he adds. "Strange, isn't it," he continues. "No one comes here for months on end, and then two groups of foreigners arrive within 10 minutes of each other."*

Asked to describe the other "foreigners," he replies, *"Different accent to you, but foreigners all the same."*

If the characters move cautiously, have them make Stealth rolls opposed by the Nazis' Notice. Densely grouped trees grant a + 2 bonus. There are four Nazis on guard near the well. All count as active sentries. Success allows the characters to get within 6" of the goons. A second roll is required to get within 5". A failure means the party is spotted at 12".

Once alerted to the characters' presence, the goons dive for cover behind the nearest trees and open fire. Trained soldiers, they use this cover during the firefight. Typically, this grants them Heavy Cover (–4), as they peek around the trunks to let rip with their SMGs.

The battlefield is 24" to a side. The goons begin in the middle, next to the well. The well fills a Small Burst Template. Two ropes dangle down the well. Every fourth square on a battlemat should be marked as containing a tree. These fill a 1" square and are impassable terrain.

Where the characters begin depends on how close they got before they were detected. However, they must be placed on the southern side of the tabletop. The hill slopes up from the south to north. The terrain is steep, heavily wooded, and slippery. All movement counts as difficult ground.

- **Holly Hollingberry:** See page 22.
- **Nazi Agents (1 per hero):** See page 23.

DOWN THE WELL

The Nazis down the well haven't heard the firefight, and for good reason—they're all dead!

The shaft descends down some thirty feet before ending in a small, domed, stone-lined chamber. A tunnel, the only other exit, heads north and slightly downward from here, the direction of the summit. Only the slow drip of water can be heard up the tunnel.

At the far end is a large chamber. Three Nazis, all decapitated, lie just inside the chamber. Inscribed on the lintel above the entrance are the words, *"A king lies here. Do what is right. Have courage in your convictions."*

Visible inside the chamber are thirteen wooden thrones with solid bases lined up against the far wall. The center one is grander than the others, and is carved with images of lions and swords. All are badly rotten after centuries of neglect. A Nazi lies slumped at the feet of one.

To enter safely, one must walk forward at a low bow, for blades slash from the walls as the threshold is crossed (jumping doesn't avoid the trap). The high blades first sweep across at head, shoulder, and chest height. A bowing character feels the lowest one a mere fraction of an inch above his back. He must make a Spirit roll to avoid panicking and dropping to his knees to avoid the attack.

A split second later, circular blades rise up to sever the hands and head of anyone crawling forward on their knees. Again, a bowed character gets a fright as he sees the blade coming up out of the ground toward his face. He must make another Spirit roll, this time to avoid standing up and being caught by the upper blades as they swing back across the passage.

Failing a Spirit roll causes 2d8 damage from a Wild card source. If a hero fails both, he takes two sets of damage.

The traps were set up to punish those who would arrogantly walk upright in the presence of a king or who would grovel before one, for one should reserve that respect for God, whose majesty is greater than all mortal rulers.

Inscribed in Latin on the seat of Arthur's throne are words which, when translated, read, *"The Perilous Seat shall judge those worthy."* If no one in the party speaks Latin, use Old English instead. Any English speaker can fathom the phrase after a little thought.

All of the thrones appear identical, save one—the one behind the dead Nazi. It has a series of slots in the seat. In order to progress further, a worthy hero must fully sit on the throne. The chosen party member must then make a Spirit roll. He suffers a modifier to his roll depending on his Hindrances, as shown below. All modifiers are cumulative. The GM should also apply penalties if the character has tortured captives, is jingoistic, constantly rude, and so on.

Mod	Hindrance
+2	Code of Honor, Heroic, honorable major Vow (such as poverty or chastity)
+1	Loyal, honorable minor Vow (as above)
–1	Arrogant, Doubting Thomas, Greedy (Minor), Mean, Stubborn, Vengeful (Minor)
–2	Bloodthirsty, Greedy (Major), Vengeful (Major)

A failure causes a number of sword blades to spring up through the slots, piercing the victim for 2d10 damage. With success, Arthur's throne and the stone on which it sits tip forward, revealing a small, metal box beneath.

The box is unlocked. Inside is a scroll, written in the Latin alphabet but with translation the characters recognize it as being in Old French. That being said, it's still gibberish to the heroes. However, they know Professor Jones can translate it.

TRANSLATIONS

If the characters try to contact Professor Jones, they are told he is in Wincanton (not far from Cadbury Castle) with Sir Percival. His lordship has left instructions at the British Museum for the characters, asking them to meet him at his home in Wincanton as soon as possible. Likewise, characters who have kept in touch with their patron learn the viscount is in Wincanton the next time they call.

SCENE 3: I SHALL BE KING!

Jeeves answers the door of Fanhard's Wincanton home and shows the heroes into the study. After a few minutes, Sir Percival joins them, along with Professor Jones.

"Excellent work, excellent work," he beams.

"What did you find? Are we close to completing our quest?"

Whether the characters hand over the scroll or not, Fanhard calls out for Jeeves. However, instead of Jeeves, a dozen men (among them Reginald and the other drunken nobles from the polo match) enter. All are armed with pistols, which are leveled at the characters. One has his pistol pointed at Professor Jones' head.

"Now, if you'll just hand over your weapons like good chaps." Fanhard's men level pistols at you. "And before you think about heroics, there are men outside the windows and in the hall as well." Right on cue, other figures emerge into view, all brandishing shotguns aimed in your direction.

Characters who haven't handed over the scroll may think they have a bargaining chip. They're mistaken.

"Are you really willing to watch a man be killed over a piece of paper?" Fanhard asks. The trigger man threatening Jones pulls back the hammer on his Webley. "Could you live with the knowledge your futile actions caused his death? Yes, futile actions. We could just shoot you and take the paper from you. Even if you destroy it, there will be other clues. At best you'll delay my plans a few years.

"Of course, there is another choice. Join me. Become knights of the new Round Table and serve the cause of righteousness against the darkness festering in Europe. You have the skills to be leaders of men."

Holding out further forces Fanhard to begin a slow countdown from three. When he reaches zero, Jones is executed in cold blood. The next round, the goons open fire on the heroes.

The heroes can try and bluff it out by claiming to support Fanhard. To prove their loyalty, he orders them to kill Holly. Any hero worth his salt is going to stoop that low.

This is one of those scenes where surrender isn't defeat—it's the way the character stay alive and don't suffer too many more wounds before the grand finale. Remind them, if necessary, that surrendering immediately earns them a benny. If the fight starts and they give up or are defeated, there's no bonus benny awarded.

- **Sir Percival Fanhard:** See page 21.
- **Fanhard's Knights (12):** See page 22. Each has a pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1).
- **Holly Hollingberry:** See page 22.
- **Lackeys (3 per hero):** Use Turkish thug stats (page 22), but only armed with shotguns.

THE END OF ARTHUR

However they are defeated (and victory is very unlikely against so many foes) the party is disarmed and dragged down to the cellar.

"I'm so glad you found the location of Excalibur before those damned Nazis. You didn't think I was in league with them, did you? Heaven forbid! No, England needs a strong ruler, but it needs an English ruler. My ancestry, coupled with my soon-to-be possession of Excalibur, gives me that right. Once the people see Excalibur, they'll depose George VI and welcome me to the throne.

"Now," he says, studying the scroll from Cadbury, "where is my prize? Ah, of course! How foolish of me! All these years wandering Glastonbury Abbey studying those graves, and the real Arthur lay within clear site! Ah, Richard, beloved ancestor, you were a devious sod!"

He turns to Reginald. "Have Jeeves prepare the car. We have to get to Saint Michael's Tower in Glastonbury immediately. As for you," he says, returning to face you, "I'm afraid I can't let you live. I have no doubt your sensibilities fail to see my divine appointment to serve England as king, and I certainly can't allow you to inform the current king of my plans.

"If you know your Arthurian legends, you'll at least face death understanding the irony of your situation. Otherwise, you'll just have to die in ignorance."

Fanhard then departs. As the last mook exits, he closes the door with a heavy slam and bolts it shut.

A few moments later, grilles slide open in the ceiling, releasing swarms of European adders. Individually, the adder, Britain's only venomous snake, isn't a particularly dangerous creature (just 14 recorded deaths in Britain since 1876). Like most snakes they don't go looking for trouble, but this is a pulp adventure, so they're a lot more vicious.

Characters who make a Common Knowledge (–2) or Knowledge (History) roll remember the legends regarding Arthur's final battle. According to the tale, the two armies were facing each other, the leaders near the center of the field discussing possible terms to avoid bloodshed. One knight saw an adder in the grass and drew his sword to strike it dead. On seeing the weapon pulled from its scabbard, the other army attacked, thinking it was an assassination attempt. The result was a bloodbath, leaving just seven survivors.

A new swarm joins the action at the start of each round. The only escape route requires bashing down the door. This requires a Strength roll at –2 (once the characters have escaped their bonds). Success earns a hero a single token and a raise two tokens. Once 6 tokens

have been gained, the door cracks open, allowing the characters to flee.

Once the characters escape, they discover their gear discarded in the study. A short run to the train station at Wincanton gets them aboard a train to Glastonbury.

- **Holly Hollingberry:** See page 22.
- **Adder Swarm:** See page 23.

SCENE 4: KILL THE KING

Have each character make a Knowledge (History) roll. British characters can use Common Knowledge instead, but unless their background indicates a West Country origin, the roll is at –2. With success, the hero knows the tower of Saint Michael in Glastonbury refers to the tower atop Glastonbury Tor, a tall hill on the outskirts of the town.

Failure means the characters have to make Streetwise rolls when they reach Glastonbury to learn the location. The delay is minimal, since every resident of Glastonbury knows the Tor. Glastonbury Tor steeply rises over 500 feet from the Somerset Levels, making it visible for many miles. In olden times, the Levels were boggy marsh, which left the Tor and its surrounds an island amid the dank waters. Even today, bad flooding can cut off Glastonbury (and similar locations above sea level) from the surrounding countryside.

Atop the Tor stands a single, roofless, stone tower, the only remaining part of a medieval church dedicated to Saint Michael. A powerful earthquake in 1275 toppled the first church. A second church, raised in the 14th century, was torn down in 1539. The tower is all that remains of that second structure. The last abbot of Glastonbury Abbey was hanged here by King Henry VIII that same year.

On entering the tower, the characters discover someone has removed one of the flagstones. Beneath is a vertical shaft with handholds cut into the rock. It descends some 100 feet into a cramped, low-ceilinged tunnel heading west.

The claustrophobic shaft finally ends. You emerge into a high-ceilinged, circular chamber supported by six pillars in the center. Around the edges are a dozen stone biers. Upon each rests a knight in plate armor, their swords stretching from chest to shin, their hands locked around the hilt.

At the far ends stands an armored knight, his body bent slightly forward so his hands can grasp the hilt of a sword embedded in a large stone.

Without warning, the knight straightens slightly, his hands still clutched to the hilt. "Ah, you survived." It isn't the voice of some ancient king, but that of Sir Percival! "Unfortunately, you are too late to stop me. Once I draw the sword, I shall be imbued with supernatural powers! You will all bow before me! Awaken, Knights of the Round Table! Awaken and destroy these invaders!" he screams.

As his voice echoes around the chamber, the knights on the biers stir!

The circular chamber measures 18" across. The dais fills a 2" square 1" from the back of the chamber opposite the entrance. Each bier on the lower level occupies part of a 1" square. These are spaced equally around the perimeter. 1" from the wall. Treat movement through a square containing a bier as difficult ground. Six pillars stretch from floor to ceiling in the center of the room. Each is 1" in diameter. These form the points of a hexagon around the edges of an open space the size of a Medium Burst Template.

On the first round, the "sleeping" knights must use an action to climb off the biers. Their swords are already drawn. Two automatically move adjacent to Fanhard, shielding him from attacks. If one of the bodyguards is slain, another disengages to fill his place.

Fanhard's first action is to draw the sword. This requires a Strength roll at –2. With success, read the following text aloud.

"Yes!" Fanhard cries jubilantly, holding a silvery long sword high above his head. "The power of Arthur is mine! Now I shall…" His voice trails away.

As you watch, the sword crumbles into flakes of rust. "No, no! What trickery is this?" he screams at the top of his voice "Where is the real sword? What have you done with it?"

Fanhard's next action is to draw his own long sword, and then charge into battle. Treat him as being under the influence of the Berserk Edge until the fight ends.

From this point on, whenever a player character (Wild Card or Extra) has a Spade suit for his action card, the specters of Arthur's knights come to his assistance. The heroes may not be British, but the Round Table wasn't about nationality, it was about justice, honor, and the courage to do what is right in the face of adversity. As such, the shades recognize fellow warriors for the forces of good. The value of the action card determines the power the ghosts invoke (see **Spectral Assistance** below).

Removing the lid from a stone sarcophagus requires a Strength roll. Inside lies a skeleton clad in corroded scale mail and chain armor, a rusted sword lying along its body. The sarcophagus upon the dais doesn't contain a corpse. Instead, all that lies within is a golden headband and a rotten leather scabbard. This is Arthur's fabled magical scabbard, but its magic didn't grant it invulnerability to the ravages of time. It has no supernatural powers in its current state.

If Fanhard and the knights are slain *before* he draws the sword (unlikely, but possible), a character can try

to wield Excalibur. It still crumbles, but that's due to its age.

- **Sir Percival Fanhard:** See page 21.
- **Fanhard's Knights (12):** See page 22.
- **Holly Hollingberry:** See page 22.

SPECTRAL ASSISTANCE

Most effects below mimic spells from the core rules. Regardless of their standard Duration, non-instant effect powers last just a single round. The benefits expire on the adventurer's next action card. The specters don't have any arcane skill—their powers automatically function with a success or a raise. Victims automatically fail any opposed rolls.

It is important to note that the ghostly shades are *never* clearly seen by the player characters. A shadow moving against the direction of other shadows, a flickering image in the corner of one's eye, or a wisp of smoke are the only visible signs of their existence. For instance, if a shade bestows *deflection* on a hero, the character might see a glint of steel block an attacker's sword. What he doesn't see is a ghostly knight parry the blow. *Stunned* foes may suddenly reel back, with the character hearing only a faint war cry from behind him.

Deuce: Attackers just ignore the character for a round, their minds having been momentarily clouded to his existence.
Three: *Stun* with a success (all adjacent foes are targeted)
Four: *Entangle* with a success (all adjacent foes are affected)
Five: *Fear* with a success (Spirit roll to resist; one adjacent foe is targeted)
Six: *Smite* with a success (+2 damage to melee attacks only)
Seven: *Armor* with a success (+2 Armor)
Eight: *Deflection* with a success (–2 to attackers' attack rolls)
Nine: *Stun* with a raise (all adjacent foes are targeted)
Ten: *Entangle* with a raise (all adjacent foes are affected)
Jack: *Fear* (Spirit roll to resist; all adjacent foes are targeted)
Queen: *Smite* with a raise (+4 damage to melee attacks only)
King: *Armor* with a raise (+4 Armor)
Ace: *Deflection* with a raise (–4 to attackers' attack rolls)

A FAREWELL TO ARMS

When the characters finally depart the chamber back along the tunnel, they hear groaning and creaking coming from behind. Just as several of the support beams collapse, the party catches a brief sight of a dozen ghostly figures in ancient armor. At their head is a man wearing a gold circlet on his brow. He dips his sword in tribute a split second before tons of rubble fill the chamber.

Were the corpses actually King Arthur's knights, or were they merely skeletons from the right era? Was the rusty long sword really Excalibur, or does it lie hidden elsewhere, perhaps moved by tomb robbers since Richard's day? Were there really ghostly knights, or did the characters suffer a hallucination? Who knows!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

SIR PERCIVAL FANHARD

Sir Percival, who holds the title Viscount Wincanton, can trace his ancestry back to King Richard I of England (the Lionheart). Raised on tales of chivalry and honor, and schooled in the belief that the upper classes are inherently superior and destined to rule, Fanhard has become convinced his ancestry stretches back to King Arthur.

Fanhard has used his extensive resources and contacts around the globe to search for Excalibur, Arthur's sword. With this in his hand, he believes he can rise to power, overthrow the king (George VI), and rule the flagging British Empire. Of course, in his mind he, and only he, can make Great Britain truly great again. His plans involve the abolition of Parliament and the instigation of rule through a Round Table of his most trusted men (with him as the supreme power, naturally).

GM's should note the only scene in which he uses his gear is the finale. Stats in square brackets are used if the noble goes berserk in the final scene.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8 [d8+2)] Vigor d8
Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d10 [d10+2], Intimidation d10, Knowledge (History) d10, Notice d8, Riding d10, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Streetwise d10, Taunt d8
Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7 [5]; **Toughness:** 9 (3) [11 (3)]
Hindrances: Arrogant, Delusional (Major), Stubborn
Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command, Improved Frenzy, Level Headed, Noble, Sweep
Gear: Plate corselet, arms, legs (+3), full helm (+3), long sword (Str+d8)

STAVROS "THE BULL" PAPADOPOULOS

A former Turkish wrestling champion and currently an antiques dealer of dubious character, Stavros is well-known in Istanbul to both criminal gangs and the authorities. He's gained a lot of weight since he quit wrestling, but he's still as strong as his nickname suggests.

Stavros' code of honor is a simple one—take folks' money, but never get personally involved in their problems unless the cause is a damn good one or they are close friends. Stavros is a Henchman.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d10,

Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Antiques) d10, Knowledge (History) d8, Persuasion d6, Notice d8, Streetwise d8
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7
Hindrances: Code of Honor, Obese
Edges: Block, Connections (lots), Scholar (Antiques & History)
Gear: Small pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6–1) when clothed
Special Abilities:
* **Grappler:** +2 to make and maintain grapples.

TURKISH MASSEURS

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Greedy (Minor)
Edges: Combat Reflexes
Gear: —
Special Abilities:
* **Grappler:** +2 to make and maintain grapples. Damage from a grapple *can* Ace.

TURKISH THUG

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Boating d8, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Greedy (Minor)
Edges: Combat Reflexes
Gear: Knife (Str+d4), pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1), shotgun (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 1–3d6, +2 Shooting), *or* Tommy Gun (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, ROF 3, AP 1)

HOLLY HOLLINGBERRY

Holly's mother was a well-regarded medium, able to channel the spirits of the dead. She was also talented in the fields of astrology, palmistry, and divining. Her daughter is also a psychic. At least, that's what Holly tells people.

In truth her "gift" is very limited, and often causes more harm than good, though her intentions are never malicious. Her "spirit voices" have recently told her about a quest for a great reassure, and have led her to the heroes.

Play her as slightly dizzy, unbelievably clumsy, and prone to distractions. She tends to quote the obvious, but always does so through her "powers." For instance, if she is present when the characters reach Alfred's Tower, she says, *"A great man once stood here. His psychic aura left a powerful shadow."* When they get into the crypt beneath Cadbury Castle, say something like, *"Men have died here! The spirits say to be careful."* The fact there are a trio of dead Nazis right in front of the party makes this patently obvious.

Special Notes: Holly's Block and Dodge Edges aren't overt combat abilities. They represent her innate psychic talent to avoid attacks and her clumsiness, which carries her out of harm's way at opportune moments (for example, crouching to gather up a toppled vase just as a knife is thrown). Her Attractive Edge remains hidden until she adopts the classic film pose of removing her glasses and shaking her hair loose. She does not suffer Brainburn on a roll of 1 on her Psionics die.

Holly is a Henchman, but has two bennies through her Great Luck Edge.
Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigor d6
Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d4, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Persuasion d6, Psionics d4, Riding d6, Streetwise d8
Charisma: 0 (+2); **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Bad Eyes (Minor), Delusional (Minor; things she's psychic)
Edges: Arcane Background (Psionics), Attractive, Great Luck, Improved Block, Improved Dodge, Strong Willed
Gear: Umbrella (Str+d4)
Special Abilities:
* **Clumsy:** If Holly rolls a 1 on an Agility or Agility-linked skill roll, she accidentally bumps into an adjacent character, gets her umbrella tangled in his legs, or otherwise causes a mishap. Her "victim," friend or foe, suffers some sort of setback determined by the GM. Typically this should cost the victim an action. For instance, she may accidentally bump into a hero preparing to fire. When he acts, he suffers a multi action penalty (even if he takes a single action), a result of Holly knocking his firearm aside. If there are multiple possible targets, determine the victim randomly.
* **Powers:** Holly's only standard power is *detect arcana* (no *conceal*). This is how she reads auras. She doesn't have any Power Points—she can use it at will. She also has very limited clairvoyance. At the start of each combat round, before cards are dealt, the character with whom she shares an action card must decide whether to take her psychic advice ("He's going to shoot you!") or ignore it. If he takes it, make a Psionics roll as a free action. Otherwise, don't bother rolling.
  With success, the hero is dealt an extra action card and acts on the best. On a roll of 1, the character draws an additional card but acts on the *worst* (erroneous information). This applies even if the adventurer has Level Headed.

FANHARD'S KNIGHT

Totally loyal to their new "king," each knight has been promised a position of power in Fanhard's "New England." All are wealthy gentry or minor nobles. *GM's should note the only scene in which they carry the listed gear is the finale.*
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Riding d8
Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (3)
Hindrances: Greedy (Major), Loyal (to Fanhard)
Edges: Frenzy, Noble, Sweep
Gear: Plate corselet, arms, legs (+3), full helm (+3), long sword (Str+d8)
Special Abilities:

* **Fanatic:** All attacks against Fanhard automatically hit an adjacent knight instead, as they throw themselves in front of blows and bullets.

FOXHOUNDS

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d10
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4
Special Abilities

* **Bite:** Str+d4.
* **Fleet Footed:** Dogs roll a d10 when running instead of a d6.
* **Go for the Throat:** Dogs instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's most weakly-armored location.
* **Size -1:** Dogs are relatively small creatures.

NAZI AGENTS

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6
Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Loyal, Mean
Edges: Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Rock and Roll
Gear: SMG (MP-35) (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, ROF 3, AP 1)



BULL

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6
Pace: 7; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10
Special Abilities

* **Gore:** Bulls charge maneuver to gore their opponents with their long horns. If they can move at least 6" before attacking, they add +4 to their damage total.
* **Horns:** Str+d6.
* **Size +2:** Bulls are large creatures.

ADDER SWARM

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10
Skills: Notice d6
Pace: 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7
Special Abilities:

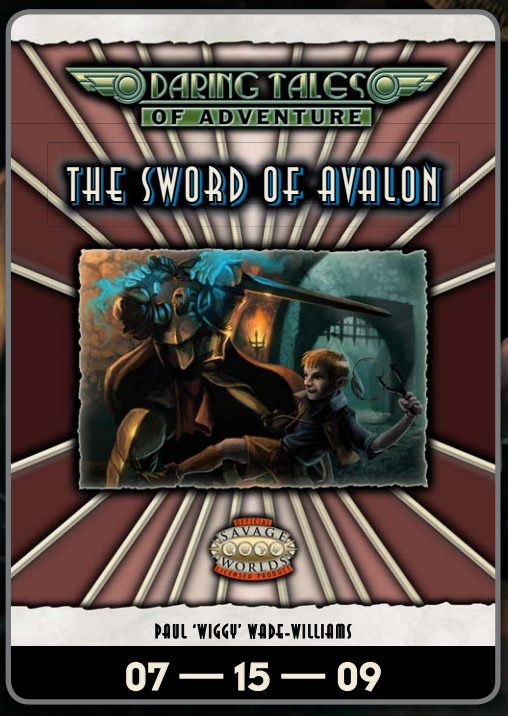
* **Bite:** The swarm automatically hits for 2d4 damage to everyone within a Medium Burst Template. Anyone Shaken or wounded must make a Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue. This can lead to Incapacitation, but never Death. Fatigue recovers at the start of the next scene.
* **Swarm:** Parry +2. Because the swarm is composed of several small snakes, cutting, piercing, and energy weapons do no real damage. Area-effect weapons work normally. Stomping does Str damage each round.

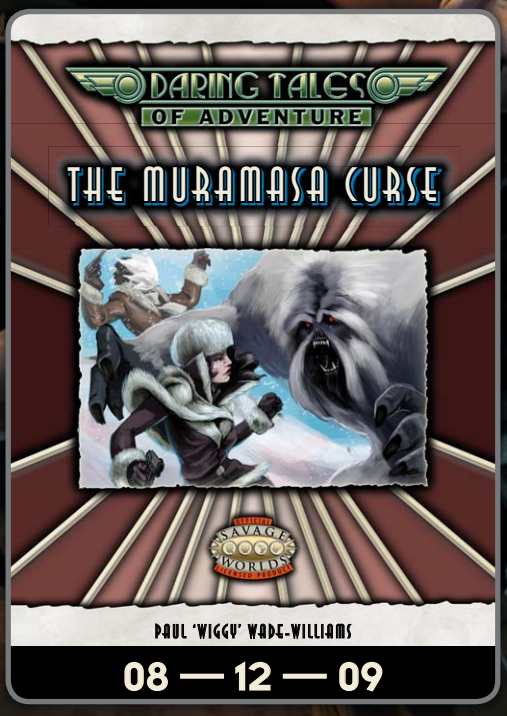
THE END IS NIGH!

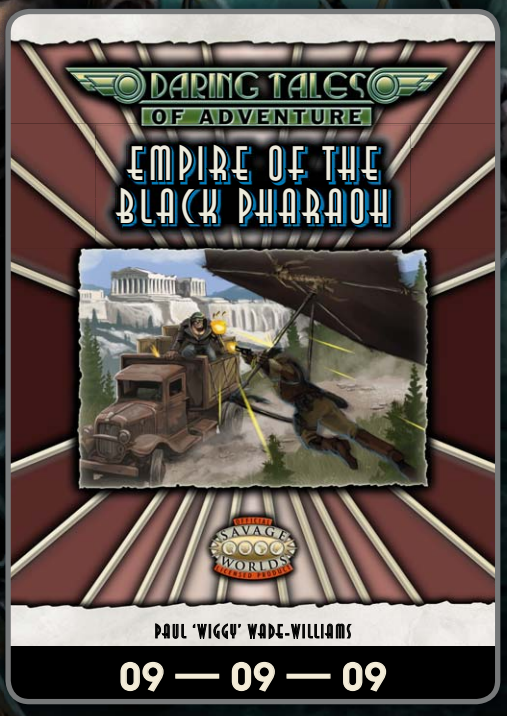
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IT'S TIME FOR HIGH TEA & HIJINKS AS THE HEROES VISIT ENGLAND!

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Whoever wields Excalibur, so the legends say, will be the rightful King of England. But what if it falls into the wrong hands!

Our heroes' quest takes them first from trapped Crusader ruins to see their old friend Stavros in Istanbul. From there they have chance to walk beneath the academic spires of Oxford University, peruse the wondrous galleries of the British Museum, and even take part in fox hunting through the English countryside. Finally, the heroes must explore four (real world) sites connected to the legend of King Arthur.

The heroes are on a desperate quest to retrieve the relic before Nazis, but are they the only villains seeking the *Sword of Kings?*

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THE MURAMASA CURSE



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PAUL 'WIGGY' WADE-WILLIAMS

DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

15

THE MURAMASA CURSE

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THE MURAMASA CURSE

Sengo Muramasa was a Japanese swordsmith who lived in Japan during the 16th century. Although a master of his craft, Muramasa was unhinged and possessed of a violent temperament. Some of that insanity found its way into the blades he forged. While deadly weapons of near-unparalleled craftsmanship, they developed a lust for blood so strong it drove many wielders to commit sepukku (ritual suicide) to sate the weapon's voracious appetite. In 1603, shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu banned all samurai from wearing swords forged by Muramasa.

One such sword, "Winter Mountain," belonged to a samurai of the Oshiro family. He took part in the second ill-fated invasion of Korea in 1597. The samurai was slain in battle and his sword taken as a trophy by the victorious Koreans. Over the centuries it was moved from location to location, no owner being able to wield the blade without falling victim to its deadly curse. At some point in the early 18th century the blade arrived in China.

Two centuries later, General Oshiro Takeo, a descendant of the samurai who fell in Korea, was posted to Manchuria. A region famed for its abundant coal and iron reserves, as well as fertile farmland, Manchuria fell to the Japanese in 1932. Renamed Manchukuo, it is currently governed by a puppet emperor, Datong, answerable to the Japanese government.

During the pillaging of a Buddhist temple, General Oshiro came across documents which mentioned Winter Mountain. At first, the general dreamed only of restoring his family's honor by reclaiming the blade, but things in Japan were taking a turn for the worst politically.

Japan had begun steps toward a democratic government, but the Great Depression, which respected no borders and was not halted by the vast Pacific, caused massive economic turmoil. Militarism was on the rise, and some senior officers, whose samurai families had been stripped of power during the Meiji Restoration of the 1860s, whispered of recreating the samurai class.

Oshiro was privy to such conspiratorial discussions before he left for Manchukuo. After learning of the continued existence of Winter Mountain, his mind, perhaps already affected by the Muramasa curse, wandered into darker territory. Yes, Japan should rebuild the samurai class, but why stop there? Why not remove the Prime Minister and replace it with a military Shogunate? (Not even Oshiro is insane enough to plot the death of the Emperor, who is regarded as a living god.) And so the seeds were laid in fertile ground.

Since 1934, Oshiro has roamed deeper into China, hunting down clues to the location of Winter Mountain. Scholarly investigation has given way to brutal interrogation and murder as the general's mind spirals steadily further into the black pit of total insanity.

But Oshiro is not the only one who knows about Winter Mountain. Emperor Hirohito, who backed the invasion of Manchuria because it stymied Russian advances in the region, has many spies and informants at his disposal. He is wise to many of the threats which bubble and seethe beneath Japan's polite and orderly surface.

While he does not know of Oshiro's plan, he fully comprehends that a Muramasa blade in the wrong hands could spell disaster for Japan. Perhaps it would not be used against him directly, but such a weapon could inspire a military commander to lead Japan on a disastrous crusade into Asia or against Soviet Russia before it was ready. To ensure the cursed blade can never be wielded, the Emperor has unleashed his most deadly servants, ninja, to hunt down the last remaining Muramasa blade.

As our adventure begins, both Oshiro and the ninja are heading for Shanghai in search of a very important clue. The ninja plan to use their standard tactics of subterfuge and surprise to acquire what they seek. General Oshiro plans a far more overt move—he has masterminded a full-blown invasion of the city!

Note: Japanese does not distinguish between singular and plural. This adventure uses the same grammatical structure. Thus, "ninja" may refer to a lone assassin or an entire group. Determining plurality is achieved through the context.

THE CHARACTERS

This Savage Adventure contains a pulp tale based around the exploits of four pre-generated characters. The full character sheets are available for free at **www.tripleacegames.com**.

The heroes have all their leveling opportunities from Seasoned (at which they begin) to Legendary mapped out in advance. Each published adventure in this line earns the heroes a fixed 5 Experience Points, guaranteeing them an advance every mission. All the players need do is tick the appropriate box and start making use of the new upgrade.

Characters: 95 XP.

The GM also needs 20 marker stones(with five of a different color) and the pulp setting rules from the TAG website.

ACT 1: THE QUEST BEGINS

The heroes have been hired by the Shanghai Museum to recover Chinese artifacts from a tomb close to the border with the Japanese puppet-state of Manchukuo to prevent the invaders from looting China's heritage.

SCENE 1: THE DRAGON AWAKENS

With the former Chinese province of Manchuria in Japanese hands, the Chinese government has taken to emptying tombs and temples near the border in order of safeguard the country's cultural heritage. Thanks to your world-renowned work with the Boston Museum, you've been hired to clear a subterranean, hillside tomb belonging to a 17th century prince and return any artifacts to Shanghai.

After several weeks of exploration, the seaplane is loaded with a decent haul, but now you're after the inner sanctum! Navigating the labyrinth of passages and avoiding the fiendish traps, you finally reach the core, a large hall supported by five columns. Each column is engraved with a glyph representing each of the five Chinese elements.

On the far side of the chamber is a coiled stone dragon. In its open maw sits a jade disc, about two inches in diameter.

The disc is inscribed with Chinese pictograms, which read, *"Winter Mountain. Taken from Oshiro, never to taste blood again."*

As soon as the jade talisman is removed from the dragon's mouth, its jaws snap shut and its eyelids withdraw to reveal painted eyeballs. A heavy, metal portcullis clangs shut, blocking the only escape route. Check for Surprise.

The dragon isn't just a statue—it's a magically animated simulacrum, placed here to prevent tomb robbers from looting the treasure. The creature's serpentine body is impervious to all weapons. Its only vulnerable spot is the inside of its mouth, which isn't armored. Don't tell the characters this, though. They'll have to learn how to harm the beast through trial and error. Proceed to Scene 2 the *instant* the dragon is Incapacitated.

The central tomb measures 15" by 15". A single exit, currently blocked, lies in the southern wall. Lifting the portcullis requires a Strength roll at –4, but may be tried as a Cooperative roll. It leads to another chamber similar in size to the current one, but without any columns.

Five stone columns, each 1" wide, support the ceiling. These form the points of a pentagon in the center of the room around a circle the size of a large Burst Template. Each column is marked with a glyph representing one of the five Chinese elements—metal, wood, water, fire, and earth. The GM must determine in advance which column bears which marking. Hiding behind one provides Heavy Cover from the stone dragon's breath.

The columns are trapped, however, and actuate at the same time the statue animates. Whenever a *living* character draws a deuce as his first action card in a round, one of the glyphs is triggered. Have the player roll a d10 and consult the table below to see which glyph glows. Duplicate rolls require affected heroes to make a second roll to avoid the effects.

Each effect fills a Medium Burst Template centered on the appropriate column. In all cases, characters within the template must make the appropriate Trait roll as a free action or suffer the effects. Heroes who enter the template after it is placed must also roll to avoid the effect. The traps are magical, and heroes with Arcane Resistance gain +2 to their rolls.

Events occur at the start of the round, before actions begin, and last until the end of the round. The dragon is immune to all effects.

d10	Element	Effect
1–2	Metal	The stone magnetizes for the round. All affected characters who fail a Vigor (–2) roll have their weapons, and any other metallic objects, ripped from their hands, belts and packs. The objects then adhere to the column. Success allows the hero to maintain his grip and/or secure any affected items, but he suffers a –1 to attack rolls so long as he remains within the template. On his turn, a hero may, if adjacent to the column, try to pull the objects free. This requires a Strength roll as an action.
3–4	Wood	A failed Smarts (–2) roll means the victim suffers hallucinations and confusing mental images. He is Shaken. On his turn, he may try to remove this condition with a Smarts (not Spirit) roll as an action.
5–6	Water	On a failed Spirit (–2), the adventurer's movements become slow and languid, as if he is moving through water. He suffers a multi

action penalty to all rolls this round and treats movement as if through difficult ground.

7–8 Fire Jets of fire shoot out from the column. All heroes within the template who fail an Agility (–2) roll suffer 2d10 damage (from an Extra) and have a chance of catching fire.

9–10 Earth The stone flows over the character's feet, pinning him in place. A failed Strength (–2) roll means the character cannot move his feet. Any Agility rolls, such as trying to perform a Trick or avoiding the dragon's breath, suffer an additional –2 penalty while he is held fast. On his turn, he may try to break free by making a Strength roll as an action.

(M) Stone Dragon: See page 19.

SCENE 2: BAD ACID

Immediately after the dragon is Incapacitated it crumbles to dust. Its "stomach" contents, a large quantity of salt crystals, begin reacting violently with the air. A huge, billowing cloud of acrid, yellow gas quickly begins to fill the room. Everything it touches starts hissing and dissolving!

Deal action cards to the heroes.

In order to escape the chamber, the characters must first open the portcullis (if they haven't done so already). As noted above, this requires a Strength roll at –4, but can be attempted as a Cooperative roll with adjacent allies. If the characters haven't escaped by the end of the second round, they each suffer 2d10 damage (from an Extra). However, the portcullis rots away by that time, leaving the passageway open.

Once the portcullis is removed, the escape uses a variant of the Chase rules. Place ten markers on the tabletop to represent the route out of the tomb. Each round, the heroes make an Agility roll to move along the markers. When they pass beyond the final one, they escape. Characters can Push as normal for extra distance.

Once a hero reaches the fourth marker from the end, he sees a huge stone block sliding down over the tomb entrance! It seals the characters inside the tunnel, and guarantees a horrible death after four more rounds.

