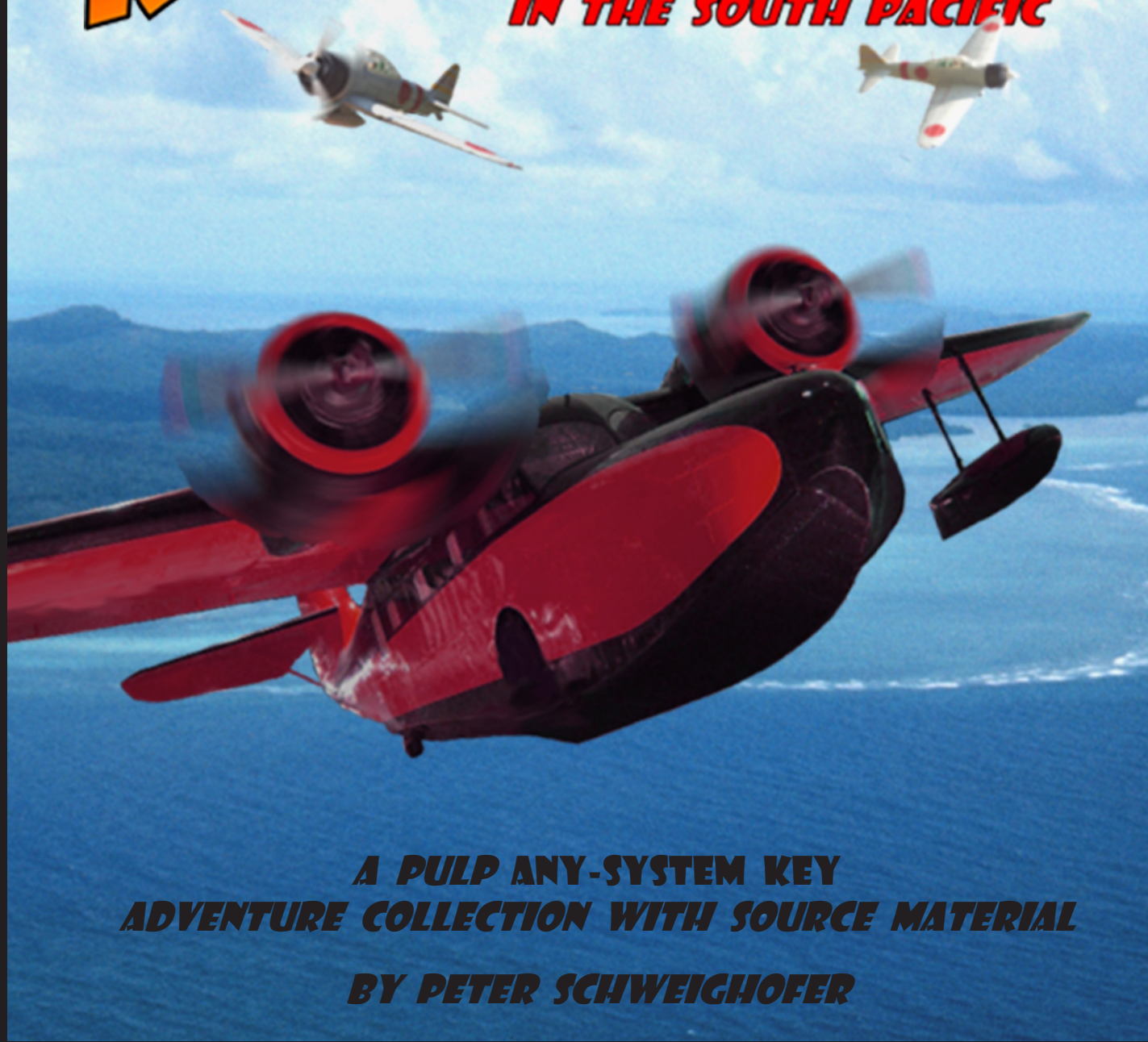


# **HEROES OF RURA-TONGA**

***PULP ADVENTURES  
IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC***



***A PULP ANY-SYSTEM KEY  
ADVENTURE COLLECTION WITH SOURCE MATERIAL***

***BY PETER SCHWEIGHOFER***





# VACATION IN TROPICAL RURA-TONGA ISLAND PACIFIC PARADISE

**R**URA-TONGA combines all the mystique of a tropical destination with a secluded location, helping you put all the world's cares behind you. This beautiful island lies 200 miles south of the Japanese Mandate, 150 miles northeast of New Ireland, and 800 miles northeast of New Guinea. Arrive by the monthly supply freighter or chartered flying boat, which offer access to locations throughout the Solomon Island chain and New Guinea. Pan Am clippers serve nearby New Caledonia once a week, offering continuing flights to New Zealand, San Francisco, Guam, Hawaii, Manila, and the Far East.

**T**HE ISLAND'S MAIN SETTLEMENT, Rura-Tonga, sits on a vast lagoon formed from the crater of a long-dormant volcano. One of the volcano's ridges rises from the center of the island as the dominant peak, towering over lush jungles and sandy, palm-shaded beaches. Although Rura-Tonga has no automobiles or even paved roads, one can easily walk the jungle paths to one of two native villages in half a day, or row there in a canoe along the coast for a magnificent view of the island. The two coastal villages, Levu and Suva, are home to the island's small native population. Here they live in quaint huts and wear picturesque costumes, providing local color to tourists seeking a taste of South Pacific life.

**V**ISITORS ARRIVE at Rura-Tonga's main dock, a small pier jutting out into the calm lagoon waters. Floatplanes and boats from larger ships can find safe harbor here. Occasionally a private yacht or touring sailboat make port and shelter in the lagoon. The dock leads to the intersection of the town's two streets, both dirt roads. Gauthier Street follows the coastline and contains bungalows for residents, each overlooking the lagoon. The road turns into a path and continues along the beach to Chateau Gauthier, a luxury bungalow on a small estate, home to Gaston Gauthier, Rura-Tonga's most illustrious resident.



The island's beaches, jungles, and mountains offer a tropical refuge from the busy world.

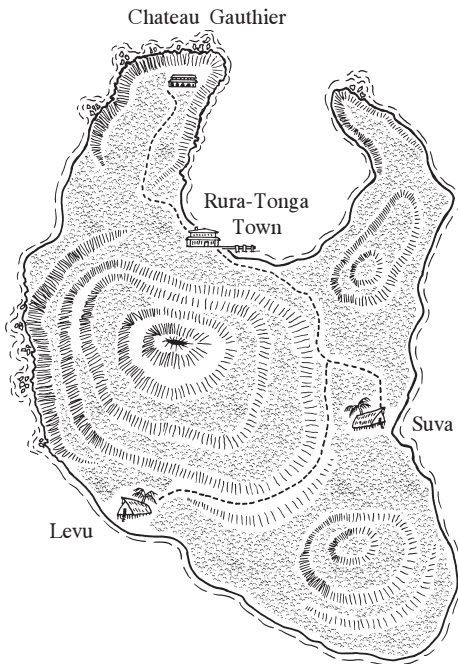


Rura-Tonga's natives provide an authentic slice of island life and local custom.



Captain Sharp ferries visitors to and from Rura-Tonga aboard his Grumman seaplane.

# EXPLORE A COZY TROPICAL PARADISE



Gaston Gauthier's estate at Breezy Point plays host to the island's more affluent and influential guests.

**BOOK  
YOUR  
ADVENTURE  
TODAY!**

**M**OST FOLKS arrive at the island aboard the twin-engine Grumman floatplane, the *Flying Fish*, owned by Captain Sharp. He runs his charter operation from a dockside shack with flight offices, parts storage, fuel drums, and a back bunk room. Unless you've made other arrangements, Sharp's aircraft is the only reliable means off the island until the monthly supply freighter makes port.

**D**OCK STREET leads from the pier up into town and eventually turns into a trail heading into the jungle to the island's two other coastal villages. Most of Rura-Tonga's key buildings stand at the intersection of Gauthier and Dock Streets.

**T**HE MATILDA HOTEL, named for the stuffed kangaroo mounted over the bar, offers drinks, meals, and lodgings to visitors. The two-story structure hosts guests in a large dining room downstairs, complete with bar, upright piano, and a tank of tropical fish. Upstairs rooms offer views of the lagoon and lush island foliage. The proprietress, Sally McKinsey, also serves as Rura-Tonga's unofficial mayor, maintaining order, spreading news, and keeping in touch with the mainland with the only wireless set on the island. She meets every ship or plane docking in the lagoon, keeps the town's official records, and performs the functions of a justice of the peace when necessary. Don't let her sometimes brusque manner and burly stature fool you...Sally's a friendly, rough-and-tumble Aussie who's glad to receive guests and offer a generous serving of hospitality.

**V**ISITORS can find souvenirs, travel guides, groceries, hiking supplies, and other basic goods for purchase at the Mainland Shipping Company store. Operated by Sally McKinsey's brother Ian, the store fronts the company's warehouse, which handles most of the imports and exports for the island. A slender, more dapper counterpart to his sister, Ian plays the friendly salesman, acting as envoy to the natives and enthusiastic wellspring of knowledge for visitors.

**T**HE RURA-TONGA ANGLICAN CHURCH serves the island's spiritual needs. Reverend James Carlisle, a missionary from England, ministers to residents, visitors, and natives, holding Sunday church services and visiting Levu and Suva to spread the Word of God to the local populace. His daughter Beth assists him, maintains the church and rectory buildings, and serves as the island's only qualified nurse.

**T**HE PICTURESQUE NATIVE HUT near the dock is Chief Lautoka's Island Souvenirs. Formerly the headman of Suva, the jovial Lautoka opens his souvenir shack whenever visitors come to town. He sells a wide range of hand-made tribal trinkets: tiki statues, spears, carved drums, shields, shells, jewelry. With Ian McKinsey he serves as unofficial liaison with the rest of the island's native population, even if it seems he's sold out to Westerners. The Chief knows the history and legends of Rura-Tonga and many of the neighboring islands, and, for a small donation, spends hours relating them to visitors.

**O**NLY THE MOST PRIVILEGED OF VISITORS receive invitations to Gaston Gauthier's luxurious bungalow, Chateau Gauthier. Although only a pleasant hour's stroll along coastal jungle paths to the spit of land known as Breezy Point, the Frenchman's small contingent of mercenary bodyguards ensure unwanted trespassers do not wander onto the estate's grounds. Gauthier, a French expatriate and native of the Alsace region, retired here after a successful career as a wine exporter. He visits town only on rare occasions when his personal guests arrive or depart at the dock. Gauthier politely whisks his guests off to his bungalow, adding a bit of mystique to the island's tropical charm.

**DISCOVER AN EXOTIC GETAWAY  
WITH THE RELAXING LIFESTYLE OF  
THE SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS**



# HEROES OF RURA-TONGA

**PULP ADVENTURES  
IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC**

**A PULP ANY-SYSTEM KEY ADVENTURE COLLECTION  
WITH SOURCE MATERIAL**

**WRITTEN, DESIGNED & PRODUCED BY  
PETER SCHWEIGHOFER**

**Playtesting & Advice:** Bob Gilkeson, Eric Hartman,  
Bryan Haven, Shawn Lockard, David Schweighofer.

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# INTRODUCTION

*Heroes of Rura-Tonga* is a pulp adventure collection with basic source material for gaming in a South Pacific setting. Inspired by old television shows like “Tales from the Gold Monkey” and “Baa Baa Black Sheep” as well as pulp-genre films like *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, it offers an exotic locale where characters can explore numerous islands, uncover ancient mysteries, and probe the looming threat of the Japanese Empire lurking to the north.

Although primarily a collection of pulp adventures set in the South Pacific during the late 1930s, *Heroes of Rura-Tonga* provides some basic notes on the setting to help gamemasters elaborate on the scenarios, handle unforeseen course changes in the central plotlines, and extend the action through additional adventures of their own. It grounds itself in a general historical period and setting, with more fantastic, bizarre elements of the pulp genre lurking just beneath the surface. This material is by no means meant to form a comprehensive campaign guide, but should offer enough information and inspiration to enhance pulp adventures in this locale.

Gamemasters can run the entire campaign as a stand-alone story, using the characters provided in this book or ones players create that fit into the setting. Rura-Tonga might provide an existing band of pulp heroes a temporary diversion from their other adventures and a chance to ply their skills in new surroundings. They might also use this remote setting as a far-flung haven from more powerful enemies haunting their usual stomping grounds.

## THE ANY-SYSTEM KEY

The character skills and task difficulties mentioned throughout *Heroes of Rura-Tonga* correspond to a simple system enabling players and gamemasters to customize this sourcebook to their favorite roleplaying game rules. The last two pages of this book contain the *Any-System Key*, a simple means of describing characters skill levels and task difficulties so gamers can easily adapt them to corresponding values in their preferred game. Sidebars throughout this sourcebook contain all stats for sample characters, monsters, and adversaries. These stats use the *Any-System Key* notations for skills, with most having Competent and Expert level skills, and a few having a defining Signature skill. Gamemasters can fill the blanks in these stat forms with values for their own game system

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peter Schweighofer, known for writing and editing numerous *Star Wars* roleplaying game products for West End Games, has designed such period sourcebooks as *Weird War II: Afrika Korpse* for Pinnacle Entertainment Group’s *Weird Wars* series, the *Raiders of the Lost Ark Sourcebook* for West End Games’ *Indiana Jones* roleplaying game, and *Pulp Egypt: Adventures Along the Nile, 1933-1939* for his own *Any-System Key*. He founded Griffon Publishing Studio as a means to market his own sourcebooks and games to the adventure gaming hobby.

## AUTHOR MUSINGS...

*Heroes of Rura-Tonga* started as a one-off scenario, “Island of the Damned,” written originally so I could explore the *Savage Worlds* game system as a break from the *D6 System*. Little did I know it would serve as a diversion into the pulp gaming genre as an adventure collection with a bit of source material.

*Heroes of Rura-Tonga* emerged from my enjoyment of pulp-era film and television and a desire to play around a little in that setting. It is far from a comprehensive sourcebook on adventuring in the South Pacific in the 1930s; that was never its intention. *Heroes of Rura-Tonga* serves as a canvas upon which I could paint a small corner of the pulp world, with just enough source material to find your way around.

It took me a while to realize how much I enjoyed pulp films and television as a kid. The *Indiana Jones* films always engaged my imagination and sense of adventure. Television shows like “Black Sheep Squadron” and the ill-fated “Tales of the Gold Monkey” illustrated a world of exciting aerial adventure in the exotic setting of the South Pacific. Those remained only fond memories of my childhood and coming of age until I began writing, designing, and publishing roleplaying games.

I’d long thought that roleplaying games best focused on commercially successful genres; the classic fantasy and dungeon delving best characterized by *Dungeons & Dragons* and later the cinematic adventure of mainstream film licenses like the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*. Other games and genres seemed nice diversions, but didn’t seem to garner a following, and certainly didn’t engage my interest.

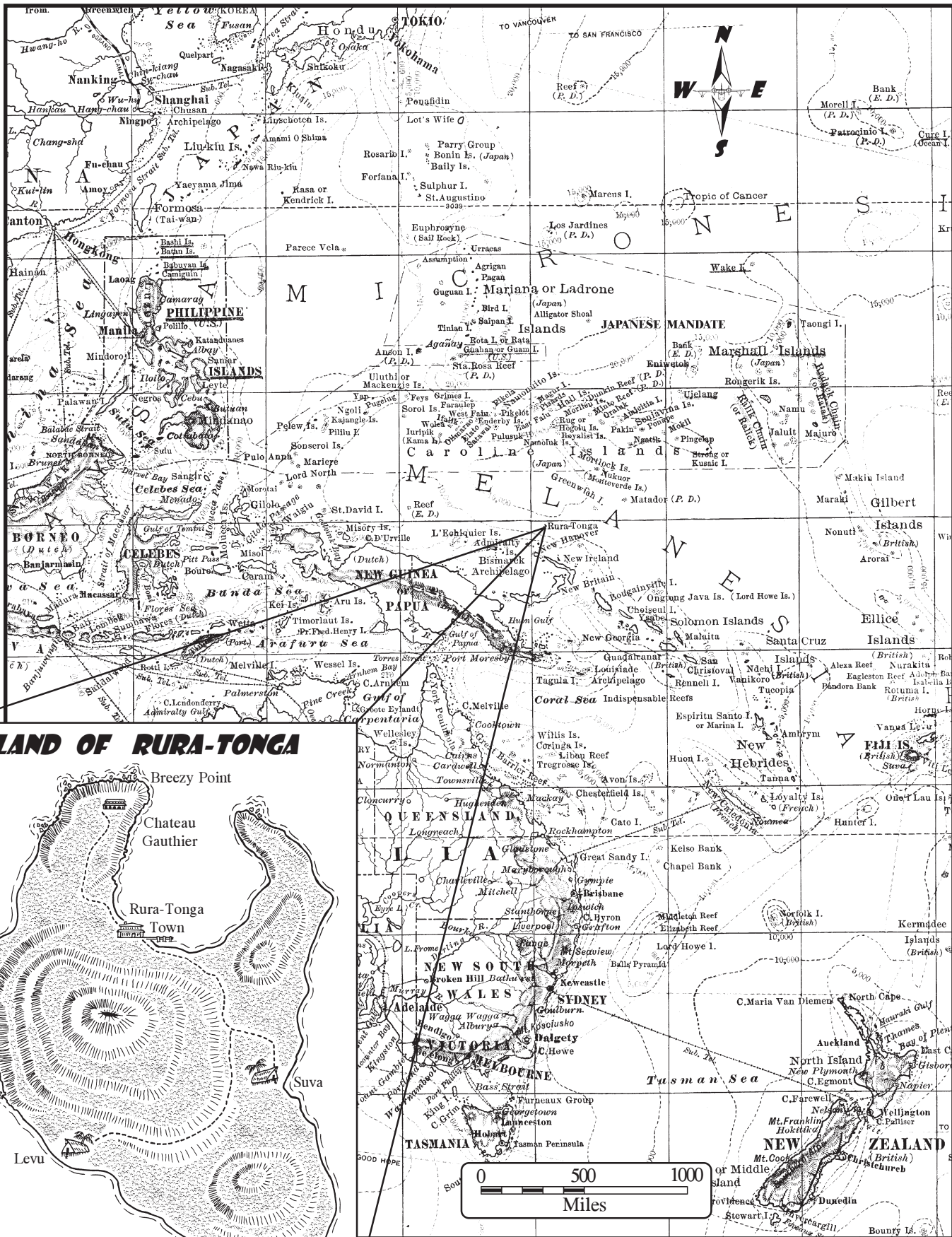
Working on the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* gave me the opportunity to write for West End Games’ *Indiana Jones* roleplaying game line, first with contributions to the main rulebook and the *Raiders of the Lost Ark Sourcebook*, and later for additional sourcebooks, including a solo adventure in *Indiana Jones Adventures*. My pulp-era exploration continued with *Afrika Korpse* for Pinnacle Entertainment Group’s *Weird Wars* line. Both fueled the enthusiasm and research I poured into my *Pulp Egypt* sourcebook.

I have numerous ideas for game sourcebooks and other writing projects bubbling about in my brain...but I put them on hold to continue exploring the pulp genre in a new locale. Along the way I’ve dabbled with cursed zombies, experimental atrocities, treacherous academics seeking unholy power, the stereotypical erupting volcano with a touch of tribal legend, and a secret enemy rocket base. It’s not a comprehensive exploration by any means, but a fun jaunt into the pulp world of one South Pacific island on the edge of the vast Imperial Japanese military machine.

Enjoy,



# SOUTH PACIFIC, 1938





# ***PULP ADVENTURING IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC***

Rura-Tonga typifies many of the innumerable small, tropical islands dotting the South Pacific. Hundreds of island chains lie between the Tropic of Cancer in the north and the Tropic of Capricorn in the south. These consist of Micronesia (including the Japanese Mandate and Hawaiian Islands), Melanesia (running from New Guinea through the Solomon Island chain to the New Hebrides), and Polynesia (with the paradise islands of Fiji, Tahiti, and the Samoans). The seas between New Guinea, Borneo, and the Philippines also contain numerous tropical islands.

Rura-Tonga itself sits about 150 miles northeast of New Ireland, part of the Mandated Territory of New Guinea formed in 1921 by the League of Nations and administered under the government of nearby Australia. Despite its semi-autonomous status, Rura-Tonga remains the closest island in the region to the Japanese Mandate, a vast territory of islands (including the Caroline and Mariana chains) colonized by Germany and ceded to the Empire of Japan after the end of the Great War.

The nearest bastions of civilization include Kavieng on New Ireland, Rabaul on New Britain, and Port Moresby on New Guinea. The closest port with flying boat clipper service to major destinations is Noumea in the French controlled New Caledonia, 1,750 miles away in the New Hebrides island chain. Steamship service from Brisbane, Australia, Auckland, New Zealand, and Fiji provides the most reliable and comfortable transportation to major ports.

## ***GEOGRAPHY***

Volcanic activity formed these islands in ancient times. Frequent eruptions of ash and magma increased the size of individual islands. In stable times coral grew along the coastlines, creating sheltering barrier reefs. Dormant volcanic mountains gradually eroded over time; others exploded violently, gutting their interior and allowing the sea to flow in, creating a protected lagoon. Some dormant volcanoes eroded so much over the eons that they actually subsided into the ocean, creating circular island chains on a foundation of dead coral reefs sheltering lagoons.

The volcanic soil provides a rich base upon which lush jungles grow in the moist, equatorial currents. Thick vegetation shelters a host of wildlife: boa constrictors, monkeys, wild boar, monitor lizards, parrots, bats, and a variety of insects. Sandy beaches and rocky coasts offer habitats for sea turtles and coconut crabs. The waters along shorelines and lagoons teem with fish, providing ample sustenance for the native population.