The gas has an Agility die of d10, but doesn't roll to move along the track until the third round begins. If the characters succeed in opening the portcullis quickly, they can secure a good lead. The cloud can't Push, either. Success moves the gas one marker, and a raise two markers. Use a token to represent the cloud.

If the cloud ends up on the same marker as a hero or moves ahead of him, the explorer suffers 2d10 damage (from an Extra) at the *end* of the current round. This rule exists to make the action cinematic—not reduce the heroes to a sizzling mass of dissolved flesh. Any character who falls unconscious while within the gas is subject to a Finishing Move at the end of the next round unless he is dragged clear. The characters are Legendary—the risks are far greater now.

Example: *The party manages to lift the portcullis on the first round. They then begin running! Brent ends the second round on the first marker (having rolled a success on his Agility die). Next round, the third since the scene began, the cloud enters play. Brent wins the initiative but fails his Agility roll, gaining no distance. The gas rolls a 5, and moves one position, bringing it level with Brent. He suffers 2d10 damage when the round ends.*

Next round, the gas draws a higher action card but rolls a failure. Brent scores a raise! He rushes ahead of the yellow plume, emerging from the stinking cloud with his clothes reduced to rags. Since he's ahead of the acid at the end of the round, he takes no damage.

SCENE 3: GOT A CRUSH ON YOU

Your lungs bursting from the exertion, you leap clear of the tomb entrance. Behind you, you hear the stone block slam into place. Sighs of relief are quickly cut short, for looking up you see the legs of a dozen or more men. Straining to look higher, you see the men are Japanese soldiers. Each has a rifle pointed at you!

An officer, a senior one judging by his uniform, steps forward. "I am General Oshiro Takeo." The man's English is flawless. "Hand over the jade talisman, gaijin scum, or you will be executed on the spot!" He looks deadly serious.

Far below, at the bottom of the steep hill into which the tomb was built, you can see your seaplane, parked on the shore of the lake. A truck full of Japanese soldiers is approaching. Without that plane, you're going to be trapped in the Chinese hinterlands!

Oshiro isn't interested in attempts at opening a dialogue, nor does he appreciate attempts to bluff him. While he'd rather not have to execute the foreigners, he's quite prepared to do so if pushed. He figures he can blame the heroes' deaths on Chinese bandits.

Hopefully after completing previous missions, the characters are wise to the fact that surrender may be the smartest option. However, they are free to start a fight. Group mentality and the number of wounds they have suffered are likely to be the deciding factors. The terrain is steep and counts as difficult ground. Oshiro, like any villain introduced early, cannot die here. The Recurring Villains rule ensures his survival. If he escapes, his last act is to cause an avalanche (see below).

If the adventurers prevaricate, Oshiro orders his men to shoot one hero. Pick one at random and make a single Shooting roll. Further refusals to cooperate are met with a volley of fire from the entire squad, spread equally among the group. The Japanese continue firing until the characters surrender the talisman.

Once he has the jade token, Oshiro holds it up high.

His men drop to their knees, their heads touching the ground.

"At last!" Oshiro shouts. "Winter Mountain shall soon be in the hands of its rightful master, and a new era of samurai rule will begin!"

The soldiers and Oshiro are paying absolutely no attention to the characters. This is their chance to escape. If they haven't yet realized this, Oshiro turns back to them and tells them they are free to leave, but should do so quickly before he changes his mind.

Oshiro has no intention of actually letting the characters go. While he could have had them shot and blamed bandits, he prefers a more subtle approach. Thinking quickly, he intends to have them killed in an "unfortunate accident."

- **General Oshiro:** See page 18.
- **Japanese Officers (2):** See page 20.
- **Japanese Soldiers (3 per hero):** See page 20.

AVALANCHE!

Whether the adventurers make a break for it of their own accord, make their way down the hill on Oshiro's orders, or defeat Oshiro in a fight, they hear the sound of an exploding grenade a few moments later. Glancing back, they see that the Japanese have destroyed the wooden supports holding back a massive pile of boulders and debris excavated from the tomb entrance. It begins tumbling down the mountainside, gaining speed all the time.

Run the scene as a Chase using our alternate Obstacles rules. Instead of being open-ended, place ten markers on the tabletop, just like the scene above. Each Range Increment equates to 10". Because the characters have a lower base Range Increment (1"), their Agility rolls suffer a –2 penalty. Flying characters have –2 to their Piloting roll if they activate their power with 3 Power Points, and –1 if they use six Power Points.

The characters have one round of movement (which requires an Agility roll). The stones draw a card and begin moving on the second round.

The avalanche has an Agility die of d10, but can't Push. Success moves the rubble one marker, and a raise two markers. Use a token to represent the debris. If the rubble ends up on the same marker as a hero or moves ahead of him, the explorer suffers 2d10 damage (from an Extra) at the *end* of the current round.

At the start of each round thereafter, the character must make an Agility roll. With success, he receives a card as normal. A failure results in him being carried forward one Range Increment by the avalanche and suffering 2d10 damage. Incapacitated characters are automatically carried forward with the stones. Keep rolling for damage—heroes still use the Incapacitation Table, albeit for nonlethal wounds, and a character could end up unconscious for quite a few hours.

Example: *Jimmy gets caught by the avalanche and suffers 2d10 damage. The next round, he makes his Agility roll and draws a higher card than the avalanche. He scrabbles clear and regains his footing! However, his roll for movement is a failure, whereas the avalanche rolls a raise! Jimmy is again swept up in the avalanche at the end of the round. He moves forward two markers along with the boulders and takes another 2d10 damage.*

OBSTACLES

Flying characters are unaffected by all the events except for those resulting from a Jack. When they draw a Club of any other value, they are buffeted by strong winds. The same penalty as the card value applies. A failure works as normal.

If the character wants to fly above the avalanche (a non-pulp thing to do), roll three d6 each round. Any die that comes up 1 means the character has been shot by Japanese soldiers and suffers 2d8 damage.

Deuce (–4) Chasm: A large crack in the ground blocks the hero's route. He can try to jump it or go around. The avalanche quickly fills the chasm and rubble rolls over the top. It automatically drops back one Range Increment.

If he tries to jump, he uses Strength instead of Agility this round. However, he can advance no farther than one marker. A failed roll leaves the character clinging by his fingertips from the far edge. Each round he must make a Strength roll as an action to haul himself free. Until he does so, he cannot make Agility rolls to gain distance.

Running requires an Agility roll at –4. Any failure means the character was forced to take a long detour. He drops back one Range Increment.

Three to Seven (–2) Steep Hill: The character is running down a particularly steep slope. The avalanche ignores this card and rolls as normal.

If the Agility roll succeeds, he moves an additional Range Increment. This stacks with Push, but so does the penalty. Any failure means he has lost his footing and fallen. Next round he suffers a –2 Agility roll penalty as he tries to regain his footing.

Eight to Ten (–2) Loose Stones: The character is running over loose stones, which slip and slide beneath his feet. The avalanche ignores this card and rolls as normal.

A failed Agility roll causes the hero to fall. Next round he suffers a –2 Agility roll penalty as he tries to regain his footing.

Jack (–2) Trees: The character runs into a small clump of trees. Any failure results in his slamming into a tree. He is Shaken. The avalanche suffers no ill effects for failing its roll beyond making no movement (as the trees temporarily slow its advance before snapping).

Queen (–2) Sudden Drop: The path the hero chose leads him to a vertical drop of several hundred feet, forcing him to quickly locate an alternate route. Any failure simply results in no increase in distance due to the delay.

If the avalanche draws this card, part of it clatters over the precipice. From here on, the damage it inflicts is reduced one die type (2d10 becomes 2d8, 2d8 reduces to 2d6, and so on), to a minimum of d4.

King (–1) Boulders: The adventurer must dodge and weave between boulders. Any failure results in his slamming into a rock. He is Shaken.

If the avalanche draws this card, it knocks the boulders forward. From here on, the damage it inflicts is increased one die type or by +2 each step above 2d12 (2d10 becomes 2d12, 2d12 increases to 2d12+2, and so on). There is no maximum.

Ace (0) Stampede: A flock of goats, panicked by the avalanche, runs across the character's path. A failed roll causes him to fall over a goat. Next round he suffers a –2 Agility roll penalty as he tries to regain his feet. The avalanche ignores this card as it pummels the goats and sweeps them forward.

SCENE 4: TAKE TO THE SKIES

On moving beyond the 10th marker, the characters reach the lakeshore at the bottom of the hill. The avalanche splashes noisily and harmlessly into the water,but the characters aren't safe yet! A squad of Japanese soldiers has arrived on the scene. Their orders were initially to seize the seaplane the party used to reach the tomb, but now they are intent on gunning down the escapees.

The battlefield measures 24" long and 12" wide. This marks the extent of the shore. The seaplane is moored 10" out on the water on the opposite end from where the characters enter. Movement through the water is difficult ground. Large boulders and trees (each 1" wide) dot the landscape. The Japanese begin at the opposite end of the battlefield to the characters.

- **Japanese Officer (1):** See page 20.
- **Japanese Soldiers (2 + 1 per hero):** See page 20.

ACT 2: SHANGHAI

The characters' orders were to return any artifacts to the Shanghai Museum. Although they have (probably) lost the jade talisman, they still have a decent collection of other pieces to hand over. Mister Chang, their contact, gratefully accepts the finds on behalf of the Museum, and then invites the heroes to a gala dinner that evening in the Museum to mark the recovery of the artifacts.

If the name "Winter Mountain" is mentioned, Chang blanches. He promises to tell the characters more at dinner. No amount of cajoling can convince him to speak of the matter until then. He then quickly makes excuses and departs.

No one in Shanghai can do much about the presence of the Japanese soldiers, nor their attempts to kill the party, though diplomatic complaints are sent to Tokyo. A successful Streetwise roll reveals that General Oshiro is widely regarded as a brutal butcher. He has been responsible for several massacres in recent months.

GM Note: Scenes 2 through 4 form one continuous chase, though in three different styles. In the first, the heroes are chasing ninja over the rooftops. The second sees them trying to outrun Japanese bombs either on foot or in a car. Finally, they must take to the air to escape the city. Keep the pace relentless!

SCENE 1: THE MEN IN BLACK

The gala dinner is attended by government officials and wealthy citizens of Shanghai. It's an extremely formal event, so women are required to don dresses and men to wear tuxedoes. This makes the covert carrying of firearms difficult, not to mention downright rude. Any hero trying to smuggle in a weapon of pistol size or smaller must make a Stealth roll at –2. Larger weapons are automatically detected. Confiscated gear is placed in the foyer.

The central gallery has been laid out with long dining tables. At the far end are the recovered pieces. Numerous displays of ancient armor and weapons adorn the walls.

The dinner begins with a series of speeches thanking the characters for their assistance and praising their efforts. Negative comments about the Japanese are duly inserted, but kept low key to avoid antagonizing their neighbors. As the actual meal begins, Chang, who is seated nearby, tells the characters what he knows.

"Winter Mountain," Chang whispers conspiratorially, "is the name of a katana, a Japanese sword. It was forged by the master weaponsmith Muramasa. Legends say he was crazy, and that his personality was folded into every blade he made. According to ancient records, Winter Mountain belonged to a samurai who took part in the invasion of Korea in the 16th century. He was killed and his blade taken as a trophy.

"But no one could wield it without being compelled to commit terrible bloodshed. It moved from owner to owner, before eventually ending up somewhere in China. No one knows where it is located. Some say it is the last Muramasa blade in existence. A find from Tibet may be of interest to you. Please wait one moment."

Chang quickly scurries off to the far end of the galley, returning a few minutes later with a long, flat case. "This case was handed in by a Buddhist monk about a century ago. Notice the markings on it are Japanese kanji."

The case is marked with the same symbols as the jade talisman. The case is empty, but before the characters get the chance to discover this, the skylights above their head smash inward, showering them in glass. Rapidly

abseiling down are a number of figures clad entirely in black.

These are the Emperor's ninja, sent to recover the case, which they believe contains Winter Mountain. As yet, the heroes know nothing about the Emperor's involvement. All they know is that a Japanese officer wants Winter Mountain and the ninja are Japanese. That being said, they'll think Oshiro hired the ninja.

Deal action cards!

The gallery is 18" long and 8" wide. Two rows of tables, each 1" wide and spaced 3" apart, line the center of the gallery. Movement through these is treated as difficult ground. The ninja begin 2" from the characters.

The ninja are after the case. A ninja adjacent to the case can grab it as a free action. He then immediately rushes back to the ropes, drops a smoke grenade, and begins climbing at a rate of 2" per round (aided by ninja on the roof who haul him up). The roof is 4" above the ceiling. Once he escapes, the other ninja try to flee the same way, using their grenades to cover their escape. Ideally, the master ninja should grab the case. He can then use the Recurring Villains rule to ensure he gets away.

The GM should ensure the case *is* stolen. It's likely the adventurers won't pay much attention to it once the fight begins. If one picks it up, grabbing it off them is treated as a Disarm maneuver. Once the ninja flee with the case, Chang, who was hiding under the table, cries out, *"After them! They must not find the sword!"*

Note that while it is tempting to have the ninja throw their grenades and grab the case early in the fight, the GM should refrain from this course of action. This scene is a great chance to evoke some cinematic flavor, with the characters battling fearsome ninja, running across tables, spinning martial arts weapons above their heads, and so on.

Whether armed or not, the characters have access to a variety of weapons, as detailed below. In all cases, picking up a weapon requires a character to be adjacent to the item and use an action (unless he has Quick Draw).

* The dining tables are covered in glasses, bottles, and fine china. These breakable objects inflict Str+d4 damage, can be thrown 3/6/12, and shatter after a single use. Cutlery inflicts Strength damage, but is more resilient. Grabbing a carving knife allows a hero to cause Str+d4 damage.

More lethal weapons can be gained by moving adjacent to any wall and spending an action to rip one from its mounting. Quick Draw is of no use here. Unless a character is looking for a particular weapon, roll a d6 to see what is to hand.

d6	Weapon
1	**Bisento:** A Chinese halberd comprising a curved blade attached to a long, wooden handle (Str+d8, Reach 1, 2 hands)
2	**Butterfly Sword:** A sturdy short sword with a cross guard to help parry blows and hook an enemy's weapon (Str+d6, +1 Parry, +2 to Disarm maneuvers)
3	**Qiang:** A spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands)
4	**Dao:** A Chinese saber (Str+d6)
5	**Sanjiegun:** A three-section staff. Each wooden section is linked by a short length of chain. Its flexibility allows it to circumvent shields and other blocks when used two-handed. The weapon can be used one-handed (Str+d4) or two-handed (+1 Fighting, Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1)
6	**Maul:** A long wooden shaft topped with a large iron ball (Str+d8, Parry –1, 2 hands)



Tablecloths, plates of food, glasses of wine, rugs and tapestries pulled from the walls can all be used in Tricks. Anything else which could reasonably be found in a museum or at a banquet should also be present if a hero requests it.

Ninja Master: See page 19.

Ninja (2 per hero): See page 19.

SCENE 2: RACE ACROSS THE ROOFTOPS

Hopefully the characters give chase to the ninja. A ladder outside the gallery leads to the roof. Once there, the adventurers spy the ninja leaping across the rooftops of Shanghai.

This scene is run as a Chase, using our alternate Obstacles *and* Event Stages rules. The ninja begin 3 Range Increments ahead if the characters were quick to give chase. Delaying to grab gear adds +1 Range Increment. Waiting for Chang to beg the characters to give chase, which he does if they ignore his first request, adds another +1 Range Increment. Each Range Increment equates to 5".

Divide the ninja into pairs for action card purposes.

The ninja are armed with grenades and throwing stars. Those nearest their pursuers use these weapons to slow down the heroes. Remember to apply a multi action penalty to Throwing rolls.

It doesn't matter whether the ninja escape or are captured. They are resistant to interrogation and carry no identification. All they have of interest is the sword case, and it is irrelevant to the plot. The characters do have the next clue regarding where they need to visit—Tibet. Of course, they don't know the case is empty when the chase begins.

Once the ninja escape or are caught, give the players just one minute of *real* time to catch their breath or perform any actions before launching into Scene 3. This is enough time for any stragglers to rejoin their comrades.

Ninja Master: See page 19.

Ninja: See page 19. There are four ninja on the roof, plus as many others as fled the fight in the museum.

EVENT STAGES

Unlike a regular Chase, this one has fixed encounters along the route as the characters run across Shanghai's rooftops. Space 20 markers in a line along the table to present the rooftops. Place a different color marker for the 4th, 8th, 12th, 16th, and 20th positions. These are the Event Stages. If the chase progresses beyond the 20th marker, just keep adding colored stones in every fourth position.

Move each participant's playing piece along the track each time it moves one or more Range Increments. This way it is very easy to see where an individual is in relation to the events.

When a hero reaches a particular Stage he must deal with the specific event. These are detailed below. Unlike Obstacles, these events affect all participants reaching the marker equally.

Unlike some of our other Event Stages, the events in this chase are identical—a leap over an alleyway between rows of buildings.

Events: Requires a jump between buildings. The character must make a Strength roll. If a character has Pushed and his movement takes him through multiple Event Stages, his Strength roll suffers multi action penalties as normal.

Success either allows a character to continue moving (if the event interrupted his movement) or to start the next round by making a regular Agility roll (if the jump occurred at the end of his movement for the round).

With failure, he fails to clear the distance but manages to grab the edge of the roof. He is left dangling over the ground below. His movement for this round ends immediately. On subsequent rounds he must make a Strength roll to drag himself onto the roof as an action. Until he succeeds, he does not make an Agility roll.

OBSTACLES

Deuce (–4) Caltrops: The ninja, planning their escape in advance, have scattered caltrops on the roof. The ninja are not immune to this—they have simply forgotten about them in the heat of the chase. Any failed Agility roll causes the character to be Shaken, as the pointed barbs puncture his feet.

Three (–2) Broken Tile: The character's foot hits a cracked tile. Any failure means the runner's foot punches through the roof and becomes stuck. On subsequent rounds, the hero must make an Agility or Strength roll (his choice) as an action to pull his limb clear. Until the roll succeeds, the hero can't progress in the chase.

Four (–2) Loose Tiles: The tiles beneath the runner's feet crack and give way, causing him to slide toward the edge of the roof. Any failed roll means the hero has slid to the edge of the roof, where he is hanging by his fingertips. On subsequent rounds he must make a Strength roll to drag himself onto the roof as an action. Until he succeeds, he does not make an Agility roll.

Five (–2) Slippery Tiles: The adventurer's foot hits a slippery tile. Any failed Agility roll causes him to fall. Next round, his Agility roll suffers a –2 penalty as he regains his footing.

Six (–2) Chimneys: Low chimney stacks cause the hero to weave and hurdle across the roof. Any failure causes male characters to be Shaken as they smack their unmentionables on the top of one.

Seven (–2) Washing Line: The hero blunders into a line of washing. Any failure results in him becoming entangled. He is treated as being Shaken, but must use Agility or Strength (his choice) to unShake.

Eight (–2) Wire: A telephone line lies concealed on the roof. Any failure means the character has tripped over it. Next round, his Agility roll suffers a –2 penalty as he regains his footing.

Nine (–2) Open Skylight: Just as the runner reaches a skylight, the occupant of the building below opens it! Any failed Agility roll causes the character to fall through. He lands in the kitchen of a very startled Chinese couple. They politely offer him food. He forfeits his Agility roll next round as he must spend time climbing back onto the roof.

Ten (–1) Skylight: The character steps onto a previously unnoticed skylight. Any failed Agility roll causes the character to crash through. He lands in the bedroom of a very startled Chinese couple. He forfeits his Agility roll next round as he must spend time climbing back onto the roof.

Jack (–1) Mine: As well as caltrops, the ninja placed a small number of mines on the roof. Any failure indicates the unfortunate sap has stepped on it. He suffers 3d6 damage (from an Extra). Again, the ninja are not immune to this obstacle.

Queen (–1) Bright Light: A searchlight suddenly kicks into life and sweeps across the roof, blinding the character. There is no specific penalty for failure—the lack of movement is a result of the hero having to avert his gaze and momentarily lose his bearings.

King (0) Firecrackers: Someone in the street below has ignited a string of firecrackers, which sound a lot like gunshots. The character must make a Smarts roll as a free action. With success, he recognizes the sound and can proceed with his Agility roll. On a failure, he instinctively dives for cover and forfeits his movement this round.

Ace (0/–2) Sloping Roof: The roof ahead drops down into two levels. One is flat, the other is steeply sloped and slick enough to use as a slide. Ask the character which route he wants to take. The ninja always take the flat route.

Using the flat roof gives no penalties to the Agility roll. Failure is treated as normal.

Using the sloping roof as a slide gives the runner a –2 penalty to his Agility roll, but if successful he gains an *extra* Range Increment. This bonus (and the penalty) stacks with the Push maneuver. Failure causes him to slip and fall, giving him a –2 penalty to his next Agility roll.

SCENE 3: DEATH FROM ABOVE

The Shanghai skyline is suddenly illuminated by a brilliant red-orange flash somewhere behind you. Seconds later, the noise of an explosion reaches your ears. BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! More flashes of light and more explosions. Searchlights flare into life, highlighting squadrons of bombers high above. Explosions are erupting all over the city. Many are far away, but one line of bombs is heading straight for you! Below, frightened citizens are fleeing into the streets. One chap has abandoned his car and raced off on foot.

The chase now enters its second phase. Heroes have the options of sticking to the rooftops, dropping down into the streets and running, or hitting the streets and stealing a car. Make these options known to the group.

Instead of being an open-ended chase, place 10 markers on the tabletop. The characters begin off the track, and move onto it with their first successful Agility or Driving roll. Once the characters move beyond the last marker, proceed *immediately* to Step 3.

Whatever method of escape they choose, the Range Increment extends to 10". This gives the characters –2 to their Agility rolls if they decide to go on foot. Taking a vehicle increases their Range Increment to 10" as well, thus negating the penalty.

If they elect to stay aloft, use the Event Stages *and* Obstacles table from Scene 2 above. Don't worry about shifting the Event Stages—the rows of buildings are just much longer now. Running or driving at street level use the Obstacles table below and the Event Stages no longer apply.

The bombs have an Agility die of d10, but cannot Push. Whether the characters run or drive, the bombs make their first roll for movement at the start of the *second* round. Success moves the explosions one marker, and a raise two markers. Use a token to represent the bombs. If they end up on the same marker as a hero or move ahead of him, the explorer suffers 3d10 damage (from an Extra) at the *end* of the current round.

SEDAN

Acc/Top Speed: 10/20; **Toughness:** 12 (3); **Crew:** 1+5

OBSTACLES

The bombs ignore this table. Instead, they suffer a –2 penalty to their Agility roll as a result of munitions being dropped too close together or crosswinds blowing them off course whenever they draw a Club suit.

The Trait roll is Agility if the heroes are running and Driving if they have a vehicle. Make changes to the text below as appropriate. Flying heroes do not suffer the results of the card value for a failed Piloting roll. They use the regular Obstacles rules as they slam into buildings or are struck by flying debris.

Deuce (–4) Dense Crowds: The street is blocked by panicking citizens. Any failure simply means the characters could not make forward progress this round.

Three (–2) Crater: A bomber on a different route drops a single bomb early. It explodes just in front of the character, creating a deep crater. Any failure on the Agility roll means the hero has fallen into it. Characters on foot are Shaken. A vehicle suffers collision damage with a hard Obstacle.

Four (–2) Panicked Driver: A car pulls out of a side street. Unless the hero's reflexes are quick, he's going to be struck. Any failure causes a collision with a hard Obstacle. Since this is a T-bone collision, only the third party vehicle's speed counts. Damage is 3d6 (from an Extra).

Five (0) Strafing Run: A Japanese fighter strafes the street. Roll three d6. For each die that comes up 1, the runner or vehicle suffers 2d8+1 damage, AP 2 (from an Extra). If a runner has Dodge, roll two d6 instead. For Improved Dodge, roll just a single d6.

Six (–2) Head-On Collision: Some idiot in a car is driving *toward* the bombs by mistake! A failed Agility roll means a head-on collision with a hard Obstacle. The car is moving at 15" per round.

Seven (–2) Tight Turn: A multiple vehicle crash just ahead forces a driver to take a sudden turn or a runner to leap over the wrecked cars. Any failure causes a collision with a stationary hard Obstacle.

Eight (–2) Debris: Panicked citizens have tried to abandon their homes carrying their furniture and other belongings. Much of it has been discarded in the road, though. A failed roll causes a collision with a stationary soft Obstacle.

Nine (–1) Road Blocked: An explosion rips through a building up ahead. With success, the character darts through, just avoiding collapsing rubble. On a failure, he is forced to take a lengthy detour. He drops back 1 Range Increment.

Ten (–1) Smoke: Dense, acrid smoke from various conflagrations is spreading across the city. The character becomes confused if his Agility roll fails, and gains no distance this round.

Jack (–1) Burst Water Main: A large pipe bursts, sending a jet of water surging upward through the road right beneath the character. Any failure indicates a runner has been knocked off his feet and is Shaken. A vehicle failing the roll automatically goes Out of Control.

Queen (–1) Explosion: A ruptured gas main back along the street ignites, shattering the road as the flames surge along the pipe. A failed roll means the character (or vehicle) suffers 3d6 damage (from an Extra).

King (–2/0) Take My Child: A mother pushes her baby toward the hero, asking him to take the young girl to safety. He has the choice of grabbing the kid (or bundling it into the car) or ignoring the woman.

Taking the child gives a –2 Trait roll penalty. However, any failure merely indicates the delay prevented forward movement this round. If the hero takes the child and is on foot, subsequent Agility rolls have a –1 penalty due to the extra burden on his back or in his arms. However, he earns a benny as a reward. Characters in a vehicle who grab the kid don't gain the benny, but they don't suffer any penalty either (and their good deed should make them feel good).

Ignoring the woman's pleas allows an unmodified roll. However, it costs the runner, or every hero in the car, a benny for his despicable behavior.

Ace (0) Angry Mob: Looking for someone to blame for the attack, a large and angry mob singles out the character (or vehicle). Any failure means the character has failed to evade the mob (or driven through them and forced them aside). The adventurer or vehicle takes 3d6 damage (from an Extra).

SCENE 4: CITY IN FLAMES

The final leg of the chase takes place in the air! Heroes on the rooftops don't have any choice but to climb down and enter the square. Behind, everything is ablaze or being bombed.

As before, don't give the characters a chance to think too much. As soon as they escape the bombs, read the text below. If they start delving into options, have a few bombs land nearby to spur them into action. Have a small advanced party of Japanese soldiers arrive on the scene if necessary

You enter a large square, in which are parked two Chiang Hung biplanes. The pilots are nearby, cowering behind rubble for protection. An officer runs over to you and begins shouting loudly in broken English. "You no stay here!" he screams. "Japanese tanks coming down street! Too dangerous! Go away, go away!"

If there is only a single pilot in the party, replace the aircraft with a single cargo plane. It has the same stats as the Chiang Hung below, but can hold the entire party. Characters can fire hand weapons out of the cargo doors.

No one stops the characters if they want to steal the planes. Should they try to escape by any other route, they quickly discover Japanese troops advancing on the square and bombers pounding other parts of the city. If they're wondering where to go next, remind them that Mister Chang mentioned the wooden case bearing Winter Mountain's name was found in Tibet.

A hero making a Common Knowledge roll at –2 knows the largest city in Tibet is Lhasa. It's as good a place as any to begin searching for Winter Mountain.

Once airborne, the Chinese planes are quickly spotted by a pair of Type 92 Japanese fighters. Run this scene using the Chase rules.

The Range Increment is 10", and the Japanese begin 3 Range Increments behind the characters. The Japanese fighters are faster, which grants the pilots +1 to their Piloting rolls.

The heroes can either fly through the streets below rooftop level or take to the open skies. If they stay low, use the regular Obstacles rules. Soft Obstacles might represent being caught in the blast of a bomb, whereas hard ones indicate the pilot has clipped a building or other structure. Characters who fly above the level of the buildings are in danger of being shot down by other enemy fighters and Chinese anti-aircraft guns. Roll three d6 each round they elect to stay high. Each die that comes up 1 indicates a hit for 2d8+1 damage, AP 2 (from an Extra). No Obstacles rules are used for planes flying above the city.

The Japanese pilots aren't particularly skilled and lack the Steady Hands Edge (–2 penalty). Since their weapons are mounted on the wings, no autofire penalties are incurred for not having Rock and Roll. In addition, the

weapons are synchronized. Roll one set of Shooting dice (not one set per gun), and add +1 to each die.

If the heroes are having an easy time of it, feel free to add in another pair of fighters. The escape should be exciting and tense, but the characters must flee the city. In the unfortunate event they are shot down, the GM should arrange for them to exit Shanghai without too much trouble from the Japanese.

Japanese Pilots (2): See page 20.

CHIANG HUNG

The two planes are Chiang Hung reconnaissance planes. Each has space for a crew of two (pilot and observer) in an open cockpit. The plane has no weapons, but whoever takes the observer seat can use a personal firearm against targets behind him.

Acc/Top Speed: 10/50; **Toughness:** 11 (2); **Crew:** 2

KAWASAKI KDA-5

A single-seat biplane equipped with a pair of linked machineguns, the Type 92 played an important role in the subjugation of Manchuria.

Acc/Top Speed: 15/80; **Toughness:** 12 (2); **Crew:** 1

Notes: —

Weapons:

* 2 x linked light MGs (+1 Shooting, Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3, AP 2)

ACT 3: TIBET

Tibet is an independent kingdom (in 1937) situated on a plateau in the Himalayas. The altitude varies between 8,000 and almost 15,000 feet. Many major rivers, including The Indus, Ganges, and Yangtze have headwaters in Tibet.

Great Britain maintains a presence in Lhasa, having invaded in 1904 under the pretext of thwarting a (nonexistent) Russian invasion. Having secured a peace treaty by presence of arms, the British had the audacity to demand reparations from the Chinese government for sending troops to Tibet to halt the Russian advance. In return for not annexing Tibet, the British secured Chinese guarantees that no other nations would be permitted a presence in the country. Currently neither the British nor Chinese have much interest in the region.

The 13th Dalai Lama, Tibet's spiritual ruler, died in 1933. His successor, Tenzin Gyatso (the modern-age Dalai Lama), was born in 1935. At the time of the adventure, the youth has just been taken to Lhasa. He is officially recognized as the 14th Dalai Lama in 1939, at the tender age of four.

SCENE 1: YETI ATTACK

After landing the planes and grabbing their gear, the heroes begin marching through the snow and ice toward Lhasa. A successful Survival roll allows a hero to calculate that the journey should take around 10 hours.

During the march, one of the explorers is struck from behind by a large snowball. The victim can be any hero, but not the one at the back of the party. The idea is to make it look like one of his comrades pelted him. There's no sign of life for miles.

The culprit is one of a small yeti pack out hunting prey. Through trial and error, the yetis have learned this tactic can sometimes lead travelers to fight among themselves, thus making an attack easier. While the yetis have no comprehension of how firearms work, they know they hurt and have learned to recognize them. Using their white fur to help camouflage them, the yetis keep a careful watch for guns being drawn.

Keep this up for a few minutes. If the party doesn't turn to squabbling, the yetis grow bored and their hunger gets the better of them. The creatures rise up from behind snow drifts and charge. Parties who are bickering are also attacked, but in this instance the characters must check for Surprise.

The battlefield is 24" to a side. Roughly one-third should be marked as exposed ice, in the form of a frozen river running down the center. The remainder is powdery snow. Movement through the snow is difficult ground. Characters who run on the ice and roll a 1 on their running die slip and fall prone. Agility rolls on the ice, such as those to avoid an area effect attack or perform a Trick, suffer a –2 penalty.

Any character on the frozen river who draws a deuce as his first action card in a round encounters a patch of thin ice. The hero must make an Agility roll (at –2) at the start of the round or fall into the icy water. He doesn't submerge or get swept away—his elbows prevent that. The yetis have an innate ability to detect thin ice, and so never suffer this event.

However, the sudden shock of hitting the water leaves him Shaken. Each round thereafter, he must make a Strength roll as an action to haul himself back on to the ice. For each round he remains partially submerged, he must make a Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue. This can lead to Incapacitation, but never Death. Recovery is as per the standard rules for Cold.

The heroes begin near the banks of the river. It's their choice as to which bank. The yetis attack from two edges of the battlefield—the one nearest the characters and the one directly opposite. Divide the yetis in pairs for initiative card purposes. Their tactic on the first round is to close the range, throw boulders, and then, if movement allows, get close enough to melee. They won't run this round, as they favor accuracy with their projectiles.

Yeti (2 per hero): See page 20.

SCENE 2: WE'RE ON YOUR SIDE

Marching on, the characters notice that the sky is beginning to darken. A character making a Survival roll can sense a storm is coming, sweeping snow down from the high peaks onto the plateau. The heroes can see wisps

of smoke from dung-fuelled fires rising over the brow of a nearby hill.

A small village lies over the next ridge. A handful of peasants are tending their herds of goats and yaks. As the characters cross the brow of the hill, the peasants spot them. They scurry hurriedly into their homes and close the doors. No amount of Intimidation or Persuasion can convince them to come out.

Have the characters make Notice rolls as they near the huts. Those who fail are Surprised as ninja jump down from the rooftops and leap out from behind the dwellings.

The battlefield measures 15" by 15". The Tibetans' huts are 3" by 2". Place half a dozen at one end of the table to represent the village. Each has a door and a single window in the same wall.

Once half the common ninja or the adventure party are out of the fight, or the ninja master has taken two wounds (he won't need any remaining bennies, so use them to Soak), an orange-robed monk emerges from one of the huts. He shouts out in Japanese and English, *"Stop fighting! You are on the same side!"* Any ninja who haven't acted this round go on Hold, waiting for the characters to make the next move.

The monk repeats his message at the start of the following round. He walks between the two groups, holding his arms out to try and keep them apart. *"Please," he says, "put away your weapons and talk."* The ninja master pauses for a moment and signals his men to comply. When the party does the same, the monk beckons them into the hut.

Ninja Master: See page 19.

Ninja (2 per hero): See page 19.

TALKING WITH NINJA

Once inside, the monk tends any wounds. He has Healing d8+2. Each hero benefits from a single Healing roll, regardless of how bad his injuries are—the monk has to tend to everyone equally. After this is done, he sits down against one wall, and gestures for the party and ninja to sit facing each other.

The conversation takes the form of questions, asked by the players, and answers provided by the ninja. The ninja only speak Japanese, so it's likely the monk has to translate. The ninja also ask questions of the characters, trying to learn where they came from and why they are hunting the last Muramasa blade. For every question the party asks, the ninja ask one in return.

Q: Are you working for General Oshiro?

A: *"No. We work for the Emperor. General Oshiro is working to his own agenda."*

Q: Why did you attack us in the museum?

A: *"We could hardly walk in and ask for the sword case. Unfortunately, the case was empty. The loss of life was regrettable, but unavoidable. We thought you were Oshiro's agents. We could not allow you to find Winter Mountain."*

Q: Why do you want Winter Mountain?

A: *"To stop it falling into Oshiro's hands. Winter Mountain is the last Muramasa blade. It carries the curse of all Muramasa blades. With it, Oshiro would likely endanger the Empire."*

Q: Why does Oshiro want the sword?

A: *"It belonged to one of his ancestors. The sword was lost in battle and the family shamed. Oshiro wants to reclaim his family's honor. Right now, we do not know what else he plans to do when he gets the blade, but he is up to something beyond reclaiming a weapon."*

Q: Aren't ninja evil?

A: *"A common misconception to the uncultured. We provide a service to whoever wishes to hire us. Good and evil are concepts, not absolutes. If we kill one man to save ten others, was our deed good or evil?"*

Q: Do you plan to kill Oshiro?

A: *"Only if he gets in our way. For all his faults, Oshiro is an excellent general. We have no wish to deprive the Emperor of skilled warriors unnecessarily."*

Q: Do you know where Winter Mountain is?

A: *"Yes. There is an old monastery not far from here. It was abandoned long ago. The peasants say it is haunted, so they dare not enter. The monastery is marked with the symbol of Winter Mountain, or so the monks say. It must lie somewhere inside. We were on our way there when the clouds darkened."*

Q: How did you learn about the monastery?