In time seafaring tribes from Asia settled these islands after crossing broad expanses of ocean on homemade outrigger canoes and ships with rudimentary sails. Most of these primitive peoples



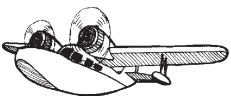
have affable demeanors and display friendship and hospitality to peaceful outsiders. Only a few tribes deep in the jungles of New Guinea still practice cannibalism.

Many islands host native villages and cozy settlements, but only the largest have anything approaching a provincial city. The small enclave on Rura-Tonga provides amenities common among most island towns of its size: a hotel for visitors, a general store with a warehouse for storing necessary materials and trade goods, transportation facilities (docks, seaplane landing ramps, steamer offices), a small church or other structure used by missionaries to preach the Word of God to the local populace, and several private bungalows for year-round residents. Sometimes islands host remote estates or plantations for more prominent citizens, though these remain private concerns.

## ***COMMUNICATIONS***

Methods of communication available in the 1930s do not allow for swift, clear, or frequent contact.

Radio technology allows the most efficient and long-range communication. Called “wireless telegraphy” by the British, transmitters send and receive messages by broadcasting and tuning into radio waves on particular frequencies. Most communications consist of the easily distinguished dots and dashes of Morse Code; a trained operator can quickly send and receive messages. Actual voice communication has a shorter effective range (it becomes garbled over longer distances) but remains the most convenient for those aboard airplanes speaking with other aviators or ground stations. Such gadgets require a power source, usually a generator



**MORSE CODE**

A	• —
B	— • • •
C	— • — •
D	— • •
E	•
F	• • — •
G	— — •
H	• • • •
I	• •
J	• — — —
K	— • —
L	• — • •
M	— —
N	— •
O	— — —
P	• — — •
Q	— — • —
R	• — •
S	• • •
T	—
U	• • —
V	• • • —
W	• — —
X	— • • —
Y	— • — —
Z	— — • •
1	• — — — —
2	• • — — —
3	• • • — —
4	• • • • —
5	• • • • •
6	— • • • •
7	— — • • •
8	— — — • •
9	— — — — •
0	— — — — —

providing electricity for an island community or a battery aboard a boat or plane recharged by the vehicle’s engines. The delicate inner workings (vacuum tubes or crystals) are prone to breakage if handled roughly.

Some individuals engaged in espionage—with a need for covert radio communication—use radio transmitters fitted into large, inconspicuous-looking suitcases with all the necessary equipment: Morse key, wire aerial, battery, spare crystals or tubes, and code books.

Few islands have more than one major settlement, and thus don’t have overland telegraph wires linking towns. Undersea telegraph and telephone wires connect only the most important ports. The closest to Rura-Tonga remains Noumea in New Caledonia, a French colony 1,750 miles southeast of Rura-Tonga.

One establishment on each island handles the collection and distribution of mail; a government office, prominent business, or the proprietor of the main hotel. Mail travels by floatplane, cargo freighter, or yacht to major ports of call and then proceeds to its destination through regular channels (usually clipper seaplane or steamship).

**POLITICS**

Much of the South Pacific region retains an international influence left over from earlier colonial rule, enhanced further by the exotic nature of the islands and their indigenous cultures.

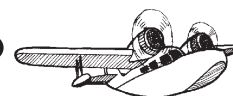
European powers established their presence throughout the South Pacific islands and southeast Asia during the age of exploration and subsequent period of marine commerce. They regarded few of the smaller island chains as lucrative colonial holdings, though they served as territorial claims for influence throughout the area and in some cases ports to support mercantile and naval shipping.

England maintains the most influence in the area through its alliance with Australia and New Zealand as Commonwealth Nations. British holdings include Fiji and many island chains stretching eastward from the Solomons and Gilberts to the Cook and Friendly Islands. The British split the island of Borneo (taking the northern portion) with the Dutch, who control the vast territories of the Dutch East Indies: Sumatra, Java, the Celebes, and the numerous islands in between. France maintains control over the New Hebrides (including New Caledonia) in the west, and French Polynesia (including the Marquesas, Tubuai, Tahiti, and the Society Islands) in the east. The United States gain a number of Pacific territories in its short history, including the Hawaiian Islands, Guam, and the Philippines.

In 1919 the victorious allied powers grant other nations territorial claims to Germany’s Pacific colonial holdings after the Treaty of Versailles, which imposes enormous penalties and reparations as punishment for the Kaiser’s belligerence during the Great War. Although Japan receives the Mariana, Marshall, and Caroline Islands, territory called the Japanese Mandate, it is forbidden to fortify them with military bases. America takes possession of the Samoan Islands. England takes over the northeastern portion of New Guinea formerly claimed by Germany, essentially splitting the mountainous, jungle-covered island in two with the Dutch. England also gains control over the islands in the former Bismarck Archipelago, including New Ireland, New Britain, and Rura-Tonga.

Although many islands in this region receive limited autonomy in 1921 by the League of Nations, most still remain under the administration or protection of their former colonial power. Today most islands—however autonomous they might seem—maintain a society greatly influenced by their colonial associations. Communities on these islands exhibit heavy European culture merged with the exotic customs of the native peoples. Most western and indigenous inhabitants speak at least one European language (typically that used by the former colonial power governing the region), and longtime denizens know the local language and culture, too.





Travel between islands remains relatively unrestricted, allowing goods and people to move freely. Rather than create tensions between expatriates of rival nations, this arrangement lends the islands their own international charm mingled with the exotic mystique of the tropics and the native peoples. Islands within the Japanese Mandate remain the exception to this trend, however, as the Empire of Japan, having only recently made colonial gains in the area, seems particularly protective of its holdings.

## **RURA-TONGA**

Rura-Tonga consists of a main volcanic island with several atolls a few miles offshore that remain too small for settlement. A huge mountain rises steeply from the center of the island, dominating the jungles and lagoon. Occasionally wisps of smoke drift up from the crater; once or twice a year light tremors shake the island but aren't seem severe enough to cause much worry.

Ancient lava flows and coral reefs built up the land over time, providing rich soil and a fertile base for the lush, tropical rainforest. The thick tangle of trees shelters several colonies of monkeys, parrots, and bats. Families of wild boar nest in warrens burrowed inland; although considered a delicacy, the native Rura-Tongans take care not to hunt this food source into extinction. The island's largest wild inhabitants, a few boa constrictors and monitor lizards, keep to the more isolated regions of the jungle, staying well away from the human settlers and natives.

Natural rainfall collects in streams that run down the lower slopes of the volcano into quaint jungle ponds. These fresh pools supply clean water even if it gains a slightly sulfurous smell and taste from running over volcanic rock. The island inhabitants also collect rainwater to supplement the natural reservoirs.

Sandy beaches surround most of the island. The only seaside cliffs rise in the vicinity of Breezy Point. The ocean floor on the northern side of the island, near the point and the lagoon entrance, drops off steeply, but most other shore waters remain shallow for about 300-500 feet, where waves break against a line of underwater reefs. The natives who fish these waters know the reefs well and can navigate through gaps to the open sea.

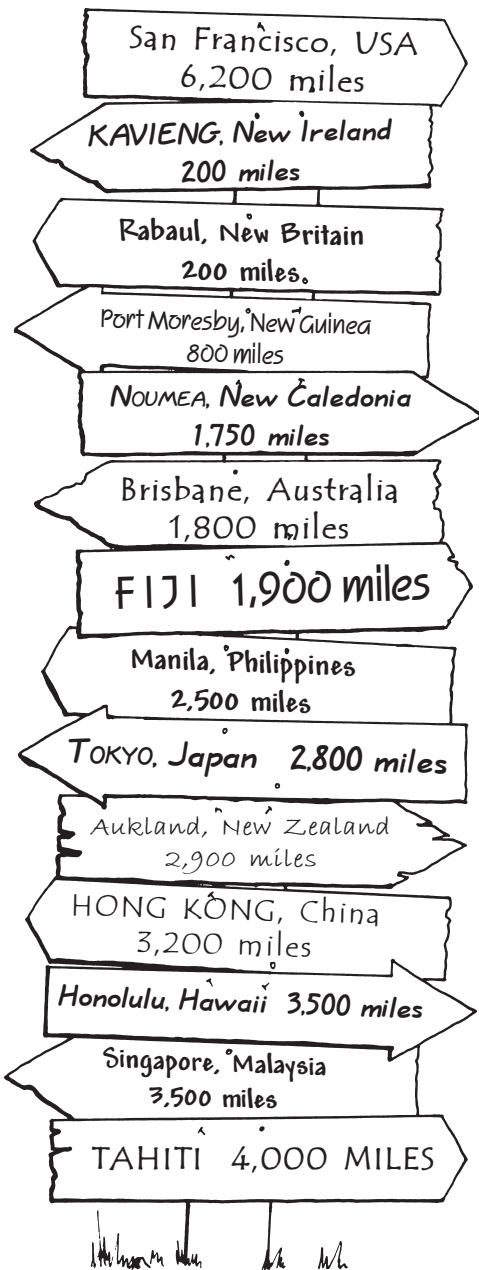
The island has no roads, though the two streets in the settlement seem wide enough to accommodate automobiles; in fact they are wide enough for hand carts and the only full-sized wagon, owned by Ian McKinsey and used to haul supplies between the dock and his Mainland Shipping Company warehouse behind the store.

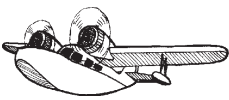
Narrow paths lead southward from the main settlement to the native villages of Levu and Suva and northward to Breezy Point and Chateau Gauthier. One can also travel by sailboat or canoe along the coast; the waters between the shoreline and the reefs remain relatively calm and easy to navigate. To reach the native villages takes about half a day's walk or a few hour's sailing; one can only reach Breezy Point along the path (an hour's stroll) since the shoreline is rocky and faced with cliffs.

## **HISTORY**

Nomads from southeast Asia first settled the island thousands of years ago during a massive ocean-going migration that brought people from the continent across the numerous South Pacific islands from the Philippines eastward to what is now French Polynesia. These natives built two villages, what they currently call Levu and Suva, one on each coast. The two communities maintained relatively harmonious relations throughout the centuries by honoring an invisible boundary that split the island in two.

Dutch explorers first stumbled upon the island in 1619; aside from bartering some trinkets for pearls the natives had harvested, they deemed Rura-Tonga a poor trading destination. Given its insignificance relative to other nearby islands, nobody ever





**“What a lovely  
little paradise  
we’ve conquered.”**

*—Major John McKinsey*

conducted a thorough survey to map Rura-Tonga, though the Dutch sailed around its shores and drafted sketchy charts of its coastlines.

The island remained unmarked on many maps until 1880, when British missionaries spreading the Word of God throughout the region accidentally landed

here during a storm. They left behind the Reverend Albert Keenlyside with his wife and young son; together they hoped to establish a small church and school with the intent of converting and civilizing the local population. The Keenlysides befriended the natives and built a chapel near their landing place on the lagoon, the remains of which were later renovated into the current Anglican church. Nobody quite knows what happened to the Keenlysides. They never received any further support from their missionary organization. Although friendly, the natives never really took to the Keenlysides, their proselytizing, or their efforts at “civilizing” their society. Various and conflicting bits of native lore claim the Keenlysides all died of a wasting disease, left the island on a home-made raft, or were eventually slaughtered by the Germans.

When the Germans formally staked their claim to the Bismarck Archipelago in 1886, they arrived at the lagoon only to find the abandoned chapel and a ramshackle dwelling presumably used by the Keenlysides. They initially left the island alone, but in 1904 they built a supply dump here. It was little more than a collection of tents surrounding a central storehouse; many believe this structure still stands as the renovated Mainland Shipping Company warehouse. An administrative steward and two assistants stayed behind, hiring natives for labor when required to load cargo onto merchant and military vessels infrequently stopping here for resupply.

When the Great War broke out, Australian authorities seized German colonial possessions throughout the region. They imprisoned the German stewards and established their own presence by building a small community around the supply depot. Many believe that Sally and Ian McKinsey’s father was the commanding officer in charge of the Rura-Tonga settlement and thus passed his influence and property along to his children. After the war the island became a British possession, but was incorporated into the Mandated Territory of New Guinea formed by the League of Nations in 1921 and placed under Australian administration.

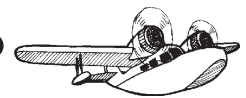
## **THE SETTLEMENT**

The town of Rura-Tonga consists of a dock and a handful of buildings along the inner shore of the lagoon. Most were constructed with natural materials found on the island with embellishments imported from the mainland. Their architecture typifies western-style buildings in tropical environments: wide verandas, tall windows with louvered shutters, and roofs of sheet metal capable of warding off the monsoon rains.

Once a month a freighter from the McKinseys’ Mainland Shipping Company makes port and send a small motor launch into the lagoon. It brings essential supplies for the town’s survival—fuel oil, replacement parts, foodstuffs, manufactured goods—and special-order items for Sharp’s charter operation (mostly aviation petrol and spare parts) and Gauthier’s estate (fine food and luxury items). Travelers sometimes book passage on the freighter to reach Rura-Tonga and other destinations throughout the South Pacific, though this remains a slower and less expensive alternative to chartering a seat on a seaplane. Passengers must first hire a charter flight to reach a major port with clipper service before flying to Southeast Asia, Australia, or America. Both the monthly freighter and Sharp’s charter service have contracts to transport mail.

The Matilda Hotel stands at the center of the settlement and functions as hotel, bar, town hall, and hub for most activity among the western inhabitants of Rura-





Tonga. Its broad veranda, running around three sides of the structure, offers tables and benches where locals, natives, and visitors congregate to while away the lazy, humid hours, share news, air disputes, and tell tall tales.

A large water tank stands behind the hotel elevated on a wooden-frame scaffolding. Gutter pipes channel rainwater from the roof into the cistern, and a thick central pipe running from the lower portion of the tank returns into the hotel to provide visitors and staff with some semblance of running water. A pipe also runs into the tank from a small jungle pond about 100 feet uphill. Most buildings in town get their water through similar arrangements.

A small gasoline generator behind the hotel chugs away for several hours after dusk each night, providing the hotel and a few nearby buildings with electricity over poorly strung lines. The power runs luxury appliances: electric lights, ceiling fans, and the wireless set in Sally McKinsey's office. In months when the supply freighter runs late McKinsey cuts the generator off earlier, if she starts up the little engine at all.

The wireless set is the only immediate means of communicating with nearby islands, passing vessels, or the mainland. Sally McKinsey keeps it locked away in a cabinet in her office; an aerial wire leads from the radio set to the uppermost roof of the Matilda Hotel for relatively clear reception. Only Sally and Ian have keys. Both can operate the wireless set and use Morse Code, though Sally's more adept at it than Ian. They handle requests by residents and visitors to send radio messages for a small fee; they also receive, record, and distribute incoming transmissions. A hook-up to the generator and a recharging battery enables the radio to remain on most of the day and early evening. Sally keeps the radio tuned to the frequency used by the main government wireless set in Port Moresby on New Guinea.

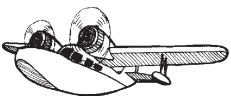
With the Mainland Shipping Company general store and warehouse, the Matilda Hotel dominates the center of town. Several subsidiary structures—the Anglican church and rectory, the ramshackle shed that houses Captain Sharp's charter seaplane operations, Chief Lautoka's souvenir hut—complete the village. A handful of bungalows line Gauthier Street parallel to the lagoon shoreline, home to the fewer than 30 year-round residents. Most lead lives of secluded, primitive luxury as part of the town's social scene, though a few run cottage industries that help support the island.

## **CHATEAU GAUTHIER**

Gauthier Street runs parallel to the shoreline and remains wide enough to accommodate wagons until it passes the last bungalows. To the east it simply ends, while in the west it turns into a well-worn jungle path that follows the lagoon until it turns inland for the gradual climb to Breezy Point and Chateau Gauthier. Those who follow it eventually reach a small guard shack where Gaston Gauthier's intimidating sentries ward off unwelcome visitors.

At Gauthier's orders his mercenaries (nobody's quite sure how many he keeps) have the entire peninsula leading to the chateau and Breezy Point guarded against intruders. Signs in French and English dot the palm trees along the perimeter, warning away trespassers with threats of unstable ground and dangerous jungle creatures. A fence of barbed wire strung between tree trunks stands 20 feet beyond the warning signs, just out of sight of the casual observer. No natural hazards exist as posted, but Gauthier's





**Mercenary  
(Henchman)**

Competent Skills:

- fight \_\_\_\_\_
- intimidate \_\_\_\_\_
- notice \_\_\_\_\_
- stealth \_\_\_\_\_
- track \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skill:

- shoot \_\_\_\_\_

Gear:

- boot knife \_\_\_\_\_
- Browning pistol \_\_\_\_\_
- machete \_\_\_\_\_
- bolt-action rifle \_\_\_\_\_
- tropical outfit \_\_\_\_\_

**“Go back, if you please. Monsieur Gauthier does not care to entertain guests today.”**

*—Chateau Guard*

thugs have placed landmines at strategic locations beyond the fence where people might try slipping through the thick jungle undergrowth.

After following the path (or daring the hazardous jungle) one reaches Gauthier’s estate at the height of Breezy Point. The Frenchman had it constructed years ago when he first settled on Rura-Tonga. He had the land cleared of trees and brush to create a vast, open lawn,

and had an immense villa constructed: two stories, with an open verandah and balcony running around the entire house. These fine quarters accommodate Gauthier in relative luxury, his house staff (a cook, manservant, and bodyguard), and his squad of mercenaries. Gauthier keeps to himself, occasionally entertaining secretive guests who only briefly pass through Rura-Tonga town.

Few people have mentioned ever visiting Chateau Gauthier, so most information anyone hears remains sketchy or embellished. Sally and Ian McKinsey were guests long ago, and they talk about the tropical gardens, fine food, and opulently appointed rooms when visitors seem curious. Although the presence of gruff mercenaries arouses some suspicions, nobody really suspects that several locked and concealed basement chambers contain a code room with wireless transmitter, a tidy office with detailed maps and file cabinets filled with classified material from several governments, and a small but well-stocked armory.

**NATIVES**

Rura-Tonga’s native population arrived here thousands of years ago during a great seagoing migration from southeast Asia eastward across the Pacific islands. They formed a tribal society that survived through substance-based agricultural pursuits, primarily farming and fishing. At some point in the distant past the population split into two related tribes, each settling in a village on an opposite coast of the island; Levu sits along the western edge of Rura-Tonga, while Suva occupies the eastern shoreline. The two villages have lived in relative harmony over the centuries thanks to an ancient law dividing the island and its resources in two halves according to an invisible boundary running north-south through the island.

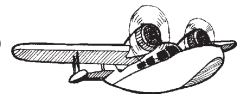
Both tribes share many similar attributes. They build solid huts raised above the ground on stilts using wood and thatch harvested from palm trees. The jungle also provides wood for their outrigger canoes and many hunting, farming, and household tools. They share strong tribal traditions revering long-dead ancestors and numerous island spirits tied to natural features; many westerners find these beliefs lend a sense of almost paranoid superstition to the natives.

The natives remain self-sufficient despite the presence of outsiders on their island. For food they rely on domesticated chickens and pigs, subsistence crops grown near their villages, and fish harvested from the ocean. Several times a year they hunt the wild boar living in the jungle to provide delicacies at various tribal celebrations. Like many indigenous peoples, the natives use every part of their harvest for various uses in everyday life.

Natives occasionally visit the town to conduct business, usually bartering goods they manufacture in cottage industries for simple luxuries to make their life easier: soap, tools, alcohol, aluminum pots, and novelty items.





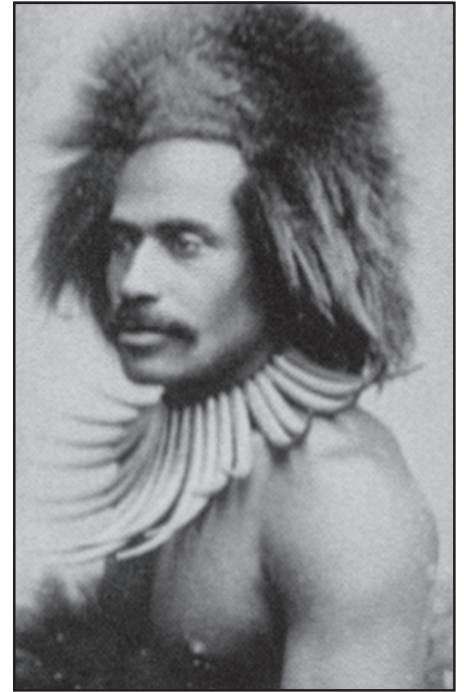


The villagers in Levu pursue two activities beyond their subsistence agriculture to generate goods to trade with the town. Skilled divers paddle their outrigger canoes into the nearby waters to harvest pearls from oysters on the ocean floor. The villagers also take choice cuts of rare woods found in the jungle. Teams of the tribe's young men armed with primitive axes and directed by an experience elder identify and fell trees, then square them off and cut them into more easily transportable lengths. A village elder safeguards the pearls and wood until he makes one of several annual trips to the town, when he trades them to Ian McKinsey for materials and luxuries for his tribe.

Natives living in Suva participate in more intense commercial activities, especially since their headman Lautoka maintains a permanent place of business and a more prominent position in the town than any villager from Levu. The tribe's chief occupation centers around copra, the dried meat of the coconut found growing on the innumerable palm trees across the island. The villagers gather the meat, grind it into a pulp, and boil it in water to extract coconut oil. They seal the oil in small, airtight casks Ian McKinsey provides for them expressly for this purpose and trade it to the entrepreneur for various goods they need. Suva's talented woodcarvers also provide the array of native trinkets available for sale at Chief Lautoka's Island Souvenirs.

**"Many generations ago the Mother Goddess of the Sea led our people here to begin life anew."**

*—Chief Lautoka*



**ULTERIOR MOTIVES**

Rura-Tonga's inhabitants each pursue ulterior motives. Revelation of these intentions or their true identities could cause a stir in the island community and disrupt the delicate balance that allows the town to survive, so they keep them well hidden and quickly act to stem any suspicions.

**Sally McKinsey** focuses on making sure the town survives. She strikes a delicate balance between native villagers, Ian's business concerns, and the visitors and residents in town. She doesn't really care if the Matilda Hotel makes money—she and Ian inherited the family business back home—but she tries making it a hospitable place for visitors.

**Ian McKinsey** uses the Mainland Shipping Company facilities on Rura-Tonga as a front for various illegal activities, primarily smuggling. He and Sally essentially own the entire business, but prefer to let trusted executives run things from Australia while Ian uses the company ships to haul contraband from the Far East to the American West Coast. A large warehouse behind the shipping company store remains locked and closely guarded at all times. Besides supplies imported to ensure the settlement's survival, it holds casks of coconut oil manufactured as a cottage industry by the natives and crates of rare wood choice-cut from trees found throughout the island's jungles. He keeps pearls gathered by the natives in a velvet bag locked away in his office safe. Various cargoes conceal shipments of opium from the Orient, stolen cigarettes from America, and a hallucinogen home-brewed by the Rura-Tonga natives. Ian employs villagers to load and unload cargo from the monthly supply freighter. He keeps track of all business dealings from a small office at the back of his store, and sleeps on the premises to safeguard his warehouse.

**Reverend James Carlisle** uses his missionary work as a cover for espionage activities. He serves British Secret Service (MI-6) by keeping an ear open for news of Japanese activities and passing along any other interesting information. He contacts MI-6 Far

**Chief Lautoka  
(Boss)**

Competent Skills:

- first aid \_\_\_\_\_
- notice \_\_\_\_\_
- street smarts \_\_\_\_\_
- track \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

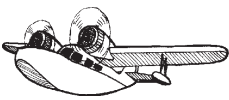
- charm \_\_\_\_\_
- island lore \_\_\_\_\_
- seafaring \_\_\_\_\_
- survival \_\_\_\_\_
- swim \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Skill:

- persuade \_\_\_\_\_

Gear:

- walking stick \_\_\_\_\_
- chief's shawl \_\_\_\_\_
- loincloth \_\_\_\_\_
- purse with \$20 in varied currency \_\_\_\_\_
- tribal headdress \_\_\_\_\_



**Sally McKinsey  
(Boss)**

Competent Skills:

- etiquette \_\_\_\_\_
- fight \_\_\_\_\_
- street smarts \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

- charm \_\_\_\_\_
- notice \_\_\_\_\_
- persuade \_\_\_\_\_
- wireless \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Skill:

- business \_\_\_\_\_

East headquarters in Singapore once a week on a radio hidden in his bungalow. He maintains contacts with several villagers in Levu and Suva who canoe to nearby islands to gather intelligence on activities there.

**Beth Carlisle** isn't really the Reverend's daughter, but a fellow MI-6 agent sent to assist him. Her medical training has saved islanders numerous times, but her keen, analytical mind helps evaluate intelligence that comes their way. Although she seems demure in public, she's a crack shot and a close combat expert.

**Chief Lautoka** serves as the eyes and ears of the island natives. Despite his sometimes overly enthusiastic entrepreneurial zeal selling souvenirs to tourists, he truly has his people's welfare at heart. He may seem at ease around foreigners and readily adaptable to their customs and manners, but Lautoka still reveres the traditional gods, taboos, and customs of his people.

**Gaston Gauthier** rarely ventures into town, preferring to keep to his luxurious bungalow. Occasionally he meets important visitors at the dock, whom he and his entourage of burly bodyguards briskly escort out of town to the estate. Wanted for embezzling, smuggling, and fraud in France, he's a Fascist sympathizer and local agent for the Germans and Japanese, who pay him extremely well to report on events within his sphere of influence. Gauthier prefers to pay others to do his dirty work, and enjoys maintaining the facade of an affluent expatriate.

**Ian McKinsey  
(Boss)**

Competent Skills:

- fight \_\_\_\_\_
- gamble \_\_\_\_\_
- intimidate \_\_\_\_\_
- investigate \_\_\_\_\_
- shoot \_\_\_\_\_
- sleight of hand \_\_\_\_\_
- stealth \_\_\_\_\_
- wireless \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

- bargain \_\_\_\_\_
- bureaucracy \_\_\_\_\_
- street smarts \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Skill:

- business \_\_\_\_\_

Gear:

- boot knife \_\_\_\_\_
- Colt 1911 pistol \_\_\_\_\_
- dapper suit \_\_\_\_\_
- Panama hat \_\_\_\_\_

**Reverend James  
Carlisle (Boss)**

Competent Skills:

- religion \_\_\_\_\_
- shoot \_\_\_\_\_
- stealth \_\_\_\_\_
- survival \_\_\_\_\_
- wireless operation \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

- fight \_\_\_\_\_
- investigate \_\_\_\_\_
- street smarts \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Skill:

- notice \_\_\_\_\_

Gear:

- Bible with concealed blade \_\_\_\_\_
- one-time pad concealed in hymnal \_\_\_\_\_
- Panama hat \_\_\_\_\_
- seersucker suit \_\_\_\_\_
- suitcase radio \_\_\_\_\_

**Beth Carlisle  
(Boss)**

Competent Skills:

- fight \_\_\_\_\_
- investigation \_\_\_\_\_
- pick lock \_\_\_\_\_
- sleight of hand \_\_\_\_\_
- street smarts \_\_\_\_\_
- wireless operation \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

- charm \_\_\_\_\_
- first aid \_\_\_\_\_
- notice \_\_\_\_\_
- stealth \_\_\_\_\_

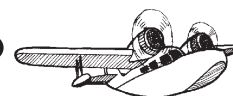
Signature Skill:

- shoot \_\_\_\_\_

Gear:

- .22 Derringer \_\_\_\_\_
- hymnal with concealed blade \_\_\_\_\_
- doctor's bag \_\_\_\_\_





**Gauthier's Mercenaries** keep to themselves, but forcefully eject anyone trespassing anywhere near Chateau Gauthier. They prefer to beat intruders senseless rather than inflict lethal damage, but keep their guns handy in case anyone really threatens them. Like their employer, they avoid town except when escorting Gauthier or his guests. Most are fugitives from French colonial authorities.

## **OTHER RESIDENTS**

The town on Rura-Tonga has fewer than 30 other residents, but some of them stand out among the others as potential resources for visitors. Most live in one of the simple bungalows along Gauthier Street.

**Rawson** spent the past 20 years as a big game hunter, leading rich clients on safaris in Africa and Asia to bag the most exotic prey. He keeps to himself during the day, but spends most nights drinking in the Matilda Hotel bar by himself. Those buying him a drink can entice the grizzled man to ramble on with stories (no doubt embellished) of his earlier adventures stalking lions with the Masai, canoeing along the Amazon, hunting tigers from the backs of elephants in India with British nobility, and purportedly tracking the elusive yeti in the high Himalayas. Occasionally Rawson disappears for several days on end, presumably stalking creatures in the jungle to keep his hunting skills fresh, or possibly just wandering about aimlessly reliving the old days in his mind.

**Allen Brennan** is a middle-aged American with enough money to run off to a remote South Pacific island to write the "great American novel." Each morning he sits on his bungalow's porch having breakfast, then bangs away at his portable typewriter until lunchtime. He spends the afternoon and evening loitering around the town, usually on the Matilda Hotel veranda or in the bar, ostensibly watching everyone and scribbling observations in a small notebook. He also enjoys chatting up visitors (the locals have all become bored with him), talking incessantly about his plans for fictitious characters, locations, and plots. In fact Brennan possesses very little writing talent and even less sense of perception; he's simply deluding himself and living off his family's wealth in a cheap, remote, tropical paradise.

**Clocher** the cook works at the Matilda Hotel preparing meals for guests and making sure the larders remain well-provisioned. The overwrought, portly fellow hobbles around on a false left leg he claims he lost at Verdun during the Great War. He supposedly fled France after the armistice, wandered the world on various ships, and finally found himself on Rura-Tonga working in the hotel kitchen. Clocher can cook almost anything, though it all exhibits a dash of French cuisine. Although he's proud of his cooking, he takes compliment and insult quietly, preferring to keep to himself. If he isn't hobbling around the kitchen making a meal for guests or arguing with Ian McKinsey about supplies at the Mainland Shipping Company warehouse, Clocher's asleep in the corner of the hotel bar clutching a bottle of cheap red wine like a beloved teddy bear.

**Leo Grijzen** runs the only fishing operation in the town with the help of his wife and two teenage sons. A retired sea captain who plied the shipping lanes throughout the Dutch East Indies, he possesses an excellent knowledge of seamanship and remains familiar with the numerous island chains to the west of Rura-Tonga. Early each morning Grijzen and his sons launch the tired-looking fishing boat tied up in the lagoon and head out to deeper waters to haul in the morning's catch. After they return at noon for a large lunch, the entire family helps sort, clean, and process the fish. Some they send over to Clocher in the Matilda Hotel kitchen to prepare for guest meals. Local residents also stop by in the afternoon to purchase fish for their own dinners. The family fillets and salts the rest and sets them out on racks (much like the natives use) to dry in the sun.

### **Gaston Gauthier (Boss)**

Competent Skills:

business \_\_\_\_\_  
 command \_\_\_\_\_  
 cryptography \_\_\_\_\_  
 fight \_\_\_\_\_  
 investigate \_\_\_\_\_  
 wireless operation \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

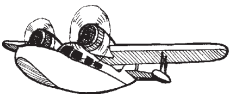
bluff \_\_\_\_\_  
 etiquette \_\_\_\_\_  
 intellect \_\_\_\_\_  
 intimidate \_\_\_\_\_  
 persuade \_\_\_\_\_  
 shoot \_\_\_\_\_  
 street smarts \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Skill:

notice \_\_\_\_\_

Gear:

Browning pistol \_\_\_\_\_  
 sword cane \_\_\_\_\_  
 dapper suit \_\_\_\_\_  
 gold-plated cigarette case \_\_\_\_\_  
 gold-plated lighter \_\_\_\_\_  
 Panama hat \_\_\_\_\_



MOST SECRET.

Intelligence Assessment on Japanese Activity in Vicinity of RURA-TONGA

1. The following must be clearly understood:

(a) My static cover in the settlement of RURA-TONGA does not enable the freedom of movement to allow me or my assistant to make long-range reconnaissance or verify information herein firsthand.

(b) My personal observations remain limited to activity on the island of RURA-TONGA, specifically occurrences within the main settlement on the lagoon. Access to other areas remains infrequent (in the case of the native villages) or impossible (such as access to CHATEAU GAUTHIER or BREEZY POINT).

(c) Information herein comes from sources with varying degrees of reliability. Observations from SHARP carry more authenticity than those of NATIVES.

(d) SHARP is a pilot operating floatplane charter service based at RURA-TONGA. Information from him was gathered in the course of casual conversation; he is an unwitting informer unaware of AGENT'S activities in the region.

2. Intelligence gathered from NATIVES came from several visits to their villages under guise of AGENT'S cover:

(a) NATIVES returning from ocean-going fishing expeditions occasionally report sighting military aircraft with clear Japanese markings flying in the vicinity of RURA-TONGA. None have shown hostile intent toward NATIVES. AGENT speculates these are probably reconnaissance flights or probing patrols for foreign shipping.

(b) On or about 21st October, 1937, one fishing expedition reported sighting a "fish of great size" just beneath the ocean surface. They fled fearing it might surface and swallow their vessel. Their description placed the sighting approximately 1 mile northwest of BREEZY POINT. AGENT believes they spotted a submarine. Please verify with fleet logs that this was not a British submarine.

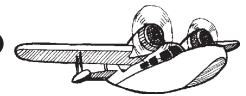
3. Conversations with SHARP revealed observations made during infrequent flights to nearby islands.

(a) On several occasions he spotted Imperial Japanese Navy vessels in waters along the boundary of the Japanese Mandate. Vessels often consisted of a lone warship on patrol. By cross-referencing his descriptions with military intelligence references at hand AGENT believes this vessel could be the Hatuharu class destroyer ARIAKE or YUGURE, possibly both conducting regional patrols.

(b) On or about 11th November, 1937, on a flight to KAVIENG, NEW IRELAND, SHARP spotted a small flotilla of warships on the northern horizon, including what he believed was an aircraft carrier. Please verify with fleet logs that these were not British ships operating in the area.

(continued on next page)





(Intelligence Assessment continued from previous page)

(c) SHARP reported that conversations with pilots at other ports of call in the region reveal increased yet non-aggressive encounters with Imperial Japanese Navy aircraft in the past two months. Other pilots have also spotted warships in the distance but failed to investigate further to verify nationality and class.

4. AGENT personally observed the arrival on 3 December, 1937, of a Japanese commercial flying boat at RURA-TONGA lagoon. GASTON GAUTHIER, a resident of RURA-TONGA, met the seaplane at the dock and greeted its passenger, a Japanese businessman named IWAICHI KOMATSU. The two walked to GAUTHIER'S residence at BREEZY POINT, where they stayed for two days before a Japanese flying boat came to pick KOMATSU up at the lagoon dock. Intelligence references at hand indicate that KOMATSU is cover identity for ICHIRO AKASHI, a known agent of Imperial Japanese Navy intelligence. GAUTHIER is a suspected agent working for a Nazi intelligence organization.

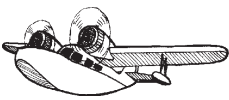
5. AGENT believes increased Imperial Japanese Navy activity in the area indicates a build-up of forces within the Japanese Mandate and an increased interest in invasion of or threats from Commonwealth territories to the south. Given its remote nature, RURA-TONGA seems particularly susceptible to Japanese covert infiltration.

(Sgd) J.M. CARLISLE  
Agent-in-Place.

RURA-TONGA, 29th December, 1937.

**“Curd” Johnson** operates the town’s only distillery equipment. The hillbilly from one of America’s rural Appalachian regions flits and hops around the copper contraption set up behind his bungalow, adjusting valves and stoking the fire like some excitable dwarf. He bottles his finished product in an assortment of jars he’s collected over the years. A chemical wizard, “Curd” can brew any potent alcohol from almost any vegetable matter; those who sample his liquor enjoy the taste and potency, but learn not to ask its ingredients. A wiry man with an excitable, anxious demeanor, “Curd” speaks in such incoherent babble and with such a twangy American accent that few on the island—even visitors from the United States—can understand him. He only leaves the vicinity of his bungalow to trade his finished product with Ian McKinsey for more supplies. Occasionally “Curd” disappears into the jungle, possibly on expeditions to barter with the natives or gather local fruits for his concoctions. His nickname comes from the sour smell his unkempt beard retains from spilled food and infrequent bathing.

**Matthew Marchand** sequesters himself in a bungalow at the extreme eastern end of Gauthier Street, where the gaunt and somewhat deranged fellow hides among his vast collection of books. The quirky American came here in 1930, possibly seeking refuge from the stock market crash, and immediately began losing himself in the large library he’d amassed. He rarely leaves the house. Every time a supply freighter makes port he waits anxiously at the dock for the crate-load of books he’s ordered. Marchand carries these back to his bungalow and spends the next month reading them and jotting down notes on pads and scraps of paper littering the bungalow. He only mumbles to anyone who tries speaking with him, unless they ask him “research” questions. Marchand answers these like some Harvard professor, lecturing knowledgeably on a particular subject covered by books in his library. He jealously guards his collection, forbidding anyone else to enter his bungalow or handle his beloved books.



## GRUMMAN G-21

### Grumman G-21

Top Speed: 180 mph

Range: 1,000 miles

Crew: 2

Passengers: 4

The Grumman G-21 amphibious flying boat plays an integral role in *Heroes of Rura-Tonga* adventures and in any South Pacific pulp campaign.

The floatplane provides affordable means to fly between islands, both for the owner—who has manageable costs for operation, maintenance, and repair—and passengers who pay a fair price for transportation services.

Aside from cargo freighters, private planes offer the only way for passengers to travel independent of set schedules and routes. For instance, anyone seeking to get from Rura-Tonga to another island must either charter a flight through Captain Sharp's *Flying Fish* floatplane operation or wait until the monthly freighter arrives; and even then, they must remain on the freighter until its chartered route eventually brings them to their final destination.

Characters in the *Heroes of Rura-Tonga* campaign need independent transportation like the Grumman G-21 to enable them to flit about the islands in their misadventures. Captain Colin Sharp, one of the pregenerated character templates in this sourcebook, operates a floatplane from the dock in Rura-Tonga town; using him as a player or gamemaster character can give the heroes transportation to various adventure locations. Alternately one of the heroes themselves might have acquired their own G-21 through an inheritance, business venture, or personal interest in aviation (a perfectly acceptable endeavor in what many call the "Golden Age of Aviation").

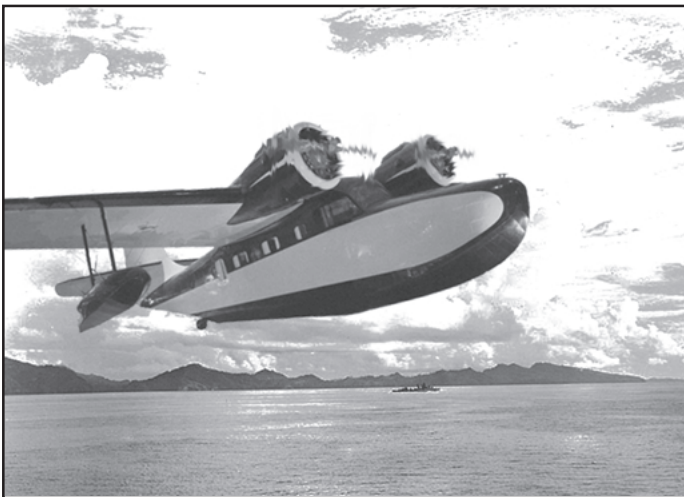
The Grumman Corporation originally designed the G-21 in 1937 as an amphibious plane to shuttle commuters between affluent Long Island communities and Manhattan. It quickly became a common sight between coastal and island destinations with waterfront airports and harbor facilities that catered to flying boats like the famous clippers. Today it serves as a light amphibious transport for both passengers and cargo. Military services such as the Coast Guard have also adopted it for search and rescue operations as well as limited coastal patrols. Two nine-cylinder Pratt & Whitney radial engines provide enough power for a water take-off and a top speed of 180 miles per hour. The G-21 can range upwards of 1,000 miles on a single load of fuel.

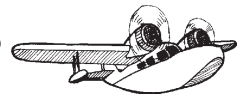
Designers created the G-21's fuselage for optimum amphibious operation. The lower portion of the nose has a boat-like shape that helps the hull cut through water during take-offs and landings. Two floats, each mounted about halfway down the length of each wing, keep the aircraft stable in the water, though they add to the overall drag and ultimately decrease airspeed in flight. Several features enable the G-21 to tie up at a pier much like a boat: mooring cleats mounted on the outer hull, line stored just inside the forward hatch, even an anchor for sitting just off shore. Crew members can emerge from the airplane's forward hatch and guide

the craft to a dock where they can tie it fast to the moorings. The G-21 isn't completely limited to water landings. Retractable landing gear folds out of the forward fuselage, with a small tail wheel emerging from the lower aft section, enabling the airplane to land on conventional airfields.

In addition to the forward entrance hatch on the bow, the plane has one other main entry; a door on the left side of the plane through which passengers, crew, and cargo pass. The hull around one window on the right side of the plane can open and serve as an emergency exit hatch if needed.

Although a single pilot can fly a craft as small as the G-21, the cockpit provides seating for two, a pilot and co-pilot, with each having access to all controls and instruments. Instrumentation includes a compass, altimeter, airspeed indicator, vertical speed indicator, bank and turn indicators, a clock, fuel gauge, landing gear position





indicator, and several gauges to monitor performance on the two engines. Two jacks allow the crew to plug their headphones and throat microphones into the radio set; a third jack in the cabin aft allows a passenger to plug in and listen to wireless traffic or communicate by intercom with the pilots.

The main cabin accommodates four passengers comfortably in reclining chairs with seat pockets and ash trays mounted in the bulkhead nearby. Small portholes offer glimpses outside at the passing scenery. A forward hatch, usually closed off by a simple curtain, sets the cockpit apart from the passenger compartment. Cargo webbing secures baggage at the back of the cabin. Heating, ventilation, interior lights, and soundproofing add to the comfort of both the cabin and cockpit.

Compact stowage compartments in the main cabin contain emergency equipment (assuming the owner keeps everything well-stocked). These usually consist of a first aid kit, flare gun, and a small fire extinguisher for emergencies. Since the plane was designed to land and remain floating on water, no allowance was made for such bulky items as inflatable rafts or life jackets.

**WHAT COULD POSSIBLY GO WRONG?**

The mechanical responsibilities of owning and operating an airplane form a frequently occurring theme in the *Heroes of Rura-Tonga* campaign. The characters depend on their own, independent means of transportation. They sometimes divert from their original plans to ensure their craft remains in working order. They must replace, repair, and install parts worn through overuse, damaged by hard landings, or shot up during encounters with adversaries. In some cases they must scrounge to find adequate replacement parts or hold out until they can find a safe haven in which they can effect repairs. Although these activities normally occupy downtime during the campaign and occur during “off-screen” moments, sometimes they form the crux of an encounter, episode, or entire adventure (such as “Island of the Damned”).