A: *"We have our sources."*

After the questioning reaches a natural conclusion, a peasant runs into the hut and begins hurriedly talking in Tibetan. The monk listens calmly, and then says, *"Japanese soldiers are approaching from the south."*

The ninja master rises to his feet and draws his blade. *"It must be Oshiro. No one else would have the audacity to send Japanese troops this far. If we do not stop him, he will find Winter Mountain. Will you fight with us, gaijin (Japanese for 'foreigner')? Only together do we have the strength to be victorious."*

SCENE 3: THE JAPANESE ARMY

Hand out Ally Sheets for the ninja master and ninja to the players.

The battlefield should be as large as your table will allow. Set up the huts as above. The heroes and their ninja allies begin in the village and have time to position themselves as they wish. The Japanese start at the opposite end of the table.

In between the village and the Japanese is a small corral. This measures 4" to a side and stands three feet high. Crossing it counts as difficult ground. Inside is a flock of goats. For ease, the goats fill a Medium Burst Template and stay herded together if released. They have Pace 6 and Toughness 7 (effectively they are a nonlethal swarm).

If released, a character within 5" can spend an action to shepherd them toward the Japanese. Although they don't cause any injuries, they do create a nuisance—movement through the template is difficult ground. A

sneaky hero could also conceal himself among the goats, allowing him to ambush the Japanese (unless they've seen him duck into the herd, of course). Successful implementation of this tactic gives a hero the Drop for one attack (and certainly merits a benny). After this, the soldiers wise up to the tactic.

Also, between the village and the invaders are a dozen large boulders. Each fills a 1" square and is impassable. The GM should place these at random. They exist to provide Cover and break up the battlefield a little.

The weather at the start of the fight is light snow. Treat it as Dim lighting (–1). Starting on round 6, the weather worsens dramatically. Reduce the lighting to Dark (–2, 10" maximum visibility) for the rest of the fight. This is actually a great bonus for the ninja, as it allows them to use their superior Stealth to sneak up on the Japanese.

The Japanese force is a large scouting party, not Oshiro's main column, however, that is following close behind. Once the last Japanese soldier is taken down, the characters see more men in the distance. This time they have small tanks providing support. The ninja master (or any surviving ninja if the master died) turns to the characters.

> *"He is too strong. If we stay here, we will all die. Find the sword. We will lead General Oshiro on a merry chase higher into the mountains to buy you time. If we're lucky, the storm will aid us."*

Any heroic requests to stay and fight are forcefully rejected. *"You risk this entire mission on foolish notions of bravery and honor. Run today, fight tomorrow."*

Ninja Master: See page 19.

Ninja (2 per hero): See page 19. Reduce the number accordingly to account for any Incapacitated in the previous scene. Any grenades or throwing stars spent in the previous fight are deemed recovered from fallen comrades.

Japanese Officers (1 per hero): See page 20.

Japanese Soldiers (3 per hero): See page 20.

SCENE 4: FIVE TRAPS, TWO BLADES

Although the storm is raging, it does not seem to affect the characters. The snow blows around them, and the wind is a gentle caress, not the full-frontal assault roaring through the mountains. After a few hours, the heroes spy the monastery. Sure enough, above the lintel are carved glyphs for Winter Mountain.

Buddhist monks eventually gained possession of the cursed blade. Knowing it to be a fell weapon, they chose to seal it away behind a series of traps. Whereas a noble warrior might have destroyed the blade, the monks could not do so—they knew the katana contained a soul, and to shatter the blade would kill the spirit, something Buddhism expressly prohibits. Thus, their only option was to imprison the blade until the fates decreed it be discovered.

At the rear of the small temple is a stout wooden door. Lying on a small shelf to one side are five wooden tiles. They appear blank until a character handles them, whereupon a symbol for one of the Chinese elements appears on each tile (wood, earth, fire, water, and metal). Carved onto the bench, in Tibetan, Mandarin, and Japanese, is a message the explorers hadn't noticed before—*"The order of overcoming paves the way."*

The riddle relates to the idea that each element has mastery over another. For instance, water quenches fire. To defeat the fire guardians (see below), the party needs to use the water tile. Trial and error, or quick thinking, will see them through eventually. Once a tile is used, it disappears.

The temple has reacted to the presence of the heroes, and provided them with a clue to defeating the guardians. Whether or not they are actually worthy to retrieve Winter Mountain is yet to be seen.

Beyond the door is a series of chambers. These are detailed below. Each chamber measures 12" to a side. Strangely, the chambers make the monastery far bigger on the inside than its outside dimensions would allow.

Belligerent characters could suffer a lot of injuries if they elect to stand and fight rather than trying to escape quickly. Although some violence is likely, once the heroes know how to defeat the guardians, they should be able to do so in just two rounds per chamber.

CHAMBER 1: WOOD

The first chamber is completely paneled in wood. A door at the opposite end has a small recess, matching the wooden tiles in size. The door is impervious to all damage and impenetrable until the correct tile is inserted.

As soon as the first character steps into the room, wood elementals emerge from the center of the floor and attack. On subsequent rounds, one additional elemental per two player characters appears and joins the fray. Characters not in the room cannot see the elementals, and thus cannot remain outside the chamber and provide fire support. The elementals aren't invisible—they simply don't exist to explorers outside of the chamber.

Although the elementals can be defeated in combat, they are infinite in number. To proceed from this room, the characters must insert the tile marked with the element that overcomes wood in Chinese magic—metal (metal cuts wood). Once the correct tile is inserted (an action for each tile tried), the elementals sink back into the floor and the door opens.

(M) Wood Elementals: See page 21.

CHAMBER 2: WATER

This chamber functions as above with the following exceptions: The room and door are made of what appears to be solid water. Ripples appear on the floor when the characters walk on it, yet they do not sink. The elementals are water spirits, and the correct tile to place in the door is earth (earth absorbs water).

Water Elementals: See page 21.

CHAMBER 3: EARTH

This chamber functions as the first chamber with the following exceptions: The room and door are made of packed earth, the elementals are earth spirits, and the correct tile to place in the door is wood (wood parts earth).

Earth Elementals: See page 20.

CHAMBER 4: FIRE

This chamber functions as the first chamber with the following exceptions: The room and door are made of what appears to be solid fire. It flows like flame, yet is firm to the touch. The room is hot, but not so much that it burns the characters. The elementals are fire spirits, and the correct tile to place in the door is water (water quenches fire).

Fire Elementals: See page 21.

CHAMBER 5: METAL

The last chamber is forged from metal. There are no signs of joins, welds, or rivets. The elementals are metal spirits, and the correct tile to place in the door is fire (fire melts metal).

The last door leads into a small chamber. Resting on velvet pillows are two katana (see the sidebar on page 15). Both are decorated with *mon* (emblems of samurai families, similar in function to European coats-of-arms), but it requires a Knowledge (History) roll at –6 to determine which one is Winter Mountain.

Once the swords are collected, the characters can safely walk back through the elemental chambers.

Metal Elementals: See page 21.

OLD ENEMIES

Unfortunately, the ninja were not successful in their attempt to delay General Oshiro. He and a large party of his men are waiting outside the temple. Gathered in front of the soldiers are peasants from the village, including the monk.

"You have one chance to throw down your weapons and hand over Winter Mountain," Oshiro says calmly. "If you refuse or try to stall for more time, one of the prisoners will be executed. To ensure you understand that I am deadly serious…" Oshiro pulls his katana from its scabbard and raises it over his head…

Unless the characters hand over at least one of the blades immediately, Oshiro decapitates a peasant. In all honesty, it's very unlikely the adventurers have determined which blade is Winter Mountain. Oshiro, however, recognizes his family *mon* immediately. Basically, there's a 50% chance the characters get it wrong if they try to hand the general just one of the swords. The general fumes at the "deception" if the wrong blade is chosen, and again raises his sword to strike.

When Winter Mountain is in his hands, Oshiro's eyes take on the glint of the truly insane. His face contorts in ecstasy as he caresses the blade and whispers to it. After a few moments, he places the sword, still sheathed, into his belt. He then orders the heroes bound. Oshiro then draws the other katana, Spring Blossom, from its scabbard and studies the blade.

"Bah!" he scoffs. "The work of a coward!" He steps closer to you and waves the blade in front of your faces. "This blade was forged by Masamune. Some say he created the best blades in Japan, but they would only strike those deserving of death. I think it is time to put this legend to the test!"

Soldiers wrestle <insert random hero's name> to the floor, and push his head forward. Oshiro raises the blade and cuts downward in a lightning fast move! The blade strikes your comrade's neck, but comes to an abrupt halt. It is obvious from the look on Oshiro's face that he hasn't pulled his blow.

"So" Oshiro sneers, "the legends are true—a sword that will not slay the innocent. A worthless weapon to a true warrior! It will accompany you all to your graves!"

Proceed to Act 4.

General Oshiro: See page 18.
Japanese Officers (1 per hero): See page 20.
Japanese Soldiers (4 per hero): See page 20.

ACT 4: MANCHUKUO

The captives are marched into the temple. They notice the door which lead to the elemental chamber is no longer there!

Soldiers securely tie each character to one of the supporting columns in the center of the temple. Meanwhile, others hang grenades from the ceiling by thin cords. The cords are then unraveled, nailed here and there onto the walls, and trailed back to the door.

SCENE 1: DO YOU SMELL BURNING?

"What were you thinking?" Oshiro sneers. "Did you honestly think a handful of barbarians could stop me achieving my destiny? When will you hakujin learn your place?"

The general strokes Winter Mountain's scabbard absently. "Tomorrow, the Prime Minister of Japan is going to award me a medal for services to the

Emperor. Shortly thereafter, Winter Mountain will drink of his blood!

"Once that sniveling bureaucrat is dead, the officer class will reclaim its rightful place. The samurai shall be reborn, and Japan shall be governed by a shogun once again. I shall rule Japan, with the blessing of the impotent Emperor. Shogun Oshiro Takeo—oh, how our enemies will learn to fear my name! With the military in full control, we shall crush them all like ants beneath our feet!

"They say," the general mutters, much calmer than a second before, "true courage is the ability to face death without flinching. That may be true of samurai, but I expect to hear you screaming for mercy before your demise!

"Those are impact grenades." Oshiro gestures toward the dark orbs hanging from the ceiling. "Very soon they will fall, and you will die."

Oshiro and his men then depart. As the last one reaches the door, he crouches down and ignites the cord. It fizzes violently, and begins burning toward the grenades. Any character making a Common Knowledge roll recognizes it as a slow match, a primitive but effective form of fuse used for explosives. The temple door is then closed and barred. Once outside, the soldiers soak the wooden temple in gasoline and ignite it.

The temple interior measures a mere 6" to a side. The pillars are arranged in the center of the room and are spaced 1" apart to form a square. The grenades hang over the center of the temple.

The fuse burns through at the end of the 6th round. When it does, the grenades drop. They explode on impact. The grenades have the following stats: Damage: 3d6, Medium Burst Template. That's 3d6 four times—even as damage dealt by an Extra, it'll hurt.

Smoke from the gasoline fire quickly begins to fill the small temple. At the end of the 3rd round, the heroes must make a Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue. When round 4 ends, another Vigor roll must be made, this time at –1. The end of each subsequent round requires a Vigor roll at –2.

* Escaping from their bonds requires an Agility or Strength roll at –2. One roll may be attempted each round. A character who breaks free can release a comrade without a die roll, but this take a complete round, permitting no other actions except movement up to the hero's Pace.

* Climbing up to reach the fuse requires a Climbing roll at –2. Once a hero has reached the correct height, he may make a Strength roll to snap the cord, thus disarming the trap. Climbing up to free the grenades requires rolls as above.

* Should the grenades fall, a hero on Hold can try to grab them before they hit the floor. He doesn't need to roll to interrupt—it's an automatic success. A hero who tries to catch one must make an Agility roll. If he tries to catch two (one in each hand), he suffers a multi action penalty *and* the off-hand penalty. No hero can catch more than two grenades.

* Breaking down the main door requires a Strength roll at –6. This can be attempted as a Cooperative roll. Alternatively, a hero who has caught a grenade or pulled it from the ceiling can throw it at the door. No Throwing roll is necessary—just roll damage. The door has Toughness 15.

If the characters aren't free by the end of the 7th round, the main door cracks open at the start of round 8. Standing there, backlit by the raging inferno, is the ninja master! (Well, you didn't think we'd let the characters burn to a crisp, did you?)

The adventurers' gear is outside in the snow, where it was dumped after they were searched. General Oshiro has no wish to soil his hands with non-Japanese equipment.

THE INDESTRUCTIBLE NINJA

Whether he seemingly died in the battle against the Japanese or not, the ninja master is still alive, though

THE TWO BLADES

The two swords were forged by master swordsmiths whose temperaments were diametrically opposed. Muramasa, as already noted was insane and violent. Masamune, who lived two centuries earlier, was, in contrast, of peaceful and meditative temperament. His blades, so the legends go, never drew blood from the innocent or those undeserving of a violent death.

White Mountain: This katana causes Str+d6+2, AP 2. It is also cursed. When drawn, the wielder must make a Spirit roll at –2 or go berserk. This works as per the regular Berserk Edge, except it uses Spirit and not Smarts. The user's Spirit is considered d4 for the purposes of tempering his rage, which also requires him to sheathe the weapon. Sheathing the blade is considered part of the roll to calm the rage, but only works if the Spirit roll is successful.

Each round the wielder of the drawn katana fails to inflict a wound, whether he is enraged or not, he must make another Spirit roll or cut himself (a free action). This causes an automatic wound, which *cannot* be Soaked. Make the roll at the end of each round, after all actions have been dealt with.

Spring Blossom: This katana causes Str+d6+2, AP 2. Unlike its counterpart, the Masamune blade never harms those who are innocent or dedicated to virtuous causes. In game terms, this provides one bonus: when used to Sweep, a player character *never* has a chance of hitting allied characters—the blade simply "refuses" to cut the heroes and those who fight alongside them.

barely. If the initial Japanese attack didn't mortally wound him, his guerilla action against Oshiro's column resulted in the terrible injuries he now sports. A trail of blood through the snow is clear evidence he has dragged himself some distance.

"Oshiro is returning to Manchukuo," he says, coughing up blood. "He has Winter Mountain. Go to the Seven Dragon laundry in Harbin. Ask for Hideyoshi. Tell him, 'The white crane flies over the mountain alone.' He will help you." With that, the ninja master closes his eyes for the last time.

SCENE 2: LARGE MEN AND LATHER

The largest city in Manchukuo is Harbin. In 1898, Harbin was turned from a small village into a bustling town by the Russians. After the defeat of Russia in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05), Russian influence over Harbin waned considerably, and the town quickly opened up to other foreign investors. Harbin grew rapidly into a bustling, industrialized, international city.

During the Russian Civil War (1918), large numbers of Tsarist Russians settled in Harbin. Jewish émigrés from Nazi Germany followed once Hitler took power. The Japanese occupied the city in 1932, resulting in a second mass migration of Russians and Jews—this time out of the city.

The laundry where they party is to meet Hideyoshi is on a major thoroughfare.

Entering the Chinese laundry, you are momentarily overcome by the smell of detergent. Huge white sheets hang throughout the room, obscuring your view. You can just make out a handful of Chinese workers, scrubbing busily.

The laundry measures 12" to a side. The entrance is in the northwest corner. There is a second door in the southwest corner. Against the west wall are three large, wooden vats, each the size of a Small Burst Template. Against the east wall are four steam presses, used to fold and crease the sheets. They fill a 1" square, movement through which is difficult ground. Small tables hold bars of soap, buckets of soapy water, and other paraphernalia.

If Hideyoshi's name is mentioned, the Chinese point to a door in the south wall. As the characters near it, the workers flee out the main door into the street. Seconds later the door crashes open, as four huge sumo wrestlers (agents of Oshiro) stagger into the laundry. Hideyoshi was forced to ask a lot of questions to uncover useful information, and his enquiries reached the ears of the crazed general. To ensure silence, Oshiro dispatched several agents to the laundry. They arrived just before the characters.

Much of the scenery can be used as weapons or in Tricks, as detailed below. Other items a hero might wish to use, such as washboards, brushes, and paddles for beating clean carpets and rugs are automatically available if a character requests one. Typically these cause Str+d4 damage, and can be used in Tricks.

Bucket: Str+d4 damage. The buckets are filled with soapy water, which can be used in Agility Tricks.

Sheets: The hanging sheets provide Light Cover (–1) to anyone on the opposite side to an attacker. They can also be used in Tricks (such as pulling one over an opponent's head).

Soap: A large bar of soap can be thrown to Range 3/6/12 and inflicts Str+d4 damage. They can also be slid under feet as an Agility Trick.

Steam Press: A hero who has grappled his foe adjacent to a steam press can try to force part of his victim into it. This requires an opposed roll as normal for grappling. Damage is 2d6 (from an Extra).

Vat: The large vat is filled with warm, soapy water. The vat has Toughness 8. When it takes a single wound, it splits open, disgorging its contents in a Cone Template. Any one under the template must make an Agility roll at –2 or be knocked back 1" and fall prone.

Leave the template in place after the water spills out. Movement through the soapy pool is difficult ground. Any character who runs through the area and rolls a 1 on his running die slips and falls prone.

Sumo Wrestlers (1 per hero): See page 21.

THE CONTACT

Once the fight is over, the characters can search the laundry for their contact. They find him stuffed inside a large laundry basket. He's been beaten to a bloody pulp, though fortunately he's not in danger of dying. He opens a puffy eye, smiles weakly, and says, *"Ah, the Westerners…sent to save the…Empire. Hongbo Square…midday…Oshiro receiving medal from…Fumimaro. Stop…"* With that he falls unconscious.

Japan's internal politics are largely unknown to Westerners in the 1930s. A Common Knowledge roll at –4 is required to know that Fumimaro Konoe is the Prime Minister of Japan. The name alone, coupled with Oshiro's rant in Tibet, should allow them to piece things together, anyway.

The contact mentioned midday—that's just 10 minutes from now! Hongbo Square is just a little over a mile from the laundry, but the streets are crowded and the heroes don't know the way. Luckily, as they leave the laundry, a number of rickshaws pull up. A smiling rickshaw driver says in broken English, *"You want ride? Rickshaw go very fast."*

SCENE 3: RICKSHAW RUMBLE

Each rickshaw can hold two people and has a single operator. The rickshaws are faster than running through the crowded streets as the operators also know many shortcuts the characters don't.

During the chase which follows, the characters should

always feel constrained by time. Stopping to engage in a firefight should seem like a bad idea as the minutes tick away. Keep reminding them that the lock is against them.

In the event the heroes wish to run to Hongbo Square, the scene still unfolds as below. However, when they reach Hongbo Square they must make a Vigor roll at –2. Failure means they are Fatigued until the end of Scene 4. With a critical failure, they are Exhausted.

General Oshiro is determined his coup will succeed. He has ordered cavalrymen to patrol the streets. They have orders to kill any Westerners on sight. In the event his plan is stalled, Oshiro has forged papers ready, "proving" any Westerners his men were forced to kill were actually Russian assassins.

After only a few hundred yards, the characters hear gunfire behind them. Looking round, they see a small cavalry detachment galloping toward the rickshaws. The Japanese are currently armed with pistols. If they succeed in the Parallel stunt, they switch to their sabers instead. The rickshaws count as an Unstable Platform.

The Japanese cavalrymen have a Range Increment of 5". Characters on foot suffer a –1 penalty to their Agility rolls for having a lower Range Increment (1"). Although the rickshaws are powered by runners, they're extremely fit. The rickshaws have a Range Increment of 5" as well.

The cavalrymen use their Riding skill to determine movement. The Chinese rickshaw operators use Strength (d6) to pull the rickshaws. They act on the action card of one of the passengers. If a character wants to switch rolls with the driver, he needs to make a Persuasion roll. He gets a +2 bonus if he speaks Mandarin, as it makes the negotiations quicker.

The rickshaws don't have stats—they are treated as scenery. Instead, the characters are treated as pedestrians with Medium Cover (–2) for the purposes of attacks.

Don't use the regular Obstacles rules. Instead, whenever a Club is drawn, consult the table below. The penalty applies to the appropriate Trait roll. It signifies the crowded state of the street and the participant's inability to make good progress that round.

Card	Penalty
Deuce	–6
3–10	–4
Jack–Queen	–2
King–Ace	–1

Japanese Soldiers (2 per hero): See page 20.

Horses (1 per soldier): See Savage Worlds Rules.



SCENE 4: FIRE AND STONE

By the time you reach Hongbo Square the ceremony has already begun! A crowd of army officers stands atop a platform at the far end of the square.

Arrayed in front of them is Oshiro and a line of officers and men due to receive medals. A man in a suit, likely the Prime Minister, has just placed a medal around the general's neck. He steps back and bows. Rather than returning the bow, Oshiro reaches for White Mountain!

The characters have Surprise over the Japanese and receive a free round of actions. The Prime Minister has Parry 2 and Toughness 5. However, fate is on his side—he can't die here (although he can be Incapacitated).

The square is 24" long and 18" wide. The heroes begin at the southern end. Oshiro and his men start 6" in from the north edge, facing away from the party. The Prime Minister is in front of Oshiro. The platform on which the other attendees stand is just off the north edge of the battlefield.

Emperor Hirohito has been informed of recent events through his spies, and has ordered his other generals not to interfere. Indeed, during the fight, the characters see them deliberately ordering their men to hold fire. Hirohito has a plan to test Oshiro's loyalty once and for all, but he's content for the characters to remove as many conspirators as possible beforehand.

Immediately Oshiro takes his third wound, proceed to the next section. If he's Incapacitated, still move onto the next section.

- **General Oshiro:** See page 18.
- **Japanese Officers (2):** See page 20.
- **Japanese Soldiers (2 per hero):** See page 20.

DUTY IS A MOUNTAIN

Oshiro staggers back, clutching his wounds. Suddenly, the Japanese soldiers stop fighting and drop to their knees, heads bowed low. A Japanese man in traditional silk robes, flanked by katana-wielding guards in military uniforms, steps onto the platform. A whisper goes through the crowd like wildfire—it's Emperor Hirohito!

Oshiro's eyes widen in disbelief. Still clutching Winter Mountain, he staggers toward the Emperor. "I shall be shogun!" he spits. He raises Winter Mountain above his head. Hirohito stands impassively, his hands held out at waist level, holding back his bodyguards, whose blades are now drawn and poised to strike. Hirohito speaks, not to Oshiro, but to Winter Mountain—"I am the Emperor of Japan."

Winter Mountain begins to fall in a graceful, sweeping arc. Suddenly it stops. Oshiro's face contorts into a grimace. Slowly, his arms fold back, Winter Mountain's tip wavering closer to his heart.

A sudden thrust, and Oshiro slumps to his knees as Winter Mountain's blade emerges through his back. A second jerk, and the blade is buried to the hilt. The general looks down in disbelief, and then falls forward, dead.

Atop the platform, the Japanese man regards you silently, his face as unreadable as a stone. He turns to leave, but before he does so, you think you detect an almost-imperceptible nod of his head.

A bespectacled senior officer, his chest gleaming with medals, walks through the crowd of stony-faced officers and approaches the heroes. He bows politely, and introduces himself as Hideki Tojo, Chief of Staff of the Kwangtung Army (and the future Prime Minister of Japan during World War 2).

"The Emperor has been kept aware of your assistance," he says without emotion, "Please, accept this token of his esteem." Tojo lifts a katana clutched in his hand and offers it to you. "It is called 'Divine Wind,' a katana forged by the master Masamune for the Emperor's family long ago."

If asked what just happened, Tojo replies as follows:

"Is it not obvious? Not even a Muramasa blade would dare strike a living god. It performed its duty most admirably."

CAST OF CHARACTERS

GENERAL OSHIRO TAKEO

General Oshiro's family can trace their ancestry far back in time, when they were part of the elite samurai class. In 1597, a distant ancestor took part in the second invasion of Korea. He fell in battle, a noble enough death, but disgraced the family because he lost his katana, a powerful blade forged by the insane swordsmith Muramasa. General Oshiro lives with this shame still, although recent events may soon restore his honor.

General Oshiro is a thin man with round glasses and thinning hair. He looks more like a bureaucrat than a senior officer, but his appearance is deceptive. Beneath his bookish guise lurks the heart, and skill, of a samurai.

Many men have underestimated Oshiro Takeo, and all have paid the ultimate price.

Oshiro is the general's family name, and Takeo is his given name.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Shooting d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Bad Eyes (Minor),

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command, Hold the Line, Improved Block, Improved Frenzy, Level Headed, Mighty Blow, Quick Draw, Strong Willed

Gear: Katana (Str+d6+2, AP 2), pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1)



STONE DRAGON

Crafted long ago, the stone dragon acts as guardian of the tomb. Like all Chinese dragons, it has no wings. Its most deadly weapon is its acid breath, which is fuelled by salt crystals in its "stomach," which react with the air when expelled. The stone from which the dragon is carved is completely impervious to physical harm. Only the inside of its mouth lacks this armor, and is thus the creature's only weak point.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d12

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 13

Special Abilities:

* **Acid Breath:** The dragon breathes acid using the Cone Template. Every target within the cone may make an Agility roll at –2 to avoid the attack. Those who fail suffer 2d10 damage. The dragon may not breathe in the same round it uses its bite or claws.
* **Claws/Bite:** Str+d8.
* **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; no additional damage from Called Shots (see Weakness below); immune to poison and disease; never suffers wound penalties.
* **Invulnerability:** The creature's stone form is impervious to all weapons. It can be Shaken by attacks, but never suffers wounds unless its Weakness is exploited.
* **Large:** Attackers gain +2 to attacks against creature's body due to its large size.
* **Size +5:** The dragon is over 20' long.
* **Tail Lash:** The dragon can sweep all opponents in its rear facing in a 3" long and 6" wide rectangle. This is a standard Fighting attack. Damage is d12+2.
* **Weakness (Mouth):** The only weak point in the creature's armor is its mouth. Targeting the mouth requires a Called Shot (–2).

NINJA

Black-clad assassins, saboteurs, and spies, ninja are an iconic relic of Japan's feudal era. Supposedly wiped out during the Tokugawa Era, the ninja in fact went underground, surviving into the modern day by curbing their activities.

Ninja prefer subterfuge and trickery to standup fights. Typically, they operate in pairs. One tries to Trick a foe, leaving his partner with an easier attack.

The kusarigama (see below) is a straight-bladed sickle on a long wooden handle with a weighted chain attached to the butt. Typical usage is to use the chain to grapple a foe, and then move in to strike with the blade. Alternatively, the weight can be swung in a circle to strike foes.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Lockpicking d8, Notice d8, Riding d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d10, Survival d8, Swimming d8, Throwing d8, Tracking d8

Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Loyal, Outsider

Edges: Acrobat, Ambidextrous, Dodge, Quick Draw, Sweep, Thief, Woodsman

Gear: Black costume (+1 Stealth in bad lighting conditions), short sword (Str+d6) *or* kusarigama (Str+d6, Reach 1, 2-hands, can grapple at 1" distance), 4 x throwing blades (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: Str+d4), see below for others

Special Abilities:

* **Grenades:** Range: 3/6/12. Each ninja carries one of each type below.
* **Blinding Powder:** Medium Burst Template. Anyone under the template must make a Vigor roll or be Shaken.
* **Explosive:** Medium Burst Template. Anyone under the template must make an Agility roll at –2 or suffer 3d6 damage (from an Extra).
* **Smoke:** Large Burst Template. Attacks into, out of, or through the template suffer a –4 penalty.
* **Nerve Strike:** By making a Called Shot (–2), a ninja can target a nerve cluster. Victims must make a Vigor roll, –2 if the attack was a raise, or roll on the Injury Table. The injury is removed at the end of the encounter. The attack causes no physical damage.



NINJA MASTER

Unlike the men who serve under him, the ninja master has studied ancient, mystical techniques. To activate these he uses a special skill called Ninjutsu.

Special Rule: Rather than mess around tracking Power Points for villains, master ninja can cast each spell a certain number of times during the adventure. Once they've used their allotment they can't cast any more spells. Powers which can normally be maintained instead last for three rounds per casting (track these by using gaming stones). The power list is the equivalent of 30 Power Points.

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d10, Intimidation d10,

Lockpicking d10, Ninjutsu d10, Notice d10, Riding d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d12+2, Survival d8, Swimming d8, Throwing d10, Tracking d10
Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 7
Hindrances: Loyal, Outsider
Edges: Acrobat, Ambidextrous, Block, Combat Reflexes, Fleet Footed, Improved Dodge, Improved Frenzy, Level Headed, Master (Stealth), Quick Draw, Strong Willed, Sweep, Thief, Woodsman
Powers: 2 x *boost trait* (no *lower*), 2 x *deflection*, 1 x *fear*, 1 x *invisibility*, 1 x *puppet* (), 1 x *quickness*, 2 x *speed*, 2 x *teleport* (up to 10" per casting)
Gear: Black costume (+1 Stealth in bad lighting conditions), short sword (Str+d6), 4 x throwing blades (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: Str+d4), one of each grenade (see above)
Special Abilities:
* **Nerve Strike:** By making a Called Shot (–2), a ninja can target a nerve cluster. Victims must make a Vigor roll, –2 if the attack was a raise, or roll on the Injury Table. The injury is removed at the end of the encounter. The attack causes no physical damage.

JAPANESE ARMY OFFICER

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8
Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: Command
Equipment: Pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1), poor quality katana (Str+d6, AP 1).

JAPANESE SOLDIER

Well-trained and highly disciplined, these soldiers fought in Manchuria and are combat veterans. They are loyal to General Oshiro unto death, having been corrupted by his madness away from the Emperor's cause.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Riding d8, Stealth d6, Shooting d8, Throwing d6
Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: Combat Reflexes
Equipment: Steel helmet (+2), rifle (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d6+1, AP 1), bayonet (Str+d4 or Str+d6, Reach 1, +1 Parry when fitted to rifle), 2 x hand grenades (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 3d6, Medium Burst Template). Cavalrymen have sabers (Str+d6) and pistols (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1).

JAPANESE PILOT

Japan's pilots in Manchukuo have yet to encounter any aerial resistance. As such, they are poor quality flyers.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d6, Piloting d6, Shooting d6
Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: —
Equipment: Pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1), knife (Str+d4)

YETI

Native to the Himalayas, yetis are primitive humanoids. Many people believe they are shy and reclusive, but the same could be said for any predator—having your prey spot you doesn't make for an easy meal. Every year hundreds or people vanish in the Himalayas, most of them within the hunting grounds of the yeti.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+1, Vigor d10
Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Throwing d8
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (1)
Gear: Large boulder (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: d12+d6+1, 2 hands)
Special Abilities:
* **Armor +1:** Thick fur and fat.
* **Big Feet:** Yetis treat snow and ice as normal terrain, not difficult ground.
* **Claws:** Str+d6.
* **Camouflage:** Yetis add +4 to Stealth roll in snowy terrain because of their white fur.
* **Improved Frenzy:** A yeti makes two Fighting attacks each round at no penalty.
* **Size +1:** Yetis are taller than humans.

CHINESE ELEMENTAL

The elementals all appear as humanoids, but are comprised of their natural element. A few have special attacks, but most rely on slam attacks to defeat foes. GMs will note these variants lack the Invulnerabilities and Weaknesses of the elementals in the Savage Worlds rules—this is a deliberate omission.

EARTH ELEMENTAL

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d12+3, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d4
Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (3)
Special Abilities:
* **Armor +3:** Rocky hide.
* **Burrowing (10"):** Earth elementals can meld into and out of the ground.
* **Elemental:** No additional damage from Called Shots; Fearless; immune to disease and poison.

* **Slam:** Str+d6.

FIRE ELEMENTAL

Attributes: Agility d12+1, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d10, Shooting d8
Pace: 6; **Parry**: 7; **Toughness:** 5
Special Abilities:
* **Elemental:** No additional damage from Called Shots; Fearless; immune to disease and poison.
* **Fiery Touch:** Str+d6; chance of catching fire.
* **Flame Strike:** Fire elementals can project a searing blast of flame using the Cone Template. Characters within the cone must beat the spirit's Shooting roll with Agility or suffer 2d10 damage, plus the chance of catching fire.
* **Immunity (Fire):** Takes no damage from any source of heat or fire.

METAL ELEMENTAL

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d12
Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d6
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11 (3)
Special Abilities:
* **Armor +3:** Solid metal.
* **Elemental:** No additional damage from Called Shots; Fearless; immune to disease and poison.
* **Slam:** Str+d6.
* **Sweep:** Metal elementals may attack all adjacent creatures at no penalty.

WATER ELEMENTAL

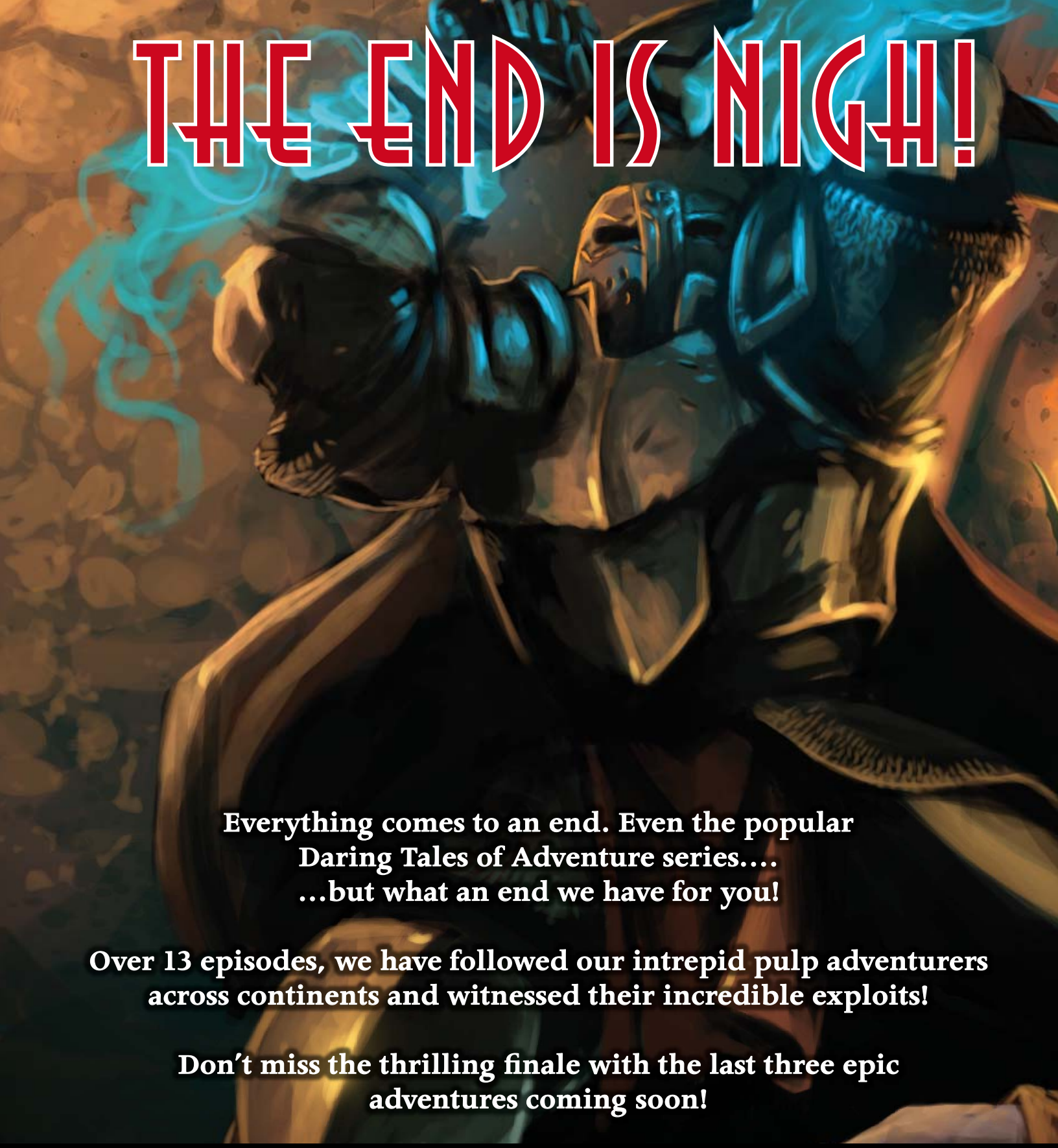
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d8
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7
Special Abilities:
* **Elemental:** No additional damage from Called Shots; Fearless; immune to disease and poison.
* **Slam:** Str+d6.
* **Waterspout:** Water spirits can project a torrent of rushing water in the shape of a Come Template. Creatures within the cone must make a Strength roll at –2 or be Shaken.