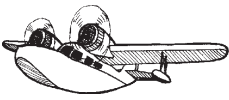
Rather than resorting to ad lib techno-jargon when describing aircraft components that take damage, need

replacement, or require repair, gamemasters can consult these checklists of various equipment aboard the Grumman G-21. Bits of the hull and various control cables are easy to fix, but having other, more specific equipment sustain damage can make for a more realistic campaign.

<b>Component</b>	<b>Damage Effect</b>
<b>Flight Surfaces</b>	
elevator	loss of maneuverability
rudder	loss of maneuverability
vertical stabilizer	loss of maneuverability
wing	loss of maneuverability, speed
wing flap	loss of maneuverability
<b>Engine Components</b>	
cylinder cooling baffle	loss of speed
exhaust collector ring	loss of speed
fuel pump	loss of speed
generator	eventually drains battery (see “battery” below)
oil radiator	loss of speed
propeller	loss of speed
<b>Support Components</b>	
battery	no power to start engines or electrical system
instrument panel	difficulty navigating
landing gear	cannot land on airfield
lower hull	difficulty making water landings
wing float	difficulty making water landings







## GRUMMAN "G-21" AMPHIBIAN AIRPLANE SPECIFICATIONS

Type: Amphibian Monoplane

Engines: 2

Length: 38' 3"

Wing Span: 49' 0"

Height Overall (Tail on Ground): 12' 2"

Fuselage Material: All Metal

Wing Material: All Metal Structure

Rudder and Elevators: Metal Fabric Covered

Ailerons: Metal Fabric Covered

Flaps: All Metal

## PERFORMANCE

(With Full Gross Weight)

Cruising Speed: 150 mph

Top Speed: 180 mph

Landing Speed: 60 mph

Cruising Range at 150 mph: 1,000 miles

**WHAT, NO GOOSE?**

The Grumman G-21 amphibious flying boat doesn't receive its now-famous "Goose" nickname until World War II. Several allied military powers deployed the seaplane for maritime search-and-rescue operations and coastal anti-submarine patrols. During its service with Britain's Royal Air Force pilots christened the G-21 "Goose" for its unique profile and its ability to take off and set down on both land and sea.

This doesn't prohibit people from giving their own planes nicknames. Following the maritime tradition of naming ships, many seaplane pilots christened their craft with names, painting them on the nose for easy identification. The tradition continued into the American Army Air Force during World War II as bomber and fighter pilots named their aircraft and painted mascots on their noses.

**MARITIME ADVENTURES**

Although speedy transportation throughout the South Pacific relies on seaplanes like the famous Pan Am clipper and the smaller Grumman G-21 amphibious flying boat, another means of personal travel exists: the private yacht.

A yacht provides most of the same mobility a seaplane offers: a means of traversing the ocean between islands, accommodations for the crew and several passengers, and a valuable asset to safeguard from damage or loss in the course of an adventure. The waters of the South Pacific make for generally calm sailing; although storms pose major threats, good sea captains can usually find shelter at one of the innumerable islands dotting the map. Yachts can still encounter aircraft and warships of the Imperial Japanese Navy, the principle adversary in this campaign.

Mariners and yachts lack the glamour and romantic image that pilots and their aircraft evoke during this period. Ships move much more slowly than airplanes, lengthening travel times and possibly muting some of the suspense that higher-

speed vehicles offer. They're fine for villains, allies, or other gamemaster characters, but the heroes want to dash around in streamlined airplanes during this Golden Age of Aviation.

Using a yacht in the scripted adventures in this sourcebook requires adapting portions of the scenario that rely on using a seaplane. For instance, in "Island of the Damned," the heroes must replace damaged motor parts on their yacht instead of fixing components on their seaplane engines. They can't fly around the island on reconnaissance; they must circle it at sea level, assuming their yacht isn't severely damaged.

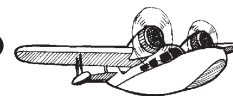
**75-foot Motor Yacht**

Top Speed: 46 mph

Range: 1,500 miles

Crew: 3

Passengers: 10



## SEAPLANES

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"The first lesson is that you can't lose a war if you have command of the air, and you can't win a war if you haven't."

—Jimmy Doolittle, Aviator

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By 1938—the year in which the adventures in *Heroes of Rura-Tonga* take place—most nations with interests in the South Pacific maintain small fleets of seaplanes for military and civilian purposes, primarily transport, search and rescue, and patrol. They ply the sea lanes between major ports, both those influenced by their associated colonial power and those of friendly allies. The flying boats below might serve as allies or support craft during adventures. By stripping military craft of their weapons and reducing the crew to two (with the remaining space for passengers), they become civilian models operating to transport passengers, deliver cargo, and convey mail.

### **CONSOLIDATED PBY**

The United States Navy initially commissions this versatile flying boat—which enters service in 1936—for duty as a maritime patrol bomber, but its profile later includes anti-submarine warfare, search and rescue, and mine-laying duties. The design includes many American innovations on the amphibious flying boat concept, including a broader mono-wing, retractable landing gear for setting down on airfields, and outboard wing floats that fold into the wingtips during flight. Its rugged construction makes it the most reliable and durable of any flying boats of its day. PBYS operate from American Naval installations in Alaska, the Philippines, Wake, Guam, the Hawaiian Islands, and America's west coast. (During World War II other nationalities adopt the PBY, including Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada; pilots with RAF Coastal Command give this aircraft the nickname "Catalina" only after 1941.)



### **Consolidated PBY**

Top Speed: 170 mph

Range: 2,000 miles

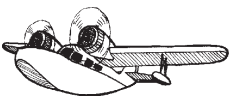
Crew: 5

Passengers: 4

Ordinance: .30 caliber machine guns (2 bow, 1 tail),  
.50 caliber machine guns (2 waist)

### **CURTIS SOC**

This single-engine floatplane serves as the eyes of American naval vessels at sea. In the days before radar, ships depend on visual reconnaissance. Lookouts in a ship's high masts can only see to the horizon; floatplanes deployed from steam catapults on the aft decks of battleships and cruisers scout far ahead of ocean-going vessels. The



biplane provides open cockpits for a pilot and a second crewman who serves as observer, radioman, and gunner. Three pontoon floats—a large one mounted below the fuselage and one beneath each of the lower wing tips—allows the plane to land on the ocean surface; a fixed wheel assembly could replace the center pontoon for landing on traditional runways. Upon landing near its base ship, a patrol floatplane links with a line from the vessel's deck crane which hoists the aircraft back onto its launch catapult. The biplane's wings fold back against its fuselage for storage aboard ship.

### Curtis SOC

Top Speed: 165 mph

Range: 675 miles

Crew: 2

Ordnance: .30 caliber machine guns (1 fixed forward, 1 rear)

## EMPIRE-CLASS FLYING BOAT

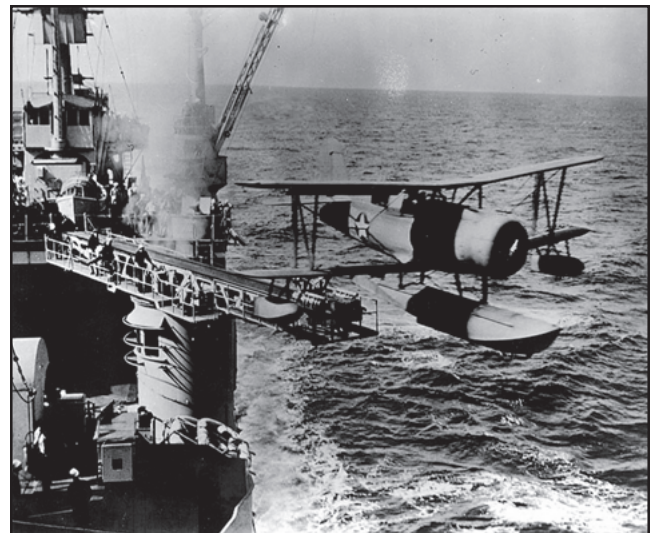
The Short Company designs and builds this flying boat for passenger and mail service to maritime destinations. They enter service with Imperial Airways in 1936 and are soon adopted by civilian airlines Quantas Empire Airways Limited (Australia) and Tasman Empire Airways Limited (TEAL, forerunner of Air New Zealand). Carrier routes offer transport between Britain, Commonwealth nations, and colonies throughout the South Pacific, providing a British equivalent to the famous American Pan Am

## RADAR

Radar technology emerges in the late 1930s but doesn't enter common usage until World War II, when military forces use it to monitor activity in the air and on the sea. Before World War II, and even in its earliest stages, radar remains an inaccurate instrument for tracking airplanes and seafaring vessels. Aircraft—particularly those operating in civil aviation—do not possess radar sets during the 1930s.

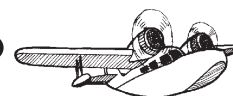
Radar technology requires so much power and machinery that the military deploys it primarily on ground stations (often along the coast) and on naval vessels, from massive battleships to smaller motor torpedo boats (known as PT boats in the American navy). As technology develops during the war, air force night fighters employ smaller radar sets to more effectively engage the enemy. Accurate use of radar frequently suffers from poor weather, temperamental equipment, atmospheric interference, and lack of operator training.

Although the Germans equip their pocket battleship *Graf Spee* with radar in 1937, few other nations deploy the nascent technology aboard their vessels. Most warships rely instead on lookouts placed in high masts to locate other ships. Larger



vessels like battleships and cruisers often use small aircraft to fly patrols to spot other vessels; these single-engine floatplane launch from steam catapult ramps on their stern decks and are retrieved by cranes.





clippers. The craft has two decks, a long mono-wing, four engines, and outboard wing floats. (An armed version, the Shorts Sunderland, enters service with RAF Coastal Command in the summer of 1938 and flies in World War II as convoy escorts and anti-submarine patrol.)

### **Empire-class Flying Boat**

Top Speed: 200 mph

Range: 2,500 miles

Crew: 5

Passengers: 17

### ***MARTIN 130 CLIPPER***

Martin builds only three 130 Clippers—the *China Clipper*, *Philippine Clipper*, and *Hawaii Clipper*—yet this flying boat becomes synonymous with Pan Am’s China Clipper service throughout the Pacific Ocean. Pan Am begins clipper mail service across the Pacific in 1935, following quickly with full passenger service in 1936. Four engines mounted on a single high wing carry the large hull aloft on flights ranging more than 3,000 miles. The interior contains functional spaces for the cockpit, crew accommodations, galley, radio room, and cargo, with comfortable passenger seating in a main cabin and individual berths for overnight flights. The clipper has enough room for 46 passengers, though on longer, overnight flights the sleeping berths can only hold 18 in relative comfort. In early 1939 the Boeing 314 Clipper enters service as the largest commercial plane in scheduled use, eventually supplanting the Martin 130 on Pan Am’s Pacific passenger routes.

### **Martin 130 Clipper**

Top Speed: 180 mph

Range: 3,200 miles

Crew: 5

Passengers: 18/46



### ***SUPERMARINE WALRUS***

Designed in 1934, this floatplane mounts a single pusher engine (with a propeller at the rear of the motor) amid a biplane wing arrangement above the main fuselage. It enters service with the Royal Navy in 1935 and serves with Britain’s commonwealth allies, including Australia and New Zealand. Navies employ the Walrus as a spotter plane, launching it from steam catapults on cruisers and battleships to fly reconnaissance (before the further refinement and deployment of radar). It also conducts search and rescue operations. The high engine mount gives it an awkward appearance, which inspires its crews to nickname it “Shagbat.”

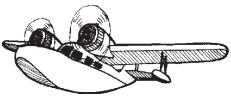
### **Supermarine Walrus**

Top Speed: 135 mph

Range: 600 miles

Crew: 4

Ordnance: .30 caliber machine guns (1 bow, 1 aft dorsal)



## AMELIA EARHART'S LAST FLIGHT

**"Please know that I am aware of the hazards. I want to do it because I want to do it. Women must try to do things as men have tried. When they fail, their failure must be a challenge to others."**

*—Amelia Earhart, Aviatrix*

On July 3, 1937, famed aviatrix Amelia Earhart disappears in the South Pacific with her flight engineer Fred Noonan while flying their twin-engine plane on one of the last legs of their round-the-world flight.

The internationally known Earhart is one of the premier aviators of her time. In 1932 she becomes the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean from Newfoundland to France, for which she receives several commendations, including the Distinguished Flying Cross from the United States Congress. Earhart makes two cross-country solo flights, one in each direction, becoming the first woman to fly solo across America. In 1935 she becomes the first person to fly solo from Honolulu, Hawaii, to Oakland, California. She publishes several accounts of her aviation exploits. Earhart maintains friendships with several aviators during this "Golden Age of Flight," including the famous British aviatrix Amy Johnson.

In late May, 1937, Earhart and her flight engineer Fred Noonan begin a round-the-world flight starting in California and flying east around the globe on an equatorial route through Florida, South America, Africa, India, and Southeast Asia. The final leg of their journey is supposed to take them 2,500 miles from an airfield on New Guinea to Howland Island, in the Gilbert Island chain, where a U.S. Coast Guard cutter waits to guide them in using radio signals. Earhart's twin-engine Lockheed L10 Electra leaves New Guinea on July 2, 1937. Early on July 3 the cutter receives Earhart's clear radio transmission requesting



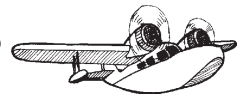
navigational assistance; she claims their plane reached the coordinates for Howland Island and spots the Coast Guard vessel but could not see the island. Despite frequent replies from the Coast Guard, Earhart seems to have trouble receiving them. Since the cutter can't spot her plane, they presume she flew off course. Coast Guard officers speculate that Earhart has technical problems with her plane's direction-finding loop antenna. Further attempts to give them radio navigation guidance over the next two hours fails. The Coast Guard loses contact with Earhart and, after they estimate the Lockheed Electra ran out of fuel, presumes she ditched in the Pacific.

For the next five days the U.S. Navy deploys a small fleet—an aircraft carrier, battleship, four destroyers, and several support craft, all led by the Coast Guard cutter—to search 150,000 square miles of the Pacific Ocean for Earhart or any signs of her crash. A navy Consolidated PBV seaplane launched from Pearl Harbor the afternoon of Earhart's disappearance reports stormy weather north of the Howland Island area which might have contributed to the Lockheed's navigational or radio difficulties. Despite the largest maritime search and rescue operation ever undertaken, the U.S. Navy finds no signs of Earhart, Noonan, or their downed aircraft.

During the next week some radio operators around the Pacific Ocean claim they pick up weak and garbled distress signals from Earhart's downed aircraft, indicating that they had somehow set down on land since the plane's radio battery required recharging from one operational engine.

**"We are circling you. We cannot hear you. Gas running low. We are flying at an altitude of 1,000 feet."**

*—Amelia Earhart,  
Aviatrix*



## SHORT SINGAPORE

Like the Supermarine Walrus, the Singapore uses a high-mounted biplane wing, but instead of one engine it mounts four in two pairs front-to-back; one set of propellers pulls the plane, the aft set pushes it. The seaplane enters service with the RAF in 1934. By 1937 five squadrons serve throughout the Middle and Far East, undertaking maritime search and rescue, patrol, and transport duties. British forces begin phasing the Singapore out of active service during the late 1930s in favor of the Short Sunderland (see the *Empire*-class Flying Boat above). England sells many Singapores second-hand to New Zealand (they later serve admirably in the early years of the Pacific War).

### Short Singapore

Top Speed: 135 mph

Range: 1,230 miles

Crew: 8

Ordnance: .30 caliber machine guns (1 bow, 1 aft dorsal, 1 tail)

## AMELIA EARHART'S FATE

Earhart's disappearance remains an unsolved mystery. Several theories about her true fate could find their way into a *Heroes of Rura-Tonga* campaign. Any of these cases could form the basis for an adventure or campaign to determine Amelia Earhart's true fate and its significance in the greater scope of world events:

**Crashed:** Most believe that Earhart and Noonan perish when they crashed into the Pacific Ocean. In this case, the United States government would possibly pay a reward for any conclusive evidence of their fate, including aircraft parts, gear washed up on shore, or personal items from the famous pilot and her navigator.

**Marooned:** Earhart might have managed to crash near or even land on one of the innumerable small islands capable of habitation. They would have to eke out a living on what resources they could find, or might build a raft from palm trees and aircraft wreckage to try sailing back to civilization.

**Imprisoned:** Faulty navigation could have drawn Earhart off course into the Japanese Mandate; with fuel running low, she could have crash-landed near an Imperial Japanese Naval base, possibly at Saipan. Japanese forces would assume she was conducting espionage flights to chart, observe, and photograph new naval bases that could threaten America. The Japanese might imprison her and Noonan, interrogate them about American naval and aviation operations in the area, and try to turn them as Japanese agents to report on military developments affecting Japan.

**Underground:** Earhart and Noonan did not in fact fly their charted course, but carried out an elaborate ruse to land at a remote island, assume new identities, and continue their lives without the burdensome reputation that surrounds their public lives. They can't live in peace for long, however, as American forces seek Earhart to put her aviation expertise to work training

pilots for what many see as a coming war; Japanese forces would hunt her down as a suspected spy who might infiltrate their growing naval bases throughout the Japanese Mandate.

**Under Cover:** The supposed crash is an elaborate hoax to enable Earhart and Noonan to disappear from public life so they could work covertly for the Americans, putting their aviation expertise to work in preparing for a coming war with Japan. Now traveling under assumed names and identities, they wander the South Pacific gathering information on growing Japanese naval presence throughout the region.

**Abducted:** Some speculate that supernatural or otherworldly powers cause Earhart's disappearance. Perhaps she is abducted and interrogated by beings from another world who have established a survey base on a remote South Pacific island. Earhart's aircraft possibly flies through a region serving as an inter-dimensional portal much like the infamous Bermuda Triangle, trapping her in an alternate Earth or another plane of existence.

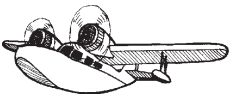
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**"Adventure is worthwhile in  
itself."**

*—Amelia Earhart, Aviatrice*

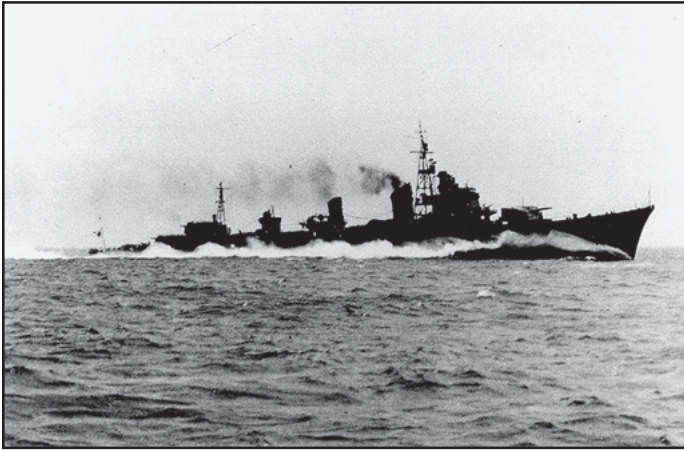
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## **THE IMPERIAL JAPANESE NAVY**

Of all the nations with colonial interests in the region, the Empire of Japan entertains the largest military ambitions in the South Pacific. In this modern age Japan needs oil and steel to fuel its industry and military. As a small island nation, Japan relies on resources imported from other countries and reaped from colonial holdings. Coming late into the game of international imperialism, it has to settle for what territories it can acquire: Manchuria, Korea, Formosa (Taiwan), and part of Sakhalin Island (also claimed by the Soviet Union). In recent years Japan has revealed its ambitions to acquire other territories in Asia, particularly Chinese provinces. The Imperial Japanese Navy remains a major instrument of this expansionist policy, supporting military action in coastal regions and carrying out its own operations at sea.



Japan has long strained against limitations set on its military by foreign powers. After the Great War Japan seeks equal standing and status with prominent western nations, but the allies, using diplomatic means, curtail Japanese efforts to gain fair consideration in world affairs. In 1922 and 1933 treaties with America and England limit Japanese military tonnage and weaponry to less than one-third the combined naval power of the two other nations.

Since international treaties limit the numbers of new naval vessels it could launch, the Japanese designed ships geared toward greater range, speed, and firepower. To circumvent limitations imposed by foreign powers, Japan pioneers new advances in naval military technology. While other navies convert old cruisers and battleships into aircraft carriers, the Japanese construct flat-decked vessels specifically designed to support naval aviation operations. Japanese engineers invent the world's first oxygen-fueled torpedo, technology later copied by many other naval powers. Japanese warships mount increasingly larger caliber guns; by 1938 battleships sport 14-inch guns, though later craft would have 16- and even 18-inch guns.

After the London Naval Treaty in 1933, the Japanese find and exploit several loopholes in the agreement that allow them to increase their naval power. Many vessels built under earlier restrictions go into the Yokohama shipyards for substantial refits to armor and weapons.

Despite their distrust of outsiders and resentment toward foreign naval treaties, the Japanese welcome assistance from other countries when offered. They study and in many cases copy aircraft designs from their German allies as the Nazis begin secretly rearming their country in the mid-1930s. British aircraft experts travel to Japan to guide developments to improve Japanese planes and instruct a corps of pilots.

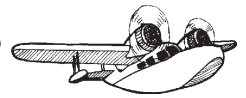
As the 1930s progress, Japan's belligerence becomes increasingly more apparent. Beginning in 1931 and several times throughout the decade, Japanese troops occupying Manchuria manufacture "incidents" of Chinese aggression that necessitate military action; in most cases, Japanese invasion and annexation of Chinese territory. Constant purges and fighting between provincial warlords, the nationalist government, and communist elements during the 1920s leaves China a fragmented and vulnerable target. Japan's invasion of China signals a new era of disregard for western political views and a purely imperialist strategy to gain more land, resources, and manpower to fuel the Japanese war machine. It ignores protests from the League of Nations, demonstrating the ineffectiveness of that organization to mediate international conflicts and maintain world peace. In 1937 Japan mounts a full invasion of China, culminating in the

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**"In the first six to twelve months of a war with the United States and Great Britain I will run wild and win victory upon victory."**

**—Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto,  
Imperial Japanese Navy**

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conquest of remaining portions of Manchuria, the port of Shanghai, the nationalist capital of Nanking, and most Chinese provinces north of the Yellow River.

During the 1930s the Imperial Japanese Navy also begins preparing for war with its primary adversary in the Pacific, the United States. Although other western powers deploy military vessels throughout the region to protect their colonial interests, the Americans maintain a significant naval presence at its bases in the Aleutian Islands, the Philippines, and the Hawaiian Islands, all potential starting points for an assault against Japan. Tensions between the two countries increases after 1937, when Japanese forces, in their drive on the Chinese capital of Nanking, attack and sink the American navy gunship *Panay* in the Yangtze River, which was evacuating foreigners and civilians

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**"Japan is the one enemy, and the only enemy, of the peaceful peoples whose shores overlook the Pacific Ocean."**

—Joseph Grew, U.S. Ambassador  
to Japan

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## **WORLD EVENTS TIMELINE**

Events around the world, from the end of the Great War to the current year (1938), affect the military and political situation throughout the South Pacific. Most inhabitants of the region and of Rura-Tonga have a general awareness of these historical points.

**July 18, 1919:** The victorious allies of the Great War sign the Versailles Treaty; Germany's Pacific colonial possessions are ceded to other nations; Japan gains the Mariana, Marshall, and Caroline Islands.

**Nov. 12, 1921:** The United States, Great Britain, France, and Japan sign the Four Power Act, a treaty obliging these nations to peacefully mediate their disputes arising in the Pacific.

**Feb. 6, 1922:** The Five Power Naval Limitation Treaty (signed by the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan) agrees to scrap large numbers of warships and limit future naval construction. The subsequent Nine Power Pact (with Belgium, the Netherlands, China, and Portugal) requires signatories to respect China's rightful territory.

**June 20, 1927:** British, American, and Japanese representatives meeting in Geneva discuss an acceptable ratio of cruisers, destroyers, and submarines in their fleets, but fail to reach a consensus.

**Sept. 19, 1931:** Acting to counter a supposed threat against railway bridges between its military installations in Manchuria, Japanese forces engage Chinese troops and begin invading China.

**Feb. 18, 1932:** After several months of military action in China, the Japanese control all of Manchuria, rename it Manchukuo, and install the former Chinese Emperor Pu-Yi as a figurehead leader.

**Jan. 1, 1933:** Hitler and his Nazi party come into power in Germany.

**Jan. 21, 1933:** Meeting at the London Naval Conference over four months, representatives from Britain, America, France, Italy, and Japan agree to limits on the numbers of aircraft

carriers and submarines in their navies, though loopholes effectively negate this effort at disarmament.

**Dec. 19, 1934:** After demanding equal numbers of warships as Britain and America, Japan rejects the various treaties limiting the size of its naval forces.

**Nov. 25, 1936:** Japan signs the Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany to fight the spread of communism, specifically the threat posted by the Soviet Union.

**July 3, 1937:** Aviatrix Amelia Earhart and her navigator Fred Noonan disappear between New Guinea and Howland Island (near the Gilbert Island group) while flying a twin-engine plane on a round-the-world flight.

**July 7, 1937:** Japanese forces, responding to a supposed threat, engage Chinese army units near Peking in what soon turns into a all-out invasion of China.

**Dec. 12, 1937:** Shortly before the Japanese capture of Nanking—capital of the nationalist Chinese government—Japanese bombers sink the *USS Panay*, an American gunboat evacuating western civilians from Nanking on the Yangtze River, sparking an international incident highlighting Japanese aggression.

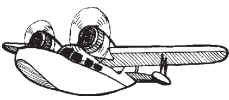
**Dec. 13, 1937:** Japanese forces capture the Nationalist Chinese capital of Nanking and initiate several weeks of wholesale looting and slaughter.

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**"A war with Japan!  
... I do not  
believe there is  
the slightest  
chance of it in  
our lifetime."**

—Winston Churchill,  
1925

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from the besieged city. Japan fear war with the United States and begin preparing to engage this powerful opponent.

The Imperial Japanese Navy follows two primary strategies: develop massive battleships with greater range, powerful weaponry, and heavy armor to stand up against American naval power; and design aircraft carriers to launch long-range strikes using the latest aviation technology that was already providing an edge in other wars around the globe. To expand its reach, Japan establishes secret naval bases—in violation of the original League of Nations mandate giving Japan former German colonies in the South Pacific—supporting both ships and aircraft on islands in the Japanese Mandate, including Truk, Eniwetok, Kwajalien, and Saipan (names later synonymous for some of the fiercest fighting during World War II).

By 1938 most foreign powers view Japan as an unpredictable, belligerent state with an eye toward expanding its empire in the Pacific through military might. The Imperial Japanese Navy keeps a tight watch on its territories throughout the Japanese Mandate, warning foreigners away from the region to protect their secret military build-up. The stats below reflect the aircraft, warships, and personnel serving with the Imperial Japanese Navy in the South Pacific near Rura-Tonga.

## **AIRCRAFT**

### **AICHI D3A**

The Imperial Japanese Navy's newest dive-bomber enters service in mid-1938. It owes some of its design elements to Germany's Junkers 87 "Stuka" dive bomber, particularly the dive brakes on the undersides of the wings and non-retractable landing gear with aerodynamic fairings over the wheels to reduce drag; Japanese engineers deemed the machinery for retractable landing gear would add too much weight to the airframe. The Aichi D3A serves as the principle dive- and torpedo-bomber aboard Japanese aircraft carriers, but also flies sorties from land bases against Chinese targets during the Sino-Japanese war. (The carrier-based force that bombs Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, includes Aichi D3As.)

#### **Aichi D3A**

Top Speed: 240 mph

Range: 700 miles

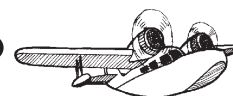
Crew: 2

Ordnance: .30 caliber machine guns (2 fixed forward, 1 rear), 500 lb. bomb (1), 130 lb. bombs (4)

### **KAWANISHI H6K**

The largest of the Imperial Japanese Navy's flying boats, the Kawanishi H6K serves as the primary floatplane deployed for long-range maritime patrols. A broad single wing supported above the fuselage sports four engines; a twin tail offers added stability. Japanese engineers based much of the design on British floatplane developments viewed during a visit to the factory of Short Brothers, the leading designers of flying boats at the time. The H6K possesses durability and endurance allowing it to make patrols as long as 24 hours. The Japanese first deploy it in 1938 against China during the Sino-Japanese war, but it finds broad usage throughout the Pacific islands of the Japanese Mandate.





## AIRCRAFT SPECS

Name	Nationality	Top Speed	Range	Crew/ Passengers	Ordnance
Aichi D3A	Japanese	240 mph	700 miles	2/—	.30 caliber machine guns (2 fixed forward, 1 rear), 500 lb. bomb (1), 130 lb. bombs (4)
Consolidated PBY	American	170 mph	2,000 miles	5/4	.30 caliber machine guns (2 bow, 1 tail), .50 caliber machine guns (2 waist)
Curtis SOC	American	165 mph	675 miles	2/—	.30 caliber machine guns (1 fixed forward, 1 rear)
<i>Empire</i> -class Flying Boat	British	200 mph	2,500 miles	5/17	—
Kawanishi H6K	Japanese	240 mph	4,200 miles	9/—	.80 caliber cannon (1 rear), .30 caliber machine guns (1 bow, 1 aft dorsal, 2 waist)
Martin 130 Clipper	American	180 mph	3,200 miles	5/18	—
Mitsubishi A5M2b	Japanese	270 mph	870 miles	1/—	.30 caliber machine guns (2 fixed forward)
Nakajima B5N	Japanese	235 mph	1,240 miles	3/—	.30 caliber machine gun (1 rear), 1,700 lb. torpedo or 1,700 lbs. in bombs
Nakajima E8N	Japanese	185 mph	560 miles	2/—	.30 caliber machine guns (1 fixed forward, 1 aft dorsal)
Supermarine Walrus	British	135 mph	600 miles	4/—	.30 caliber machine guns (1 bow, 1 aft dorsal)
Short Singapore	British	135 mph	1,230 miles	8/—	.30 caliber machine guns (1 bow, 1 aft dorsal, 1 tail)

### Kawanishi H6K

Top Speed: 240 mph

Range: 4,200 miles

Crew: 9

Ordnance: .80 caliber cannon (1 rear), .30 caliber machine guns (1 bow, 1 aft dorsal, 2 waist)

### MITSUBISHI A5M2B

Variations of the Mitsubishi A5M form the backbone of the Japanese Navy's carrier-based fighter squadrons from 1937 to 1942. A nine-cylinder radial engine powers the A5M2b fighter, but it still retains the open cockpit and non-retractable landing gear of earlier designs. During patrols the plane relies on two 7.7 mm Type 89 machine guns nestled into the forward upper fuselage decking for armament. When fitted for bombing runs, it can carry two 60-pound bombs slung beneath the wings. (The A5M's cousin the Mitsubishi Reisen "Zeke," commonly known as the "Zero" throughout World War II, does not enter service with the Japanese navy until 1940.)

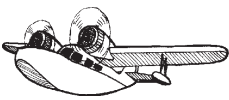
### Mitsubishi A5M2b

Top Speed: 270 mph

Range: 870 miles

Crew: 1

Ordnance: .30 caliber machine guns (2 fixed forward)



**AMERICAN NICKNAMES**

During World War II American forces give each Japanese airplane a nickname more easily remembered than the manufacturer and model number. Although these designations don't yet exist and aren't in use during the 1930s (and therefore the period covered in *Heroes of Rura-Tonga*), modern readers might better identify nicknames with aircraft.

Japanese Designation	American Nickname
Aichi D3A	"Val"
Kawanishi H6K	"Mavis"
Mitsubishi A5M2b	"Claude"
Nakajima B5N	"Kate"
Nakajima E8N	"Dave"

**NAKAJIMA B5N**

Introduced in 1937 as a light, carrier-based bomber, the B5N first deploys to land bases to sortie against Chinese targets in the Sino-Japanese war. Aircraft assigned to carriers receive modifications to operate as torpedo bombers. The enclosed cockpit houses three crewmen: the pilot, a navigator who also functions as observer and bombardier, and a radio operator who also fires the rear machine gun. (The carrier-based force that bombs Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, includes a large complement of Nakajima B5Ns.)

**Nakajima B5N**

Top Speed: 235 mph

Range: 1,240 miles

Crew: 3

Ordnance: .30 caliber machine gun (1 rear), 1,700 lb. torpedo or 1,700 lbs. in bombs

**NAKAJIMA E8N**

In an age where radar technology is still in its infancy, warships at sea rely on patrol floatplanes like the Nakajima E8N to provide long-range reconnaissance. First deployed in 1934, the E8N recon seaplane becomes the standard spotter plane aboard Imperial Japanese Naval vessels. With the nine-cylinder, air-cooled radial engine revved up to full power, the biplane launches from a short steam catapult in the aft sections of battleships and cruisers for recon and patrol duties at sea. Although covered by a reinforced fabric skin, the all-metal frame provides strength to withstand both steam catapult launches and rough ocean landings. An open cockpit accommodates one pilot and a spotter/gunner. A main float below the fuselage and two support floats beneath the lower wing tips enables water landings. Deck cranes recover returning floatplanes and raise them back onto their launch catapults for immediate deployment if necessary.

**Nakajima E8N**

Top Speed: 185 mph

Range: 560 miles

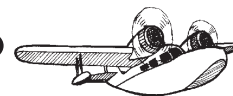
Crew: 2

Ordnance: .30 caliber machine gun (1 fixed forward, 1 aft dorsal)

**WARSHIPS**

**BATTLESHIPS**

The Japanese design and commission much of their fleet in the 1920s under restrictions of various treaties with other naval powers operating to protect their interests around the Pacific Ocean. These pacts limit tonnage, weaponry, and armor aboard battleships and cruisers in addition to scaling down the number of vessels Japan could deploy. During the 1930s, as Japan chafes against these restrictions—effectively keeping its naval forces significantly less powerful than other nations' navies sailing the Pacific—many ships undergo substantial refits at Japanese naval yards to ignore previously unfair limitations. Several former "battle cruisers" receive



additional armament and armor to bring them in line with contemporary battleship profiles. These refits result in more formidable battleships to patrol Japanese possessions, support its war against China, and prey on those straying into their sphere of influence. Most battleships operate as part of a fleet, with cruisers and destroyers providing support and aircraft carriers providing the ability for long-range reconnaissance and strike capability. Operational Japanese battleships in 1938 include *Huso* and *Yamashiro* (both refitting in 1933), *Haruna*, *Hiei*, *Kirishima*, *Mutu*, and *Nagato* (all refitting in 1936), and *Hyuga*, *Ise*, and *Kongo* (all refitting in 1937).



## Battleship

Top Speed: 26 mph

Range: 9,200 miles

Crew: 1,300

Ordnance: 14-inch guns (12 in 6 turrets), 5.5-inch guns (18), 5-inch anti-aircraft guns (8), anti-aircraft machine guns (8), torpedo launchers (4)

Armor: 12 inches

## AIRCRAFT CARRIERS

As aircraft begin playing an expanded, significant role in both military and civilian spheres, navies design vessels specifically intended to support aviation operations at sea. Like most early aircraft carriers, those the Japanese construct mount runway decks above conventional warship hulls. Funnels, command superstructures, and gun emplacements emerge from the sides of lower decks (the “island” structure rising above the flight deck and containing the bridge and flight operations area becomes a later development). Lower decks also house hangars and machine shops for storing and maintaining up to 60 planes. Japanese aircraft carriers in service by 1938 include *Kaga* (launching in 1921), *Hosyo* (1922), *Ryuzo* (1933), *Ryujo* (refitting in 1936), and *Akagi* (refitting in 1938). (Most Imperial Japanese Navy aircraft carriers participate in the early December 1941 assaults on Pearl Harbor, the Philippines, and other military objectives throughout the Pacific.)



## Aircraft Carrier

Top Speed: 37 mph

Range: 9,200 miles

Crew: 2,000

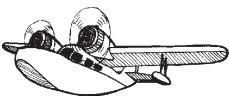
Ordnance: 8-inch guns (10), 4.7-inch guns (4), 4.7-inch anti-aircraft guns (12)

Armor: 6 inches

## SHIP STAT VARIATIONS

The stats for naval vessels represent characteristics of the average Japanese ships of their class. Individual craft vary, particularly in configuration of weapons and armor. These stats typically reflect armor around the vessel’s “belt” or waterline; increase armor by one or two inches for turrets and decrease by several inches for the bow, stern, deck, and superstructure.





## CRUISERS

Although packing less firepower and armor than battleships, cruisers serve as much faster and more maneuverable escorts to both battleships and aircraft carriers. The Imperial Japanese Navy constructs both heavy and light cruisers (sometimes called “first-class” and “second-class” cruisers) during the 1920s and 1930s. In the mid-1930s some earlier craft receive extensive refits to negate design limitations enforced by international treaties to curb Japanese naval power (some of the light cruiser fleet heads to port for modernization refits in 1939 and 1940). Besides escorting other ships in fleets and convoys, lone cruisers perform patrol duties to guard against incursions into Japanese territory.

Heavy cruisers in service by 1938 include *Hurutaka* and *Kako* (1926), *Aoba* and *Kinugasa* (1927), *Atago*, *Maya*, *Takao*, and *Tyokai* (1932), *Mogami* (1935), *Ashigara*, *Haguro*, *Myoko*, and *Nati* (all refitting in 1936), and *Kumano* and *Suzuya* (1937). Light cruisers operating by 1938 include *Tatuta* and *Tenryu* (1919), *Kuma* (1920), *Kiso*, *Kitakami*, *Oi*, and *Tama* (1921), *Kinu*, *Nagara*, and *Natori* (1922), *Isuzu*, *Yubari*, and *Yura* (1923), *Sendai* (1924), and *Abukuma*, *Naka*, and *Zintu* (1925).

### Heavy Cruiser

Top Speed: 38 mph

Range: 14,000 miles

Crew: 700

Ordnance: 8-inch guns (10 in 5 turrets), 4.7-inch anti-aircraft guns (4), anti-aircraft machine guns (16), torpedo launchers (8)

Armor: 3 inches

### Light Cruiser

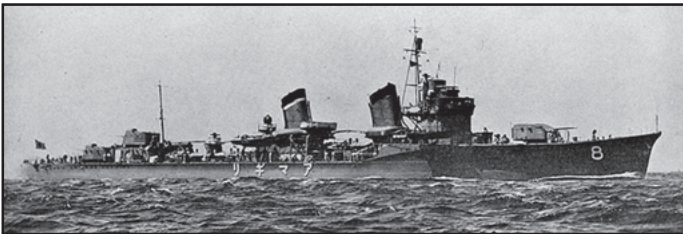
Top Speed: 38 mph

Range: 8,500 miles

Crew: 450

Ordnance: 5.5-inch guns (7), 3-inch anti-aircraft guns (2), anti-aircraft machine guns (2), torpedo launchers (8)

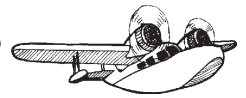
Armor: 2 inches



## DESTROYERS

Smaller vessels with shorter construction times, Japan's latest destroyers represent the most modern and numerous craft in the Imperial Japanese Navy. With design in the early 1930s and completion between mid-1933 and early 1939, the *Hatuharu*-class destroyers ignore the limitations foreign treaties placed on the number, armament, and engineering of ships. Destroyers have the speed, maneuverability, and ordnance to patrol on their own and

escort larger military and cargo vessels. *Hatuharu*-class destroyers in service by 1938 include *Hatuharu* and *Nenohi* (launched in 1933), *Hatushimo* and *Wakaba* (1934), *Ariake* and *Yugure* (1935), *Shigure* and *Shiratayu* (1936), *Arasio*, *Asasio*, *Harusame*, *Kawakaze*, *Mitsio*, *Murasame*, *Osio*, *Samidare*, *Suzukaze*, *Umikaze*, *Yamakaze*, and *Yudati* (1937), and *Arare*, *Asagumo*, *Kasumi*, *Minogumo*, *Natugumo*, and *Yamagumo* (1938).



## Destroyer

Top Speed: 39 mph

Range: 4,000 miles

Crew: 180

Ordnance: 5-inch guns (5), anti-aircraft machine guns (2), torpedo launchers (6)

### **ASTOR'S INTELLIGENCE CRUISE**

Vincent Astor, a close friend of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, carries out his own intelligence-gathering mission against the Japanese in 1938.

Astor was a millionaire businessman—the son of John Jacob Astor, he inherited a \$200 million fortune upon his father's death aboard the *Titanic*—a successful publisher and real estate entrepreneur, and a friend of President Roosevelt since the early 1920s. The two shared a naval background, Roosevelt having been Assistant Secretary of the Navy and Astor having served with the navy as an ensign during the Great War.

In 1927 Astor and Kermit Roosevelt (grandson of President Theodore Roosevelt) help establish an exclusive social club for upper class friends who possess the means to travel freely around the world, the acuity to make keen observations, and a romanticized notion of intelligence work. The group rents a nondescript apartment at 34 East 62nd Street in Manhattan to serve as a mail drop and meeting place; the location and the club become known as “The Room.” The association serves as an amateur intelligence-gathering society consisting of a handful of rich dilettante travelers who return to America with interesting political and military observations from abroad. Members share their information over dinner, formulating conclusions about evidence gathered from traveling, conducting business, and meeting with influential foreign leaders. Occasionally they invite distinguished speakers to expound on relevant topics.

Astor himself travels the world in his yacht, the *Nourmahal*. On several occasions he entertains President Roosevelt and no doubt shares with him intelligence gathered by members of The Room. By 1937, with the

*Panay* incident having sparked an American outrage against Japan, Roosevelt becomes seriously alarmed by Japanese military intentions in the Pacific. The United States government, still in the throes of the Great Depression, has no budget to establish and operate an official intelligence service beyond those already incorporated into the army and navy.

In early 1938, with direction from Roosevelt, Astor proposes to cruise to islands in the central Pacific, specifically those within the Japanese Mandate, to observe and assess information about reported Japanese military build-up at airfields, ports, fuel depots, and other facilities. The *Nourmahal* travels under cover of an “oceanic expedition.” Outfitted with

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**“I may be able to do a job in a way that the regular service never could.”**

—Vincent Astor

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special naval transmitters and receivers plus direction-finding equipment, Astor keeps in touch with American naval vessels in case of emergency and while tracking down Japanese radio installations. The American president loves to indulge his penchant for intrigue and espionage, and hopes to vicariously spy on the Japanese through Astor.