WOOD ELEMENTAL

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d8, Stealth d8
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6 **Toughness:** 8 (1)
Special Abilities:
* **Armor +1:** Hard bark.
* **Elemental:** No additional damage from Called Shots; Fearless; immune to disease and poison.
* **Improved Sweep:** May attack all adjacent foes with no penalty.
* **Slam:** Str+d6.

SUMO WRESTLER

The sumo wrestlers are treated as Henchmen.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8
Hindrances: Obese
Edges: Combat reflexes, Improved Frenzy, Quick
Gear: —
Special Abilities:
* **Slam:** Str. With a raise on the Fighting roll, victims are also knocked back 1". They must make an Agility roll as a free action or fall prone.



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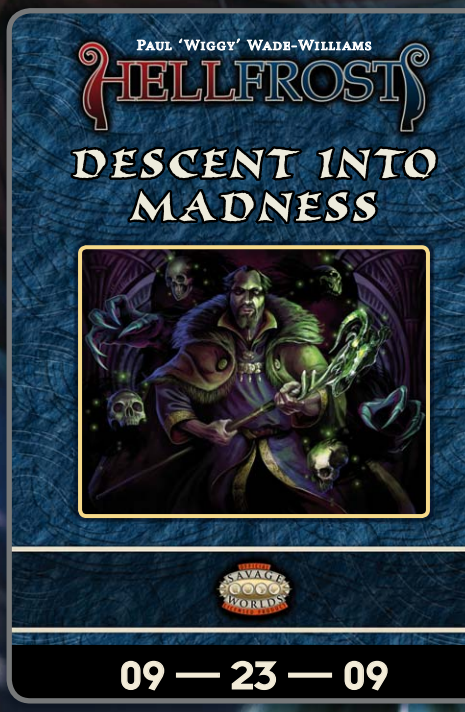
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EMPIRE OF THE BLACK PHARAOH



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DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

1G

EMPIRE OF THE BLACK PHARAOH

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EMPIRE OF THE BLACK PHARAOH

Kadar ibn Mukhtar began his criminal career as a mercenary weird scientist. For the right fee, he would create gizmos for criminal gangs. His life changed in 1926, when his research led him to discover the properties of time manipulation. Kadar, using his considerable ill-gotten fortune, began to plan for the future—a future in which he would rule over the entire globe as a new pharaoh.

Kadar created an alter-ego, the Black Pharaoh, and quickly began building a criminal empire. He hired other criminals and outfitted them with Weird Science devices, though ones he could deactivate and whose power source could only be recharged at his whim. As well as his elite criminals, the Black Pharaoh is also served by cultists, who believe he is a living-god (thanks mainly to his disguise and apparent supernatural powers).

The Black Pharaoh's master plan requires a device of unusual power, a weapon he calls the Eye of Creation. The Eye functions by focusing energy through a series of magnetic fields and amplifying its intensity through a matrix of lenses and crystals. The resultant beam can, in theory, alter the passage of time, though only backward. He plans to send the nations of the world back into the Stone Age, leaving Egypt alone with technology. Then, with him as pharaoh, Egypt will conquer the world and create a truly global empire.

His agents have stolen thousands of gemstones, which have been ground down and reconstituted into huge lenses. But the key piece, a power source capable of ripping through the veil of time, has proven elusive. Not even the Black Pharaoh's Weird Science experiments have been able to perfect such an energy source.

Fortunately for the criminal mastermind, what modern science cannot achieve, ancient science could. The Black Pharaoh has learned of a supposedly-mythical sphere known as the Heart of Egypt.

Plato wrote of Atlantis as a city inhabited by an advanced race, and he was right. The Atlanteans knew how to harness awesome energy by converting radioactive elements, such as uranium, into something far more powerful. Such was the complexity and danger involved in this process, that the Atlanteans managed to crate just a single sphere of the element. Although small, it provided enough power for their entire city.

There were survivors of Atlantis' watery demise. A small few arrived in Egypt, where they lived out the rest of their lives as gods. Among the treasures they brought with them was the energy sphere. After using a small fraction of its power to subdue the natives, the Atlanteans turned to civilizing the savages in a bid to rekindle their lost civilization,but their lives were short, and little progress was made before their deaths.

Although the Egyptians never learned how to harness its power, they knew the sphere was special, and accorded it divine status. In their mythology, it became a heart (due to its red color), from which the gods drew their power. It was placed within the great temple at Karnak until the reign of the heretic pharaoh, Akhenaten, whereupon the stone vanished from history.

Strangely, though, the image of the Aten was a sphere from which radiated lines of energy. Egyptologists believe this was a representation of the sun's disc, but the true Aten was the Atlantean sphere, which the deranged pharaoh claimed spoke to him in dreams.

When Alexander the Great came to Egypt, he was seen as a liberator, not a conqueror. The oracle at Siwa told him of the Atlantean orb and where it could be found. The great general removed the gem and hid it away, fearing a rival would abuse its power and try to topple him.

As he lay on his death bed in Babylon, he spoke to his general, Ptolemy, future pharaoh of Egypt, and told him of the secret. He gave Ptolemy an ancient amulet, which Alexander said held the secret to the whereabouts of the treasure.

Thinking his master deranged with fever (the Atlantean words, which Alexander learned in Egypt from an elderly priest, were a meaningless jumble of letters to Ptolemy), the general never sought out the sphere. The amulet was passed down through generations of Ptolemaic pharaohs as a relic of Alexander's age, until finally

it was buried in the tomb of a minor princess around 100 BC (during the reign of Ptolemy X).

The Black Pharaoh, through his contacts and expeditions, discovered the princess' tomb, only to find it had already been excavated. The villain has since learned of the amulet's location, and has made plans to have it brought to Egypt by its unwitting owner.

GM Note: Several Wild Card villains are equipped with Weird Science gizmos. These may end up in the hands of the player characters, although they need the Weird Science skill to use them. Power Points for these items do *not* recharge in the conventional *Daring Tales'* manner (i.e. after each scene). Once the Power Points are expended, the device is useless. Not even Doc Davenport can use his abilities to recharge them. As such, their Power Points must be carefully monitored.

The Black Pharaoh commands loyalty through fear. Absolutely nothing the heroes do can scare his cohorts or cultists into revealing anything about his plans. They've seen his power, and the adventurers' abilities pale to nothingness in comparison.

THE CHARACTERS

This Savage Adventure contains a pulp tale based around the exploits of four pre-generated characters. The full character sheets are available for free at **www.tripleacegames.com**.

The heroes have all their leveling opportunities from Seasoned (at which they begin) into Legendary mapped out in advance. Each published adventure in this line earns the heroes a fixed 5 Experience Points, guaranteeing them an advance every mission. All the players need do is tick the appropriate box and start making use of the new upgrade.

Characters: 100 XP.

The GM also needs the pulp setting rules from the TAG website.

ACT 1: EGYPT

The heroes begin on a movie set in the Egyptian desert outside Cairo. They've been hired to protect an actress, Veronica Cantori, a well-known starlet of dubious acting prowess.

SCENE 1: BEN WHO?

Ah, Egypt—land of adventure! Unfortunately you haven't had much adventure since you arrived. For the last two weeks you've been working as bodyguards to a budding actress—Veronica Cantori. She isn't a big name, but the studio thinks she is worth watching over. Several break-ins at her home before she left prompted the studio to hire escorts. Free room and board, a chance to visit Cairo, and even minor roles in the movie all made the deal seem sweet.

Today's scene involves a chariot chase. According to the script of The Egyptian Princess(the movie Veronica is starring in) her character, the eponymous princess, is fleeing from her Assyrian suitor, played by a ham actor who thinks he's the next Rudolph Valentino. You're taking part in the scene as extras—manning and driving chariots behind the "glorious prince."

And…ACTION! The chariots begin thundering across the desert sands at full speed, sand flying as hooves thunder. A rifle shot rings out across the desert, and Veronica's driver tumbles from the chariot. The horses panic and increase their speed! The prince, all bluster and no brains, reins in his horse, shouting, "That wasn't in the script! Should we cut?"

Veronica's chariot, meanwhile, continues to thunder across the sands!

Run this scene as a Chase using the standard Obstacles rules. The Obstacles are Sparse (–1) and represent gullies and small stones. All count as soft Obstacles. The fleeing chariot begins 3 Range Increments ahead of the characters' vehicles, and each Range Increment is 10". Using the chariots requires Driving, not Riding. Each holds a maximum of two people. Let the heroes decide who is driving and who is the passenger in each.

Veronica isn't in control of her chariot—she's too scared to do anything except scream. Each round, the chariot automatically moves one Range Increment. Deal the horses an action card, but ignore the suit—the Obstacles are only there to complicate matters for the heroes.

The only safe way to stop the bolting horses is to pull alongside using the parallel maneuver and leap onto the chariot (an Agility roll) or the horses (Agility roll at –2). Stopping the runaway horses from inside the chariot requires a Driving roll at –2. On the horses, it's a Riding roll at –2.

An alternative rescue attempt can be made by leaping onto the chariot and then convincing Veronica to leap back over with the hero. Getting her to comply requires an Intimidation or Persuasion roll. Her leap requires an Agility roll (and a character controlled chariot to be Parallel), but the hero with her may assist in a Cooperative roll.

Unfortunately, time is against the characters. At the end of the 6th round, a wheel breaks, destroying the chariot as it digs into the ground. Anyone on the chariot takes 3d6 damage from the crash. Veronica survives the odeal—at worst she is Incapacitated and suffers a broken leg. It's more likely she is badly bruised and shaken up. Production on the movie stops while the script is rewritten to account for her injury,

Veronica Cantori: See page 17.

INVESTIGATION

A hero who inspects the chariot can make a Common Knowledge (–2) or Repair roll. With success, he realizes the wheel breaking was no accident—the spokes have been partially cut, weakening their integrity. Unfortunately, the chariots were left outside all night, so anyone could have sabotaged the wheel.

SCENE 2: INVISIBLE ASSAILANTS

Veronica has returned to her tent after the excitement of earlier, leaving you the chance to enjoy a quiet evening around the camp fire. About midnight, you're disturbed by a loud scream. Veronica comes running (or limping) from her tent, clutching her neck. She then begins slapping her hands in the air, like she's trying to fight off a mosquito. "Help!" she screams in a piercing voice. "Help me!"

The sight of a movie star performing some bizarre mime act in the middle of the desert is enough to force a Notice roll from the heroes to avoid Surprise. In this instance, "surprise" equates to a moment's pause to try and understand the situation.

The battlefield is 24" square. The characters begin near one edge, seated around a campfire the size of a Small Burst Template. It sheds enough light to make the visibility Dim (–1). There are six tents, each 3" by 2" at the opposite end of the battlefield. Place a few obstacles like film equipment or supply crates to help break up the ground a little. Movement through these is difficult ground.

Shadow Walker, one of the Black Pharaoh's lieutenants, has tried to sneak into camp and steal Veronica's amulet. He wears an *invisibility* gizmo of his master's design. His minions, a group of cultists, wear lesser gizmos slaved to Shadow Walker's device. Make a Weird Science roll for Shadow Walker, spending a benny if necessary to ensure a success—whatever result he gets also applies to the cultists equally.

Each lesser device has just 5 Power Points, however, which is enough for just 3 rounds of invisibility. By the time the characters are alerted and arrive, the goons have already had one round of being invisible.

Don't place figures for the invisible villains on the tabletop—they are invisible, after all. Their movement should be mentally calculated by the GM. This makes the



fight slightly more complex to manage, but it removes any player inclination to act on knowledge their character doesn't have.

When a villain is detected by a character, place the relevant figure back on the tabletop and mark it with a colored gaming stone. Give the spotter a stone of the same color as well. To the other characters, the goon is still invisible. However, having a comrade point out his location allows a free action Notice roll (even if an adventurer made one already this round). Once their devices run out of Power Points (the start of the third round of combat), place figures for the goons.

Throwing sand at a detected but still invisible foe coats the target in fine grains. It doesn't make him visible enough to negate the penalties, but it does allow the hero's comrades a free Notice roll to spot the goon.

Shadow Walker is only after Veronica's amulet. Ideally he tries to snatch it from her neck. This is treated as a Disarm maneuver. Veronica shouts out, *"My amulet!"* if the trinket is stolen, thus alerting the characters to its existence.

Once he has it in his possession, Shadow Walker flees. Remember, items grabbed by him don't become invisible. This allows every hero a free Notice roll to spot the villain. He also attempts to escape once his invisibility gizmo drops down to 10 Power Points.

Veronica Cantori: See page 17.

Shadow Walker: See page 18.

Cultists (1 per hero): See page 18.

POSSIBLE CHASE

The heroes may decide to give chase to Shadow Walker. Run this as a regular Chase, with Sparse (–1) Obstacles. These represent soft sand, small dunes, and rocks. Characters who fail an Agility roll don't suffer a collision. Instead, they trip over and fall flat on their faces. Their next Agility roll suffers a –2 penalty. Shadow Walker begins 3 Range Increments ahead of the characters.

Characters who have detected him don't suffer any penalties—they can follow his footprints in the sand or see the amulet jangling around. Those yet to spot him suffer a –2 penalty to Agility rolls, though they make a Notice roll as a free action each round (someone is bound to be pointing his location out).

Snatching the amulet requires a Disarm maneuver. There's no penalty for Shadow Walker being invisible—the amulet is clearly visible—but the lighting in the desert is Dark (–2).

As much as he is loyal to his master, Shadow Walker isn't suicidal. Outnumbered and without any backup, once a hero gets to the same Range Increment or his Power Points drop to 5, he throws the amulet away, hoping to distract his foes long enough for him to escape.

Use the Recurring Villains rule if needed to ensure his escape at this point (he can just vanish by ducking onto rocky terrain behind a dune, thus leaving no prints). He has no intention of reporting his failure to his master just yet. Instead, he goes back to Cairo to fetch help.

Whatever happens, the amulet must end up in the characters' hands.

VERONICA'S STORY

Veronica snatches the amulet back from the heroes when it's presented to her. *"This thing has been nothing but trouble!" she wails. "I don't know why I bother keeping it!"* Of course, she rejects any offers from the adventurers to take it off her hands. If asked where she acquired it, she says:

"Daddy was an arky...orkey…an explorer. He was in Egypt last year digging up some boring old tomb. I was shooting 'Sheba, the Amazonian Queen' at the time. Have you seen it? One of my better works, the director said.

Anyway, he brought it back with him and gave it to me. He said it belonged to an Egyptian princess. When I got the role for this film I thought it must be a lucky charm, because this film is called The Egyptian Princess.

Then someone tried to break into my house. Three times! Anyway, I wasn't the first choice for this role, though I don't know why. Apparently, there were three other actresses before me, but they all had… accidents. Anyway, I got a call saying I'd got the part. Everything looked swell, until I was attacked tonight!"

THE DIRECTOR

The movie director, Bertie Bigsby, arrives at this point to check on his star. He fawns over Veronica for a while, and then suggests she go to bed to get some rest. Once she's out of earshot, he says quietly, *"I don't know why I cast her!"*

Questioned about this, or indeed the mysterious accidents, he tells a strange story.

"She's right, she wasn't my first choice. Dang, she wasn't even on my short list. The first actress I chose had an automobile crash. The second was bitten by a snake or something, and the third girl drowned in some freak accident.

"Then someone phones me at the studio and suggests I pick Veronica to star in the movie. Oh, I refused outright, but then he offered me $50,000. That was too much to turn down. No idea who her benefactor is, but money is money, right?

"Anyway, that's when I made the call to hire you as bodyguards. I figure if the girl is worth 50 big ones, she's worth protecting. I mean, I couldn't afford to lose a fourth actress—the studio was

threatening to shut down production. Something about a curse, they said.

"Please don't tell Veronica any of this. It doesn't hurt her to think she got the role because of her acting ability."

The Black Pharaoh was the mysterious benefactor. After several failed attempts by his incompetent followers to grab the amulet in America, he learned The Egyptian Princess was being shot in Cairo. Where better, he thought, to snatch the necklace than his own backyard?

So he arranged for the movie to receive a funding boost, in return for Veronica being picked for the role (after failing to win her a place by bumping off the competition). What he didn't count on was her bringing along bodyguards.

THE AMULET

The amulet is 24-carat gold and shaped to resemble the mythical Eye of Horus (a stylized eye). Inscribed in an early form of hieroglyphs is the name "Narmer." There is also some other writing. Although it has similarities to Egyptian script, it also has other elements which make it untranslatable.

Characters making a Knowledge (History) roll know Narmer was a very early pharaoh, credited with unifying Upper and Lower Egypt. Artifacts from this era are extremely rare, and no gold items have been discovered, at least not until now.

If the heroes have played through *Daring Tales of Adventure #10: Kingdom of the Blood Gods*, they recognize the indecipherable script from the ancient (Atlantean) ruins. Unfortunately, the one man they knew of in Cairo who might have been able to help them, Rashid ibn Al-Azif (from *Daring Tales of Adventure #7*) is dead.

SCENE 3: CAIRO

In the morning, Veronica, still shaken by the accident, refuses to shoot any scenes. Instead, she demands the characters take her to Cairo so she can visit the souk. No amount of persuasion, cajoling, or blackmailing can prevent the young starlet from taking her trip. As she says, *"You either come with me, or I'll get you fired and go on my own!"*

Since the heroes' pay is dependant on keeping the actress both safe and happy, she'll eventually get her way. Bigsby asks the adventurers to comply if they hold out, claiming he could do with a break from her incessant whining. The director loans the heroes his open-top sedan, which he had shipped over from America at great expense (to the studio).

Veronica has more money than sense (and acting talent). At the souk, she goes on a huge spending spree, though she refuses to haggle—that's why she has helpers. Rugs, pots, spices, and fake artifacts are all purchased and loaded into the sedan. Give the players a short break from the action and let them roleplay haggling. The rules of selling are simple—start high and go no lower than half the first price you quote.

Once the players are twitching for more action, proceed to the next section.

THE OLD WOMAN

At some point during the shopping spree the characters will undoubtedly take their eyes off Veronica, if only for a split second. Next thing the characters know, the actress is screaming and trying to fend off an old Egyptian woman who is poking and prodding at her. The old lady speaks Arabic fluently, though she has very basic French and English.

"The Eye," cackles the old woman, gesturing toward Veronica's amulet, which she is wearing outside her blouse, "the Eye of Horus. This is very special! Very special! I have seen this writing before, long ago, in an old tomb. A very secret tomb! My brother knows the way. Come, come with me!"

Before the characters get a chance to quiz the crone on her claims, Shadow Walker makes a return appearance. This time he has brought a friend to help him—a criminal known as the Scarab.

A car screeches to a halt near the heroes, and disgorges Shadow Walker and a small number of thugs. These thugs don't have any *invisibility* gizmos. The Scarab flies into view over the rooftops. His first action is to drop his jar of flesh-eating scarab beetles near the characters.

The outdoor bazaar is huge and should cover most of the table. Each brightly-covered stall, and there are dozens and dozens of them, measures 1" wide and 2" long. The objects for sale in the stalls are whatever the characters require (within sensible limits). For instance, if a hero wants to grab a pot to smash onto a thug's head, slap one with a pair of sandals, wrap one in a rug, or grab a silver plate to use as a makeshift buckler (Parry +1), there's one found in the nearest stall!

The car is parked 12" from the characters. Shadow Walker and the cultists begin adjacent to the vehicle. The Scarab is hovering 8" up and 8" behind the heroes. The crone ducks beneath a stall for cover. She plays no part in the engagement, but remains present so she can be questioned afterward.

During the skirmish, one adjacent cultist slips a tracking device (disguised as a dime) into a randomly chosen character's pocket. This allows the Black Pharaoh to track the characters location.

Shadow Walker hasn't returned to his master, so his Power Points are not recharged. If he has at least 5 left, he'll use his *invisibility* gizmo. Otherwise he's forced to fight without his big advantage. Likewise, he wasn't able to reach Cairo within "the golden hour" after his escape from the previous encounter, so he carries forward any wounds. The Scarab begins with his *armor* and *fly* pow-

ers active. His stats already show the necessary modifications. When he enters the combat, he has had his *fly* active for two rounds and his *armor* for a single round. Remember to track his Power Point expenditure.

All of the Wild Cards are expendable. However, if the party is exceptionally tough or combat-oriented, the GM may wish to use the Recurring Villains rule to have one escape so as to be present in subsequent encounters, making it more of a challenge for the characters.

During the engagement, keep a very close eye on Veronica's character. At some point, a second car pulls up. It contains four goons. Deal it an action card as normal. On its turn, it stops alongside her, Veronica is hauled inside (it's an open-topped sedan), and the car roars away. Although it bends the Recurring Villains rules slightly, the GM should use one of his bennies to ensure the car gets away. Proceed to Scene 4.

- **The Scarab:** See page 18.
- **Shadow Walker:** See page 18.
- **Cultists (1 per hero):** See page 18.
- **Flesh-Eating Scarab Swarm (1):** See page 19.

SCENE 4: CHASING STARLETS

Run this scene using the Chase rules and our alternate Obstacles rules. The villains begin 1 Range Increment ahead of the characters, plus one additional Range Increment for each round the heroes delay in giving chase. Each Range Increment equates to 10".

Should the adventurers all give chase on foot (or using the Doc's rocket pack), the thugs have +1 to their Driving rolls because they have the faster vehicle. There is 2 Range Increments difference between the car and runners (or a flying hero using his base Pace), which gives the heroes a –2 penalty. If the Doc flies at double his base Pace, the penalty is –1 (base Range Increment 5").

One cultist drives, one keeps Veronica subdued, and any others blast away at pursuing characters with their pistols. They want to escape, not get engaged in a lengthy firefight. So the driver will Push on any round he doesn't draw a Club suit.

While this chase should be exciting, the villains shouldn't get away. The amulet should be reacquired by the characters and Veronica rescued (again) when the scene ends.

OBSTACLES

Deuce (–4) Demonstration: A nationalist demonstration is marching through the streets. Success means the car nips down a side street and emerges back in the chase. Failure causes the vehicle to inch forward while the nationalists shout abuse and bang on the bodywork, costing it 2 Range Increments.

Three (–2) Swarm of Kids: Slowing down for that last corner was a mistake. A swarm of young street urchins have clambered onto the car and are demanding money. They're even on the hood, which is blocking the driver's vision.

There's no specific penalty for a failure—the driver is just forced to move slowly this round. The kids stay on the car, and this penalty remains in play, until a hero pays them $10 (between them, not each) as an action or the car goes Out of Control, at which point they leap off and scurry away.

Four (–2) Narrow Street: The street is rather narrow and lined with market stalls on each side. Any failure results in a collision with a stationary soft Obstacle and scatters goods everywhere.

Five (0) Sniper: Resentment for the English still festers in Egypt after the 1924 riots. A sniper takes a pot shot at the characters (they're Caucasian, so likely English goes his reasoning) as they drive past. Roll three d6. Each roll of 1 on a die indicates a hit for 2d6 damage (from an Extra). The cultists don't become targets. They simply ignore this entry.

Six (–2) Goats: A goat herder is taking his livestock to market, but that means them crossing the road. Any failure simply results in the car making no progress due to the delay.

Seven (–2) Painters: The car careers dangerously close to scaffolding, atop which are a dozen painters. If the driver fails his Driving roll, the vehicle strikes the scaffolding and dislodges pots of white paint. Every occupant must make an Agility roll. Those who fail suffer a –1 penalty to Trait rolls until they spend an action to clean the paint off their faces.

Eight (0/–2) Traffic Cop: A policeman directing traffic holds up his hand for the vehicle to stop. Characters have the choice of stopping or ignoring his signal. The villains always ignore the cop.

Stopping causes the car to automatically drop back two Range Increments due to the delay. Tearing past the junction the cop is policing requires a Driving roll at –2. Failure leads to a collision with another vehicle. Since this is a "T-bone" collision, only the speed of the vehicle involved in the Chase counts.

Nine (–1) Slow Traffic: Slow-moving traffic forces the car to dodge and weave to make any progress. On a failure, the vehicle is blocked in and drops back one Range Increment.

Ten (–1) Road Works: Workers have left their wooden barricades in the road overnight to stop cars driving into a utility trench they're digging. Success avoids the road works, while a failure leads to a collision with a soft Obstacle.

Jack (–1) Bumpy Road: Cairo's back roads aren't well-maintained. Any failure causes a collision with a stationary hard Obstacle as the suspension takes a pounding from potholes and bits of debris.

Queen (–1) No Brake Lights: The vehicle in front suddenly comes to a complete stop, forcing the car to swerve to avoid a collision. A failure leads to a collision with a hard Obstacle.

King (0) Blocked Road: A vehicle pulls out into the road, sees the oncoming chase participant, and brakes hard! Success allows the driver to swerve around the car, while a failure causes a collision with a hard obstacle.

This is a T-bone, so only the chasing vehicle's speed counts.

Ace (0) Window Washer: As the car stops at a junction a windshield washer makes his move. Unfortunately, the car pulls away with him clutching the wipers and obscuring the driver's view. With failure, the car loses one Range Increment due to erratic maneuvers before the man leaps clear.

SEDAN

Because both cars have no roofs, the occupants can be targeted as per normal combat. However, they have Medium Cover (–2) because only their upper torsos are visible.

Acc/Top Speed: 10/20; **Toughness:** 12(3); **Crew:** 1+5

Cultists (1 per hero): See page 19.

THE OLD WOMAN AGAIN

Hopefully the heroes don't forget about the old woman in the souk. If they return, she's still shopping. Otherwise, she catches up with them later, having somehow tracked them down. She again mentions a secret tomb, and urges the characters to meet her brother.

The family has a long-tradition of tomb robbing, going back many centuries. The brother, Abdul, is a spirited man in his seventies who worked as a digger for Gaston Maspero in the 1880s and 90s. He asks to see the amulet. After studying it closely, he says:

"Yes, I have seen this writing before. There is a tomb near Amarna, where Akhenaten the heretic pharaoh once ruled, which contains this writing. The tomb is very secret. Only one man knows the way, and he is sick and in need of expensive medicine." Abdul coughs unconvincingly.

Abdul holds out for $100, although he'll accept $50. If the characters don't have the cash, Veronica hands over the greenbacks. Abdul then scribbles down directions to the tomb. Before the adventurers leave, he warns them to be careful—*"The pharaohs guarded their secrets jealously."*

Veronica refuses to go on any more adventures, so she hands over her amulet. She's sick of being chased and attacked. As far as she's concerned, it's the characters' problem now.

ACT 2: REMNANTS OF ATLANTIS

Amarna was once the seat of power of Akhenaten, the pharaoh who tried to bring monotheism to Egypt (and who failed). The city was rediscovered in the 18th century and mapped during the 19th century. All that remains today are foundation stones. An expedition, launched by the Egypt Exploration Society, finished an extensive dig in 1936. The tomb the characters seek is in the hills behind the city, in what has become known as the Royal Wadi.

There are five tombs in the wadi—a royal tomb, a cache tomb, an unfinished tomb, a completed tomb robbed in antiquity, and one in which the walls were plastered but never decorated with hieroglyphs. It is the last tomb, known to Egyptologists as Tomb 29, the characters seek.

Abdul's instructions indicate a section of plastered wall. If the old man was telling the truth, part of the plaster in the northeast corner is relatively new, put there by Abdul and his cohorts to conceal a second tomb complex they discovered behind the known one. Sure enough, a few good smacks with a heavy item reveals a dusty crawlspace.

The section beyond was constructed by the Atlanteans, who congregated here in secret to plot and plan. Simple devices, by Atlantean standards, enabled them to bypass the traps. Sadly, those items no longer exist, and the chambers are veritable deathtraps!

SCENE 1: GREAT BALLS OF FIRE

After a short crawl, the passage's height rises enough to allow upright walking. A few dozen yards later, the adventurers reach the first chamber.

You stand on one end of a colossal bridge. The far end isn't visible, even with your flashlights. Peering down, you see only inky darkness. Looking up, you see a high vaulted ceiling. Looking up further you see a huge pair of feet.

After maneuvering to get a better view, you realize the feet belong to a cyclopean statue carved from the rock face. The figure wears a simple skirt, and is well muscled. While it reminds you of Greek statues, the beard is more in keeping with Persian images. In its outstretched hand it grasps the looped top of a gargantuan ankh, the Egyptian symbol for life.

Heroes who want to test the depths of the abyss can throw a stone over the side. No sound of it hitting the bottom is heard. The drop is 500' (10d6 damage from a Wild Card source). The bridge has no visible supports, but is structurally very safe. It could support several hundred tons with ease.

A solid stone door seals the exit to this chamber. Dozens of Atlantean hieroglyphs adorn the door, among them an Eye of Horus. Touching it causes the door to rise into the ceiling, revealing a chamber beyond.

HOT STUFF

This long, wide chamber is completely empty. Across the expanse stands another doorway, much like the one you just passed through.

As soon as a hero enters the room, read the text below aloud. Then deal action cards.

WHOOSH! A column of swirling fire appears out of nowhere in the center of the room. As if controlled by some unseen hand, it begins moving!

The chamber is 30" long and 12" wide. The exit is blocked by a door identical to the one above. Opening it reveals a second chamber immediately beyond the portal.

The flaming column fills a Small Burst Template and stretches from floor to ceiling. It isn't a creature and has zero brainpower. Instead, it moves randomly each round. When its action card is called, roll a d12 and read it like a clockface. This determines the fire's direction. Then roll 2d6 for its movement. If it strikes a wall, it bounces back to form a 90-degree angle as many squares as required to complete its movement for the round.

Any creature caught under the template must make an Agility roll at –2 or suffer 2d10 damage (from an Extra) and risk a chance of catching fire. Since this is an area effect attack, the bonus from Dodge and Improved Dodge apply here.

The fiery pillars aren't affected by anything—they're just fire. However, the heroes don't know that, so they might waste a little time blasting away suspecting that they're some sort of elemental beings.

One randomly moving column of fire isn't particularly deadly. The Atlanteans knew this as well, so they made sure more appeared! Each round a deuce is dealt as any character's first action card, another column appears in the center of the room (which is bad luck for any hero in that space). If multiple deuces are drawn, then multiple fire columns come into play. Deal each column its own action card and roll for movement and direction separately.

Should every hero leave the room, all the pillars of fire immediately vanish, however one reappears in the center of the room the instant a hero steps back into the chamber.

SCENE 2: CHOP CHOP

Ahead stretches a long, colonnaded chamber. There are four rows of columns stretching from one end of the room to the other. Through the stone forest, you can just make out what appear to be sarcophagi leaning against the wall.

The second chamber is a long, colonnaded hall. Each column is 1" wide (impassable terrain) and rises majestically to the ceiling 8" above. The hall measures 9" wide and 24" long. There is a 1" wide opening in the center of the lower and upper wall.

The first line of pillars begins 1" from the east wall. Every other square along that line contains a pillar. There is then a 1" wide clear line of floor, followed by another line of pillars. So the sequence horizontally goes clear space, row of pillars, clear space, row of pillars, and so on. Reading up the line of columns the same pattern repeats (clear, pillar, clear, pillar,etc.).

Spaced equally along each long wall are unadorned stone sarcophagi. Waiting within these are robotic mummies, a creation of the ancient Atlanteans who built this chamber. The guardians activate once the first character enters the room. Deal action cards at this time.

As soon as the hero is inside, the door begins to slide shut. It does so at the end of the current round. It remains locked for six rounds. After this time, it can be opened again by pressing the Eye of Horus symbol. There is a symbol on both sides. The exit is blocked by a door identical to the one above. Opening it reveals the final chamber.

Although only machines, they are capable of using tactics, such as advancing behind pillars for cover. The pair nearest the exit move to block it as quickly as possible to prevent intruders from escaping quickly.

Should the heroes flee the room, the traps cease operation, and surviving mummies return to their sarcophagi to await the next set of intruders (which includes the heroes' return through this chamber).

The room is trapped in another way as well. Thin metal wires concealed in the columns spring out at random intervals and in random places, lacerating all in their path. These extend from floor to ceiling, so flying heroes aren't immune. There are only two safe areas in the entire chamber—the squares immediately in front of the entrance and exit. Any time a hero on any other square draws a deuce as his first action card in a round, he has blundered into one of the traps.

The character must make an immediate Agility roll (before any actions are taken in the round), modified by the suit of his card (as shown below), or suffer damage (from an Extra). The mummies are not immune to this, and should be dealt action cards as pairs to avoid them all being sliced open at once.

Suit	Mod	Damage
Club	–4	2d6+4
Diamond	–2	2d6+2
Heart	–1	2d6
Spade	0	2d4

Robotic Mummies (2 per hero): See page 19.

SCENE 3: DECIPHERING ATLANTEAN

The only furnishings in the chamber are two polished columns, roughly three feet high. The top appears to be polished obsidian, a volcanic glass found in various parts of the world (Turkey being the nearest source to Egypt).

The chamber is 10" to a side, though no tabletop action occurs here.

Placing the Eye of Horus so the writing is face-down on the right-hand obsidian panel causes images to appear on the left-hand one. These are Egyptian hieroglyphs. They form a translation of the Atlantean script.

Heroes who don't understand the language can at least transcribe the symbols and have them translated back in Cairo. The hieroglyphs read: *"The guardian of Athens shows the way to those of worth."*

Any hero making a Common Knowledge (–2) or Knowledge (History) roll knows the guardian of Athens likely refers to Athena, after whom the city was named. The largest temple to Athena in Athens is the Parthenon, which stands dominant atop the Acropolis.

After leaving this chamber, the characters must again face the pillars of fire in the next chamber. Hopefully they've learned they can't hurt them and simply opt to run as fast as they can.

SLICE, DICE, AND CULTISTS

When the characters enter the colonnaded hall, the traps and mummies activate. At the start of the second round, the far door opens. Entering into the chamber are cultists and at least one villainous Wild Card. Deal the cultists action cards in pairs just like the mummies.

Shadow Walker and the Scarab are present unless they were killed in previous scenes. Their Power Points are fully recharged, and the Scarab has a pot of beetles at hand. Each has recovered one wound from any previous injuries. If one or neither survived, then the Mind Flayer is present as well. Otherwise this new villain appears only in the final fight.

All of the Wild Cards are expendable. However, if the party is exceptionally tough or combat-oriented, the GM may wish to use the Recurring Villains rule to have one escape so as to be present in the final fight, making it more of a challenge for the characters.

- **Shadow Walker:** See page 18.
- **The Scarab:** See page 18.
- **The Mind Flayer:** See page 18.
- **Cultists (2 per hero):** See page 18.
- **Robotic Mummies (varies):** See page 19. The number activating depends on how many survived the previous encounter.

SCENE 4: ANKHS FOR THE MEMORY

Unfortunately, the heroes face a test of their worth before they can reach safety. Using the Atlantean decoder to read this particular amulet activated an ancient trap. The ground begins to shake as the tomb starts to collapse. The adventurers reach the start of the chasm-spanning bridge without much incident, but things quickly take an ugly turn.

At the other end of the bridge, you see a truly huge stone lowering down across the doorway, but that's not all—up ahead, the colossal ankh is beginning to pitch forward. Its arc will take it directly into the far end of the bridge. If it smashes into the structure, it will destroy a significant section, preventing the characters from reaching the doorway in time!

This scene uses a variant of the Chase rules. Lay out 10 markers along the tabletop. Then place 9 markers of a different color at right angles to one end of the first line to form a large "L" shape.

The first line represents the bridge, while the one vertical to it is the ankh's path. Characters begin on the first marker on the opposite end to where the lines intersect. The ankh, naturally, begins at the top of the other line of markers.

Most heroes will use Agility to govern their movement. Doc Davenport uses Piloting if he elects to *fly*. If a hero in your party can *teleport*, he moves Range Increments as normal should he activate his power, and uses the appropriate arcane skill. (The Range Increments in this scene don't represent a fixed distance. Rather, they are more an indication of time.)

The ankh has an effective Agility of d10. It can't make any maneuvers or stunts—it just falls. No force the explorers can muster can delay its progress. Should it reach the marker where the two lines intersect, it smashes through the bridge, destroying a 3" section. Anyone standing on the intersection when the ankh hits home suffers 4d10 damage (from an Extra) and is knocked one Range Increment back along the track.

Jumping the gap requires a Strength roll. Any failure leaves the hero dangling by his fingertips on the far edge of the chasm. A Strength roll is required as an action on subsequent rounds for him to drag himself onto what is left of the bridge and through the door.