Unfortunately the Japanese deny Astor permission to sail in the Marshall Islands. The *Nourmahal* instead cruises through the British-controlled Gilbert Islands, from whence Astor gathers information gleaned from Japanese long-range radio signals and discussions with British intelligence officers. Astor reports that the Japanese are probably using Eniwetok atoll as

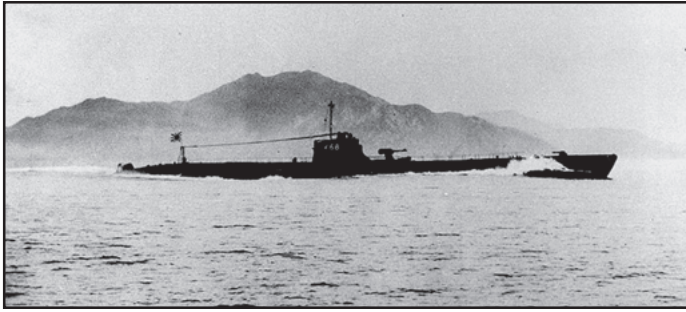
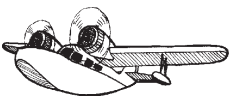
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**“The information gathering side of our cruise has proved interesting, instructive, and, I hope, will be helpful.”**

—Vincent Astor

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their main naval base, with Bikini atoll as a secondary facility. Though this intelligence seems scant considering the effort Astor makes to get it, the operation demonstrates how monitoring radio, air, and naval traffic from areas near the Japanese Mandate can reveal tidbits of useful intelligence.



## ***SUBMARINES***

Inspired by the effectiveness of German submarine forces during the Great War, the Japanese Imperial Navy develops its own submarine fleet in the 1920s. Much of their design and technology draws from several German submarines Japan receives as part of the reparations for joining the allies during the war. After testing several experimental craft of their own, the Japanese begin construction on new submarines comparable to those of other navies during the late 1920s and early 1930s. Nobody really knows how extensively Japanese submarines deploy in the late

1930s; they quietly patrol Japanese-controlled waters, infiltrate territories governed by other nationalities, and engage in clandestine missions to further Japan's military aims in the region. (The numerous Japanese submarine variants—including cargo subs, those that could carry and launch small planes, and midget submarines—do not enter service until the onset of World War II.)

### **Submarine**

Top Speed: 22 mph surfaced, 10 mph submerged

Range: 6,000 miles

Crew: 60

Ordnance: 5-inch guns (2), anti-aircraft machine guns (2), torpedo tubes (4 fore, 2 aft)

## ***MILITARY PERSONNEL***

### ***JAPANESE SOLDIER***

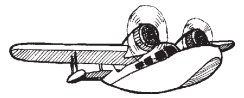
Like the troops serving other nations, Japanese soldiers possess an unquestioning loyalty to their country ingrained in them through rigorous training, constant propaganda, and unrelenting discipline. Japan's emphasis on the warrior code and honor in combat reinforce this dedication, making them some of the most fanatical soldiers in the world. Cultural differences and a general disdain for those they defeat make them particularly brutal conquerors, as evidenced by their vicious atrocities committed after capturing the nationalist Chinese capital of Nanking.

### ***JAPANESE OFFICER***

Officers in both the Japanese army and navy come from a proud warrior tradition developed over centuries of samurai culture. Many attended universities in America and England, gaining a solid education and a greater insight into western attitudes, culture, and politics. Though some might disagree with the current military government running their country, most serve







dutifully and unquestioningly by following orders from their superiors, inspiring the soldiers who serve them, and developing strategies to gain victory.

**JAPANESE PILOT**

The pilot officers in the Imperial Japanese Navy combine the stern sense of honor toward the warrior code and a more enlightened mindset from their higher education and long technical training. Drawn from Japan’s university students, they undergo extensive courses in navigation, aviation, and military maneuvers. Japan’s military leaders realize the great advantage air combat can play in a coming war with America, and therefore treat pilots with a greater degree of respect and admiration. Like other officers, many pilots received schooling in western countries like America and Britain; others recently trained with their counterparts in Germany to broaden their flight expertise.



**Japanese Soldier  
(Henchman)**

Competent Skills:

dodge \_\_\_\_\_

endurance \_\_\_\_\_

fight \_\_\_\_\_

notice \_\_\_\_\_

survival \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skill:

shoot \_\_\_\_\_

Gear:

Arisaka 38 rifle \_\_\_\_\_

bayonet \_\_\_\_\_

hand grenades \_\_\_\_\_

canteen \_\_\_\_\_

knapsack \_\_\_\_\_

**Japanese Officer  
(Boss)**

Competent Skills:

bureaucracy \_\_\_\_\_

fight \_\_\_\_\_

navigate \_\_\_\_\_

notice \_\_\_\_\_

wireless \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

tactics \_\_\_\_\_

intellect \_\_\_\_\_

shoot \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Skill:

command \_\_\_\_\_

Gear:

Nambu pistol \_\_\_\_\_

katana \_\_\_\_\_

**Japanese Pilot  
(Boss)**

Competent Skills:

climb \_\_\_\_\_

dodge \_\_\_\_\_

fight \_\_\_\_\_

intimidate \_\_\_\_\_

notice \_\_\_\_\_

survival \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

gunnery \_\_\_\_\_

navigate \_\_\_\_\_

shoot \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Skill:

pilot \_\_\_\_\_

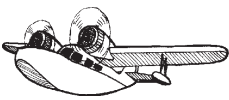
Gear:

Nambu pistol \_\_\_\_\_

katana \_\_\_\_\_

flight suit \_\_\_\_\_

survival pack \_\_\_\_\_



## HEROES OF RURA-TONGA

Use these six fully developed player characters for South Pacific escapades based in Rura-Tonga. They represent “regulars” who frequently visit or operate out of the island settlement. You can also use them for other pulp scenarios set in the 1930s and 1940s. Feel free to create your own, though adventures in the South Pacific rely on at least one character having aerial transportation. If players choose to create their own characters, use these personalities as gamemaster characters to add flair to the setting and aid the heroes when necessary.

**“In an age of bullies, we cannot afford to be sissies.”**

—William Donovan, 1939



### Captain Colin Sharp (Boss)

Competent Skills:

- charm \_\_\_\_\_
- etiquette \_\_\_\_\_
- fight \_\_\_\_\_
- stealth \_\_\_\_\_
- survival \_\_\_\_\_
- swim \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

- navigate \_\_\_\_\_
- notice \_\_\_\_\_
- shoot \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Skill:

- pilot \_\_\_\_\_

Gear:

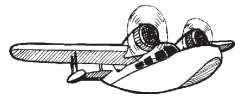
- Webley revolver \_\_\_\_\_
- Grumman G-21 floatplane \_\_\_\_\_
- flight clipboard \_\_\_\_\_
- E6-B flight computer \_\_\_\_\_
- leather flight jacket \_\_\_\_\_
- cap \_\_\_\_\_

### CAPTAIN COLIN SHARP

From his base on the tiny island of Rura-Tonga, Colin Sharp flies passengers and cargo in his Grumman G-21 floatplane between destinations in the Solomon Islands, New Guinea, and New Zealand. He frequently takes passengers from Rura-Tonga to New Caledonia to catch the Pan Am Clipper that stops there once a week. He always seems desperate for money, but he still conducts business in a gentlemanly manner with a fine, English-bred accent. Although he keeps his mind firmly grounded in reality, he often goes to great lengths for his friends, including his mechanic “Sparky” and Rura-Tonga’s foremost resident, Sally McKinsey.



Sharp inherited a fortune from his wealthy family, but chose to follow his dream of flying charters in the South Pacific, bought a Grumman G-21 which he christened the *Flying Fish*, and flew it halfway around the world. His money ran out in Rura-Tonga, and he’s worked out of the run-down shack by the dock ever since. He doesn’t seem to mind. Sharp’s friendly demeanor made him many friends on the island. As the owner of the only reliable means of transportation, he’s become an integral part of life on Rura-Tonga.



**JAMES "SPARKY" JONES**

"Sparky" serves as the only mechanic on Rura-Tonga and buddy to Captain Sharp. Unlike the dapper tourists visiting the island or the residents who look the part of South Seas society, "Sparky" just shuffles along in his grimy coveralls, scratching his stubbled chin, clanking the tools in his pockets, and holding a greasy rag in one hand. He keeps to himself, though, and prefers to spend his time working on machinery, talking to his dog, Jasper, or sleeping in the bunk behind the offices in Sharp's dockside shack. Sally McKinsey keeps teasing the shy fellow about going on a date. Get him into a conversation about the technical aspects of airplane engines or electrical generators and "Sparky" gets really going.



In reality law enforcement authorities in San Francisco want James "Sparky" Jones in connection with a series of brutal beatings. Although he never speaks of his past, and would claim he was framed if ever confronted with the crimes, it's easy to believe the man knows his way around the fighting end of that huge wrench he carries.

**James "Sparky" Jones (Boss)**

Competent Skills:

- climb \_\_\_\_\_
- notice \_\_\_\_\_
- pilot \_\_\_\_\_
- sneak \_\_\_\_\_
- survival \_\_\_\_\_
- swim \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

- dodge \_\_\_\_\_
- fight \_\_\_\_\_
- gamble \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Skill:

- repair \_\_\_\_\_

Gear:

- big wrench \_\_\_\_\_
- tool box \_\_\_\_\_
- goggles \_\_\_\_\_
- greasy coveralls \_\_\_\_\_

**JASPER**

Jasper is a dog who attached himself to "Sparky" sometime on the long journey from San Francisco to Rura-Tonga. Although the mechanic can understand what his canine companion "says," he has no clue exactly where Jasper came from or why he befriended the down-and-out fugitive.



Jasper seems totally devoted to "Sparky" and his friends. Though some wonder why, Jasper knows he's grateful to receive every scrap, pat, and belly rub. He originally belonged to an official at a foreign consulate in San Francisco, but thought running away on a ship would offer a bit more adventure and excitement. Now he has no clue where he's going, but enjoys the tropical climate and the friendly company enough to stick around. He particularly enjoys flying with "Sparky" and Captain Sharp, occupying a space between them in the cockpit of Sharp's Grumman G-21.

**Jasper (Boss)**

Competent Skills:

- dodge \_\_\_\_\_
- endurance \_\_\_\_\_
- intimidate \_\_\_\_\_
- jump \_\_\_\_\_
- survival \_\_\_\_\_
- swim \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

- fight \_\_\_\_\_
- run \_\_\_\_\_
- track \_\_\_\_\_

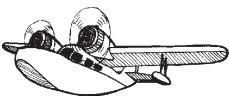
Signature Skill:

- notice \_\_\_\_\_

Natural Defenses:

- bite \_\_\_\_\_





**Janice Porter**  
**(Boss)**

Competent Skills:

- bluff \_\_\_\_\_
- charm \_\_\_\_\_
- first aid \_\_\_\_\_
- shoot \_\_\_\_\_
- sneak \_\_\_\_\_
- street smarts \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

- intellect \_\_\_\_\_
- notice \_\_\_\_\_
- persuade \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Skill:

- investigate \_\_\_\_\_

Gear:

- .22 Derringer \_\_\_\_\_
- pad and pencil \_\_\_\_\_

**JANICE PORTER**

Janice Porter might seem like the clueless, damsel-in-distress type, but she submits to playing all sorts of stereotypes to get what she wants. Playing the “cute, willful little girl,” she convinced her grandfather, Socrates Porter of Porter Newspapers in Columbus, Ohio, that the newspaper and its syndicates should widen their coverage of world events with a reporter in the South Pacific. She wangled her way into the job, hopped on a Pacific Clipper from San Francisco, and found herself drawn to Rura-Tonga. Now every time the supply ship stops at the settlement, Janice sends off another parcel of pages destined for publication in America as feature stories about life in the South Seas.



Janice has a good nose for news and stops at nothing to satisfy her curiosity and cover every angle. She stoops to any depth to get her way, making promises she can't fulfill, feigning romantic interest in those who can help her, and generally playing people's weaknesses for all they're worth. Many times Janice seems both helpless and heartless, and few can refuse her without experiencing some inner turmoil.

**Dr. Arthur Higginbotham**  
**(Boss)**

Competent Skills:

- persuade \_\_\_\_\_
- pick locks \_\_\_\_\_
- sneak \_\_\_\_\_
- street smarts \_\_\_\_\_
- survival \_\_\_\_\_
- track \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

- investigate \_\_\_\_\_
- notice \_\_\_\_\_
- shoot \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Skill:

- bluff \_\_\_\_\_

Gear:

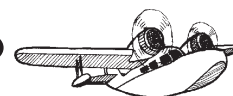
- Colt 1911 pistol \_\_\_\_\_
- knife \_\_\_\_\_
- binoculars \_\_\_\_\_

**DR. ARTHUR HIGGINBOTHAM**

An “independent scholar” of aboriginal cultures who studied at Yale and Oxford, Higginbotham traveled to Rura-Tonga to observe the indigenous Melanesian peoples of the Solomon Islands and surrounding regions. He often disappears into the jungle with his binoculars and notebook to record tribal details of the inhabitants of Levu and Suva, and constantly pesters (and eventually pays) Captain Sharp to take him to islands near and far to survey native customs. The harmless old man often seems doddering and clueless, though he's quick to start a casual conversation with anyone around him.



Though he seems like a kindly old scholar, Higginbotham is in fact an agent of the United States Office of Naval Intelligence working for superiors stationed at the massive American naval base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. His current assignment requires him to monitor Japanese naval operations near the Solomons and in the Japanese Mandate to the north. His cover as an anthropologist gives him mobility and cause to wander throughout the area, taking notes on expansionist activity he relays to Hawaii.



## **GRAVELEUX**

The surly Frenchman Graveleux inhabits the bar at the Matilda Hotel. Few disturb him lest they inadvertently start a brawl with the brawny soldier-of-fortune. Few know his origins, but he's often hired to provide extra protection for important guests or those venturing into the more untamed regions of the Solomon Islands. When nobody requires his services, he spends his days getting drunk at the Matilda Hotel bar. Despite living so far from his homeland, he never seeks out the company of Rura-Tonga's other French expatriate, Gaston Gauthier, and conveniently disappears on the rare occasion Gauthier happens to come to town.



Graveleux received his military training with the French Foreign Legion, serving in Algeria, Tunisia, Syria, and French Indochina. Despite years of training and loyal service, he let his temper get the better of him and killed three officers in a bar fight. He deserted the Legion and lost himself in the South Pacific before the authorities knew what happened. Graveleux still maintains his deadly military prowess, but time and anger continue to wear him down.

## **Graveleux (Boss)**

### Competent Skills:

climb \_\_\_\_\_  
intimidate \_\_\_\_\_  
notice \_\_\_\_\_  
strength \_\_\_\_\_  
survival \_\_\_\_\_  
track \_\_\_\_\_

### Expert Skills:

dodge \_\_\_\_\_  
fight \_\_\_\_\_  
sneak \_\_\_\_\_

### Signature Skill:

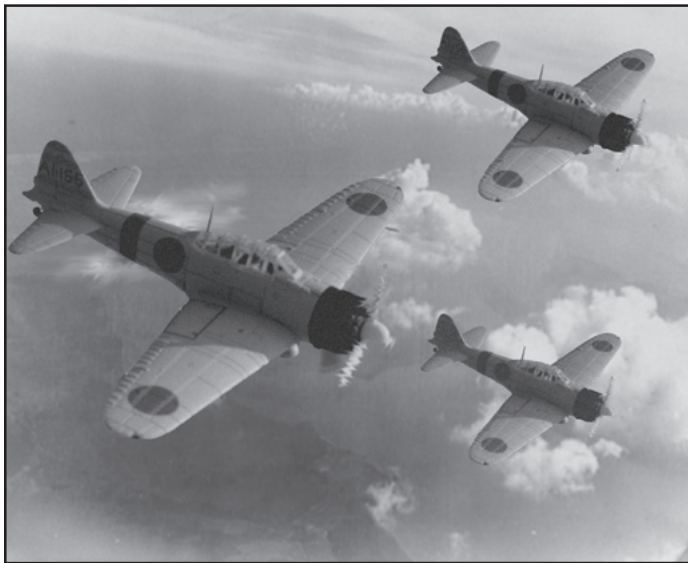
shoot \_\_\_\_\_

### Gear:

2 Colt pistols \_\_\_\_\_  
machete \_\_\_\_\_  
boot knife \_\_\_\_\_

# ISLAND OF THE DAMNED

February 22, 1938 — We were returning to Rura-Tonga from a brief jaunt to nearby Kavieng in New Ireland and flying just a little too close to the Japanese Mandate. Dr. Higginbotham suggested our altered flight plan to see if he might get an aerial view of some native mariners and their primitive boats on the open ocean. We didn't see any natives, but we spotted an ominously dark storm ahead. As I veered to avoid the approaching thunderheads, we suddenly had a frighteningly good look at four Japanese fighter planes intent on forcing us down....



The heroes suddenly encounter four Mitsubishi A5M2b fighters while flying a little too close to the Japanese Mandate. In their attempt to evade capture, they weather the approaching storm and land at a mysterious island from which they must escape before falling prey to its vengefully undead inhabitants.

## EPISODE ONE: AERIAL AMBUSH

The action begins *in media res* as the crew and passengers of the Grumman seaplane try to shake the Japanese fighters and find a safe place to land. The captain must make opposed *pilot* rolls against the Japanese flyers (taking into consideration their fighter crafts' increased maneuverability). If they succeed, the seaplane manages to resist the Japanese aviators' attempts to nudge them off course. If they fail, they veer northward to avoid collision. If the Japanese succeed by a significant margin, they inflict light damage on the plane (dented aileron, rudder, or elevator) that slightly reduces its maneuverability for one turn.

After a few minutes trying to gently push the floatplane off course, the Japanese squadron leader loses his patience. Initially it seems most of the Japanese planes veer off, but they're just following orders to retreat to a safe escort distance. The leader then returns to make a strafing run at the characters' aircraft! His intent isn't really to destroy the plane, just to incapacitate it enough to force it to land. Assuming the squadron leader hits—despite the heroes' best efforts to evade—he inflicts light damage that either reduces maneuverability or speed: a severed control cable, busted fuel line, blown spark plug, shattered flight instrument; anything that requires a small spare part to repair.

All this time that storm on the horizon draws ever closer, until—at a critical moment in the dogfight—it breaks over the seaplane and pursuing Japanese fighters. Obviously the Japanese squadron curtails its attack. Everyone involved must make a *Hard pilot* roll to navigate through the storm; failure indicates lightning hits the plane and inflicts moderate damage. Just as the heroes begin wondering where they can land and find shelter, the shadow of an island appears before them, a large mountain peak rising out of a dense jungle. Landing on the rough surf without damaging the plane or its passengers requires a *Hard pilot* roll. Failure inflicts more damage on the aircraft. The seaplane lands near a broad, sandy beach on the island where it can weather the storm in relative safety.

### Grumman G-21

Top Speed: 180 mph

Range: 1,000 miles

Crew: 2

Passengers: 4

### Mitsubishi A5M2b

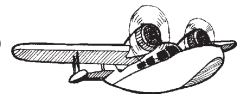
Top Speed: 270 mph

Range: 870 miles

Crew: 1

Ordnance: .30 caliber machine guns  
(2 fixed forward)





## EPISODE TWO: EXPLORING THE ISLAND

When the storm subsides the heroes assess the damage to their floatplane from its encounter with the Japanese aircraft and the violent weather. Before they can become airborne again, they must fix several items, including at least one that requires a replacement part they don't currently possess.

Heroes making a *Routine notice* check recall seeing several of the Japanese planes going down in the storm; perhaps they, too, somehow landed near the island and could be scavenged for spare parts. Everyone remembers seeing a lagoon on this island with many ships moored in its calm waters.

Repairing the flying boat requires a *Challenging repair* roll for light damage or a *Hard* check for more serious damage sustained earlier. Regardless of the plane's condition, one essential flight system requires a spare part, possibly scavenged from the downed Japanese fighters or from the ships in the lagoon. Each *repair* roll represents about two hours spent fixing various bits of the seaplane, during which time heroes working as mechanics must remain with the plane and can undertake no other activities.

The others may explore the island, seek out downed Japanese planes, try to reach the mountain peak, or head for the lagoon to find spare parts.

### DOWNED PLANES

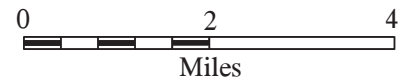
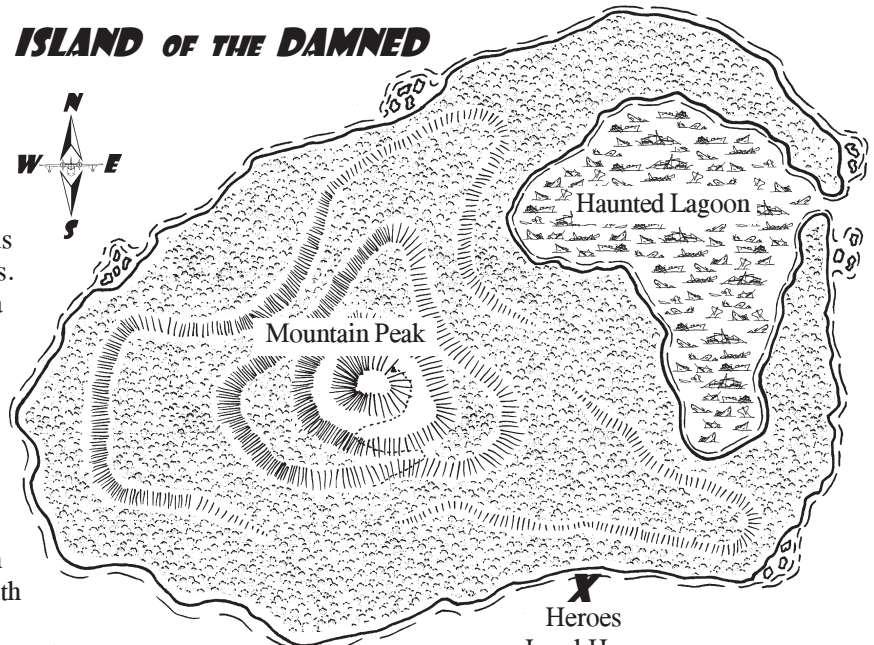
Negotiating the thick jungle terrain requires the lead character to make a *Challenging survival* roll if the heroes intend to make any headway to the island interior. Failure results in a host of additional difficulties to slow them down: snakes, insects, angry lizards, quicksand, tangled vines. They may even get lost and find themselves back at their landing site.

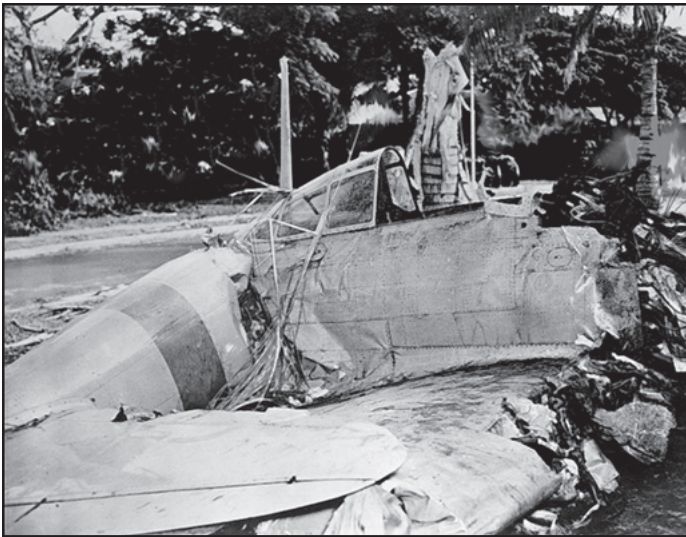
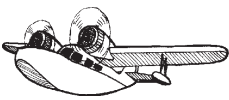
Eventually they stumble upon a cleared track, which anyone making a *Routine survival* roll recognizes as an overgrown path. One way leads toward the lagoon (see "Haunted Lagoon" below), while the other leads into the highlands near the island's single peak. After a short walk, the heroes notice recent wreckage from a Japanese fighter in a clearing not far off the trail.

The airplane apparently crashed here after clipping a palm tree. The impact tore off one wing, then crumpled the plane into the mountainside. The engine and much of the fuselage remain intact, so heroes making *Challenging search* and *repair* checks can find and salvage components useful in fixing their own seaplane. They also realize that someone left the cockpit canopy open and took any survival supplies with them. The pilot's missing, and his body isn't sprawled dead nearby. Anyone making a *Challenging survival* or *track* roll discovers signs that the pilot crawled out of the cockpit and set out into the jungle.

Ambitious heroes might search for the other three planes. This requires half a day of combing the jungle for signs of wreckage, as well as a *Challenging survival* roll to locate each plane. Scouting from the heights on the upper mountain slopes makes this task somewhat easier, but requires several *climb* checks to negotiate the steep slopes and rocky terrain.

### ISLAND OF THE DAMNED





While inspecting the downed Japanese plane or wandering through the jungle, however, the heroes inevitably run into the Japanese aviators waiting to ambush them, plus a horde of hungry island zombies (see below). The characters suddenly come under fire from adversaries hidden uphill in the jungle foliage. All four Japanese pilots survived crashing their planes on the island. They've managed to regroup and start assessing their position when they detect and ambush the characters. The aviators intend to chase the heroes away from the fighter plane with a few warning shots and an initial assault; if the characters remain after a minute or two of shooting, the Japanese pilots fall back into the jungle to regroup and reassess their plan of attacks.

A few moments after the aviators apparently retreat they come charging back through the brush, unconcerned with the heroes, white with fear, and screaming about some horror they encountered in the jungle. Anyone making a *Challenging languages* check to understand Japanese discerns that they're yelling about a horde of "living dead" gathered in the upland jungle...and heading this way!

If the characters manage to calm the pilots and communicate with them, they might gain valuable allies in ensuring their survival. This requires at least one *Challenging languages* and *persuade* roll. Once they understand the heroes can transport them off the cursed island in their repaired seaplane, the Japanese aviators grudgingly offer their aid, pledging to use the remaining rounds in their pistols, their samurai swords, and whatever strength remains in their bodies in battling the undead.

The heroes better hurry, make their peace with the pilots, and finish scavenging the downed plane before a crowd of zombies shows up and begins attacking them with intent to consume their flesh. For this initial encounter, send in one zombie for each hero and one for each of the Japanese pilots who decide to join them.

**Japanese Pilot (Boss)**

Competent Skills:

- climb \_\_\_\_\_
- dodge \_\_\_\_\_
- fight \_\_\_\_\_
- intimidate \_\_\_\_\_
- notice \_\_\_\_\_
- survival \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

- gunnery \_\_\_\_\_
- navigate \_\_\_\_\_
- shoot \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Skill:

- pilot \_\_\_\_\_

Gear:

- Nambu pistol \_\_\_\_\_
- samurai katana \_\_\_\_\_
- flight suit \_\_\_\_\_

**JAPANESE PILOTS**

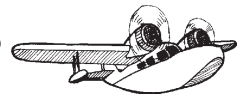
The downed Japanese aviators come from the Imperial Japanese Navy's most intelligent and best-trained officer corps. Lieutenants Miyamoto, Serizawa, and Tanaka all defer to their squadron leader, Captain Watanabe, though each one exhibits qualities of honor, cunning, and fortitude (at least when they aren't facing hordes of undead). Their initial flight from the zombies reflects their surprise at encountering such horrific creatures in an unexpected surrounding.

Although willing to work with the heroes to defeat the zombies, repair the Grumman seaplane, and escape from this cursed island, they do not consent to surrendering their arms or acting as subordinates. They realize everyone must work together as equals to survive; they do their utmost not to treat the characters with disdain many Japanese have for westerners. The way the heroes treat the pilots can affect relations with Japanese military personnel in later adventures.

**ISLAND ZOMBIES**

The zombies trapped on this island look like a hodgepodge of risen dead from a variety of stock: lost American and European sailors, drowned Japanese navy personnel, cursed natives, dead Chinese pirates. They shamble around the island day and night seeking sustenance from living humans they sense through some otherworldly intuition (other animals, such as dogs, do not register on this unearthly sense).

These hordes display poor tactics, preferring to overwhelm opponents through greater numbers and their mindless tenacity. Since they shamble about at a slow rate (about one-quarter a person's average walking speed), they might initially seem easy to evade, but they swarm over the entire island. Once a small crowd begins pursuing its prey, more zombies emerge to join the hunt. Some hide



dormant in shaded jungle groves or behind boulders along the beach waiting for unsuspecting victims to wander past. They lurk in the wrecked hulks in the haunted lagoon.

Should the heroes take to the water for shelter against the zombies—using the seaplane as a boat and anchoring it just offshore—the zombies still clamor to reach them. They wade into the surf, some sinking, some floating, and claw at the water until they reach the plane. They can't really get a good grip or cause much damage, but the sight horrifies anyone. Something more sinister lurks beneath the waves if the characters decide to move offshore. A zombie shark patrols the waters around the island, attacking waterlogged survivors and making sure nobody escapes. It attacks the floatplane, ramming it with its decomposing snout and possibly knocking overboard anyone attempting to repair the engines or other exterior damage. Those unfortunate enough to fall into the water must not only fend off the aggressive, undead shark, but evade the raging claws of other zombies bobbing on the waves nearby.

Nobody's quite sure how the cursed island attracted so many shipwrecks and plane crashes, nor how it transformed their crews into ravenous, undead hordes. Those injured or killed by zombies, however, run a great risk of becoming a member of this undead legion themselves. Heroes who are seriously injured by zombie attacks, especially those who sustain bites, have a chance of deteriorating into zombies. For each wound a hero sustains from a zombie, he must make a *Challenging endurance* roll to resist the eventual onset of zombie rot. Anyone incapacitated by zombie attacks must make an additional *Hard endurance* roll for their body to fend off this unnatural decay. This disease slowly manifests itself by gradually killing the victim from within. Early symptoms include a general fatigue and weakness followed by visible putrefaction of flesh and innards culminating in death. About an hour after death the subject becomes animated as an angry, hungry zombie. From initial infection to death takes from two to seven hours.

## **MOUNTAIN PEAK**

If the heroes follow the paths or cut their own trail they eventually reach the naked rock rising to form the island's peak. From the base they can see ancient handholds and worn steps carved in places, indicating a path upward. Those hiking around the mountain's base and making a *Challenging notice* roll also find the trail up the mountain. Reaching the summit along this path offers few obstacles, though the characters might make a few *climb* or *willpower* checks to negotiate rockfalls, narrow ledges, or collapsed sections of the pathway. Few zombies have the coordination or the urge to wander this difficult route, but several might have become trapped in a rocky crag and wait to ambush anyone passing nearby. Those trying to ascend without using the trail must make several *Hard climb* rolls before intercepting the established path.

The heroes must overcome one major challenge near the summit. The ledge the path follows suddenly stops at a precipice, only to continue about five feet away. Characters can jump this by making a *Hard jump* roll. Those making a *Challenging notice* check find hand- and foot-holds carved into the vertical rock face. Using these to cross requires a *Challenging climb* roll. Failing either check sends the hero plummeting into the chasm, though others can try to grab hold of them at the last minute.

The trail eventually leads to a shallow cave entrance near the top of the mountain. Inside they find a small chamber with few amenities: a long-cold fire pit, a pile of old skins and blankets for a bed, a deep puddle of rainwater, a few broken clay pots, and the skeleton of the former inhabitant propped up against a wall. He wears a few tattered rags and clutches a walking stick. Around his neck hangs an odd bone charm. Those making a *Hard knowledge* or related roll identify it as a crude representation of a Chinese symbol for life.

An old Chinese magician was stranded here long ago, managed to evade the

### **Island Zombie (Henchman)**

Competent Skills:

intimidate \_\_\_\_\_

notice \_\_\_\_\_

track \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skill:

fight \_\_\_\_\_

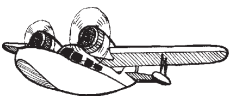
Natural Defenses:

claws \_\_\_\_\_

teeth \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: Weapons inflict minimum damage on zombie bodies. Zombies simply keep functioning until a called shot to the head (with increased difficulty to hit) destroys it; simply severing the head still allows the remaining body parts to function normally. Open flames have full effect, as they eventually burn the head and render the zombie useless.





zombies, and established a refuge high on the mountain. He crafted the amulet to ward off the undead, and apparently lived long enough to die peacefully here in his cave.

Anyone openly wearing the charm gains a bonus to resist damage from any zombie attacks, including rolls to resist zombie rot; they also inflict full damage when hitting zombies in any portion of their moldering bodies.

## HAUNTED LAGOON

As the morning light burns off the mists hanging over the lagoon, the heroes realize that derelict wrecks fill the entire harbor. The ghostly husks of freighters, pleasure yachts, old warships, a few large aircraft, and even a submarine rise at unnatural angles from the still waters. Tattered flags of several nations hang limply from flagstaffs. Most have damage from storms or rocks, though a few are obvious casualties of military action.

The heroes can actually board several vessels beached on shore. They're filled with many dangers: rusting pipes, torn hull plates, broken glass, slippery stairways, rotted railings, and weak planking. To retrieve anything handy for repairing their seaplane requires *Hard search* and *repair* rolls. These rusting hulks hold little of use. The characters' best bet—to reach one of the crashed aircraft in the middle of the lagoon—yields the parts they need for repair, but brings with it the risk of finding a way to reach the wrecks without falling prey to small crowds of waterlogged zombies lurking just beneath the surface.

Intrepid heroes seeking other useful materials—survival supplies, weapons, ammunition, maps, radios, intelligence—can make a few *search* rolls, but they only find incomplete, broken, unstable, destroyed, and otherwise useless materials.

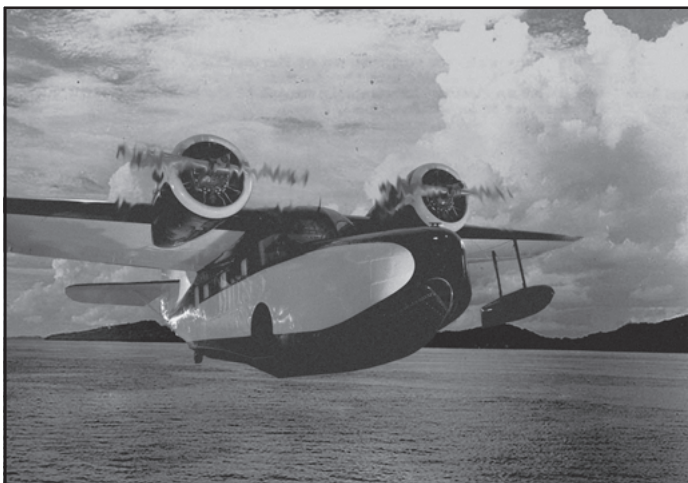
At an appropriate time—when the heroes enter the deepest part of a ship, finally find a functional component, or decide they'd better leave—they encounter a horde of ravenous zombies bent on attacking and eating them. Once they defeat this small group, they realize the entire lagoon crawls with zombies waking up to the scent of the heroes' warm flesh!

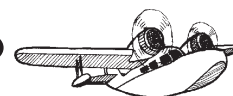
## EPISODE THREE: ESCAPE!

After the heroes explore the lagoon or encounter the Japanese pilots, they must formulate a plan to escape from the cursed island. They face two main challenges: repairing the seaplane (explained at the beginning of “Episode Two: Exploring the Island”) and fending off a growing zombie horde.

The characters must determine what replacement parts they need and retrieve them from the downed Japanese fighters. They might have accomplished some of this in the last scene. You may determine that they need to make one more foray to a downed plane to scavenge more parts before making the final repairs to their floatplane. This requires negotiating the jungle, evading a Japanese ambush (if the heroes haven't established an alliance with the pilots), and avoiding clusters of hungry zombies ambling through the trees. Installing this final part requires a *Hard repair* roll and about 15 minutes.

The heroes must also defend their own plane from zombie advances. Assume they beached the craft on a sandy shore in the cove. To protect it they might cut down palm trees and create an impromptu barrier, dig trenches or moats, or clear brush by machete or fire. They cannot reasonably repair the plane if they float it back into the cove—and if they try it, the zombies simply





bob out on the water, sinking, floating, and eventually swarming the plane. If the heroes landed or taxied their seaplane into the lagoon, zombies try to prevent them from taking off by slowly pushing derelict ships to block the entrance or place hazards in the way of a clear take-off path.

Just as the heroes race to replace the last broken components on the seaplane, a huge horde of zombies bursts from the jungle to assault their position. They must fend off this final attack before completing the repairs, starting up the engines, and floating back out into the cove to take off. As a final challenge the pilot must spot and evade the zombie shark, which tries to leap out of the water to bite the plane as it takes off, providing the ultimate climax to the adventure.

If they're lucky, the characters evade the shark, their repairs hold firm, and they fly away from the island and its condemned inhabitants. In their excitement the heroes fail to recall exact navigational information that might lead them back to the island. Even if they scramble to take sun and compass readings, they fly through a fog bank or column of clouds that obscures their view and momentarily disorients them. Only those who make an *Improbable navigate* roll might collect enough data to possibly find the island again.

## **EPILOGUE**

The heroes fly off with their skins intact (more or less) and their plane in working condition. Enterprising characters with connections might find individuals interested in purchasing reliable information leading back to the island (assuming they managed to collect this data during their escape).

If the heroes befriended and helped rescue the Japanese pilots, they earn valuable contacts should they ever tangle with the Imperial Japanese Navy again. The surviving pilots won't forget that the heroes proved their loyalty as allies and warriors against the zombies.

The information that Japanese aircraft intercepted the heroes' seaplane somewhat south of the Japanese Mandate could indicate increased naval activity in the area. The intelligence might prove valuable to anyone keeping tabs on military operations in the Pacific.

### **Zombie Shark (Boss)**

#### Competent Skills:

endurance \_\_\_\_\_

notice \_\_\_\_\_

track \_\_\_\_\_

#### Expert Skills:

fight \_\_\_\_\_

intimidate \_\_\_\_\_

strength \_\_\_\_\_

#### Signature Skill:

swim \_\_\_\_\_

#### Natural Defenses:

teeth \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: Weapons inflict minimum damage on the zombie shark. It simply keeps functioning until a called shot to the head (with increased difficulty to hit) destroys it.

# SHIP OF GHOULS

March 14, 1938—This morning Rura-Tonga town woke up to spot a freighter lurking outside the lagoon. We thought it might be the monthly shipment from the mainland, but the ship seemed deserted. Leo Grijzen and his boys took their fishing boat out to investigate, but the monstrosities they discovered on that ship were too horrible to set down on paper.



The heroes lead the townspeople in an investigation of a mysterious freighter they find anchored one morning outside the lagoon. Ian McKinsey isn't expecting the monthly supply ship for another week, so he has no idea who's sailing the vessel or why they're just sitting outside the lagoon without sending a launch to the town dock.

Anyone using binoculars to more closely examine the freighter sees no signs of life: nobody's on deck, no smoke drifts from the stack, and the flag of the Imperial Japanese Navy hangs limply from a mast. Alongside the stern hull the heroes spot the ship's name, *Siranui*, which translates to "unknown fires" for anyone who understands Japanese. (Surveying the ship from the nearest shore or from the air offers no more detail.) Anyone making a *Challenging notice* roll realizes that one pair of davits remains empty, meaning that someone launched one of the vessel's lifeboats.

Leo Grijzen and his two teenage sons—who run the only fishing operation in town—prepare their fishing boat and propose they investigate the derelict freighter with anyone else willing to accompany them. (The heroes might putter out there in Sharp's *Flying Fish*, though using the floatplane for such a purpose isn't common practice.) If the heroes think to gather useful supplies, they can quickly assemble a few items that might come in handy: one battery powered flashlight, two oil lamps, a coil of rope with a grappling hook, some moldy life jackets, and an old first aid kit.

## EPISODE ONE: GHOST SHIP

As Grijzen's fishing boat approaches the *Siranui*, the heroes immediately notice that the freighter hasn't dropped its anchor, but seems to have become stuck on one of the reefs encircling the island. Since the tide's going out, the vessel begins listing slightly to one side, though it doesn't seem like it's sinking.

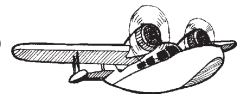
Grijzen maneuvers the smaller fishing boat around the reefs and pulls alongside the Japanese freighter. As his sons toss lines to catch on the railings and stanchions of the *Siranui*'s higher deck, anyone making a *Routine notice* roll realizes that the nearby waters teem with sharks swarming around the Japanese ship. Although they don't harass Grijzen's boat, the sharks make failing the *Challenging climb* roll to scale the lines to the freighter's deck more tense.

The heroes get a better sense of the ship's layout once they reach the main deck. Two masts rise from the deck fore and amidships, their crane assemblies once used to load and unload cargo. The Japanese sealed the wide deck hatches leading to the holds below with huge sheets of corrugated steel, denying access to them from the deck. Ladders and hatches lead below decks fore and amidships, with a few hatchways allowing entry into the superstructure which the heroes presume houses the bridge and crew quarters.

From this perspective the *Siranui* seems to have been abandoned for several days. Several lines securing the crane masts have frayed and snapped, a few windows in the superstructure have broken, and bits of seaweed and palm fronds remain stuck to parts of the railing, door hatches, and odd corners of the deck.

A cursory look around offers no sign of officers or crew. Anyone making a *Challenging notice* roll thinks they spot a face





or two peering at them from the bridge windows high above the main deck, though any attempt to get their attention fails to provoke a reaction. Any hero who pries at, rattles, bangs on, or otherwise interferes with the metal-sealed deck hatch leading to the forward hold thinks he hears weak voices below, though he can't clearly discern who they are or what they're saying.

From the main deck the heroes can access most other areas on the ship.

## BRIDGE

A grisly sight greets anyone entering the bridge. Characters viewing this scene must make *Hard endurance* rolls or become violently sick, suffering a bout of fainting, vomiting, or even frenzied flight from the horrors before them. The corpses of several Japanese navy and army officers sprawl across the bridge controls and chart tables, including one or two whose bodies lean against the forward windows as if peering out over the deck. Most still hold the short, ceremonial samurai dagger in one hand. For some unknown reason they all committed *seppuku*, ritual suicide, while standing at their duty stations.

Anyone who can withstand the revulsion of this gruesome scene can search and examine the bridge more closely. With a *Challenging search* or *notice* check they spot several items of interest:

**Plague Corpses:** Besides the obvious signs of the ritual suicide that killed everyone on the bridge, all the corpses exhibit ghastly symptoms of some unknown epidemic. On each victim's skin, to varying degrees, one notices weltering red lesions, many having been infected and oozing with puss. The bodies show signs of deteriorating weakness in the form of emaciation, withering limbs, and sunken eyes. Characters with medical training cannot identify the plague by these symptoms, and likely have never heard of or seen anything like this. If they hadn't killed themselves, the bridge crew would have succumbed to this mysterious epidemic.

**Army Officer:** Among all the Imperial Japanese Navy officers (an odd fact in itself on what is obviously not a warship) the heroes find a lone and senior-looking Imperial Japanese Army officer whose uniform displays an unusual unit patch. Only those with some understanding of the Japanese language can deduce that he holds the rank of colonel, and that the patch reads "Epidemic Prevention Research Laboratory."