Of course, we mustn't forget the sealing doorway in all of this. The immovable and indestructible (by any weapons the characters possess) stone block descends fully after 15 rounds. That should allow for plenty of time for the characters to move 10 Range Increments and give them chance for a few Strength rolls if they screw up their jump.

In the event they need a little more time to escape, give it to them, but don't make it obvious—they should feel that their dice rolls allowed them to escape just in the nick of time—not the GM's interference.

ACT 3: THE ACROPOLIS

Although the rock on which the Acropolis of Athens sits has been inhabited since Neolithic times, the structures best known in modern times date from the 5th and 6th centuries BC. Dominating the skyline of Athens is the Parthenon, the temple to Athena, protector of Athens.

The fastest way to reach Athens is by plane. From the airport, a quick taxi ride brings them to the top of the monument.

SCENE 1: THE CHAMBER OF ZEUS

The Parthenon is undergoing some restoration work. Wooden scaffolding has been erected along one side of the building. No workmen are currently present, but they have left behind their tools including shovels, picks, rope, and even two oil lamps.

Have the characters make a Notice roll as they snoop

around the interior. With success, they spot a flagstone marked with the Eye of Ra. Should they all fail, the one carrying the amulet receives a slight electric shock when he walks over it. Prying up the flagstone takes only a few minutes. A wide, deep shaft lies beneath, with rusty iron rungs imbedded into the bedrock which forms the tunnel's walls.

The shaft ends in a marble-walled chamber. Inscribed on the floor in Greek are the words, *"The feet of Zeus stand upon great wisdom; but his wrath is swift."* A single exit leads into darkness beyond. After a short walk the characters enter a large chamber.

The walls of this long chamber are adorned with intermittently placed iron shields, each bearing a stylized lightning bolt. Between them stand life-sized statues of Zeus. The god wears a wreath on his head, and carries a lightning bolt in his right hand. At the far end stands a 12' high statue of the god, carved from pure white marble but with gold for his toga, wreath, and lightning bolt.

The chamber measures 13" long and 9" wide. Arrayed along the long walls are a dozen iron shields, six to a side. These are spaced in alternating squares starting one square up from the bottom (so the pattern is blank wall, shield, blank wall, shield, and so on).

There are fourteen statues in total, seven to each side. When the characters move within 8" of the large statue, the smaller ones animate and attack!

Whenever a deuce is dealt in combat as a character's first action card in a round, the GM must roll two d6 before any actions are taken. Each d6 relates to the number of shields on the walls—count up a number of shields from the bottom of the left-hand wall to match the result of the first die, and repeat the process up the right-hand wall using the second die.

A bolt of electricity, Zeus' thunderbolt, shoots between these shields in a line 1" wide. Place a suitable strip of paper over the battlefield to indicate the path. Any character in the path of the lightning must make an Agility roll at –2 as a free action or suffer 2d10 damage (from an extra). Dodge and Improved Dodge modify this roll. The bolt lasts only a fraction of a second.

If multiple deuces are drawn, then multiple blasts of lighting tear across the room simultaneously. A character caught in multiple beams must roll to avoid each one individually, as each is considered a separate attack.

The large statue has Toughness 16, except the feet, which are only Toughness 8. Although twice the size of human feet, they are still a Small Target (–2). When the feet take a wound, the marble shatters to reveal a hollow space. Inside is a large coffer. Once the coffer is removed from the chamber, the lightning ceases.

Zeus' Minions (2 per hero): See page 19.

INSIDE THE COFFER

The coffer is locked. It doesn't have a keyhole, but there is an indentation on the top in the shape of the Eye of Horus. Veronica's amulet fits the hole perfectly. When the two are joined, the lid cracks open with a slight hiss. Inside is a large sphere, red as blood, its surface dimpled like a golf ball.

THE GOD OF DARKNESS

After a long climb you manage to reach the surface of the Acropolis with your prize in-hand. Several flatbed trucks with "Athens Museum" stenciled on their sides have arrived since you began your exploration. One has a canvas covering and is parked with the rear facing you. Suddenly, the canvas is flung open to reveal a heavy machine-gun! From the surrounding ruins, a number of men in coveralls appear, all brandishing pistols.

A figure emerges from the cab of the truck carrying the machinegun. He's naked apart from a pair of sandals, a black linen skirt, and a full-head mask shaped vaguely like a jackal. He carries a long, black staff in his right hand. He snaps his fingers, and a goon reaches into the cab and drags out Veronica.

"Thank you," the masked figure says, "for delivering my prize to me. Now, drop your weapons and kneel before the Black Pharaoh, or I shall reduce your friend to dust!"

The heroes are experienced explorers and they've seen plenty of Egyptian tombs. Those who succeed at a Common Knowledge roll recognize the mask isn't a jackal—it's designed to resemble the head of Set, the Egyptian god of chaos and darkness.

The Black Pharaoh isn't joking. Unless the characters do as he demands (including kneeling), he uses his *bolt* power on Veronica. Give the characters a chance to engage in some banter or insults before they choose to comply or suffer the Black Pharaoh's wrath. Hopefully they're wise by now to the benefits of surrendering—a chance to escape without first incurring more wounds and a free benny to assist them.

The villain takes great delight in looking over any Weird Science gizmos and commenting on how poor they are. He's a villain, so make his comments cruel—*"Primitive workmanship from an unenlightened mind."*

The Black Pharaoh: See page 17.

Cultists (4 per hero): See page 18. They have one heavy machinegun (Range: 30/60/120, Damage: 2d10, ROF 3, AP 4). The gunner, and only the gunner, has the Rock and Roll Edge.

SCENE 2: FRYING TONIGHT

The party is escorted down to the chamber of Zeus, whereupon they are bound securely.

"Many years ago," the Black Pharaoh begins, "I learned how to manipulate time. Simple tricks to a genius such as myself, and with a limited sphere of influence, but nevertheless, I had proven man could master time. All I lacked to produce a larger, more powerful time manipulation device was a source of power unequal to anything currently known to man.

"The stone you uncovered is such a device. The ancients' called it the Heart of Egypt, but it is far, far older. It once adorned the temple of Poseidon in Atlantis. Rescued by survivors before Atlantis sank, it reached Egypt, where some of the Atlanteans ruled as gods over the primitive inhabitants. The gem remained in the great temple of Luxor until Alexander the Great arrived. He knew of its origins and its power, and had it removed.

"A god himself, he left clues for those with the wisdom to understand so they could find the gemstone. Why? Because he foresaw my coming! He foresaw the rise of a new living god, made in his own image, and descended from Atlantean stock!

"With this gem in my possession, my ultimate weapon shall be complete! The Eye of Creation will rise into the heavens, giving me the ability to eradicate any city on the surface of the Earth, to send man back into the Stone Age. With this power at my disposal, no nation will dare move against me. My power will be unlimited!"

He walks over to one of the iron shields and points his staff at it. A ray of black light strikes the shield, knocking it from the wall. The Black Pharaoh bends over to study the area behind.

"Yes, just as I suspected. A primitive generator powered by energy crystals. Far beyond the reaches of your puny intellects. A tweak here, and…there!" He replaces the shield and kicks it to lock it back into place. "In just a few moments, Zeus' wrath will reduce your worthless bodies to ashes!

"Don't worry about your friend. She will be returned to Egypt. I shall have need of her in my experiments."

With that, he closes the door, leaving you alone with your last thoughts.

A humming begins to emanate from the shields, steadily growing louder as the seconds tick by. The Black Pharaoh has rigged the shields to overload. When they do, the chamber will be filled with extremely powerful bolts of lightning. These in turn will shatter the walls and cause the entire subterranean system to collapse, burying what's left of the characters alive. At least that's the theory.

In order to escape, they have six rounds to perform the following tasks in order. When the 6th round ends, every character in the chamber suffers 3d10 damage from an Extra. For all his genius, the Black Pharaoh failed to notice a safety cutout. After a brief but powerful flash of lighting, the mechanism shuts down, but not before the blast shatters the stone door.

1. The characters' first task is probably to work free of their bonds. This requires an Agility or Strength roll at –2. Failure means a hero must try again next round. Once an adventurer is free, he can release one comrade's bonds, although doing so prohibits any other actions in the same round. The characters might think about simply running away once they're all free. Unfortunately the door doesn't open from the inside and it's too tough to break down in the time available.
2. Ripping a shield off the wall requires a Strength roll as an action. Failed rolls may be reattempted next round. A hero with bound hands can still have a go, but he suffers a –2 penalty.
3. Next, the characters must deduce the workings of the machinery behind the shield. This requires a Repair (–4) or Weird Science roll (–2). Failure means the hero is stymied by the complexity, although he can try again next round.
4. Finally, the adventurer must deactivate the device. This requires a Repair (–2) or Weird Science roll. Bound characters can have a go (with someone else acting as their eyes and providing directions), but the roll is made with an additional –2 penalty. As the device deactivates, so the door opens (a safety feature to ensure the builders didn't get trapped and fried).

SCENE 3: WINGS OVER ATHENS

You reach the top of the Acropolis to discover the villains have made good their escape! Looking down over the summit, you can see a convoy of four trucks kicking up dust as they speed toward the city. Looks like they're going to get away! If only you could find a use for those wooden poles and canvas sheets…

The Black Pharaoh has ordered his goons to take Veronica to the airport, ready to be loaded onto a plane and shipped back to Egypt. He has gone on ahead with the Heart of Egypt. His villainous hubris doesn't allow the notion that the characters might actually survive the deathtrap.

Even if the characters had a car, they wouldn't catch the escaping goons in time. Doc Davenport (or a similar flying hero) might be able to give chase, but he'd be all alone and vastly outnumbered. The thin wooden poles

and canvas sheets are suitable for making a hang glider. Hang gliders have been around since the 19th century, so the heroes know the principal of how they function.

To catch the goons, the characters have just six rounds to complete the following tasks in order. Should *every* hero fail, the thugs are too far away for the primitive hang gliders to catch up and they escape the party. The characters have lost both the Heart and Veronica. It's time to head to Act 4.

1. Constructing a single hang glider requires a Repair roll. This may be a Cooperative roll. There are enough materials to construct as many hang gliders as required, but each one requires a Repair roll. A failure means the contraption isn't finished, but the builder can roll again next round.Most modern hang gliders carry a maximum of two people, but this is a pulp game. It's up to the characters how many their machine/s can carry, but the heavier the load, the greater the penalties in the next step.
2. The heroes must launch themselves down the Acropolis and catch the updraft from the city below. This requires a Smarts roll from each pilot to judge the wind direction and strength. Failure means the hero got it wrong and must try again next round.
3. Now airborne, the pilots must steer their devices down the hill and toward the thugs' trucks. This requires a Piloting roll. If the hang glider has a single passenger (in addition to the pilot), the Piloting roll is at –1. Two passengers give a –2 penalty, three a –4, and four or more a hefty –6.Doc Davenport doesn't need a hang glider, since he can fly, but he still has to make a Piloting roll. For the sake of convenience, once he lands on a truck (or he fails to do so, as noted below) he has expended all his rocket pack's Power Points for the scene.
4. The heroes are over the trucks, but the hang gliders are rapidly losing altitude. Have each hero nominate a truck before he makes his roll. Veronica is in the cab of the second truck from the front. She doesn't aid in any escape overtly—she's sedated to stop her talking. Dropping from the hang glider into the back of a truck requires an Agility roll at –2. On a failure, the hero lands but is Shaken and prone. A character can drop down onto the goons if he so wishes. This is an Agility Trick, but the hero suffers an additional –2 penalty. However, it does affect both goons simultaneously. As above, failure leaves the daring hero Shaken and prone.

So long as at least one hero completes these steps in time, he buys his comrades a little more time as the remainder of the scene unfolds. Naturally, the thugs in the truck don't take the arrival of the characters lightly. They move to attack. Heroes not yet on a truck may continue to roll for steps 3 and 4 for another three rounds. After this time, they're out of the next scene for a little while.

SCENE 4: TRUCK FIGHTING

It doesn't matter much to the adventure if the characters rescue Veronica or not—they still have to return to Egypt to find the Eye and stop the Black Pharaoh's dastardly plan.

There are four trucks, each with a driver in the cab and two cultists in the back. For game play, the flatbeds measure 3" by 2". It's larger than real life, but it allows for multiple heroes to land on a single truck.

As an action, the driver may make sudden turns and swerve violently to try and dislodge the unwanted passengers. Everyone on the back must make an Agility roll opposed by the Driving roll. On a failure, Extras fall off and are assumed Incapacitated. The characters aren't quite so unfortunate—they manage to catch hold of the edge. Pulling oneself back on the truck requires a Strength roll as an action.

Any goons take this opportunity to dislodge the character by stamping on his hands. The character's Parry is reduced by 2 due to his vastly limited ability to dodge (i.e. move his hands out of the way). With a successful hit, the victim must make a Strength roll opposed by the damage. With failure, he tumbles from the truck and suffers 2d6 damage.

Throwing someone off the back of a truck first requires a grappling maneuver. If the hero wins the opposed roll on a subsequent round, he can chose to inflict damage or send the cultist tumbling into the dust. Since the characters are the good guys, they are left dangling as above if a cultist manages to maneuver them off the side.

Characters dangling from the rear of the truck face another danger—being crushed! The driver behind can see the unfortunate sap, and accelerates. However, he can't react in the same round the character fell. This, given good cards, allows the character at least one chance of escape. On his next action card, the driver makes an opposed Driving roll with the driver of the truck the character is on. With success, he knocks into the character for 2d6 damage (3d6 if he gets a raise).

In the event the characters haven't landed on the second truck from the front, the driver pulls down a side road after five rounds. Now if they want to give chase they'll have to disable the driver of their truck, climb into the cab (which requires an Agility roll as an action), and give chase. Proceed to the next section when they do.

Cultists (3 per hero): See page 18.

CHASE THROUGH ATHENS

For each round the heroes delay in giving chase, the escaping truck is one Range Increment away. Each Range Increment is 10". Remember, Doc Davenport is out of Power Points for his rocket pack and this is the same scene, so they haven't had time to recharge. Use the regular Obstacles rules.

The round after the heroes give chase, any other surviving truck drivers do the same. They begin one Range Increment behind the characters' trucks, and attempt to ram them off the road.

ACT 4: EGYPT, AGAIN

Regardless of whether Veronica was saved or not, the Black Pharaoh now possesses the Atlantean sphere. Unless the heroes can track him down, he'll put his plan into action and reduce the technologically advanced countries of the world to a primitive state.

SCENE 1: SLEEPY TIME

Once back in Cairo, the heroes are going to need to hit the streets and interact with the city's underworld. The Black Pharaoh doesn't operate in a vacuum, and any master criminal will leave a trail of clues, whether through associates or enemies.

Have the characters make Streetwise rolls at –2. With success, they learn the Black Pharaoh sometimes uses a warehouse on the riverside to fence wares. The contact they've made figures they're in Cairo to buy stolen goods, so he tells them the password to ensure a quick entrance—"time marches on." It's not much of a lead, but it's the only one going. On a failure, they learn the above, but not the password. It's not particularly important either way—the Black Pharaoh quickly learns the heroes are on the move via the tracking device.

An alternative option is for the heroes to invent a Contact (this is a great time to bring one into play). Whoever they create knows the information above, including the password.

The warehouse is occupied by a skeleton staff day and night. Giving the password allows immediate access. Not knowing the password requires a Persuasion (–2) roll for the door to be opened. Otherwise it has to be kicked open, granting the characters Surprise over their foes.

Once inside, one of the cultists asks how he can help the heroes. If they pretend to be buyers, he leads them to a section near the center of the right-hand wall. This is the cue for hidden cultists to attack. Have the heroes roll to avoid being Surprised.

The warehouse is 16" long and 10" wide. It's stacked full of crates and barrels. There is one door into the building. Skylights provide ample light. As soon as a fight begins, no matter who starts it, a cultist activates a switch. Metal shutters seal the skylights and the door shut.

The characters *must* lose this scene. It's slightly unsporting, but a hero's life is never an easy one. The gas is potent stuff, so it's likely to incapacitate the heroes quickly, or at least cause them to spend a few bennies, meaning they won't be able to Soak physical attacks. In the event you need more goons with gas grenades, add in one per hero each time reinforcements are required.

- **Cultists (1 per hero):** See page 18.
- **Gas Mask Cultists (2 per hero):** As regular cultists (page 18), except each wears a gasmask and carries three knockout gas grenades. Range: 5/10/20, Large Burst Template. Victims not wearing gasmasks must make a Vigor roll or fall unconscious for 2d6 hours. The roll must be made each round a hero begins in turn in or enters a template. Each template remains in play for three rounds.

SCENE 2: OLD AGE BECKONS

When the heroes wake up, they find they are tied to stout wooden posts a few dozen yards from a crumbling mud brick pyramid. Characters who make a Common Knowledge (–4) or Knowledge (History) roll recognize it as Abusir, a Pharaonic mortuary complex some 15 miles south of Cairo. The Black Pharaoh stands before the party.

"You have proven resourceful opponents." The Black Pharaoh is genuinely pleased. "I could use people like you in my new world. I can offer you riches and power. Whatever you wish, it can be yours. What say you? Will you join me in ruling the world, or will you hold to your morality and die out here?"

The Black Pharaoh's offer is only semi-genuine. He doubts he could trust any hero who would turn against his principles to save his life. Still, he's content to watch them beg for mercy and become his lap dogs. Whether or not he gets his desire depends on how the adventurer's respond. Whatever their answer, he replies:

"On second thought," he sneers, "perhaps you can serve me in a more profitable way." He gestures toward the nearby ruin, from which a tall telescoping mast is now extending. Attached to the top is a strange contraption.

"Very soon the Eye of Creation will be ready to launch into the heavens. I have devised an orbital platform on which to mount my machine. Up there, high above the stars, I can maneuver it to target any point on Earth in a matter of seconds.

"You will not be around to witness my glorious triumph, however, but I do want to share with you what fate awaits the rest of mankind. I have managed to chip off a piece of the sphere, a tiny fragment, but even that provides near-limitless energy, albeit on a small scale.

"According to my calculations, even on the minimum setting, the device you now see unfolding will wither the flesh from your bones. I imagine your deaths will be quiet painful, but take

heart—you have the honor of being the first to die by its withering gaze!

"Oh," he adds nonchalantly, "you are probably wondering how my agents always managed to locate you." He reaches into <character's name> pocket and pulls out a dime. "This coin contains a powerful miniaturized tracking device, planted on you in the Cairo bazaar. You've led me a merry chase I admit, but I have always been one step ahead of you!"

He turns and walks toward the ruined monument. A few moments after the Black Pharaoh departs, the machinery begins to whirr into life. A wide beam of piercing light shines forth in a wide arc. Where it hits the sand, the particles begin to turn to fine dust. Then the intense beam begins to expand outward, right toward you!

This scene uses a variant of the Chase rules in combination with our "deathtrap escape" procedure.

Rather than an infinitely long track, place 15 markers in a line on the tabletop to represent the Egyptian desert. The characters begin on the 5th marker. Being tied to stakes prevents any movement, however.

Deal the gizmo and the characters action cards as normal. For the first five rounds, the beam of light automatically moves one Range Increment (it moves onto the track on the first round). If the beam ends up on the same marker as a hero or moves ahead of him, the explorer suffers 2d10 damage (from a Wild Card) at the *end* of the current round.

The characters can't run until they have escaped their bonds. This requires an Agility or Strength roll at –4 (character's choice as to which). A hero who escapes can free a comrade in one round, but no other actions may be taken.

Once the heroes are free, they can begin running away. Now the regular Chase rules kick in. The laser has Agility d10. It never uses any stunts or maneuvers. Doubling back and daring to jump through the beam is exceptionally risky—the field of expansion is such that it fills every range marker behind its current position as well!

The characters use Agility to flee. The desert is littered with rubble and dunes, all of which serve to trip up the heroes. A character who draws a Club suit must check the value against the table below. This determines his penalty for the round. Failure means the hero stumbles and falls. His Agility roll next round suffers a –2 penalty.

Card	Penalty
Deuce	–6
3–10	–4
Jack–Queen	–2
King–Ace	–1

When either the beam or all the heroes have moved beyond the 15th marker the device shuts down—the Black Pharaoh has allowed enough time to "guarantee" his adversaries have been aged to dust. Very soon after, though, the sand begins to vibrate and a muffled roar rises steadily in volume.

SCENE 3: TROUBLE WITH TIME

The inside of the pyramid has been altered to suit the Black Pharaoh's needs. Rather than a small crypt, the structure has been hollowed out to accommodate a large rocket and complex machinery. Much of the rocket is concealed down a deep shaft. All that the heroes can see is the top third.



The battlefield is 30" to a side. The rocket is 12" across, and sits in a shaft 14" across. This is all located in the center of the chamber. A gangplank crosses the gap to an open door in the fuselage, but this is on the opposite side to where the characters enter the pyramid. The party enters by a 1" wide tunnel in the center of the south wall.

Watching over a control console is the Black Pharaoh. A number of cultists are present, operating switches and dials at their master's command. Shadow Walker, the Scarab, and Mind Flayer are present unless they were killed in previous scenes. Their Power Points are fully recharged, and the Scarab has a pot of beetles at the ready. Each has recovered one wound from any previous injuries. The presence of all three makes this an extremely tough fight, but the characters had their chances to remove them earlier.

Since the Black Pharaoh removed the tracking device, he doesn't know the heroes are still alive. They gain Surprise and the Drop during the first round of combat. Don't let the characters delay acting too long—give them a few minutes real time to form a basic strategy and then spur them into action by having the Black Pharaoh announce the launch is ready to proceed.

Divide the cultists into groups of three for the purposes of action cards. This prevents them all acting before the characters, and from suffering mass boons or banes due to the time leak (see below).

For all his genius, the Black Pharaoh has made a fundamental error. His chipping a piece off the Atlantean sphere has resulted in instability in its power regulation. This in turn is affecting the Eye of Creation, causing sporadic hiccups in time in the local vicinity.

On any round in which a Joker is drawn roll a d6 and consult the table in **Time Distortion** below. Ignore second Jokers drawn in the same round. The effect takes the form of a shimmering green bubble which covers the entire battlefield and affects every character equally. All effects last for just one round. The Jokers function as normal for the holder.

Immediately when the Black Pharaoh is Incapacitated, pause the combat and read his "final" words.

"You pathetic fools!" he hisses vehemently. "By my death you have sealed the demise of mankind. You see, the rocket is linked to a device inside my chest. In mere seconds it will launch. When it does, the Eye of Creation will go into automatic mode once it reaches orbit. Its program will send the Earth back to the Stone Age, eradicating everyone alive!" With that, the villain… Vanishes!

The door to the rocket begins to close. There is no way to abort the launch or self-destruct the rocket, except from inside! Characters who aren't inside at the end of the second round after the Black Pharaoh's death won't be able to help stop the device activating—their adventure is over. Should none of the characters enter the rocket, they've screwed up royally. Let's hope their ancestors have fun banging rocks together!

The Black Pharaoh isn't dead. He activates a special device (a plot device) on his wrist, and disappears through time. He'll be back to hound the characters very soon!

Other villainous Wild Cards not Incapacitated when the characters leap into the rocket take the opportunity to flee. They are greatly reduced in power, for once their gizmos' Power Points are drained they can't recharge them. Still, they may want revenge in the future.

TIME DISTORTION

d6	Result
1	**Selective Time Burst:** Everyone with a red suit card or Joker receives an extra action this round. They can't repeat an action, but they can perform two actions with no multi action penalty (so they can run and shoot at no modifier, for example).
2–3	**Time Distortion:** The characters find time running at an altered speed. Run initiative in reverse, starting with the lowest card and count upward toward Ace. Jokers remain unaffected.
4	**Selective Time Freeze:** Everyone in the area with a black suit initiative card is momentarily frozen in time and cannot act this round. Characters with Jokers or red suit cards act as normal. Frozen characters can be attacked with the Drop and have their Parry reduced to 2.
5	**Slow Time:** All characters receive only limited actions this round. They may move up to their Pace or perform a single action (such as firing a gun), but not both (so they can't run).
6	**Selective Time Hop:** Everyone dealt a black card this round hops forward 1d4 rounds in time—don't tell the players this! Remove their figures from the tabletop immediately.

At the start of round after the appropriate delay, deal vanished characters action cards as normal. When their card is called, position them back exactly where they were standing. They can now act as normal. If someone else now occupies their square, both persons take 3d6 damage (from an Extra). The re-appearing hero is then pushed to an unoccupied adjacent square (roll randomly using a d8).

Be fair when using this effect. The meta-game thing to do is surround the square a hero vanished from ready for when he reappears. However, the cultists have no idea what is happening. As far as they are concerned, the people are dead and act accordingly.

- **The Black Pharaoh:** See page 17.
- **Shadow Walker:** See page 18.
- **The Scarab:** See page 18.
- **Mind Flayer:** See page 18.
- **Cultists (3 per hero):** See page 18.

SCENE 4: TIME TO SAVE THE EARTH

The doorway leads onto the rocketship's bridge.

As the rocket roars into the sky, the characters can do nothing for several minutes as the g-forces squash them into the deck. As it gains altitude, so the thrust slackens, releasing the characters.

The bridge is circular and 10" across. Panels covered in flashing lights, brass knobs, levers, and gauges are built into the walls.

The characters have six more rounds to disable the rocket before the Eye of Creation is launched. In order to do so, they must complete the following tasks in order. Failure to complete the steps in time is discussed below.

This is challenging enough, but the Black Pharaoh understood the need for maintenance. While the characters try to work at these tasks, they must also fend off maintenance robots, which emerge from hidden panels in the ceiling and drop to the floor. Worse still, time distortion still wracks the rocket. Use the rules from the previous scene.

Just so the heroes understand the pressure they're under, place six gaming stones on the table in clear view. At the end of each round, take one away.

1. First, the characters must locate the master control panel, no mean feat when there are dozens of near identical consoles. This requires a Notice (–4), Repair (–2), or Weird Science roll. Failure allows the characters to try again next round.
2. Next the panel must be removed. This requires an Agility (–4) or Strength (–2) roll. As usual, failure means the task must be repeated next round.
3. Once the panel is open, someone needs to study the complex wiring before they can do anything. Remind heroes that are keen to start randomly tearing the machinery apart that they have no idea what might happen if they disable the wrong system—they might activate the Eye, or they could end up blown to pieces in a titanic explosion. Deducing the function of the machinery requires a Repair (–2) or Weird Science roll.
4. Finally, the correct machinery must be disabled. This requires a Repair (–2) or Weird Science roll.

Whether the characters succeed or not, an alarm begins to blare loudly. A soft, female voice begins talking from speakers *"Critical failure of ejection system. Critical failure of ejection system. Eye of Creation launch imminent. Deployment failure will cause engines to ignite inside the rocket. All personnel should abandon ship. Repeat, destruction of rocket imminent."*

Explosive bolts release panels in the wall, behind which are single-person escape pods. Characters who fail to enter one by the end of the next round are vaporized (no Soak roll allowed) as the Eye of Creation's engines detonate inside the nosecone. A colossal fireball illuminates the heavens across half the globe as the Atlantean sphere shatters. Yes, this is rather brutal, but the voice was quite clear that things were about to get very, very hot inside the rocket.

Those who made it out watch this as their pod tumbles back through the atmosphere. Where will they land? Well, that's for the GM to decide. It could even lead to a new adventure!

Maintenance Robots (2 per hero): See page 19.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

THE BLACK PHARAOH

Formerly known as Kadar ibn Mukhtar, the Black Pharaoh is head of a criminal organization dedicated to elevating him to power. In his everyday guise, Kadar works as an antiques dealer. He appears mild and servile, although extremely knowledgeable.

As the Black Pharaoh, however, he is cunning, confident, and brooks no failure. When conducting "ceremonies," he dresses in ancient Egyptian garb, all of which is authentic (having been looted from tombs). To conceal his identity, he wears a black facemask sculpted to resemble the head of the god Set. A small gizmo in the mask disguises his voice.

The Black Pharaoh has one true gizmo, his "Staff of Seth," into which all his powers are built. He has a pool of 50 Power Points, shared between his powers.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Egyptian history) d12, Lockpicking d10, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Streetwise d12, Weird Science d12

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Arrogant, Greedy (Major), Overconfident, Stubborn

Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), Charismatic, Command, Fervor, Hold the Line, Improved Level Headed, Power Surge, Strong Willed, Thief

Gizmos: *Blast* (ages flesh), *bolt* (ages flesh), *deflection* (puts the subject out of phase with the rest of time), *entangle* (traps victims in time stasis bubble), *quickness* (alters the time flow around the target), *teleport* (momentary jump forward in time) (50 Power Points)

Gear: Staff of Seth (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands)

Special Abilities:

* **Cut-Off:** As an action, the Black Pharaoh can disable any Weird Science device he created within 48". The items' Power Points are drained to zero immediately. Powers with a non-Instant Duration, such as *armor*, are negated instantly, as if they had ben subject to *dispel*.
* **Weakness (Gizmo):** Astute characters may target the Staff of Seth. It is a Small target (–4). Reduce the Pharaoh's Power Points by the damage inflicted by the attack.

VERONICA CANTORI

Veronica is attractive, but not exactly a rocket scientist. She's an okay actress, well-suited to low budget movies,

but she thinks she's a big star and lets everyone know that—constantly. She demands to be pampered, whines about the smallest thing, and treats everyone like dirt. Veronica is a Henchman.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d4, Persuasion d6
Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Delusional (Major; thinks she's a big star), Stubborn
Edges: Attractive
Gear: —



SHADOW WALKER

Shadow Walker is another of the Black Pharaoh's criminal henchmen. Formerly a master thief in his own right, his already impressive talents have been boosted by an *invisibility* device of the Black Pharaoh's design. He wears a metal breastplate beneath his clothes.

As with the Scarab, he can use Weird Science gizmos, but cannot build his own. When his Power Points are expended, he must return to the Black Pharaoh to have them recharged.
Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d10, Lockpicking d12, Notice d8, Stealth d12, Weird Science d10
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 8 (3)
Hindrances: Loyal (The Black Pharaoh), Overconfident
Edges: Ambidextrous, Block, Combat Reflexes, Improved First Strike, Improved Frenzy, Improved Sweep, Thief, Two Fisted
Gizmos: *Invisibility* (15 Power Points)
Gear: Plate corselet (+3), 2 x long sword (Str+d8)



THE SCARAB

The Scarab is one of the Black Pharaoh's "superpowered" criminals. Like his comrades, he has a black ankh tattooed on his left wrist—a sign of his servitude to the Black Pharaoh.

The Scarab can use Weird Science, represented by his skill, but he can't create new gizmos. The Scarab's gizmos are actually a single item with a common pool of Power Points. They take the form of a small, black rucksack. The *armor* power produces a black, metallic shell, which flows out across the Scarab's body. His *fly* ability causes a pair of beetle's wings to unfold. When his Power Points are expended, he must return to the Black Pharaoh to have them recharged.

Scarab's stats reflect his *armor* and *fly* being already activated when he joins the fight.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Piloting d10, Shooting d8, Weird Science d10
Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6 (12 flying); **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (2)
Hindrances: Loyal (The Black Pharaoh), Ugly (scarred flesh)
Edges: Improved Dodge, Level Headed, Rock and Roll, Steady Hands
Gizmos: *Armor, fly* (12 Power Points)
Gear: Tommy gun (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, ROF 3, AP 1)
Special Abilities:
* **Scarabs:** The Scarab cultivates flesh-eating scarab beetles. On missions, he carries a large clay pot full of the voracious critters. When dropped, the pot shatters and produces a Medium Burst Template swam (p. 19). The creatures are not under the Scarab's control, so he usually drops them while airborne.



THE MIND FLAYER

The Mind Flayer is the Black Pharaoh's most-trusted lieutenant. Mind Flayer can use Weird Science, represented by his skill, but he can't create new gizmos. His gizmos are actually a single item with a common pool of Power Points. When his Power Points are expended, he must return to the Black Pharaoh to have them recharged. His Mentalist Edge is a product of his gizmo.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Weird Science d10
Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Arrogant, Loyal (The Black Pharaoh)
Edges: Command, Fervor, Hold the Line, Improved Dodge, Level Headed, Mentalist
Gizmos: *Bolt* (tears victim's apart with psychic energy), *puppet* (20 Power Points)
Gear: Pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1)

CULTIST

The Black Pharaoh's cultists worship him for two reasons. First, they believe he is a living god, as evidenced by his powers. Second, they are keen to remove the last vestiges of European Colonialism and see Egypt returned to the glory days it enjoyed under the pharaohs. As far as the criminal mastermind is concerned, they're an expendable resource.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: —
Gear: Knife (Str+d4), pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1)
Special Abilities:
* **Fanatic:** All attacks against the Black Pharaoh automatically hit an adjacent cultist instead, as they throw themselves in front of blows and bullets.

FLESH-EATING SCARAB SWARM

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10
Skills: Notice d6
Pace: 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 8 (1)
Special Abilities:
* **Armor +1:** Carapace.
* **Bite:** Scarab swarms inflict hundreds of tiny bites every round to their victims, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage (as a Wild Card) to everyone in the template.
* **Split:** Scarab swarms are clever enough to split into two smaller swarms (Small Burst Templates) should their foes split up. The Toughness of these smaller swarms is lowered by –2 (to 6 each).
* **Swarm:** Parry +2; Because the swarm is composed of scores, hundreds, or thousands of creatures, cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Area effect weapons work normally, and a character can stomp to inflict his damage in Strength each round.

ROBOT MUMMY

Externally, robot mummies have the stereotypical visage of a bandage wrapped corpse, albeit with a chunkier form than real-life mummies. Beneath the linen bandages lies not withered flesh and brittle bones, but a metal skeleton housing cogs and gears to provide locomotion, and cables and pulleys in place of muscles. A primitive mechanicalncomputer provides "brain power."
Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6
Pace: 4; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8 (2)
Gear: —
Special Abilities:
* **Armor +2:** Metal skeleton and heavy bandages.
* **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; immune to poison and disease; no additional damage from Called Shots.
* **Shuffling Gait:** Robot mummies roll a d4 running die.
* **Slam:** Str.
* **Susceptible (Fire):** The chemicals used to coat the mummy cause it to take +4 damage from fire.

ZEUS' MINION

Zeus' minions are seemingly animated statues. Like the robot mummies (page 19) they are actually constructs, created using Daedalus' designs (based on Atlantean ones) and powered internally by strange Atlantean energy crystals.
Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Throwing d8
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (2)
Gear: See below.
Special Abilities:
* **Armor +2:** Stone.
* **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; immune to poison and disease; no additional damage from Called Shots.
* **Immunity (Electricity):** Suffer no damage from electrical attacks.
* **Lighting Bolts:** The bolts the statue's carry can be used in melee (2d6 damage) or thrown (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: 2d6).
* **Slam:** Str.

MAINTENANCE ROBOT

Spiderlike in appearance, but with their front legs serving as pincers, cutters, and circular saws, the maintenance robots were primarily programmed to keep the Eye of Creation running. Secondary programming involves the elimination of any organic lifeforms aboard the rocket!
Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8(A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d7, Repair d10
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (2)
Hindrances: —
Edges: Ambidextrous, Combat Reflexes, Two-Fisted
Gear: Assorted tools (Str+d6)
Special Abilities:
* **Armor +2:** Metal skin.
* **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; immune to poison and disease; no additional damage from Called Shots.

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THE END IS NIGH!



Guarding a starlet on a movie set isn't really heroic work, but the pay is good and it's a free vacation. But what begins as a babysitting gig soon turns into something far more sinister, as villains equipped with weird science devices attack the starlet. Is her Egyptian style necklace the reason?

The final installment of the *Daring Tales of Adventure* line involves two of pulp's greatest staples—weird science and the ancient world. From the dusty tombs of ancient Egypt to the Acropolis of Athens, the heroes are plagued by dastardly villains with strange powers whose master, the mysterious Black Pharaoh, intends to conquer the world by manipulating the flow of time!

Strap yourselves in for the final *Daring Tale* ride!

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DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

THE TALE OF THE FABULOUS FOUR

OFFICIAL SAVAGE WORLDS LICENSED PRODUCT

PAUL 'WIGGY' WADE-WILLIAMS

DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

XMAS 08 SPECIAL

THE TALE OF THE FABULOUS FOUR

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THE TALE OF THE FABULOUS FOUR

This short adventure contains a pulp tale based around the exploits of four to six pre-generated characters. All the characters are kids, aged between 9 and 12. You'll find character sheets at the back of the module.

With the exception of Brent Hardcastle, the main hero of our *Daring Tales of Adventure* line, who must be taken as a character, the players are free to pick and choose from the others. None are vital to the successful completion of the adventure, though all have their strengths.

The GM also needs the pulp setting rules from the TAG website.

Important: The players should be made aware that their characters are young kids. Although most have some combat skills, they are not warriors, nor are they armed with an array of deadly weapons. Indeed, their low Strength scores make the use of large melee weapons or firearms trickier. They also have an average Toughness of 4, which means they'll suffer injuries more often if they opt to pummel their way out of trouble. Tricks, Tests of Will, and creative use of scenery and props are the heroes' best weapons.

SPECIAL RULES

In addition to TAG's regular pulp rules, which you'll need for this adventure (they're free from the website on which you found this little tale), a few special rules are plied, simply because the heroes are all kids.

Guns: Adult pulp heroes may be willing to charge a gun-wielding goon, but kids aren't. Anytime a gun is drawn by an adult, the thug gets a free Intimidation roll against all kids within range (+2 if he actually fires the gun, +4 if it hit someone). Roll once for the goon, with each kid making an individual Spirit roll. Characters who fail to resist are Shaken. If the thug gets a raise over the character's total, the hero is Panicked instead.

Likewise, a kid who picks up a gun isn't going to be a crack shot, even if his Shooting die is high. Allowing that is fine in a regular pulp game, but in a one-off adventure like this, where we want to encourage the players to actually think like kids, it might tempt the players to acquire firearms from fallen foes. To that end, two special rules are introduced.

First, a kid using a firearm does *not* benefit from a Wild Die.

Second, his Shooting skill is reduced one die type. Shooting dropping below a d4 becomes unskilled, and unskilled heroes suffer an *additional* –2 penalty (so that's d4–2 and no Wild Die).

Tricks: Stick a bunch of kids in a standup fight against an equal number of adults, and the kids'll likely lose. Sure, the heroes are Wild Cards, but they have low Strength, feeble Toughness scores, and few weapons.

For that reason, and for *this adventure only*, Shaken results from Tricks count as nonlethal, physical damage (and so can knock out Extras) if the Trick warrants it. For instance, squirting ink in a goon's eyes isn't going to cause him to black out, even if he's Shaken already, but tripping him will—the GM can rule the goon hits his head as he falls.

ACT 1: MILK AND MAYHEM

Set the scene by reading the following text to the players.

The festive holidays are drawing close. As a special treat your parents have taken you to Boston to visit the circus. Your folks have gone off to find a restaurant, but you kids didn't fancy that. Armed with a few bucks, you've been allowed to visit a milk bar for sodas, milkshakes, and donuts.

SCENE 1: LOCAL PROBLEMS

The youngsters are all seated at a single table. Arrayed before them are a variety of drinks and snacks, all high in sugar and low in nutritional value. Seated behind them

are two burly men in trench coats. The heroes can overhear their conversation.

First man: "The boss said we have to snatch the diamond this afternoon."

Second man: "Clam up, dummy! Yer want someone to overhear us and call the cops?"

First man: "I'm just saying is all. Boy, that sparkler is going to net us some big bucks."

Second man: "Quit yer yapping and drink yer milk. Come on, it's time to go case the joint."

With that the two men leave the milk bar. Hopefully the young heroes are intrigued by the possibility of a crime taking place, and decide to follow the thugs.

As you step outside, you bump into a small gang of kids heading into the milk bar. One of them stumbles back, slips on the icy sidewalk, and lands heavily on his butt. Rising to his feet he balls his fists and snarls, "Darn country kids. Looks like they're spoiling for a fight. Get 'em, lads!"

Deal action cards. Remember, damage from Extras doesn't Ace, so the best one of the city kids can do is Shake a hero with a single hit. This should limit the amount of damage inflicted on the party.

The sidewalk is covered in ice and snow, halving all movement. Heroes who roll a 1 on their running die, slip and fall prone.

The snow can be made into a snowball as a free action. This improvised weapon has Range 3/6/12 and inflicts Str damage. However, damage from a snowball does not Ace, though raises on the attack still grant an additional +1d6 damage.

Props outside the milk bar include a trashcan full of discarded drink cartons and food wrappers, and a gobstopper machine. Heroes who want to use other suitable props (like a newspaper, or a passing dog, which can be used as part of an Agility Trick to trip a foe), should find them available.

Pushing over the candy machine is an action. On hitting the ground, hard balls of candy scatter in a Medium Burst Template. Place the outside of the template to where it touches the machine and rotate it, so it affects an area in the direction the machine fell. Anyone moving through the template must make an Agility roll (–2 if running) or slip and fall prone.

At some point toward the end of the fight, the milk bar window must be broken. This could come about as a result of a youth staggering backward from a blow and crashing through, a missed slingshot attack, or even by a hero throwing a snowball (which just happened to contain a stone).

The round after this occurs, a large policeman appears on the scene. He blows his whistle, points at the *heroes*, and orders them to stand still. Characters thinking of complying may make a Common Knowledge roll. With success they know two important facts. First, their parents will have to pay for the damage. Second, they'll end up with no supper for a week and likely lose Christmas presents as a result of their bad behavior.



!City Kids (1 per hero): See page 10.

SCENE 2: THE CIRCUS ARRIVES

No matter which way the characters run, they end up running down the street—straight into the oncoming circus parade. Every year, the circus comes to Boston for Christmas, and every year it parades through the streets on arrival, to drum up business.

This scene uses the Chase rules, but with our alternate Obstacles rules. The Range Increment is 1", and the characters begin three Range Increments ahead of the policeman. This scene is mainly for cinematic and humor value. If the kids are escaping too quickly, add another policeman to the chase three Range Increments behind the hero furthest back. The characters should escape, but there's no harm in delaying their victory a little longer.

Because of the slippery road surface, any character who goes Out of Control automatically ends up on his butt. His Agility roll next round suffers a –2 penalty, as he must waste time getting to his feet.

Should the policeman draw close enough, he uses the Parallel maneuver. He then tries to grapple one of the young hoodlums. If a character is arrested and not freed by his comrades, he gets a cuff around the ear and is dragged back to the milk bar. His parents have just arrived and are horrified to hear of his troublesome and destructive brawling. All privileges are lost for a month, including supper and Christmas presents!

Neither the policeman nor the heroes' parents believe any stories about a potential diamond robbery—it's dismissed as an overactive imagination (and an excuse to avoid the consequences of getting caught brawling in public).

The adventure isn't over if a hero is arrested. As luck would have it, the parents intended to take the children to the Museum anyway. While the children explore, the parents visit nearby shops for last minute presents (except for you-know-who). Before the kids know it, the Museum has closed early, leaving them locked inside! Skip straight down to **Diamonds are Forever**, page 5.

! Policeman: See page 10.

OBSTACLES

Deuce (–4) Grappled: A cowboy is twirling his lasso. When he sees the hero, he tries to snare him for the amusement of the crowd. A failed Agility roll means the character is ensnared. On subsequent rounds he must make an Agility or Strength roll (hero's choice) to escape the binding. Only when this is achieved can the hero run off (so escaping and running in the same round incurs a multi action penalty).

Three (–2) Clumsy Clown: The hero runs into a clown. As the kid darts left, so does the clown (deliberately—he thinks it's funny). Failure causes the hero to drop back a Range Increment, due to the lengthy delay.

Four (–2/0) Free Tickets!: A performer is handing out free tickets for tonight's show! If the hero stops to collect them, his Agility roll suffers a –2 penalty. Otherwise he can ignore the tempting lure and keep running with no penalty. Next round, the hero has the option of grabbing another pair of free tickets and not making an Agility roll, or continuing his flight.

The policeman is just as keen to attend the show as anyone else, and always grabs tickets. He doesn't delay on subsequent rounds, though.

Five (–2) Scantily Clad Ladies: It's near-freezing, but the circus performers are a hardy bunch. Some of the acrobats are wearing barely any clothes, which is a lure for young boys and policemen. Female heroes ignore this Obstacle. A failed roll simply means the character makes no grounds, due to the distraction.

Six (–2/0) Firecrackers: A performer is handing out strings of firecrackers. If the hero stops to collect them, his Agility roll suffers a –2 penalty. Otherwise he can ignore the tempting lure and keep running with no penalty.

Using the firecrackers in a Distract stunt grants the hero a +2 bonus. If the kid elects to keep them for later, he can use the crackers to make an Agility vs. Smarts Trick (fooling any victims into thinking they're gunshots).

The policeman must make a Smarts roll if he draws this card. With failure, he suffers the Agility penalty, as he cautions the performer against giving kids firecrackers. Otherwise, he continues the chase.

Seven (–2/0) Free Candy: As above, except the reward for taking an Agility roll penalty is free candy.

If this event is drawn for Oscar, he *must* go for the candy (the player should roleplay this anyway). If Oscar is within one Range Increment of another character drawing this card, he automatically moves to the same Range Increment, whether than is an extra move forward or a forced move backward.

Eight (–2) Tangled: A glance back or slight distraction causes the hero to stumble into an acrobat, cart wheeling down the road. On a failed Agility roll, the hero is tangled up with the performer. He gains no distance this round and suffers a –2 penalty to his Agility roll next round, as well.

Nine (–2) Snowball Barrage: Local youths are pelting the circus with snowballs. The character runs straight into a barrage. Roll 2d6. If either die comes up 1, the hero has been struck. He is automatically Shaken.

Ten (–1) Singed Hair: The character runs a little too close to a fire breather spewing out a gout of flame. A failed Agility causes the hero to be Shaken and suffer a –1 Charisma penalty for the rest of the session (no eyebrows).

Jack (–1) Smelly Stuff: Elephants make a lot of mess, and the hero is headed for a fresh pile of manure. A failed roll means the character skids on the stuff, losing any movement for the round. Should he go Out of Control, he falls into it. He suffers a –1 penalty to Charisma and Stealth rolls for the rest of the adventure (even if he washes).

Queen (–1) Elephant: A number of elephants block the character's path, forcing him to weave through them.

A failed roll means the hero is accidentally struck by a beast and suffers 2d6 damage (from an Extra).

King (0) They'll Eat Me Alive!: A pair of lions (well-fed) is being paraded through the streets on a leash. One roars loudly at the passing character, forcing him to make a Spirit roll as a free action. With success, he may make his Agility roll as normal. A failure causes him to take a detour around the ferocious beast. He moves one less Range Increment than his Agility roll normally permits (moving backward if he fails the Agility roll). On a critical failure he is Shaken, as well.

Ace (0) Smashing Fun: A performer who balances plates on sticks (held by colleagues) and a chase can mean only one thing. A failed Agility roll causes the plates to fall and smash. The hero suffers no other effects beyond making no headway.

Alternately, if a kid draws this card and the policeman is within 1 Range Increment, the Wild Card can take a –2 penalty to his Agility roll. Success not only moves the hero ahead a Range Increment, but also gives him an automatic Distract stunt against the cop.

ACT 2: BOSTON MUSEUM

Having escaped the police, the characters have only one lead—the mention of a diamond of great value. Discovering which diamond requires either a Streetwise roll (asking around the crowd streets) or Investigation (reading the newspapers).

Whatever method is used, success results in the characters learning of the Amritsa Diamond, a fabulous gem on display at the Boston Natural History Museum. With a raise, they learn the Museum is closing at midday today because the circus is in town. The youngsters don't have much time!

SCENE 1: THE DIAMOND IS OURS

No matter how fast the heroes run, they reach the Museum just in time to see the last of the patrons being shown the door. A junior curator, Oswald Hibbert (who appears in *Daring Tales of Adventure #2*), is just closing the door.

"Sorry, kids," the man says apologetically, as he shuts one of the doors and slides home the bolt. "Museum's closing early today due to the circus being in town. We're open again tomorrow, though."

The heroes need to gain entrance if they're to thwart the robbery, as Hibbert won't believe their story about a theft. Persuasion rolls can be made, but any reasonable excuse, such as urgently needing the toilet, is enough to gain the party access without a die roll. Hibbert smiles politely if any hero is so brazen as to offer a bribe. He doesn't take the money.

Hibbert leads them to the toilets, but then wanders off. He plans to inform a colleague to make sure the kids are out before the doors are locked, but he forgets when he spies some exhibits that have been moved out of place. Before the characters know it, they are shut inside the Natural History Museum.

DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER

Locating the diamond can be achieved two ways. First, the heroes can wander aimlessly through the galleries. Second, they can grab a tourist brochure. Although we don't usually tell GMs when to hand out bennies, this is one of those moments when player ingenuity should be rewarded. Hey, the kids need all the help they can get!

The gallery before the one containing the diamond has a few dinosaur skeletons at floor level. Hanging overhead, however, are the immense bones of a diplodocus and a pair of T-Rex.

The gemstone gallery contains a few other treasures, such as emeralds and rubies, but nothing as lucrative as the diamond, a fist-sized, glittering stone.

The Amrita Diamond sits in a glass display case, which is surrounded by a rope to keep patrons from getting too close. This is 1915, long before the advent of infrared beams and other such security measures. One plan, which may cross the heroes' minds, is to swipe the diamond first, thus preventing its theft.

If the stone is taken, or if the heroes spend too long trying to come up with a plan, they hear sounds of clanking metal behind them. Staggering into the gallery is a suit of plate mail clutching a spiked mace! One of the goons decided to hide inside the armor to escape detection when the Museum closed! There's only one way in and one way out of the exhibit hall—past the armored goon.

In a deep voice, the armored figure growls, "Pesky kids! You'd better hand over the diamond and vamoose now, or you're going to get badly hurt!"

The characters have little chance of hurting the goon (he's a Henchman) thanks to his armor, but he's also heavily encumbered. Running past him is certainly possible.

Deal action cards.

The gallery is 10" long and 6" wide. The thug doesn't advance into the room, though—he just tries to block the doorway. Moving through his square counts as difficult ground. Despite his strong words, the guy isn't a child killer. He'll swing his mace, but pull his punches (an excuse for why damage doesn't Ace for him). He's more interested in grabbing the diamond.

Whether the thug is avoided or somehow beaten, he has one last trick up his sleeve. Regardless of whether he was Incapacitated or not, as the heroes enter the dinosaur bone gallery, the goon swings his mace, smashing the mechanism holding up the skeletons. Slowly but surely, the bones begin to fall!

Armored Goon: See page 10.

SCENE 2: COLLAPSING BONES

Unless the heroes want to be buried under tons of bones, they need to start running fast toward the other door.

This Scene uses a version of the Chase rules. Place 10 markers on the tabletop. In order to escape into the next gallery, the characters have to move beyond the 10th marker. Each hero has two free rolls before the bones begin to fall.

The skeletons have an Agility die of d10, but can't Push. Success moves them one marker, and a raise two markers. Use a token to represent the debris. If the bones end up on the same marker as a hero or move ahead of him, the hero suffers 2d6 damage (from an Extra) at the *end* of the current round.

Example: *Young Brent ends the second round on the first marker (having rolled a failure on his first Agility die and a success on the second). Next round, the third since the scene began, the bones enter play. Brent wins the initiative but fails his Agility roll, gaining no distance. The skeletons roll a 5, and move one position, bringing it level with Brent. He suffers 2d6 damage when the round ends but Soaks the wound it caused.*

Next round, the bones draw a higher action card but roll a failure. Brent scores a raise! He rushes ahead of the collapsing bones, leaping ahead of a toothed maw as it crashes to the ground. Since he's ahead of the debris at the end of the round, he takes no damage.

SCENE 3: INSECTS!

CRASH! The grinning skull of a T-Rex slams into the floor, as you dive through the doorway. Your scurry toward the exit is quickly halted by the appearance of two goons. Both look mean and menacing!

Deal action cards.

The gallery measures 10" long and 8" wide, as does the bone gallery (which the heroes may reenter). Place a dozen or so 1" counters to represent display cases. Each is full of worms, bugs, and other creepy-crawlies. Tipping over a case counts as an action. When it smashes, it releases a swarm of bugs (see below). Movement over the bones in the previous area counts as difficult ground.

When the fight begins, there are two goons present. At the start of the second round, two thugs appear to block the exit from the bone gallery. When round three begins, the armored goon (assuming he's wasn't knocked out) enters play, as well. If the characters are still in the bug room, then the armored thug appears in the doorway between this area and the bug room.

On round one, a display case *must* be smashed. This can be done by a wild swing missing, or, and easier to arrange, a goon shoving one aside as he rushes toward the kids. As it strikes the ground it shatters, releasing a swarm of angry (but not dangerous) bugs.

Deal the bugs an action card starting on the next round. Roll a d12 when the bugs act and read this as a clockface. Then roll 2d6 to determine how far the bugs move in that direction. Should they hit a wall, they "bounce" back into the room at the same angle.

At some point, the bugs' template *must* move over the character of Brent. As fans of the *Daring Tales of Adventure* line know, the adult Brent has a phobia of bugs. Can you guess where and how he got that?

Before the last goon falls or after the first hero takes two unSoaked wounds, a gun shot echoes through the gallery. Standing in the doorway is a number of thugs, one of whom has a smoking revolver in his hands.

"Brave fight, kids," he smiles, "but the show is over. We want the diamond, and we're not afraid to shoot you to get it. Now, hand it over and you can go free. Come on, you wouldn't want your parents to get a coffin for Christmas, would you?"

This is a "surrender moment," the point where the heroes give up the fight without further violence in return for a free benny.

- **Insect Swarm:** See page 10.
- **Armored Goon:** See page 10.
- **Goons (1 per hero):** See page 10.

TIED UP

The kids are tied up and stuffed into a very dark closet. The goons don't think the kids will escape; they know the Museum won't be opened until the morning, and they're planning to skip town tonight. Before the thugs leave the heroes alone, the characters hear one speaking louder than he probably should.

"Come on," he says. "These brats aren't going anywhere fast. By the time anyone finds them it'll be morning, and we'll be long gone. I got us all tickets for the circus show tonight. The boss said he'd meet us there later to collect the merchandize and pay us."

ACT 3: ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR

The heroes aren't in a deathtrap, though they are securely bound. Escaping doesn't require any die rolls—it just takes several minutes to loosen the bonds and crack open the door. By this time, the goons are long gone. Still, the heroes know where to go, at least.

SCENE 1: FAIRGROUND FUN

By the time the kids reach the circus, the show is in full swing. The grounds are swarming with adults and kids, performers and animals. As well as the circus there is also a full-scale funfair in town, so there are stalls and rides of every description.

Let the kids explore the funfair for a bit. Assume anything else that could be readily available for purchase at a funfair, such as cotton candy, costs a dime each. Who knows, it might come in handy!

There are two attractions they pass which might be of interest to the posse.

SHOOTING RANGE

There's a shooting range (air rifles), which offers a variety of prizes, one of which is a high-powered slingshot (Range: 4/8/16, Damage: Str+d4+1). The heroes might already have one, but a spare wouldn't go amiss. The GM is also free to invent other prizes the heroes might find useful, such as a fake gun (water pistol) or bag of marbles. Likewise, encourage the players to think of cool things they might want to use later in the adventure (or just to own).

In order to win a prize, the character has to make three Shooting rolls. As low-powered weapons with no recoil of note, the air rifles do not use the special rules for firearms detailed at the start of the adventure. Aiming makes no difference—the sights are rigged to be off center, and it's assumed any shooter is aiming, anyway.

A success is worth two points, a raise nets three points, and two or more raises earns the shooter five points. In order to win, the character has to score seven or more points. Each go costs a quarter!

COCONUTS

Coconuts are tough to eat, but they can be used as a thrown weapon (Range: 2/4/8, Damage: Str+d4+1). In order to win one, the heroes have to go on the coconut throw. That costs a dime and earns the thrower three balls. Hitting a nut isn't that hard, but making one fall from the ring is—a Throwing roll at –4 is required! Any winner gets the coconut he toppled.

ANOTHER BEATING

The city kids the heroes trounced earlier are also at the funfair. They spot their "rivals" and decide to get even. In order to do that, they rustle up a few more friends. Deal the action cards and let mayhem commence! Add scenery as desired to make the battlefield fun!

City Kids (2 per hero): See page 10.

SCENE 2: A FUN AND FAIR CHASE

After having a go on the firing range and reminding the local kids that country folk are raised tough, the heroes spot the thugs heading across the fairground, toward the funhouse. Unless they're quick (i.e. they give chase), they'll lose them in the huge crowd.

Run this Scene as a Chase. For the purposes of ranged combat, each Range Increment equates to 5". The goons begin three Range Increment ahead of the kids.

Lay out 20 marker stones to represent the fairground and the various attractions, through which the action takes place. It's very important that some of the stones are of different colors, or placed in such a way to distinguish the distinct locales. You can use whatever colors you want. Check the table below.

Marker	Locale
1–4	Outside
5–8	Funhouse—moving floor
9–12	Funhouse—hall of mirrors
13–16	Funhouse—haunted house
17–20	Outside

In each specific locale special rules apply, as detailed below.

The characters can "win" the scene one of two ways. First, they can catch one of the thugs and wrestle him to the ground. Pinned beneath a mob of kids, the thug quickly reveals the location of his boss (keep reading). Second, they can try to remain behind the thugs and tail them. Any hero within three Range Increments of a thug reaching the 20th marker is close enough to see the destination—the big top.

So what if the heroes fail to achieve either? They'll need to make a Notice roll to spot the goons when they leave their meeting place. With success, proceed straight to Act 4, Scene 2.

Goons (4): See page 10.

OUTSIDE

There are no true Obstacles. Instead, the numerous stalls and visitors get in the way and hamper movement. Check the value of a Club card on the table below. Modifiers apply to the participant's Agility roll for the round.

Failure results in the hero making no movement (he's still moving, of course, but very slowly). A roll of 1 or less means the hero goes back one Range Increment, through taking lengthy detours or being swept backward.

Card	Modifier
Deuce	–6
3–6	–4
7–10	–2
Jack	–1
Ace	0

FUNHOUSE—MOVING FLOOR

This particular funhouse has one attraction—a moving floor. Sections of the wooden catwalk shift left and right at varying speeds and make walking difficult. And people call this fun? Participants use Agility as their skill for determining movement, but there is always a –2 penalty. Use the table above as well—all modifiers are cumulative!

As above, heroes who fail just don't move—they're too busy catching their balance. A roll of 1 or less means the character falls. He must use an action to stand, giving him a multi action penalty if he wants to stand and try moving in the same round.

The floor counts as an Unstable Platform.

FUNHOUSE—HALL OF MIRRORS

Instead of using Agility (a measure of speed), navigating through the mirror maze uses Smarts! Use the table from the Outside segment of the Chase in here. Rather than people, it presents the confusing placement of mirrors.

A failure results in no forward gain. The character might wander in circles or just hit several dead ends (literally). On a roll of 1 or less, the hero ends up getting lost *or* smashes into a mirror by mistake. If his action card is red, he's lost. Move him back a Range Increment. A black action card means he collides with a cunning mirror which shows no reflection until its too late to stop (the kids are running, after all). The character is Shaken.

FUNHOUSE—HAUNTED HOUSE

Okay, it isn't really haunted, but there are plenty of spooks leaping out of the shadows to startle visitors.

Heroes use Agility to make progress. A Club result means the hero must make a Spirit roll as a free action, as something scary occurs (the GM should decide what). A failed roll prevents the hero from making an Agility roll this round—he's busy clutching his heart in fright. A critical failure means the runner is Shaken, as well.

ACT 4: IT ALL ENDS WELL!

There's a performance on in the big top, so it's packed. As the kids enter, the ringmaster is just announcing the next act—the clowns!

SCENE 1: BUGSY WHO?

Working their way through the spectators, the heroes catch sight of the goons not far away. They're talking to a weasel-faced man in a suit. There seems to be some sort of problem.

"Where's the merchandize?" asks the weasel.

The goons shift on their feet nervously. "Boss," begins one of them, his head hung low while he twiddles his fat in his fingers, "we stashed it for safety. Some kids was after us."

"Kids? You're telling me a bunch of brats got you scared? Darn it; just tell me where the goods are? We've got to get moving. If those kids call the cops, we're done for."

"Er," the goon replies, nodding his head toward the ring, where the clowns are dragging in a huge table full of cream pies, "we hid it in one of the pies for safekeeping. I don't remember which one, boss, we was in a real hurry."

The boss slaps a hand against his forehead. "You dummies!" he hisses. "Get in that ring now and start searching those pies! I don't care who sees you; just do it!"

With that, the goons climb over the low railing and, ignoring the boos and hisses from the crowd who resent their intrusion, head for the table.

Deal action cards. Hopefully the heroes realize they need to act fast and reach the pies first.

The circus ring is 10" across. The goons enter at the six o'clock position. The table of pies is 3" long and stands inside the northern end of the ring. Ignore the clowns—they become a special hazard once the fight breaks out. The thugs initially begin searching for the diamond, but quickly begin throwing pies at the kids if attacked.

There are a *lot* of cream pies. Grabbing a cream pie is a free action. Searching through a pie for the diamond requires an action but no die roll. Instead, draw a card from the action deck. A Joker means the character has found the stone! Picking it up requires an action, though.

A thrown pie has Range 2/4/8 just like a weapon, but instead of causing damage it functions like a Trick, but uses Throwing vs. Agility. Slapping one in someone's face is a regular Agility Trick.

When a pie that hasn't been searched is used as a weapon draw an action card. A Joker means the victim gets hit by something hard—the diamond! Picking up the gem from a thrown pie requires an Agility roll as an action, due to its slipperiness.

What about the clowns? They mill around the scene for the first round, but then decide this is a great opportunity for some fun. From round two onward, whenever a character draws a deuce, the clowns hamper him in some way (see the table below). For the goons or police (see below), pick *one* thug to be victimized, not all of them.

Suit	Result
Club	**My Eyes!:** The clown uses a water squirting flower or soda siphon on the hero. Treat this as an Agility Trick. The clown's Agility is d8+2 (they have Acrobat).
Diamond	**Big Hat:** A clown tries to stick an oversized hat over a hero's head, temporarily blinding him. This functions as an Agility Trick (d8+2), with the hat being thrown off when all penalties are removed.
Heart	**Rubber Mallet:** A hero is whacked with a rubber mallet. Make a Fighting d6 roll. With success, the hero is automatically Shaken (nonphysical effect). On a raise, the character is knocked prone, as well.
Spade	**Pie:** A clown throws a pie. Draw a card to see if the pie contains the gem. Then

roll a d8 (the clown's Throwing skill). The "attack" is made at short range.

At the start of round four, the commotion alerts a passing policeman. By a quirk of fate, it's the same one who already chased the heroes. Deal him an action card. Naturally, he sees the young hoodlums harassing adults with cream pies, so his first act is to try and arrest the kids.

Convincing him the thugs are the bad guys requires a Persuasion roll at –2 or producing the diamond—which means grappling a villain and then making an opposed Agility roll to remove the gem from the boss' pocket. Either way, the constable blows his whistle on his next action.

Once the whistle is blown, more police arrive two rounds later. The exact number is equal to the number of characters minus one (because there's already one officer present). Hand control of the law enforcement officers to the players.

The goons *will* use guns against the police (compounding their crimes), but *never* against the kids.

The boss doesn't fight—once the police turn up, he *immediately* uses the Recurring Villain rule to make good his escape. Head to the next Scene when the heroes eventually give chase.

- **The Boss:** Treat him as a goon Henchman.
- **Goons (1 + 1 per hero):** See page 10.
- **Policemen (1 per hero):** See page 10.

ESCAPING THUGS

In the event the goons manage to find the gem and pick it up, they start running. Likewise, a hero who finds it and starts running is quickly chased. Whoever becomes the chased has a three Range Increment lead (it takes time to spot his action and give chase).

Should the goons be running, only the one holding the gem sprints away—assume others that aren't Incapacitated surrender and are arrested, as the action has now switched from melee to the chase. One policeman per goon stays behind to arrest them. The other cops, if any, give chase on the round after the heroes.

The first three rounds are through the crowded circus tent. There's an automatic –2 penalty to all Agility rolls. After this, use the Outside table to determine the thickness of the crowd (see page 7).

If the gem-carrying goon escapes, the heroes have a second chance to catch him—he joins his boss in the next scene. Heroes who escape should be reminded, if necessary, that the boss has already made a run for it, and only the characters can identify him. Unless they act swiftly, he might escape!

SCENE 2: HIGH ABOVE THE WATER

The boss, and any minion who may have joined him, is detected on the edge of the river, on which the fairground is located. Run this final scene as a Chase. The heroes have two choices for how they give chase—they can swim (Swimming) or use sets of stilts left nearby by a performer (Agility). The criminals opt to use stilts.

The boss begins three Range Increments ahead of the characters, and each Range Increment equates to 5". Lay out ten marker stones to represent the river.

Once a hero is clear of the 10th marker, he is on dry land. He can either remain on his stilts or spend a full round (no movement) removing them. The far side of the riverbank is a field. It doesn't affect heroes on foot, but those on stilts still suffer penalties for drawing a Club (see below).

The water is absolutely freezing. Any hero who elects to swim also has to make a Vigor roll each round or suffer a level of Fatigue. We're not here to watch youngsters freeze to death or drown, so the worst a hero can suffer is Exhausted (–2 penalty).

A hero who goes Out of Control while on stilts falls into the freezing water. He must make an Agility roll to get back on his sticks. Until he does, he's in the water (requiring a Vigor roll) and can't roll to increase his distance.

Characters on stilts who want to use a single hand for something other than gripping the stilt, suffer a –2 penalty to all rolls if they move as well in the same turn. Standing still, the penalty is –1. Take away both hands, required for using a slingshot for instance, and the penalty is –4 (or –2 if the character doesn't move). On a roll of 1, regardless of Wild Die, the hero falls into the water as above.

The riverbed isn't flat, either—it's covered in stones and boulders. When a hero draws a Club for his action card, his stilts enter a patch of treacherous ground. The penalty on the table below is applied to his Agility roll.

Card	Modifier
Deuce	–6
3–6	–4
7–10	–2
Jack	–1
Ace	0

Where are the cops in all this? They're searching for a boat. If it looks like the villain is about to escape, have the cops appear ahead of him (having found a boat and crossed the river quickly). The boss drops back 1d4+1 Range Increments, allowing the kids to continue their chase.

- **The Boss:** Treat him as a goon Henchman.
- **Goon (1):** See page 10.

AFTERMATH

Hopefully the fight ends with the characters victorious. Once the villains are cuffed, they admit their crime.

"Yeah," snarls the boss, "we stole the diamond. A few of the boys hid in the Museum just before it closed. We knew nobody would detect the theft until the next morning. By then we'd be a long way from here and looking to retire. And we'd

have gotten away with it if it wasn't for those meddling…"

"Ah, right," says the senior policeman, "that's enough talk from you lot! Take them away and book them, Danny. As for you youngsters," he says, turning to face you, "I reckon you've done your parents proud today."

Before the heroes leave town for their country life, they are contacted by a representative of the Boston Natural History Museum. He rewards each character with $25 (a goodly sum for the age) and thanks them profusely for their assistance. The Boston Herald also interviews the party, and they make the front page!

Happy holidays from everyone at Triple Ace Games!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

CITY KIDS

City kids consider themselves savvier than their country cousins, who are a little "backward" in their opinion. They're prepared to "defend their turf" with fists, if necessary. Note that because the kids are Young, they earn a benny each.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d4
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Taunt d6
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4
Hindrances: Loyal, Young
Edges: —
Gear: —

POLICEMAN

Stereotyping may be politically incorrect, but this is pulp, and certain stereotypes are part of the genre. In this case, it's the Irish policeman with the thick brogue.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6
Edges & Hindrances: —
Gear: Baton (Str+d4), handcuffs

ARMORED GOON

The thug has a –2 encumbrance penalty due to the bulky armor. Modifiers are included in his stat block, for convenience. Remember, damage is *not* a trait roll, so that is unaffected. The armored goon is a Henchman, so he has three wound levels but no Wild Die.

Attributes: Agility d6–2, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6–2, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8–2, Intimidation d8, Notice d6
Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (3)
Hindrances: Greedy (Minor), Mean
Edges: —
Gear: Plate armor (+3), spiked mace (Str+d6+1)

GOONS

Most of these goons are mere Extras. One, the boss, is a Henchman.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6
Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Greedy (Minor), Mean
Edges: —
Gear: Revolver (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6)

INSECT SWARM

The insects aren't dangerous, but they are creepy. They fill a Medium Burst Template.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10
Skills: Notice d6
Pace: 2d6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7
Special Abilities:

* **Bugs:** Nonviolent, the bugs are nonetheless scary to young kids and adults alike. Any hero caught under the template as it moves must make a Spirit roll or be Shaken as he frantically tries to flick away the insects and creepy-crawlies.
* **Split:** When the swarm is first wounded, it splits into two Small Burst Template swarms. The Toughness of each swarm is lowered by –2 (i.e. to 5). When these swarms take a wound, they are dispersed and become ineffective.
* **Swarm:** Parry +2. Because the swarm is composed of hundreds of tiny bugs, cutting, piercing, and energy weapons do no real damage. Area-effect weapons work normally. Stomping does Str damage each round.

PLAYER CHARACTERS

BRENT HARDCASTLE

Brent has grown up on the farm where his dad works as a laborer. A rough-and-tumble lad, he prefers to solve problems through action and fisticuffs, not idle thought. He's currently the school slingshot champion, an honorary title handed down by his fellow students, but one of which he is very proud.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6
Skills: Climbing d4, Fighting d6, Notice d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d4
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Arrogant, Loyal, Young
Edges: Ambidextrous, Luck
Gear: Slingshot (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: Str+d4, RoF 1), handful of stones, pack of gum, packed lunch, $1

SAMANTHA HARDCASTLE

Sam is Brent's kid sister (only a year difference). Studious and well-read, she has aspirations of becoming a novelist one day. Although her family isn't wealthy by any stretch of the imagination, Sam has an extensive library, thanks to her teacher, Mrs. Wintermore, who has spotted her talent and is nurturing it. Sam's freckles, long pigtails, and thick glasses give her a dorky appearance.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d4
Skills: Fighting d4, Investigation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4
Hindrances: Bad Eyes (Minor), Curious, Stubborn, Young
Edges: Investigator
Gear: Glasses, pad and pencil, packed lunch, $0.50

OSCAR WHITFIELD

Oscar is your stereotypical "fat kid," but with one difference—he isn't bullied by his peers. Rather, Oscar is the school bully. He runs a "protection racket"—fellow students hand over their lunches and pocket money, or he pounds them senseless. Of course, to his parents he is their darling angel, and can do no wrong.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Streetwise d4, Throwing d6
Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Greedy (Minor: obsessed with food), Mean, Obese, Young
Edges: Sweep
Gear: Note from his mother excusing him from strenuous activity, three packed lunches, $3

NANCY HESTLETWAIN

The daughter of the town doctor and the mayor's eldest child, Nancy is richer than the other kids in her school. She owns a pony, takes violin lessons, is a star gymnast (private lessons), and has even ridden in her daddy's car (one of the few in town). Nancy has a crush on Brent, though it isn't reciprocated—Brent would rather be playing than wasting time with girls.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d4
Skills: Driving d4, Fighting d4, Healing d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d6, Riding d4, Taunt d6
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4
Hindrances: Big Mouth, Pacifist (Minor), Young
Edges: Acrobat
Gear: First aid kit, borrowed stethoscope (for playing "doctors and nurses"), packed lunch, $10

ARTHUR ABRAHAMS

Arthur's dad is an avid reader of the works of H. G. Wells and Jules Verne, and Arthur has followed suit. Using his dad's tools, Arthur has constructed a "ray gun." Actually it's just a flashlight with a powerful strobe effect, but the lad isn't having any of that.

Note: Arthur's flashlight is his sole gizmo and uses *one* set of Power Points (he's only a kid, not a genius). Due to the devices experimental nature, it cannot recharge during play—once the Power Points are spent, they are gone. The *stun* power uses a Cone Template, ignoring the usual rules on Range and the Medium Burst Template.
Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d4
Skills: Fighting d4, Knowledge (Optics) d6, Notice d4, Repair d6, Stealth d4, Weird Science d8
Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4
Hindrances: Cautious, Delusional (Minor; thinks he has invented a ray gun), Young
Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), New Power (*stun*), Power Points
Powers: *Light, stun* (15 Power Points)
Gear: "Flashlight," screwdriver, packed lunch, $0.75

LUCIUS MUNROE

In front of adults, Lucius is a perfect child—well-mannered, sociable, and very cute. But his friends know different. If there's trouble in town, you can bet Lucius is involved somehow. Many a lad has been rewarded with a cuff round the ear for stealing apples or candy at Lucius' prompting, but Lucius has a knack for avoiding danger.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d4
Skills: Climbing d4, Fighting d6, Lockpicking d6, Persuasion d4, Notice d6, Stealth d6
Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4
Hindrances: Overconfident, Phobia (Minor: Claustrophobia), Young
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DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

ROCKET NAZIS ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS



OFFICIAL SAVAGE WORLDS LICENSED PRODUCT

NOTTY STONE

DARING TALES OF ADVENTURE

2009 CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

ROCKET NAZIS ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS

BY NOTTY STONE

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ROCKET NAZIS ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS

INTRODUCTION

It is 1934, Adolf Hitler is now Chancellor of Germany, but is yet to become Fuhrer: that horror lies in the future. For now he is content to launch twisted schemes to destroy his enemies: the British, the Russians, the Americans, but above all, the French. The Treaty of Versailles forbids Hitler from openly building up his armed forces, and so he is doing it in secret. His current plan for the glorious Third Reich begins with a devastating first strike against the strongest opponent in Europe—France. In order to do this Hitler is investing in research into the most advanced and creative weapons known to man. To this end, he has authorized Major Werner von Stosser to get, by force if necessary, the most brilliant and unusual minds from around the world to work on those weapons.

Von Stosser is the commander of the elite troop of Nazi Rocketeers, and he has spent the last few months gathering scientists from around the world, to work on a variety of mind-boggling projects. Progress has been swift and he is ready for his first strike. Von Stosser's current plan is comparatively simple; he has prepared a double of France's famous Orient Express train, and has fitted it out with rockets more powerful and deadly than any known. The target of the attack is the centre of Paris, with the intention of decapitating the entire French government in one swift strike.

Von Stosser has just one problem—the rocket fuel just isn't powerful enough. However, one of his prisoners has a solution—the secret formula for advanced rocket fuel which is the brainchild of an American, Doctor Nathanial Davenport. Sadly, for the prisoner, no matter how pressingly he was questioned he didn't know the details of Davenport's work, so von Stosser has to get Davenport alive. Von Stosser is handicapped in that he has no idea what Davenport looks like; all he knows is Davenport is American and male. Von Stosser is aware this makes his task a lot harder so he will, initially, be unwilling to risk accidental damage to Davenport.

Nazi Agents have tracked Davenport down—by luck he is in Europe, and about to travel through the Austrian Alps, within range of where von Stosser and his Nazi Rocketeers can capture him easily and make a quick getaway.

However, von Stosser's actions have not gone unnoticed. Bertie Robeson, an investigator, has noticed the kidnappings, and through his contacts has come to believe Davenport is next. Stuck in New York he needs to get to Europe quickly and so he contacts some old friends—Brent Hardcastle, and Lady Amelia Valentine. Explaining the plot to his friends, Nazi agents appear and assassinate him. His dying wish to find Davenport sends the heroes to Vienna, where they battle the Nazis Rocketeers on the genuine Orient Express and rescue captured Scientists from a brooding castle filled with death traps, before racing von Stosser and his fake Orient Express to the French border, battling throughout the speeding train to prevent a devastating attack on France.

THE CHARACTERS

This pulp adventure is a prequel to the Daring Tales of Adventure series from Triple Ace Games, and is based on the history of the four pre-generated characters available for free from www.tripleacegames.com. As this is an early adventure, they use the basic character sheets (20 XP). However, if you wish to use your own characters, it should be suitable for any Novice level PCs.

GM's will also need 10 marker stones, and the *Daring Tales of Adventure* pulp setting rules from the TAG website.

ACT ONE: NEW YORK

As this adventure tells the story of how the characters met, the players do not begin together. Whilst Brent, Jimmy and Amelia meet quickly, Doc is not really involved

until the next Act. Instead of sitting out, Doc's player can choose to take control of the Nazi agents during this Act; if he makes the chase entertaining and cinematic for everyone involved, give him a benny he can keep to use as Doc later on in the adventure.

SCENE 1: WHEN BRENT MET AMELIA

INTRODUCTION FOR DOC (CAN BE USED NOW, OR LATER, AS APPROPRIATE)

Yet again the short sightedness of American funding boards has thwarted your efforts to turn your latest developments into technology that can aid mankind. Your newest breakthrough is a new method of fuel processing that makes the fuel ultra concentrated, so less is needed. The fact that it is also ultra-combustible and just mildly unstable is a small issue that could easily be overcome if only someone with a bit of vision would lend a hand on the money side of things. Not to be deterred by the lack of interest in the US, and the occasional small explosion, you have decamped to the great cities of Europe to see if you can find more enlightened minds there. So far your lectures have not been successful, but you've only reached Vienna. There's still plenty more places to try along the route of the Orient Express, and as you settle down for the next stage of your journey you have no idea of the adventure heading your way!

INTRODUCTION FOR LADY AMELIA

A few months ago, you went out for a few dates with a fellow Englishman in New York, an ex-army officer called Bertie Robeson, now working as a private detective. He called you this morning to say he desperately needed to talk to you, but it was too dangerous to talk over the phone. Your curiosity aroused, you agree to meet him at the entrance to the Central Park Zoo. You arrive promptly at three, pulling up against the curb outside the Zoo. Hanging around by the gate you notice a young man, somewhat unkempt in a rugged kind of way, with a small boy who seems to be wanting to go in.

A moment later, Bertie arrives, looking terrible. He hasn't shaved, and his clothes look slept in. He looks around himself wildly. "Were you followed? Did you tell anyone you were coming?" Before you can answer, Bertie pulls you out of the car. "Come with me, I'll explain everything." He pulls you out of the car and over to the rugged young man.

INTRODUCTION FOR BRENT & JIMMY

Early this morning you received a surprise phone call from a friend you hadn't heard from since you left your mercenary days behind you. Bertie Robeson, ex-British Army officer, sounded scared, saying nothing more that he desperately needed to speak with you, but refuses to talk over the phone. Surprised, you agree to meet him on Fifth Avenue to talk. Herding Jimmy onto the express train from Boston you get to the entrance to Central Park Zoo just before three.

As you wait, an elegant and very attractive young woman driving an expensive roadster pulls up to the curb. She scans the crowd, her eyes settling on you both briefly before looking away. A moment later, Bertie appears out of small crowd inside the zoo, and goes over to her. He looks terrible, as if he hasn't slept in a week. As soon as he sees you, he heads towards you, bringing the woman with him.

Bertie makes introductions quickly, talking up Amelia's title and Brent's bravery. He's a little surprised to see Jimmy—a kid in tow was not part of his plan—but quickly recovers.

"Good. Now we're all chums, we need to get a move on. It won't be long before they…"

With a throaty roar a large sedan pulls across the street and up onto the sidewalk, blocking in Amelia's roadster. Two men in dark suits, overcoats and black hats jump out and pull pistols from their coats, ready to open fire. "Zer he is," shouts one, "Kill him!"

Bertie scoops Amelia up and dumps her unceremoniously back into her car. "Drive! Brent, kid, get in! We have to lose them. I'll explain on the way!"

SCENE 2: CENTRAL PARK CHASE

Deal for initiative, and let the chase begin. The roadster is pulled alongside the curb at the corner of 5th Avenue and 65th Street, right outside the entrance to the Central Park Zoo, facing north with the villains blocking him in. Traffic on 5th Avenue is heavy, but not jammed. It takes the villains a little while to get in to their car, so the heroes get a two Range Increment head start. The range increment for this chase is 5.

Bertie shouts almost immediately he gets into the car: "Off the road! Into the Park!" and its hoped the PCs take this advice. If they don't then there is a lot of traffic in Manhattan for them to drive through. And the park makes for a more interesting chase.

German Agents (3): See page 17.

VILLAIN'S SEDAN

Acc/Top Speed: 10/20; **Toughness:** 12(3); **Crew:** 1+5

AMELIA'S ROADSTER:

Acc/Top Speed: 15/30; **Toughness:** 10(3); **Crew:** 1+2

As well as any random obstacles that may cause interesting events whilst screaming through the park, they have a choice between staying on the marked and paved walkways and thoroughfares, or off-roading it through the greenery. If they go off road, the ground is solid and they won't get bogged down in mud, but it is bumpy, generating a –2 to all Driving rolls. Whilst off-road the bumpy terrain also makes it difficult for passengers to take actions, as the vehicles count as Unstable Platforms (–2 to all rolls). It is assumed the chase ranges all over the park—after all, the cheerful destruction of public landscapes without worrying about the verisimilitude of their relative locations is something of a cinematic pulp staple.

The villains do not rely on poor driving to undo their victim. They attempt to shoot anyone in the roadster any time they are within four Range Increments.

CENTRAL PARK OBSTACLES

Deuce (–4) Ravine: Bursting out of the trees, the terrain comes to an abrupt stop. The lead vehicle needs to break hard, or plunge down the side of the Ravine into the loch. The following vehicle also needs to break hard. A raise lets the pursuers ram the lead vehicle into the ravine without danger to themselves. If a vehicle fails the roll, it ends up in the little river, which counts as a collision with a hard obstacle. Add an extra 1d6 damage on top of the speed-based damage to represent the fall.

Three (–2) Horse & Cart: A carriage drawn by a white horse appears suddenly from a track way. The horse is surprised and rears up. If the driver fails to avoid the carriage, it overturns and ends up on top of the car, counting as a collision with a hard obstacle.

Four (–2) Carousel: As the heroes approach the carousel, a line of 1st graders on a trip to the park is crossing the way just a little way ahead of the speeding car. Failure to get out of the way causes the vehicle to crash into a nearby patch of trees, which counts as a hard collision.

Five (–2) Ice Cream Stand: A bicycle-drawn ice cream stand is doing a roaring trade on the corner of two pathways. Customers surround the stand and the vehicles are forced to swerve hard or hit the stand. Failure leads to a collision with a soft obstacle.

Six (–2) Garbage Cans: A line of garbage cans stand by a park bench. The driver or passengers can choose to try and side swipe them and throw them into the line of the pursuing vehicle. This requires a Driving roll at –2. With success, the tailing vehicle suffers a –2 penalty to its next roll. If the Nazi's have got ahead of the heroes, they definitely try this in order to stop the vehicle.

Seven (–1) Cloud of Pigeons: Roaring past the Chess & Checkers House, (in 1934 it was a lovely rustic wooden summerhouse, rather than the brick building of today) disturbs a cloud of hungry pigeons, which fly into people's faces and windshields, obscuring vision. Failure on the roll causes the vehicle to automatically drop back one Range Increment. Don't forget to add direct hits with bird guano for comedy purposes.

Eight (–1) Trees: Turning off a footway to avoid pedestrians sends the cars into thickets of trees. Failure means any heroes currently leaning out of the car to fire on pursuers get hit in the head by low hanging branches for 2d6 damage as if from an Extra.

Nine (0) Sheep: Flocks of sheep were kept grazing in Central Park through most of its early years. However, fearing starving New Yorkers during the Depression would poach them, they were rounded up in 1934. At this moment a flock of sheep is being herded together for removal, blocking all progress in the immediate area. Whilst this doesn't cause any difficulties driving, it forces the heroes to reverse and find a detour, loosing valuable ground—they suffer an automatic loss of one Range Increment.

Ten (0/–2) Bridge Repair: A bridge under repair is surrounded by scaffolding, and a hopper of scaffold pipes stands next to the bridge. If the driver is prepare to take a –2 penalty to his roll to get close enough to the works, one of the passengers can open the hopper and bring a pile of pipes down on the pursuit. If the tailing car fails its next Driving roll, it suffers a collision with a hard obstacle.

Jack (0) Hooverville Whilst the homeless have been moved on, this remnant of their shanty town still stands. It won't take much to avoid the tents themselves, but it's a good opportunity to discourage pursuit by letting fly some of the cloth used to make shelters. Any of the passengers in the roadster can attempt an Agility roll to grab a loose piece of tarpaulin and sling it at the pursuing Nazis. Treat this as a passenger Distract stunt. The villains' sedan, as a closed vehicle, means they cannot use this Trick against heroes.

Queen (—/–2) Elephants! Central Park Zoo has taken its elephants for a walk through the park. A half a dozen pachyderms, each wearing a brightly colored coat saying "Central Park Zoo" are being led sedately through the park. Surrounding them, watching the elephants' antics, is a small crowd.

The drivers have the option of avoiding the elephants or weaving through them. Giving them a wide berth automatically cost the vehicle a Range Increment.

Driving closer keeps the vehicle's speed up, but requires the modified Driving roll. Failure on this roll means the car has gotten a bit too close to a particularly irritable elephant, which lashes out with its trunk, hard enough to shatter the front windshield of the car, making Driving harder to do (–1 to all future rolls until someone in the front spends an action to kick out the remaining windshield).

King (–2/0) Ice Rink Their course through the park is leading directly to the ice rink. Do the heroes take the

shorter route across the ice or take a lengthy detour? The Nazis always head across the ice.

Heading across the ice requires a Driving roll at –2. With success, the car gains an additional Range Increment this round due to the short cut. Anyone who *fails* the Driving roll ends up Out Of Control, spinning without traction. Alternatively, the heroes can go around the rink. This incurs no penalty, but the vehicle automatically moves one less Range Increment than normal due to the greater distance involved.

Throughout the chase, whenever is appropriate, such as a round with no obstacles and no other exciting events, Bertie fills them in on what is going on.

"It's the Nazi's Brent. They're up to something, something big. I think they're building some sort of weapon. I got asked to investigate a kidnapping back in Blighty. A professor of aeronautic engineering who was working on something special for Supermarine. I did a little digging, and it's more than just the one. Seven disappearances since April!"

"They're all fringe types, mainstream calls them crackpots, but clearly Hitler doesn't think so. I got hold of what I think is a list. Eight names in all, in all fields, Aviation, Ballistics, Robotics, Engineering. The last is a Yank, a Nathanial Davenport. Just like the rest of them he's brilliant, but completely bonkers by all accounts."

"I came over here to warn him, but when I got here, I found he'd actually gone to Europe. I was poking round for more info when those goons behind us arrived, I guess looking for Davenport as well. I need to get to Vienna quickly Brent, so I thought of you. Will you help?"

"And Amelia, I need an even bigger favor from you. They won't be looking for a man and woman travelling together. You'd be saving my life. Plus, you know my German's no good. If I'm to have any hope of getting to Davenport before the Germans do, I'll need a translator. I know it's a lot to ask, but this Davenport! If half his theories have any substance to them I dread to think what the Nazis could create if they got their paws on him!"

If the Nazi Agents catch up to the heroes they do their best to ram them and turn the convertible over. If the heroes pull ahead more than ten increments, then a second group of Nazis suddenly appear from nowhere ahead, and get off one final lucky shot that spells the end for Bertie.

If during the chase the heroes take out the Nazis, their final shot has managed to strike Bertie a mortal blow. If the Nazi's destroy the characters' car, it has turned over; the heroes are badly shaken but otherwise unharmed, except for Bertie, who is now dying.

SCENE 3: DYING BREATH

The heroes pull themselves from the convertible and turn to find Bertie. He's very badly hurt; it is obvious he's not got long left.

"Amelia, Brent, I'm sorry, I'm done for. You must finish the job. For me, for the world. Please! Find Davenport before they do.' He fumbles in his jacket and pulls out a notebook. He presses it into Amelia's hand. 'Promise me you'll do it."

Bertie won't say any more until they promise to finish his mission. Once they do, Bertie, groans his thanks, and passes away.

Looking inside the notebook they find the evidence Bertie has gathered about the plot: names of missing scientists, their specialties and the dates they were taken. At the back is a list headed Davenport Lecture Tour. It lists European cities and dates. One is underlined; it says "Vienna" and the date is for the fifteenth, just two days from now.

The missing scientists are Professor Lebensraum, Swiss, Aeronautics; Dr Juan-Marcos Reverte, Spanish, Flight systems; Dr Pierre Bonniere, French, Ballistics; Professor Hralf Sigurdsson, Norwegian, Rocketry; Dr James Phillips, British, Aeronautic and Marine engineering; Dr Victor Halley, Canadian, Explosives; Professor Lao Chi Zhang, Chinese, Explosives.

ACT TWO: THE ORIENT EXPRESS

Between Amelia's money and Brent's flying contacts, the heroes have no trouble getting themselves and their weapons across the Atlantic and into Austria. (This is pulp fiction after all, these things happen easily.) In the time it takes to cross the Atlantic, the party can recover all wounds taken in the park. Doc will meet up with the other players in the first Scene of the Act, once they get on the Orient Express and start looking for him.

The Orient Express (the Paris to Istanbul train) is a name that is a byword for luxury. This is a train journey taken by nobles, diplomats, and the very wealthy, using sleeping cars to travel from one end of Europe to the other. As such they demand, and receive, the best possible treatment, from the five star accommodations to the silver-service of the staff. The restaurant cars are known for the quality of their cuisine, providing meals matching that of the finest restaurants in Paris.

This act takes place whilst the Orient Express is traversing the Austrian Alps.

SCENE 1: ATTACK OF THE ROCKET NAZIS

Getting to Vienna is easy—a long plane flight hopping across the Atlantic, a string of bribes at the Austrian Airport, and then a taxi across the city

to the train station. Enquiries at the ticket office reveal that Doc Davenport is already onboard. Quickly buying tickets, you race to the platform for the east bound train, leaping aboard the last carriage just as the whistle blows, and the Orient Express begins steaming out towards the Alps, and its next stop in Budapest.

Your tickets indicate you have berths in the last passenger cabin, car 14. Brent and Jimmy are sharing cabin 14a and Lady Amelia has taken 14b. The dining car is car 3. From your immediate surroundings it's obvious that the train is the last word in luxury. Even the baggage seems to ride first class. It shouldn't take too long to find Professor Davenport.

Brent, Jimmy, and Amelia board the train with moments to spare, and are right at the back of the train. The heroes can either choose to settle down for the night in the sleeping car, or begin their search for Davenport immediately. If they decide to settle down, or grab some refreshments in the dining car, the romantic nature of the train might appeal to Jimmy's matchmaking tendencies towards Brent and Amelia. Should they choose to search for Davenport they have no luck in the first few cars, as Doc is on his own in cabin 7c, closer to the Dining Car, making sure his inventions are properly stowed for the journey to Budapest.

Either way, by this point it is night and the train is now well outside of Vienna moving at top speed into the Alps. If they make a Notice roll (+2), the heroes have a chance to spot the following.

Moving through the cabins you see what looks like a dozen small meteors falling through the sky over the beautiful Austrian Alps. Watching for a moment you realize these shooting stars have changed course. They are now heading directly for the Orient Express! You peer into the night, trying to see more of this unusual phenomenon. A moment or two of observation reveals that these aren't meteors, they're people. People in rocket packs, wearing Nazi uniforms with large automatic rifles!

A moment after this realization, the Rocket Nazi's open fire! Deal action cards. Any hero who notices the Nazis has two rounds to prepare before they arrive, while those who failed receive only one round. The shots the Rocket Nazis are firing are not aimed at anything in particular and are purely intended to keep the heads of the passengers and crew down.

The Rocket Nazis begin by splitting their forces. Some focus on the driver and his fireman, bringing the Orient Express under their control. The driver is ordered to continue, for now. Another group enters the other carriages, and begin herding passengers and staff into the Restaurant Car. The last group, numbering one per player, burst into the train car(s) the heroes are currently in, and attempt to herd them into the diner. The invading Nazis are free with their fists, and are generally intimidating, but only use deadly force to defend themselves if attacked first.

Fighting the Rocket Nazis can be done with firearms, melee weapons, or in hand-to-hand. If using bullets, then a stray shot may hit a rocket pack, with disastrous consequences for the wearer! Use the Innocent Bystanders rule, with rocket packs counting as valid unlucky targets. Any exploding rocket pack does 3d6 damage as if from a Wild Card in a Small Burst Template. It may also set the train on fire (it's mostly made of wood) and the furnishings are highly flammable.

This combat is an excellent occasion for Doc to meet up with the rest of the heroes, as they fight towards the Dining Car.

TERRAIN

The Orient Express is a long train of 15 cars, plus the engine and coal wagon. Immediately behind the coal wagon is the baggage car, then the kitchen car before the dining car. After that there are eleven more cabins, all sleeper cars with 8 berths per car. The guards van, and secondary baggage storage forms the last car.

For game purposes, assume the carriages of the Orient Express are all 3" wide by 12" long, both inside and out; train walls are not that thick. The interior of the sleeper cars feature a narrow (1") corridor running the length of the train on the left, with few props to aid combat. The rest of the carriage is taken up with the four cabins, each approximately 3" long and 2" wide. Bunks fold up against the walls on both sides during the day, and a small folding table rests against the rear of each cabin. The inside of the cabins can furnish any manor of prop you might find in a hotel room, though any movement inside the cabin counts as Difficult Ground due to the cramped conditions.

The dining car has no corridor, and has tables set from dinner, with cutlery, crockery and more than a few bottles of wines and spirits.

Should the fight move to the roof of the fast moving train, the hero or villain finds it slick with snow with scarce hand holds (for a total of –4 for Climbing attempts) and also counts as an Unstable Platform.

Trying to separate the carriages requires a Strength roll. However, it's not going to slow down any Nazis. With their rocket packs, jumping between separated carriages is easy for them.

Nazi Rocketeers (1 per hero): See page 17.

SCENE 2: WOULD DR DAVENPORT PLEASE STAND

The heroes are either herded into the restaurant car, or having overcome the first wave or Rocket Nazis, can sneak up to it. A quick glance reveals simply attacking will lead to the deaths of many innocent bystanders.

Many of the passengers and crew have been

crammed into the dining car, squashed into every available space. Half a dozen Nazi soldiers cover them with sub-machineguns. One of these soldiers is immense, a true man-mountain. A stern looking Nazi officer strides to the middle of the car, and draws his sidearm, a vicious looking pistol.

"Herren und Damen," he begins in German, but then switches to English. "I am Major Werner von Stosser of the German Army. I apologize for this rather unusual interruption to your journey. I have one request, and then you may go on your way with no further disruption. I am looking for an American, Herr Doktor Davenport?"

No-one answers. The German officer waits a second, turns sharply to his right, nods towards an elderly woman, and then shoots her without warning. There is a short moment of screaming as many of the passengers panic. The screaming is cut off by another shot from the Major's pistol fired into the roof. "Enough! You will show yourself to me, Herr Doktor. Otherwise I will shoot one passenger every minute until you reveal yourself. And just to be sure I do not shoot you by accident, I shall start with ze women!"

If Doc hasn't made contact with the rest of the heroes before now, he can meet up with them at this point—they are either grouped together at the back of the restaurant car with the other prisoners, or are hiding outside the restaurant car and he can join them there.

Von Stosser is not going to be satisfied with anything less than Doc's surrender, but he doesn't know what Davenport looks like. If Brent (or any other male character) wants to pretend he is Dr Davenport, he needs to make a Persuasion roll opposed by von Stosser's Notice. Children or female characters are seen through instantly.

From now on, as every minute of **real time** passes (not game time, you want the players to feel the pressure!), shoot another hostage. Start with the women. The shots are not be instantly fatal, but they produce plenty of blood and screams—von Stosser doesn't particularly care, as once he is done he plans to blow the restaurant car to bits. Von Stosser isn't particularly interested in leaving live witnesses.

If the heroes let von Stosser shoot any more hostages, they lose bennies for their non-heroic behavior (don't forget to warn them first). If that doesn't get them moving, and Amelia is in the restaurant car, have von Stosser turn his gun on her, with a stark warning of…

'60 seconds, Herr Doctor, or this pretty fraulein dies. Achtunfünfzig Seibenundfünfzig..'

Once one of the heroes (Doc or someone else) has surrendered (for which give them a benny, as per the surrender rules), von Stosser has him strapped to Corporal Gunter Eisenberg, a huge Rocketeer who has come equipped with a carrying rig and handcuffs for an unwilling prisoner, whilst the rest of the Nazi Rocketeers cover the other passengers with their sub-machineguns to make sure none suddenly get heroic ideas. Incidentally once Davenport is identified and in custody, the Rocket Nazis have orders to shoot to kill.

The train slows down, stopping on a long narrow bridge spanning a deep gorge in the Alps. The bridge is narrow, a single track, and whilst the bridge itself is supported with steel girders, the floor of the bridge is made from wood.

The first Nazis, including the prisoner, jump from the train and rocket into the night. Just before von Stosser himself leaves, a soldier comes up and says something in German. Stosser then orders his men off the train. Sharp eyed characters note the Rocket Nazi's pile off the train with exceeding haste once they hear that order. Any hero who speaks German understands what they heard as "The bomb is set for 60 seconds". Should no hero speak German, enough passengers and crew understand the language to panic.

Sixty seconds equates to a mere 10 combat rounds!

With everyone crowded into the restaurant car, there is instant chaos as passengers push and shove each other to get off the train. Worse, if the Rocket Nazis are threatened at this stage they have no hesitation in throwing a grenade into the restaurant car.

If a grenade is thrown in, many of the passengers and crew are injured, but fortunately for the players they smother most of the blast. Roll damage as normal, but treat the passengers as providing +6 Armor to the heroes.

Even if a grenade is not used, the heroes must make an Agility roll at –2 or be knocked to the floor and trampled, suffering take 2d4 damage from an Extra.

SCENE 3: DECISIONS, DECISIONS

However, the bridge is long, and it's unlikely anyone will make it to the safety of solid ground before the bomb goes off. So now the heroes have a choice—deal with the bomb or chase von Stosser. Good heroes, of course, can do both.

THE BOMB

The bomb is fixed securely to the underside of the restaurant car, over the very middle of the bridge. It's made of a single large can containing several pounds of plastic explosive and a clockwork timer on the top. There is enough explosive here to destroy the restaurant car and the bridge!

The good news is the Rocket Nazis did not have enough time to fix an advanced anti-handling device to the bomb.

Defusing the Bomb: If the party begins a search for the bomb, they must complete the following steps in order. Failed rolls may be repeated next round, at the cost of wasting valuable time. Should the 8th round end be-

fore the bomb is made safe, it explodes. Anyone helping defuse the bomb suffers 3d6 damage from a Wild Card.

When the heroes begin searching, they have just 8 rounds left before detonation. It takes them two rounds to work through the crowd and reach the outside.

Step 1) The heroes must search for the bomb. This requires a Cooperative Notice roll at –4. Until this roll is made, the party cannot locate the device.

Step 2) Having found the explosive device, the heroes must study it to ensure there are no booby-traps. The sudden impulse to rip the thing free or start cutting wires could be the last act the heroes ever take! Checking the device requires a Smarts roll at –2 or an unmodified Repair roll. On a failure, the party may either proceed with the next step, suffering an additional –2 penalty due to added caution, or reattempt this step.

Step 3) Convinced the bomb is safe to handle, the characters may now try to determine how it works. Once they know this, they can try to dismantle it. This requires a Smarts roll at –2 or an unmodified Repair roll

Step 4) There are two ways to neutralize the bomb. For those technically inclined, they can snip wires. This requires a Repair roll at –2 (thanks to the awkward operating conditions). Those less able can make a Strength roll at –2 to pull it free and toss it over the side of the bridge, where it explodes harmlessly.

Clearing the Cars: If one of more heroes decide to try and evacuate the train and its passengers to safety while their comrades are searching for the bomb, place ten tokens on the tabletop. These represent the passengers. Again, the heroes have only eight rounds in which to act.

Each round, the heroes must make a Cooperative Intimidation or Persuasion roll at –2. The rolls can be mixed—one hero can bark orders while another acts more politely and ushers people along. A successful roll removes one token, and a raise two tokens—those passengers have reached safety. If the party is split, divide the action between the two groups. The tension of one scene should help fuel the tension in the other.

If the heroes fail to remove the last token by the time the bomb explodes, they suffer 3d6 damage from a Wild Card. Many of the remaining passengers are wounded, but none mortally.

The engine and forward baggage car, and the last passenger car and the guards van are firmly on the tracks. Two more passenger cars dangle precariously over the edge of the bridge. All other carriages have plunged to the bottom of the gorge.

PURSUING VON STOSSER

The goal is now to rescue Dr Davenport, or the hero who impersonated him. If the heroes diffused the bomb or threw it in the gorge, they can easily retrieve rocket packs from the fallen Rocket Nazi's who attacked them in their sleeping car and pursue. Skip ahead to Scene 4.

This section assumes the heroes do **not** give chase at any point.

Should the heroes decide not to immediately pursue the Nazis, the last they see of von Stosser and his prisoner are the trails of the jet packs turning north. Talking to some of the passengers suggests that of all the notable places for the Rocket Nazis to head to the most likely would be the old Schloss Sturmburg—an ancient crumbling castle in the mountains—built to defend against the Turks.

Remember, the Orient Express has lots of important figures on it, people who are "in the know." They are grateful to the party for their assistance and share what knowledge they have. One of them, an elderly and retired Foreign Office diplomat, recalls there was a secret entrance to the castle, starting at the linden tree by the river beneath the main gates (should the heroes or the other passengers look astounded at him he goes: "What? I'm English and work for the Foreign Office. We're *supposed* to know everything.")

Additionally, Lady Amelia may also be aware of the castle from her time at Swiss finishing schools, the ski-ing up there was rather charming. Have her make a Smarts roll. However, she hasn't heard of the secret entrance unless she scores a raise.

SCENE 4: CHASE THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS

The chase is on! Each Range Increment equates to 10". Piloting is required to use a rocket pack. For the purposes of any collision, the rocket packs have Top Speed 30.

If the party immediately ran to get rocket packs from fallen Nazis, ignoring the bomb, the Germans are three Range Increments ahead. Waiting until after the bomb means the Nazis are six Range Increments away—they are in no rush, figuring everyone on the train will soon be killed in the explosion.

Nazi Rocket Packs are secured with several straps, that all feed into a central release buttons. If the heroes get into melee distance of the Nazis at any point using one of these packs, then the Nazi's won't hesitate to go for the release button, at which point a hero better hang on tightly! Equally a sharp eyed character could do the same to a flying Nazi!

The Rocket Nazis do everything they can to stop any pursuers catching the Major or Corporal Eisenberg and the prisoner. Each one is a true German patriot, as well as a professional commando They are highly trained so they are not afraid to take risks, and even sacrifice themselves, for their mission.

Divide the Nazi Extras into groups equal in number to the heroes for the purposes of action cards. This prevents the goons from all suffering the same obstacle simultaneously.

If they lose the chase, then the heroes see the Nazi's heading towards the shadow of an ominous castle in the distance. If they rescue the prisoner, von Stosser still gets away using the Recurring Villain rule. It quickly becomes apparent to Doc when he checks his gear his journal, containing his most sensitive research, has been

taken—von Stosser has it, and it must be reclaimed or destroyed before the Nazis can decipher it!

Liven up the chase and any subsequent aerial combat with the following events and obstacles. Events marked "*" only affect the heroes and senior Nazis. For the Extras, give a flat –2 penalty due to adverse conditions.

Deuce (—) Fuel Cut-Out*: The fuel to the jetpacks falters for a moment. The wearer must make a Smarts roll (–2) or a Repair roll each round. Until he succeeds, he loses one Range Increment automatically. Alternately, the GM can have one Nazi Extra drop from the sky with a long scream if a goon squad draws this card.

3-4 (–2) Buzzing the Trees: A copse of alpine trees looms suddenly through the cloud, forcing the pilot to take emergency action. A failed Piloting roll causes the victim to be Shaken as he flies through the top of the trees.

5-6 (–2) Ravine*: The Nazis zip between two sheer rock faces, making for a narrow squeeze. Failure damages the rockets, sending the wearer spiraling to the ground. He automatically drops back one Range Increment as he tries to stabilize his flight.

Alternately, the GM can have one Nazi Extra slam into the cliff and explode messily if a goon squad draws this card.

7-8 (0) Strap Breakage*: The straps holding the hero to their rocket pack gives out suddenly. The hero must make an Agility roll at –2 to regain the strap whilst maintaining pursuit, otherwise they lose a Range Increment every round until they reconnect the strap.

Alternately, the Gm can have one Nazi slip free of his straps and fall nosily to his doom if a goon squad draws this card

9-10 (–2) Sudden Updraft: A sudden gust of wind threatens to flip the flyer out of control. A failed roll causes the character to be Shaken.

Jack–King (0) Cloudy: The character flies into low cloud. A failed Piloting roll means the flyer becomes disoriented—he loses a Range Increment.

Ace (–2) Loose Rocks!* The noise of the pursuit loosens the snow cap of a nearby peak, tipping it down upon the flyers as they skim through a narrow valley. A successful Piloting roll keeps a character in the chase. If unsuccessful, the character falls aside and is forced to land. On snake eyes, the jetpack is damaged and they crash.

- **Major von Stosser:** See page 17.
- **Cpl Gunter Eisenberg:** See page 17.
- **Nazi Rocketeers (2 per hero):** See page 17.

ACT THREE: SCHLOSS STURMBURG

Castle Sturmburg is an ancient brooding pile the Nazi Rocketeer Brigade has been quietly converting into a forward base and research facility. It's populated by several Nazi scientists, each one every bit as ruthless in their research as von Stosser. In the last few months they have been joined by more reluctant guests—scientists from around the world who are experts in rocketry, ballistics, and artillery who have been brought here and forced to work on the first of a line of super weapons which Hitler will use as the opening salvo when the Chancellor decides it is time to conquer the world.

There's quite a lot of sneaking around in this act which can be broken up any time it gets boring with the sudden arrival of Nazi soldiers on a guard patrol. The guards, up to the point the heroes attempt to break into von Stosser's office, are stereotypical pulp German Army soldiers—dim, slow, noisy, and unobservant. But there are lots of them. The Nazi Rocketeer Brigade on the other hand is elite. Their guards are cunning, clever, and a match for anything. Including the Heroes.

There are lots of opportunities to be taken prisoner, which leads to Scene 3 (Prison Break)

SCENE 1: APPROACHING THE CASTLE

Outlined against the full moon is the ominous façade of Castle Sturmburg, looming over the pass as it has done for over six hundred years, a silent sentinel against invaders from the east. It does not seem to have fared well in that time. In places the crenellations are crumbling, and one tower is cracked open its roof sheared off long ago.

Icicles as long as a man hang from the battlements, and every few minutes you see a two man patrol move across them, moving in an endless circle around the walls. Perching on the battlements like a misshapen bird is some sort of aircraft, half hidden under what looks like camouflage netting.

The approach to the castle has been cleared of trees to the south. To the north, the castle hangs out over the ravine, leaning out over the icy river hundreds of feet below. From within, harsh yellow lights can be seen through arrow slits, and the sounds of construction; banging, scraping, hammering, sawing are escaping into the still night air.

There are several ways into the castle—climb the outer wall, use Persuasion or Stealth to get them through the front door, be captured and taken to the dungeon, or if they stayed to help the innocent passengers on the train, they know to try for the secret entrance.

CLIMBING THE WALL

The outer wall of the Sturmburg is a crumbling stone affair, though the plentiful hand holds are slick with ice, making for a very difficult climb (–2). The rocket packs are now low on fuel; one person can make it to the top if they pool the fuel. The others have to climb.

The top of the wall is patrolled by sentries, who pass

along the top at regular intervals. They are not particularly observant and the cover of darkness helps conceal the heroes until they get closer to the top. The players need to make a successful Climbing roll. On a failure the hero must try again, having got stuck part way up.

Unbeknownst to the heroes, a Nazi patrol passes along the battlements in five rounds. If any heroes are on the battlements and in sight at this time, the guards open fire. Hopefully, he party has scaled the wall and entered the castle by this time.

The terrain at the top of the wall is the classic castle battlement. The parapet is approximately 2 yards across, with no rail. In the icy conditions a combatant could quite easily slip or be pushed down to the ground some 80 feet below!

From the top of the wall, the heroes can see for quite a way, including soldiers on the far side of the castle brushing snow from what looks like train tracks. The train tracks curve away south and east, back towards Vienna. Also on the top of the wall, facing out towards the ravine, is what looks like some sort of plane, covered with a large tarpaulin. It looks like instead of regular engines, it is powered by large rocket packs.

Nazi Soldier (1 per hero): See page 17.

STEALTH/PERSUADE

Immediately out front of the castle there are no guards, though in the shelter of the porch is a single sentry. The heroes can attempt to distract the sentry with a well thrown stone, pretend to be Nazi agents, or use any other ploy they like. If they try bluffing their way in the sentry won't just let them in, but he takes them to his superior, turning his back on the heroes at least long enough to be knocked out.

Once inside the castle there are plenty of alcoves and doorways to duck into to avoid the guards patrolling the halls, and any other staff moving around. Should they be spotted, any staff quickly try and raise the alarm, to which groups of guards quickly respond.

CAPTURE

The surest way into the castle is to surrender, or otherwise engineer their capture. Nazi soldiers swiftly oblige if the alarm is raised, and the heroes are taken to the dungeons.

THE SECRET PASSAGE

The tunnel before you is narrow, just big enough for the adults to get their shoulders through, but tall enough to stand in. And it's clear it's been a dumping ground for all kinds of stuff for years. It's littered with what looks like rusting robot parts, and bits of old rockets and other machinery. Crickets chirp in amongst the rubbish, and the tunnel itself is lined with cobwebs. Things can be heard rustling in the leaf mold. Unusually, the tunnel slopes slightly downward.

Once the party is inside, a giant stone ball drops from behind them and begins rolling down the slope toward them! This scene uses a variant of the Chase rules.

Place 11 markers on the tabletop to represent the tunnel. To reach safety, the party must move beyond the final marker. The heroes must make Agility roll each round. The stone ball (Agility d10) draws a card at the start of the **third** round. Should the ball end up on the same Range Increment as a hero at the **end** of a round, the unlucky victim takes 3d6 damage from a Wild Card.

The light on markers one and two is Dim (–1), and Dark (–2) from markers three to five. Beyond this is Pitch Darkness (–4). These modifiers apply to all Trait rolls.

To make matters worse, and much more exciting, when the heroes reach certain range markers, as indicated below, ancient traps spring into life.

3) Pit: A hidden pit lies concealed beneath thin wooden panels. The pit isn't designed to kill—it's designed to slow down the party so the ball can crush them. The first hero to step foot on this marker must make an Agility roll at –2 or fall knee deep into the pit. His movement for the round ends automatically, no matter his original Agility roll.

The ball is large enough to roll over the pit.

5) Pendulums: A series of scything blades swing down the ceiling, creating a barrier of slicing death. The hero must end his movement for the round. Next round, he must use Smarts (not Agility) to move forward, judging the blades' timing. A failure causes 2d6 damage. Until the roll succeeds, the hero must remain on the marker, driven back by the killer blades.

The ball is heavy enough to smash through the blades unimpaired.

7) Nest: Thick cobwebs cover this marker. A hero crashing through finds himself covered in insects. For most, this is just an annoyance. Brett, however, must make a Spirit roll. Failure means he cannot proceed past this marker. The roll may be repeated each round. Once he succeeds, he may make his Agility roll as normal.

9) Ancient Crossbow Barrage: Crossbows mounted in the wall release their deadly missiles when a pressure plate is triggered. Well, that was the designer's plan. However, time has not been kind to the ancient weapons. As the crossbows twang, they all break. The wood has all but turned to dust and all that is achieved is a cloud of choking blinding dust is dumped onto the heroes. The first hero onto this marker must make a Vigor roll or be Shaken.

11) Portcullis: When this marker is first stepped on, a spiked portcullis crashes down! Whoever triggers it must make an Agility roll to leap through to safety. Failure means they are trapped on the wrong side of the gate.

The portcullis prevents movement beyond this marker until it is lifted. In order to do this, a character must be on the 11th marker and make a Strength roll at –2 as an action. Should the ball catch up with the characters now,

it smashes them onto the spikes for an extra 1d6 damage. The portcullis is sturdy enough to stop the ball's movement.

Once the players slip past the portcullis they are into a long forgotten storage area in the dungeons. Heading up some dusty stairs, the heroes make it into the main corridors where signs indicate they are quite near the prison.

INSIDE THE CASTLE

Whether they have successfully got in and are sneaking around, or have been captured, their path through the castle takes them past a courtyard that has been glassed over.

Beneath you, you can see a huge workshop, where a hundred German workers are busy assembling the weapons of war. Most of them seem to be unfeasibly large warheads. Others are constructing the bodies of slim rockets, and sleek looking aerial bombs. In the centre of the courtyard a huge assembly has been put together, and barrels of air craft fuel are being brought up to it. As they watch, the fuel is poured into the shuddering machine. A viscous black liquid emerges from the other end, giving off a fetid, noxious smell. The liquid is filling a barrel marked "Superfuel." Another ten barrels stand empty and waiting.

Doc quickly recognizes it for his fuel refining process, though on a scale twice as big as his prototype plans indicate.

As the heroes pass the courtyard, the smell is so overpowering they must make Vigor checks or becomes extremely nauseous, leaving them at –1 to all trait rolls whilst in the area. A critical failure leaves them puking and retching so badly they cannot move for a moment—if they haven't been taken prisoner, another pair of guards has a chance to discover them.

SCENE 2: WE HAVE WAYS OF MAKING YOU TALK

If the Rocket Nazis got away with their prisoner, or the heroes are captured attempting to enter the castle, von Stosser wants "words" with Doc Davenport. Words of a painful nature.

Doc, or whoever is pretending to be Doc, is swiftly taken to an interrogation room, a small, cold, stone chamber lit by a single bare bulb. A drain is set into the centre of the floor, and the smell of rotting meat floats from it. There Doc is strapped into a heavy chair.

Von Stosser pulls up a stool, and watches quietly whilst his minions set up the instruments of torture. A German scientist with a chin so weak it seems to have given up completely, puts a black rubber apron on over his white coat, and lays out a series of instruments on a metal tray, including a sharpened set of forceps, several scalpels, and one that looks suspiciously like a sharpened melon-baller. In the background a soldier is heating a brazier with a set of small bellows.

Von Stosser turns to Doc. "You will find that whilst I admire science for all the benefits it brings, I have a soft spot for the traditional. Alas, I do not have the time to indulge it, fortunately for you. Instead, you should know that I have access to the finest truth serums mankind has devised. However, I am not a monster. I am still prepared to offer you a chance to join us. So it is your choice. Answer my questions honestly without persuasion. Or have your free will stripped away like the skin from an orange. Do you understand? Good, then make your choice."

If Doc refuses to make a choice, von Stosser says "So be it." He snaps his fingers, and the interrogator draws an evil-looking green fluid from a vial into a syringe. He does so slowly to give Doc one last chance to change his mind, before injecting the contents into Doc's arm.

Von Stosser has a short series of questions he then proceeds to ask:

* Who were those people fighting my men on the Orient Express?
* Is there anything missing from the blueprints for the fuel process
* Where is your rocket pack? (von Stosser wants it studied to see if improvements to his can be made)
* Would you be willing to work with us freely?

Doc now needs to make a Vigor roll. If he succeeds then every time von Stosser asks a question he makes a standard Spirit roll to resist giving a truthful answer. If he fails, then his Spirit roll is at –2. Should he fail Spirit rolls to resist questioning, he has to give an honest answer.

If Doc gives an answer von Stosser doesn't like, such as "No", or "I don't know" he gives the prisoner a sound slap, with a warning, "Try again, Herr Doktor Davenport. Do not make me move on to those traditional methods I was talking about."

This can lead to the situation where Doc tells the truth, but von Stosser isn't satisfied. However, rather than be realistic and draw things out, von Stosser loses his temper quickly and end the session, sending Doc to a prison cell to think about the fate that awaits him should he not co-operate and choose to work for the Nazis.

If another player is impersonating Doc, and reveals this during the questioning, von Stosser is furious, and after a purely vindictive punch to the gut, stops any further questioning and has the impersonator thrown into a cell.

Alternatively, the hero could be bluffing if he offers to co-operate and attempts to make a break for it. If he does, deal initiative cards and run the combat, though von Stosser has to survive for the finale, so use the recurring villain rule to make sure he gets away. As well as von Stosser, there is just one regular Nazi soldier in the small room. The torturer is a scientist, not a soldier, and tries to avoid combat.

- **Major von Stosser:** See page 17.
- **Nazi Soldier (1):** See page 17.
- **Interrogator (1):** See page 18.

SCENE 3: PRISON BREAK

Going through a rounded archway leads to a stairway spiraling down. The stairway is narrow, with slightly slippery, worn flagstones and barely wide enough for two people at a time at most, and comes out into an small atrium directly in front of the prison door.

The prison itself is guarded by four soldiers, but the guards are normal German soldiers who are not expecting any trouble, rather than the elite Nazi Rocket troops. They are also pretty dim and any reasonable story may convince them to open up the cells. As a result they should be easily defeated, though they make every attempt to sound the alarm as they fight.

The prison area itself is 8" by 6". There are two cell doors in the left wall. In the centre of the prison the guards are sitting round a table drinking coffee and playing cards. They have their weapons near to hand, and there are spare shot guns in a rack in an alcove on the left hand side of the prison, where the third cell would be. Cell doors a metal with a small grille, so the prisoners inside can offer no assistance.

(M) Nazi soldiers (4): See page 17.

Once the soldiers are defeated it is easy to free the prisoners.

The heroes are surrounded by grateful scientists, all speaking at once in a half dozen languages. The other captured scientists introduce themselves and their areas of specialization, which covers ballistics, explosives, flight and robotics, just as Bertie described. They reveal they have been working on experimental missiles, flight systems and tanks. What has been missing up to now is a way of making the fuel use more effective so they actually have decent range—and now the Nazi's have Doc's notes, they can do it—the weapons are now viable! They have to get those notes back, and get the captured scientists to safety.

It is most likely the notes are being kept in von Stosser's office, in one of the castle towers. That, Professor Juan-Marcos Reverte says, is where all the plans and documents are kept.

During the discussions Professor Reverte, mentions he's been working on an assortment of flying machines, one of which includes a new light and fast experimental airplane. It's almost complete—the prototype was due to be flown to the Luftwaffe for testing in a few days.

"Except it's never going to get there!" he explains with glee. "I've sabotaged the ignition. Unless they clip the right wire in the ignition, which they won't, because they don't know about it, then, well, it will be too late.' He gives a laugh. 'If you need a fast escape, take it. You just have to make the right decision."

However, when questioned over which wire to cut he looks a little guilty.

"I can't remember. I got the idea from all those movies Hollywood makes. It works just like the movies."

If the heroes came in through the tunnel, the scientists can be led back there to make their own way out. Now they are aware of the Rocket Nazis they are quite capable of making their own way home. If this happens various national governments think a great deal more highly of our Heroes, and intelligence agencies across the world mark them as useful people to know in a crisis, however else the situation may turn out.

If they haven't discovered the secret tunnel, the scientists suggest staying in the prison area, until the heroes can clear an escape route as a big gaggle of old men wandering around is going to look very suspicious, and make a lot of noise.

SCENE 4: VON STOSSER'S OFFICE

Von Stosser's office is in the area of Schloss Sturmburg guarded by the Rocket Nazis themselves As a matter of course the Nazi Rocketeer Brigade are very alert and extremely cunning; They use a double patrol system. The first guard patrols use heavy boots with metal heel and toe traps to make the maximum amount of noise are then followed at a distance by a more discreet patrol that moves as silently as possible—a careless spy may think the guards have gone by, only to be unpleasantly surprised by the rear-guard.

Sneaking through the corridors and dodging patrols leads them to von Stosser's office, a spare and practical room featuring a portrait of the Chancellor over the fire place, and a large map of Europe pinned to the opposite wall. Marked on the map are several train routes—the current routes of the Orient Express. Where the route passes into Germany, lines are drawn from the route towards several European cities; Paris, Marseilles, Strasbourg, Lisbon, and Gibraltar. All of them are potential Nazi targets. Beyond that there is a little obvious lying about. Von Stosser has a desk which is kept sparklingly clean and clear.

Doc's notes, along with all the vital plans and breakthroughs from the captured Scientists are in von Stosser's safe. It takes either a Lockpicking roll or a Repair roll to open it. The heroes know any loud noises (like blowing a hole in a safe) will quickly draw attention however.

Once they get the safe open they find several folders. One contains Doc's notes, and includes a transcript of one of his lectures as well as a telegram from Berlin authorizing his capture. In other folders are plans for huge rockets, experimental planes, robots, and other inventions, all of which could be used for waging war. Additionally, if they don't know of the secret passage, blueprints of the castle in the safe indicate it as a drainage tunnel to the outside. An annotation on the plans in German reads "Must get this blocked off."

What is not obvious from their search of the room is that behind the picture of the Chancellor is a secret observation point, and as they open the safe, one of the more subtle Rocketeer guardsmen is entering. Having spotted the heroes moving around earlier he has come to check on the office as an obvious goal for spies. Whilst they read the plans he presses the secret button to silently pour invisible, odorless anesthetic gas (another advance of stolen science, originally intended for the dental industry) into the room.

Have the heroes make Vigor rolls at –2. Success means the victim is Fatigued. On a raise, the hero suffers no ill effects. With a failure he is Exhausted, and on a critical failure, Incapacitated. With the heroes suitably softened up, the Rocketeers move in for the capture.

Trapped in von Stosser's office, a 3" square room, with the heavy desk and chair filling most of it, free movement is difficult. The Rocket Nazis arrive wearing gas masks, and are more than willing to beat every adventurer unconscious. Blocking the only exit – there are no windows, only arrow slits glazed over—the heroes should quickly realize certain death is the only option if they try to fight. If they surrender, give each of them a benny as per the surrender rules.

If they choose to make a fight of it, show no mercy.

Rocket Nazis (2 per player): See page 17.

The Nazis should win this fight, all the noise guarantees reinforcements keep coming until the heroes surrender or they are beaten down. Once subdued, the party are bound, and led down into the castle bowels to meet their fate.

ACT FOUR: RETURN TO THE ORIENT EXPRESS

In the final act, Our Heroes must escape the Inescapable Death Trap, pilot an experimental airplane across the mountains in time to catch up with the Orient Express, and then battle von Stosser and his Rocket Nazi minions through the train to prevent a shot which would be heard around the world. Don't forget to restore a wound to any player who has taken one—they're going to need them!

SCENE 1: THE INESCAPABLE DEATH TRAP

Like all good villains, von Stosser has a death trap ready for use. The semi-conscious heroes are tied-up and wrestled down into the depths of the castle, through the assembly room to another large room.

The room is steaming hot, lit by a malevolent orange light glowing from the mouth of an incinerator at the far end. On a conveyor belt leading up to it are a series of large hoppers. As the heroes watch, the hoppers screech forward, and the foremost one tips into the smelter's mouth with a clang. The orange light blazes for a moment, and a belch of smoke blows out from it. The conveyer belt is shut down and the Rocket Nazis dump them into one of the hoppers without ceremony.

Von Stosser walks to the top of a ladder so he can look down on the heroes. He has a monologue prepared and may have been practicing it in front of the mirror. Heroes who fail to look properly awed are looked on with disfavor.

"I thought your disruption of our plans for the good doctor's work would provide me with a challenge. Instead you have become tiresome, so I must dispose of you. You'll forgive the dramatic nature, but I can't risk your bodies being found. Der Chancellor's plans are at a critical stage, and dead Americans might lead to some unpleasant consequences at a time when I cannot afford the distraction.

"Though I should like to thank you, Herr Doctor, your insight is quite revolutionary. Without it, we would not be able to strike at those garlic chewing hypocrites in Paris from so far away. Thanks to you and your colleagues we now have a missile battery of a scale unprecedented in the history of warfare. And it is mobile. So not only can we strike at them from great distance, by the time they send whatever paltry resistance they can offer after us, we will be long gone. After all, what Frog would question one of France's greatest triumphs in the world of locomotion?

"I'm afraid the hoppers get quite warm first, so it isn't as swift as you might like. Auf wiedersehn, Amerikaners, Fraulein."

With that, von Stosser sets the conveyor belts in motion, and departs the stepladder, whistling *Deutchland Uber Alles*. The guards fall in behind him and the heroes are left to their grisly fate.

Place six markers on the table to present the hopper's route. Use a token to represent the hopper in which the heroes await a fiery death. At the end of each round, the hopper moves on marker toward the opposite end of the track. Should the hopper move beyond the final marker, anyone inside is incinerated unless they succeed in an Agility roll at –2—no damage roll is required.

When the hopper moves onto the fourth marker, everyone still inside must make a Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue from the increasing heat. On the 5th marker, the roll is made at –1, and on the 6th marker at –2.

To escape, the heroes must first free their bonds. This requires a Strength or Agility roll at –2. Two heroes may Cooperate on this task, but no more—there just isn't the room. Once their bonds are loosened, the characters can try to climb the smooth sides of the hopper. This requires an Agility or Strength roll at –4 (hero's choice), but can be done Cooperatively. Remember, a bound hero who wants to try and escape *and* help a colleague climb out incurs a multi action penalty.

Jumping down from the hopper's rim requires no die roll.

SCENE 2: SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED

Once our heroes have escaped the deathtrap, they now need to escape Schloss Sturmburg. It quickly becomes apparent from the quietness that von Stosser and the Rocket Nazis have gone, and more than likely have a good lead on the party. There are no guards inside the incinerator chamber and none immediately outside. If they haven't already helped the kidnapped scientists out of the castle, now is a good time.

However, they also need to follow the Rocket Nazis quickly. The most obvious way is the experimental airplane they saw on their way in, the one Professor Reverte suggested they use, up on the castle walls.

Getting to the experimental airplane isn't difficult—a quick sneak through the castle past the second-rate German army guards gets them to the walls. However, trying the engine leads to a stuttering sound before it coughs and dies. A quick look at the workings of the plane (using Repair or Weird Science) reveals the ignition has rather obviously been wired incorrectly—Professor Reverte has indeed sabotaged his own work so the Nazis can't use it.

There are two wires to choose from, red or blue. One leads to certain success (cutting the red), and the other to certain doom (cutting the blue). They just have to figure out which is which, and all they have to go on is Professor Reverte's clue, referencing all those movies. If Jimmy wants to make a Common Knowledge roll, he may recall all the Saturday morning serials usually involve cutting the darker wire on screen (after all, in black and white, who can tell?), which he thinks is red.

They need to make a choice quickly as the Nazis have heard the engine's first attempt to fire into life and are coming to investigate with attack dogs. The dogs are noisy, so alert characters have plenty of warning and can take steps to secure their position such as barricading the doors to the ramparts, otherwise just as they finish cutting their choice of wire, the dogs and their handlers appear on the battlements. They can either fight it out, or take off now, and hope for the best! If they take off now, move to Scene 3.

If they do decide to fight it out, they can use both the plane and various piles of sandbags for Cover (as can the villains) As with if they climbed the castle walls, the parapets is narrow for fighting, and a combatant can easily fall off or be left hanging over a nasty drop.

- **Nazi Dog Handlers (2):** Treat as Nazi Soldier (page 17).
- **Dobermans (2):** See page 18.

SCENE 3: FOLLOW THAT TRAIN!

Now is Brent's moment to shine as he gets to show off his piloting skills to Amelia. Have Brent, or whoever is at the controls make a piloting roll. Read or paraphrase the following:

The launch mechanism squeaks as the breaks are released, and the plane trundles forward under only a small amount of power, just enough to throw it clear of the castle wall. It drops with all the aerodynamic grace of a baby elephant. Then there's a terrifying moment as gravity takes over and your stomachs seem to drop with it as the experimental airplane plunges towards the icy river below.

The initial takeoff is scary – plunging down the ravine, but if they cut the right wire, at the last moment before hitting the water, the plane pulls up sharply. If they didn't cut the right wire, they just plunge, giving the heroes just two rounds to rewire the ignition or attempt to glide-land without killing themselves.

EXPERIMENTAL AIRPLANE

Acc/Top Speed: 50/200, **Toughness:** 11 (2), **Crew:** 1+3
Weapons
2 x 13mm MG (Range: 30/60/120, Damage: 2d10, ROF 3, AP 2)

With the experimental airplane under control, the flight over the Alps, lit by the rising sun, is smooth. A half hour of fast flying and the heroes spot von Stosser's train. It's steaming away a lot faster than any train has a right to go. Von Stosser has had the engine adapted to burn Doc's concentrated fuel rather than coal. After that, it doesn't take long to catch up with the fake Orient Express, now crossing South Germany, with the French border not so far away.

At this point Rocket Nazis boil out of the fake Orient Express, and head towards the airplane, intent on shooting it down. Brett must dodge and weave, whilst the others man the guns, holding the Nazi's off long enough for them to get to the train.

Run this scene using the Chase rules. Each Range Increment equates to 20". The train begins five Range Increments ahead of the plane, and the flying Nazis just three Range Increments. Passengers can either use the MGs or fire out the windows.

Rocket Nazis attempt to down the plane by shooting the rudder and the wings, rather than using suicidal attempts to ram it. As Extras, they cannot Ace damage, so the threat from the guns is minimal. However, should a Nazi be shot while on the same marker as the plane there is a chance he will smash into the plane and his rocket pack, now filled with Doc's superfuel, will explode. Turn a card from the initiative deck. If it comes up Clubs the rocket pack explodes doing 2d10 to the plane.

But von Stosser isn't relying on his swarm of Rocketeers to prevent the heroes from thwarting his plans. Should they get to close, he has another surprise ready to go—the roof of the end carriage rolls back and from it emerges a large anti-aircraft gun. The gun can swivel through a full 360 degrees to track them. The gun is manned by Nazi Rocketeers, but takes a round to reload.

- **Rocket Nazis (2 per hero):** See page 17.

Anti Aircraft gun (Range: 40/80/160, Damage: 3d6, AP 4, ROF 1/2)

NOW WHAT?

Once the plane reaches the same marker as the train, the heroes can attempt to get aboard.

Landing the plane on the roof requires a Piloting roll at –4. Failure means the pilot aborts before a collision. A critical failure results in the plane "landing" inside the plane, for 2d6 damage to each hero.

Jumping is slightly easier, at least for those not flying the plane. All the heroes need do is make an Agility roll to land on the back of the train. The pilot needs to make a Repair roll to jury rig a system to hold the control stick level, and then make an Agility roll in the same round to throw himself to of the plane and onto the Orient Express. Anyone with a rocket pack has to make a Piloting roll at +1 to gentle lower down from the aircraft. If the PC's jump, they end up at the rear of the train.

If the heroes contemplate attempting to derail the train or otherwise getting it to stop it by landing or crashing in front of it, then it should be obvious to Doc's knowledge of science the plane is quite flimsy, and the Orient Express is moving at over 100 miles per hour! It is very likely the plane will be smashed to smithereens, and do little to affect the Orient Express.

Should they try anyway, then Doc's prediction comes true. The plane is smashed into little pieces, and any adventurer inside takes 4d10 damage from a Wild Card before he is thrown clear. The train continues to speed towards the French border.

Hopefully, the heroes have got off the plane before trying to stop the train.

SCENE 4: ALL ABOARD

The wind of the speeding trains whips at your hair, and drags at your clothes, threatening to send you spinning over the side to be crushed to death by the wheels below. Taking firm grip on your weapons, you start to crawl towards some sort of safety, for on the train roof there is no cover from the Rocket Nazis who are swarming in for the kill.

But as you watch, the roof of the centre carriage splits open, and from within you see an enormous canon rise up from the innards of the train car. Once it reaches the top of the car, the barrel raises slowly to an elevation of 45 degrees, and swivels with a grinding screech to point the muzzle of the massive missile-launcher towards the distant French capital.

Von Stosser is just moments from launching a missile fuelled by Doc's superfuel and packed with high explosive at Paris. The heroes need to fight their way down to the centre of the train to try and stop it. Fighting through the carriages provides a lot of nameless Extras to knock-out as they approach the centre of the train. This train is much shorter than the genuine Orient Express, with only ten carriages.

Like the original, it is 3" wide and 12" long. The first and last carriages from the engine contain anti-aircraft emplacements that take up nearly the entire car, leaving only a little room to fight around. The second and third contain bunks for the Nazis. The fifth carriage contains the super missile launcher. The rest of the carriages hold ordnance and other supplies in neat racks around the edge of the car, and on shelves bolted to the floor in the centre. All manner of tools and equipment can be found lying around. Moving through any car counts as difficult terrain, due to the cramped conditions.

Going over the roof is easier than before, as its free of slippery snow, but the train is still moving extremely fast, so it still counts as an Unstable Platform (–2 to all rolls). On a bend (which happens whenever the fight needs an Extra something to liven it up) the whole thing tilts up slightly. Any hero who doesn't make his Agility roll ends up hanging by his fingernails again. Moving down from the roof to separate the carriages takes 2" of movement if the heroes want to try and separate the carriages.

Rocket Nazis (as many as required): See page 17. The encounters should be tense and fun, not life threatening to the heroes.

Having defeated the hordes of Extras, they finally reach missile control, where von Stosser is running the operation. Inside the car, the majority of space is taken up with the missile base, which occupies a space 2" by 8" in the centre of the carriage. Against the right wall are the launch controls, a large bank of switches, dials and flashing lights, manned by two technicians who are protected by two more soldiers. A clockwork timer in the centre of the instrument panel indicates there is just 30 seconds left before the most deadly missile the world has seen is sent at Paris at beyond the speed of sound.

Von Stosser and his body guard (Corporal Eisenberg, if he lived through the initial assault on the Orient Express, another Nazi Rocketeer using the same stats if not) have their pistols drawn, and have taken cover behind the missile's base (Medium Cover). Von Stosser has a rocket pack on, and plans to escapes through the roof just as soon as he has made sure the missile has launched.

Von Stosser only needs to protect the launch. To do so he is more than prepared to sacrifice everyone else to do so. He'll use the other soldiers to distract Brent and Doc, hoping to grab Jimmy or Amelia to use as a hostage. He doesn't have to delay the heroes long after all.

"You are too late!" von Stosser calls out as you enter. "In a few moments this cannon will fire a rocket at Paris. Inside that rocket is more firepower than inside any dozen other warheads in

history. And you will not be able to stop it. Not with rocket pack, nor plane. Paris is doomed."

With that, deal initiative cards. The Major shoots at the first available target, and definitely isn't squeamish about shooting women or children. The other soldiers also open fire. In all cases, they just have to stop the heroes getting close to the control panel for five rounds, so will grapple, shoot to kill, whatever it takes.

If the players succeed in defeating von Stosser before the timer reaches zero (just five rounds!), cancelling the launch is easy—a large red cancel button sits in the centre of the control panel.

However should the timer reach zero, the missile launches in a deafening roar of heat and smoke. Heroes get a chance to throw themselves to the side of the train car with a successful Agility roll to avoid taking 4d6 damage from the rocket engine. At this point, if possible, von Stosser fires up his rocket pack and tries and makes good his escape. However, as these are the closing scenes, unless you really want him to fight another day, the Recurring Villain rule does not apply.

Once the missile is launched however, whether von Stosser is dead or not, there is nothing they can do to stop it—von Stosser has won and the heroes have failed to prevent the Nazis starting the Second World War five years early.

- **Major von Stosser:** See page 17.
- **Cpl Gunter Eisenberg:** See page 17.
- **Nazi Rocketeers (2):** See page 17.
- **Missile Technicians (2):** Use the stats for the interrogator seen earlier (page 18); these people are scientists not combatants

SCENE 5: END OF THE LINE

Missile launched or not, Major von Stosser dead, captured or escaped, there is still one major problem. The Orient Express is out of control, and heading for the French Border city of Strasbourg at ludicrous speed.

You quickly realize that the fake Orient Express is heading down out of the mountains, and gathering speed as it does so. Looking out of the carriage you can see in the distance the spire of the medieval cathedral of Strasbourg. It is now early morning, so the city is likely to be filled with visitors and workers, as well as its own citizens. The Orient Express is dashing towards it, faster and faster with ever gathering pace as the silver rails lead it directly to the heart of the ancient city. You quickly realize that the train isn't trying to stop either. By the time it reaches the city, it will likely jump the tracks at the first opportunity, killing hundreds of innocent bystanders unless you do something

The biggest danger is from the engine, with its load of highly flammable superfuel. If the engine jumps the tracks, that's going to explode whatever happens. If the carriages are attached, in the resultant fire all the ordnance is going to explode as well, to rain fiery death down on the people of Strasbourg.

In exactly six rounds, the train sweeps around a bend at a speed guaranteed to cause it to jump the rails! In order to prevent terrible destruction, the heroes need to complete four steps (in turn) before the end of the sixth round. Failures can be attempted again next round.

Step 1) The heroes must reach the engine. This requires an Agility roll at –2.

Step 2) Now at the engine, the heroes realize the engineer and fireman have gone! A Notice roll as a free action reveals the brakes have been destroyed and the train is moving too fast for the looming bend in the track.

Step 3) The heroes need a new plan. A successful Common Knowledge roll indicates the best thing to do is dump the fuel, and try and put out the firebox (where the coal/superfuel is burnt). One way to achieve this is by climbing down to the sandbox kept on the front of steam trains to grit the rails, and bringing back the sand to put out the fire. This requires an Agility roll at –2 to reach the grit and bring it back.

Alternatively, the heroes can decouple the engine (a Strength roll by one hero) and use the anti-aircraft guns on the train, or even the missile launcher if von Stosser didn't set it off, to destroy the engine before it reaches the city. They have a small window of opportunity as the engine crosses the open plain before reaching Strasbourg city walls. First though, they must make another Agility roll at –2 to run through the train and reach the gun.

Step 4) If using grit, the heroes need to shovel in as much as possible. This requires a Strength roll at –2. With success, the fire is dampened and he train begins to lose speed quickly. In the last few seconds it loses enough speed to stay on the rails until, with perfect cinematic precision, it comes to rest in the Strasbourg Terminal with a light kiss to the buffers and no more.

If firing the gun or missile, the heroes need a steady aim. Using the AA gun requires a Shooting roll, with a –2 penalty unless the heroes have Steady Hands. Firing the missile requires a Smarts roll.

Using the anti-aircraft guns is much more dangerous, as there is much less time between hitting the engine and the engine exploding to get clear. The Engine has Toughness 15, and needs to take one hit before it explodes. Remember, the gun takes a round to reload each time!

If they use the missile they can escape the train easily by rocket pack before it lands, exploding in an enormous ball of fire, quickly followed by even more explosions. Anyone still flying is knocked to the ground by the force of the wave. Anyone on the ground is knocked off their feet, lifted a few feet into the air and blown backwards in best pulp style, but is otherwise unharmed.

Once the final hit lands all the heroes still on the train need to make an Agility roll at –2 to jump clear. Anyone who fails is in the blast radius. Assuming they are at the furthest end from the engine they only take 4d8 damage as if from a Wild Card. Anyone who survives truly deserves the name 'Hero'!

AFTERMATH

Watching the ruins of the fake Orient Express burn, the heroes catch their breath and wait for the authorities, safe inside the French border.

If the heroes are completely successful, i.e. the Missile is not launched at Paris, von Stosser is captured, and the train halted before it can blow up Strasbourg, French authorities give them a hero's welcome. The American and British ambassadors in Paris thank them profusely, and arrange to get them all back to the United States in luxury after seeing any wounds cared for. Naturally, they are sworn to secrecy over what they have seen and done, after all, no-one wants a panic, and their actions have set the Nazis back a good three years.

If von Stosser escapes, he heads back to Berlin. Dismissed as a failure by Hitler, he narrowly avoids the firing squad, and begins to plot his revenge.

If the heroes manage to capture von Stosser but fail to stop the launch or the train crash, the French are less enthusiastic, though still grateful for the chance to interrogate von Stosser. Paris is devastated, throwing the European powers into disarray. Hitler moves to invade Austria, France, and large portions of Western Europe are quickly drawn into a state of war. The heroes can only head back to America, ready for their next adventure, perhaps to challenge the Nazi war machine at another point.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

GERMAN AGENTS IN NEW YORK

These junior servants within the ranks of Nazi Intelligence have one mission: Kill Bertie Robeson, and protect the secret of the Fuhrer's plans. Whilst believers in the German cause, they are not fanatical, and try and escape if they are in danger of being captured.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6
Charisma: –2 **Pace:** 6; **Parry** 6; **Toughness**: 6
Hindrances: Mean
Edges: Combat Reflexes
Gear: Pistols (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, AP 1)

ROCKET NAZIS

Skilled pilots, the cream of the Nazi special forces, the Rocketeers are capable soldiers with high morale and discipline, utterly loyal to the Major and the Chancellor

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Piloting d8, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d10, Stealth d8
Pace: 6; **Parry** 6; **Toughness**: 7 (1)
Edges: Combat Reflexes
Gear: Helmet (+3), rocket pack; leather flight suits (+1 armor), rifle (Range 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8, AP2), *or* SMG (range 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, ROF 3, AP 1), 1 grenade (Range: 5/12/20, Damage: 3d6-2, Medium Burst Template)

CORPORAL GUNTER EISENBERG

A big damn Rocketeer, Gunter is a sold man-mountain, dedicated and without fear. He is personally loyal to Major von Stosser and will carry out his orders even to death.

Corporal Eisenberg is a Henchman.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8
Skills: Piloting d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d10
Pace: 6; **Parry** 6; **Toughness**: 8 (1)
Edges: Brawny
Gear: Helmet (+3), rocket pack; leather flight suits (+1 armor), SMG (range 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, ROF 3, AP 1), 1 grenade (Range: 5/12/20, Damage: 3d6-2, Medium Burst Template)

MAJOR WERNER VON STOSSER

A dedicated officer from a noble family, von Stosser fully supports Hitler's attempt to bring back pride to the German people. A talented pilot and a cunning tactician, von Stosser will do whatever Hitler wants to increase the glory of the German people.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Piloting d10, Shooting d10, Survival d6, Taunt d6, Tracking d6,
Pace: 6; **Parry** 6; **Toughness**: 7 (1)
Hindrances: Arrogant
Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command, Improved Nerves of Steel, Level Headed, Natural Leader
Gear: Helmet (+3), rocket pack, leather flight suit (+1), Luger pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 1)

NAZI SOLDIERS

These are regular recruits to the newly resurgent German Army, dedicated but without the training of the elite rocket corp. They follow orders without hesitation, but aren't the sharpest bayonets in the box, and can quite easily be fooled or avoided.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6
Pace: 6; **Parry** 5; **Toughness**: 5
Hindrances: Loyal
Gear: Helmet (+3), SMG (Range 12/24/48/, Damage: 2d6, ROF 3, AP1) *or* rifle (Range 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8,

AP2), 1 grenade (Range: 5/12/20, Damage: 3d6-2, Medium Burst Template)

INTERROGATOR

Typical of Nazi technicians and scientists, this man has far more pragmatism than moral fiber and will cheerfully do whatever it takes in pursuit of knowledge. Except getting into combat.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Healing d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Biology) d10, Knowledge (Chesmistry) d10, Notice d6, Shooting d6

Pace: 6; **Parry** 2; **Toughness**: 4

DOBERMANS

These beautifully bred pedigree attack dogs are well trained, fearless and loyal to their handlers

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d10.

Pace: 8; **Parry** 5; **Toughness**: 4

Special Abilities:

* **Bite:** Str+d4
* **Fleet Footed:** Dogs roll a d10 instead of a d6 when running
* **Go For The Throat:** Dogs instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's most weakly-armored location
* **Size -1:** Dogs are relatively small

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The Orient Express has been inspiring stories since it first rolled out of Paris in 1882. Hitler did genuinely hate the Orient Express and wish to see it destroyed, but never succeeded, though the service was suspended during the Second World War.

The Paris to Istanbul via Vienna service has run pretty much continuously since then, though on an ever shortening route, which was eventually cut down to just Strasbourg to Vienna in 2007. However, on December 12 2009, just a few days before this adventure is published, the Orient Express Service will be withdrawn completely, bringing the story of one of the greatest trains (and plot devices) in history to a close.

The Venice Simplon Orient Express still runs replicas of the 1920s trains on one of the alternative routes used in the 30s, but the original designation and route is now a thing of the past.

FREE! TAG31049

NAZI ROCKETTEERS & THE ORIENT EXPRESS? LOOKS LIKE ONE HELL OF A PARTY!



Von Stosser is the commander of the elite troop of Nazi Rocketeers, and he has spent the last few months gathering scientists from around the world, to work on a variety of mind-boggling projects.

Progress has been swift and he is ready for his first strike.

Von Stosser's current plan is comparatively simple; he has prepared a double of France's famous Orient Express train, and has fitted it out with rockets more powerful and deadly than any known. The target of the attack is the centre of Paris, with the intention of decapitating the entire French government in one swift strike.

Triple Ace Games invite you to a seasonal Daring Tales of Adventure in which you need to foil the nazi rocketteers in *Rocket Nazis on the Orient Express*.

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