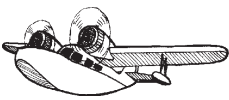
**Nautical Charts:** By examining the charts spread out on a table at the aft section of the bridge, anybody with navigational skills can follow the course of the *Siranui* over the past few weeks; it's departure from Yokohama Naval Yard in Tokyo, an week-long stay at Ryojun in Manchuria, and then a tour through various South Pacific islands from Borneo, Sumatra, and Java to the Japanese Mandate.

**Ship's Log:** The logbook sits in a cubbyhole in the bulkhead near the nautical chart table. Only characters who can understand Japanese can make any sense of the ship's log. Several facts become apparent after skimming over entries for the past few weeks. The time spent at Ryojun notes the loading of "lumber" into the forward cargo hold. Visits to ports at South Pacific islands include notations that the crew acquired and loaded "biological specimens" into the cargo hold amidships. Most of the rest of the entries contain normal nautical notations on weather, speed, and course as the *Siranui* plied the sea lanes to the Japanese Mandate and then cruised among those islands. One week ago, however, the captain noted that two crewmen died. The subsequent four days indicate that some kind of plague overtook, weakened, and killed most of the remaining crew, a few officers, a handful of army soldiers stationed on the freighter, and two doctors. Two days ago the captain noted they had insufficient crew to sail the ship through an oncoming storm, and he ordered the remaining crew and officers to commit *seppuku*.

## SOUVENIR SAMURAI SWORDS

Those heroes who can stomach the carnage on the bridge might think to salvage a samurai sword or two as souvenirs. Although these might prove useful in future misadventures, the characters must take care not to show off their prizes too much. Displaying such swords to Japanese people—even those who aren't in the military—earns their mistrust, if not outright prejudice against a westerner who defiled the very symbol of the samurai warrior culture. They would treat anyone who didn't earn the right to carry the samurai sword as a dishonorable enemy of the Japanese people.

Given the gruesome manner in which the owners met their demise, these samurai swords might also possess a curse. The tormented spirits of the dead owners or their honored warrior ancestors might haunt any hero foolhardy enough to take one of these weapons. A possessed sword might force the character to act in an openly brave yet tactically reckless manner in combat, charging foes despite their number or strength, or leaping into battle instead of waiting in ambush.



## CREW QUARTERS

The superstructure beneath the bridge houses crew quarters, ward rooms, and the galley. All show signs of disarray. The two bunk rooms in particular contain grisly sights that might cause anyone entering these areas who doesn't make a *Hard endurance* roll to become violently sick, suffer a bout of fainting, vomit, or even flee the scene. The sheets hang from the bunks like lifeless funeral shrouds. Bodies still occupy several bunks, their blotchy skin identifies them as victims of the plague, though their comrades obviously put them out of their misery. One bunk room contains the bodies of lowly sailors, while the other one houses the remains of several soldiers wearing uniforms of the Imperial Japanese Army. Their personal effects reveal little about their mission, though the soldiers wear the same "Epidemic Prevention Research Laboratory" unit patch as the officer found on the bridge.

## LABORATORY

One of the superstructure decks houses a suite of rooms presumably used as a sickbay. A sign painted on the bulkhead next to the entry hatch reads "Infirmary: Restricted Access" in Japanese writing. Heroes examining the main hatch leading into this area notice that it and several other interior hatches sustained serious blows that bent both the latches and hinges from within.

Several corridors, all painted in a sickly, antiseptic light green, connect a series of rooms that at first glance appear to serve as a small hospital. From the papers and medical items strewn haphazardly on the floor, and several hatches torn from their hinges, the heroes can deduce that someone ransacked this area:

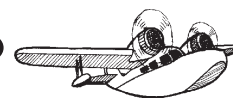


**Recovery Room:** The largest cabin looks like a sickbay recovery room someone ransacked. Five hospital beds line one wall, with narrow shelves and tables on the opposite bulkhead; the assortment of medical supplies and equipment they once held now covers the floor in disarray. Two hospital beds remain neatly made, with leather restraint straps neatly arranged over the top sheet and army-issue blanket. The other three show grisly evidence they were recently used; whatever slept in them apparently tore the restraints free, for the broken leather straps hang limply over the bed sides. Other signs of a struggle include several broken portholes and an entry hatch that, despite a padlock and chain on the outer latch, was bashed open by someone of immense strength.

**Doctors' Office:** Three desks and several bookshelves occupy this cabin, though their contents—papers, journals, beakers, medical reference books—lie broken and strewn across the floor. Only

someone with knowledge of Japanese can read the documents; they include notes on the effects of toxic substances, reports on the health of various animals in the hold and the disposition of samples taken from them, and charts for patients suffering from injections of foreign biological matter into their systems. If characters look behind one of the overturned bookshelves they find a heavy cast-iron safe. Assuming they can open it (requiring an *Improbable pick lock* or *sleight of hand* check), they discover a cache of documents in Japanese—doctors' journals, prisoner logbooks, manifests of toxic agents, and reports on hideous experiments carried out on captives—that identify this ship as a floating laboratory. Most experiments seek to either test the effects of harmful substances and conditions on the human physiology or meddle with the body's structure to improve and mutate the human form into one more effective for waging warfare.

**Laboratory:** Although a long workbench is bolted along one wall, the rest of this cabin's furnishings lie strewn about the floor. The debris includes several smashed microscopes, some notes in Japanese, crushed lab stools, petri dishes, beakers, flasks,



oil burners, and other instruments. Someone demolished a wooden cabinet affixed to one bulkhead, spilling out numerous small glass vials containing acrid-smelling preserving fluid and bits of flesh. The numbers on these biological samples correspond to lists of “patients” in sickbay logs. The damage seems so complete here that the heroes can salvage few useful items.

**Surgery:** One cabin serves as an operating room, containing medical equipment, an examination table (complete with secure leather straps for restraining patients), a bright exam light on a flexible boom, and trays with surgical tools. This chamber seems to have escaped the rampage that tore through other areas of the sickbay. Anyone with medical expertise can salvage some useful supplies (gauze, surgical tape, sutures, small instruments), but quickly realizes that the operating area has no chemicals or other apparatus for anesthetizing patients.

**Pharmacy Pantry:** The clearly marked hatch to the pharmacy pantry remains sealed. Anyone opening it unleashes a deadly cloud that swiftly fills the entire corridor serving the laboratory area. Heroes must make *Hard endurance* rolls or suffer serious injuries to their skin and lungs; anyone quickly fleeing the area must make a *Hard dodge* roll to reach safety and escape the effects of the noxious cloud. As long as portholes and hatches remain open, the cloud dissipates after a few minutes. Upon examining the small pharmaceuticals pantry, the heroes come upon a ghastly sight. One of the lab doctors sprawls on the floor, dead; apparently something flung him against the far wall of the pantry, causing several shelves and their contents to smash and spill onto the floor. Whoever killed him quickly sealed the hatch, trapping the toxic soup of poisonous substances that filled the chamber. Despite the effects of various chemicals on the doctor’s skin, the heroes can still discern that, at the time of his death, he was suffering the final stages of the epidemic that afflicted others aboard the freighter. Anyone picking through the debris and understanding Japanese can read the labels on the smashed jars, bottles, and cans: acetone, cyanide, mustard gas, arsenic, anthrax, botulism, and hydrocyanic acid. The debris also includes a small cache of medical supplies, all tainted with the contents of the smashed poisons. Anyone searching the doctor’s corpse finds a key in his lab coat; it opens the padlock sealing the forward hold (see below).

## **STORAGE**

Several chambers beyond the ship’s galley hold stores for feeding the crew: tanks of fresh water, shelves packed with dry and canned goods, bins of fruits and vegetables collected from tropical islands, and a cold meat locker with hocks of beef and pork. Although it all seems fine, everything carries the microscopic taint of the plague that devastate the freighter’s crew.

## **BELOW DECKS AFT**

The portions of the ship directly below the aft superstructure houses machinery necessary to operate the freighter: the engine room, oil tanks and turbines, and a separate burner that, upon closer examination, seems to have functioned as an incinerator with a hatch and chute to dump remains into the ocean.

## **AMIDSHIPS HOLD**

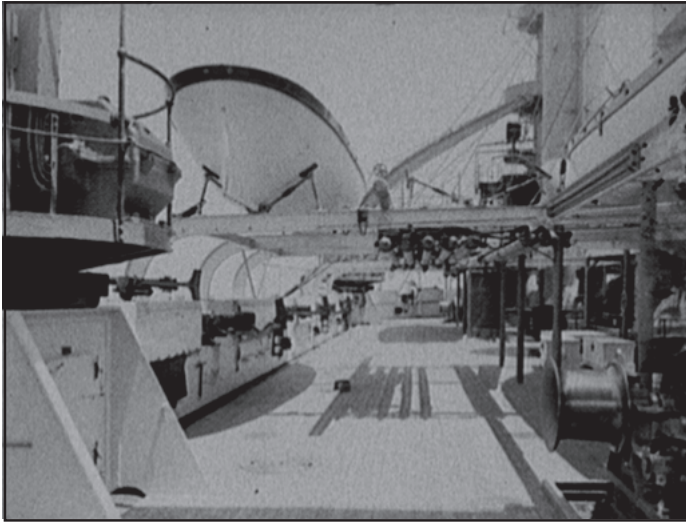
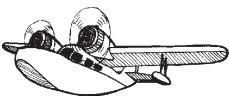
The heroes can only access the amidships hold by descending the stairways and hatches leading from the deck to the areas below, or from the area below decks aft; before sailing the crew

## **WE’RE STAYING ON SHORE**

Having the characters remain on shore while the Grijzens explore the *Siranui* (accompanied by a few other denizens of Rura-Tonga town) removes a good deal of action from this episode. They can monitor the expedition’s progress from the safety of shore with a pair of binoculars. The heroes watch as the Grijzens and their compatriots tie up alongside the freighter and scurry up to the deck. Nothing happens for a few moments as the party divides to look fore and aft for signs of life; suddenly someone bursts from the superstructure (possibly the bridge or the laboratory), leans over the railing, and vomits. Others return from their searches in a similarly shaken, sick, or hysterical state.

As soon as events seem too boring for the heroes (especially if they still decide to remain on shore), they hear an ruthless roar and a human cry for help at the far end of the town. One of the berserk mutants from “Episode Two: Raging Monstrosities” attacks the far corner of Rura-Tonga town; jump directly to that section so the characters can explore and deal with this new threat from the *Siranui*.





had the main cargo hatches covered with corrugated steel plates that prevent any access from the deck.

Only one hatch leads from the passageways below to the middle hold. Those understanding Japanese can read the words painted near the hatch: “Cargo Bay 2: Unauthorized Entry Forbidden.”

The amidships hold contains three sections holding distinctly different cargoes:

**Live Specimens:** One area houses a small menagerie of live animals, including a tank full of crabs and lobsters, a pen for swine, a glass cage containing two cobras, and larger, metal cages holding two chimpanzees, an orangutan, and a komodo dragon. Most show signs of surgeries—evidenced by sutured incisions or gauze taped over wounds—on the extremities, torsos, and craniums. Given the mangy, dirty condition of the dressings and the agitated state of the animals, they have remained neglected for at least a day.

**Toxic Storage:** Bars, fencing, and a locked gate cordon off an entire section of this cargo bay. Prominent signs affixed to the fencing declare (in Japanese) “Danger! Hazardous Materials! Unauthorized Entry Forbidden!” The key from the doctor in the pharmacy pantry that opens the forward cargo hold also opens the lock sealing off this area; the heroes might try cutting through the fence or bashing through the lock with tools scavenged from the engine room. The fences protect several large crates (each filled with glass vials or jars), 55-gallon steel drums, and a few pressure canisters. On further investigation (requiring the characters go gain entry to the locked cage) they realize the drums, tanks, and boxes all show signs of use; only about one-quarter of their original contents remain. Japanese stencils indicate that these containers hold a variety of toxic substances, including acetone, cyanide, mustard gas, arsenic, anthrax, botulism, hydrocyanic acid, and venom samples from a number of poisonous snakes, scorpions, and jellyfish. Should the heroes try handling any of these containers, they run the risk of accidentally releasing some of these toxic substances; a canister valve might break, glass jars could slip, fall, and smash on the deck, and the acid-rotted bottoms of drums might give way if shifted roughly.

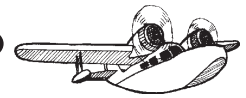
**Explosives:** A pile of wooden ammunition crates lean up against one bulkhead. The first few—those most easily accessible—contain spare rifles, bayonets, and bullets to arm the small contingent of army soldiers aboard the freighter. The crates behind these, however, contain carefully packed sticks of dynamite, with enough TNT to destroy the entire ship in case it faced capture by those who would expose its atrocious secrets. The explosives have sat in this hot ship hold throughout its tropical journey, and have now become very unstable should anyone try handling them.

## **FORWARD HOLD**

The heroes can only access the forward hold by descending the stairways and hatches leading from the deck to the areas below; before sailing the crew had the main cargo hatches covered with corrugated steel plates that prevent any access from the deck.

Only one hatch leads from the passageways below to the forward hold. Those understanding Japanese can read the words painted near the hatch: “Cargo Bay 1: Unauthorized Entry Forbidden.” A large padlock prevents anyone from working the latch (the key sits in the pocket of the dead doctor in the laboratory’s pharmacy pantry).

Anyone banging on the hatch elicits a weak response from within. Someone calls out from some distance off, as if at the farthest end of the cargo hold. The words sound unfamiliar, but anyone who understands any Chinese language dialect can translate: “Please don’t come near us, we are very sick and will infect you with this deadly



plague. There is nothing you can do for us. Please, save yourselves and leave us to die.” They resist any attempts at further communication, instead repeating their warnings until their voices become hoarse and fade away.

Assuming the heroes find the key or otherwise smash their way through the hatch, they enter the vast and dimly lit hold. The first third of the hold remains empty, with a few shafts of light shining down through joints between the corrugated steel plates sealing the cargo hatch above. In this dim and dusty light the heroes notice steel bars forming a cage that separates the rest of the hold. A locked panel (which opens using the doctor’s key) can slide aside for access. At first the heroes see nobody in this cage, but eventually hear weak coughing coming from the shadows at the back, the a repeat of the previous warning in Chinese. Here dying Chinese prisoners languish in near-lifeless piles away from the prying light.

Anyone entering the cage to more closely examine the prisoners must make *Hard endurance* rolls or become violently sick, suffering a bout of fainting, vomiting, or even frenzied flight from the horrific stench of death and decay. Extreme puss-filled lesions cover the prisoners’ skins and they possess little energy to do anything but lie there in pain and delirium.

The Japanese loaded these Chinese prisoners at Ryojun and used them as guinea pigs for their atrocious experiments. All show signs of malnourishment and mistreatment. Anyone with medical training who examines these victims notes that their heart rates seem extremely low and their bodies seem weakened beyond recovery. Should they examine any of the corpses, characters making *Hard medical* rolls notice they show none of the usual signs of decomposition after death; if they monitor a cadaver long enough, they notice an extremely faint and irregular pulse and an occasional shallow breath. These bodies seem to have passed into a state of near-death from which the heroes cannot recover them.

## **LIFEBOAT SPOTTED!**

During their investigations on deck the characters notice one lifeboat missing. Anyone scanning the island shoreline finds the missing lifeboat hastily dragged onto the beach. Sinister, shadowy forms thrash through the nearby jungle, hooting and growling with inhuman voices before their disappear deeper into the island.

If all the heroes elect to stay ashore while the boarding party explores the freighter, they only discover the presence of the berserk mutants from “Episode Two: Raging Monstrosities” when one of them attacks the far corner of Rura-Tonga town (see below).

## **EPISODE TWO: RAGING MONSTROSITIES**

Three unfortunate test subjects survived the mutating disease unleashed aboard the *Siranui* as grotesque monstrosities incorporating human and animal elements. In their enraged state they destroyed the ship’s lab, tossed the last surviving scientist into the wall of toxins in the pharmacy pantry, and escaped to Rura-Tonga on one of the freighter’s lifeboats.

Enraged by torture, brutal experimentation, and the ravages of the virus unleashed on the laboratory ship, these mutants tear

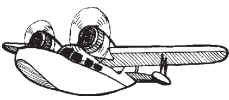
### **INFECTION**

The doctors conducting gruesome experiments aboard the *Siranui* had little luck in testing how humans could better withstand harmful substances and conditions and modifying the human physiology to create better soldiers. Unfortunately their twisted experiments yielded a new plague virus that infected both prisoners and crew.

The virus weakens its prey, causing skin lesions and physiological complications that slowly lead to a death-like state. But the bodies simply go into a state of stasis while they undergo a mutation into a hybrid human-animal form, an unwitting result of Japanese experimentation to engineer a more perfect human soldier. After most of the soldiers, officers, and crew committed *seppuku*, three test subjects—those restrained in the sickbay recovery room—competed their mutation, broke free of their bonds, ransacked the laboratory, and fled the ship in one of the *Siranui*’s lifeboats.

The Japanese soldiers dutifully collected bodies of those who seemingly died from the disease and tossed them in the ship’s incinerator for disposal, essentially destroying the virus and its host, as well as any knowledge of the plague’s origin or its final manifestation. Thankfully everyone else the epidemic infected committed *seppuku* or died from other causes. Unless put out of their misery or cured (see “Episode Four: Survivor”), the remaining prisoners mutate into raging human-animal hybrids and try escaping from the ship whenever it seems best for a boatload of mutants to threaten the action.

Unfortunately dormant virus spores coat nearly everything on the *Siranui* and still infest the few surviving prisoners. Assume anyone who boards the freighter carries the epidemic back with them and spreads it among those with whom they interact; whether the virus actually takes hold and how quickly it weakens its victims remains variable and can serve to enhance the plot and tension as needed. “Episode Three: The Plague Beings” contains more details about how the virus spreads to infect the inhabitants of Rura-Tonga town and even the heroes themselves.



through the jungle in a berserk frenzy, lashing out at animals they meet, growling back at tropical birds, and generally reacting with enraged fear to anything they encounter. Eventually they discover humans here, either in the town or one of the native villages; seeing normal people reflecting their lost humanity, they attack with a vengeance for having their human forms tormented into grotesque monsters.

Anyone investigating the beached lifeboat discovers several clues. To drag it up the sandy beach to the jungle edge where it was left would have required six strong men. Only the tracks of three people litter the area. They're frighteningly distinct in the sand: a clawed, reptilian paw print; a large, long-fingered hand print; and a collection of odd indentations made by something like a giant crustacean.

The creatures leave a path of torn foliage and deep tracks wherever they pass through the jungle, and leave their prints on the beach if they venture down to the shore. They aren't too hard to track whether the heroes pursue them from the beached lifeboat or from violent encounters with townspeople or natives.

All three mutants share similar qualities. They all act out of sense of violent rage, attacking anyone they meet until driven off after sustaining serious injury or meeting an obviously more deadly opponent or obstacle. The creatures seek fresh food and water, though obtaining these does not quell their brutal hatred for all living humans. They all share a weakness of sea water, and avoid returning to the ocean unless no other option remains. Should any of the mutants become immersed or splashed with salt water, they react as if they've just been doused with flaming oil. If tossed into the sea they flail about in agony until they sink below the waves and drown.

Each of the three mutations possesses aspects of a different animal whose biological material was part of the initial experiment the Japanese scientists conducted with elements of the plague virus:

**Dragon Mutant:** One monstrosity combines characteristics of a human with those of a komodo dragon. Scaly brown skin covers its body, the elongated jaw gnashes with

**Dragon Mutant (Boss)**

Competent Skills:

- dodge \_\_\_\_\_
- endurance \_\_\_\_\_
- run \_\_\_\_\_
- survival \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

- intimidate \_\_\_\_\_
- notice \_\_\_\_\_
- stealth \_\_\_\_\_
- track \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Skill:

- fight \_\_\_\_\_

Natural Defenses:

- claws \_\_\_\_\_
- tail swipe \_\_\_\_\_
- tough skin \_\_\_\_\_

**Crab-Man (Boss)**

Competent Skills:

- dodge \_\_\_\_\_
- endurance \_\_\_\_\_
- lift \_\_\_\_\_
- search \_\_\_\_\_
- survival \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

- intimidate \_\_\_\_\_
- notice \_\_\_\_\_
- strength \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Skill:

- fight \_\_\_\_\_

Natural Defenses:

- pincer claws \_\_\_\_\_
- carapace \_\_\_\_\_

**Orangutan Beast (Boss)**

Competent Skills:

- endurance \_\_\_\_\_
- intimidate \_\_\_\_\_
- lift \_\_\_\_\_
- stealth \_\_\_\_\_
- survival \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

- climb \_\_\_\_\_
- dodge \_\_\_\_\_
- jump \_\_\_\_\_
- notice \_\_\_\_\_
- strength \_\_\_\_\_

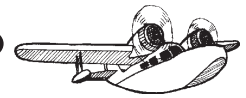
Signature Skill:

- fight \_\_\_\_\_

Natural Defenses:

- claws \_\_\_\_\_





sharp teeth, a forked tongue flicks out of its mouth, a tail swishes back and forth, and it crawls along on the ground with its four clawed feet. The dragon mutant stays low to the ground, scrambling through the underbrush for cover and occasionally hauling itself into palm trees to wait in ambush. In combat it rears up on its hind legs—betraying its human origins—lashing out with talons and whipping its powerful tail at opponents. The dragon mutant hisses menacingly at any perceived threats.

**Crab-Man:** This creature moves clumsily on land, scrambling around on its set of eight pointed legs growing from its torso, each covered in a hard carapace. A hard, crab-like shell has also emerged from the skin on top of its head, its back, and forearms, offering a layer of protection from most blows. The unfortunate beast's eyes emerge from its human-like head on stalks. Its two arms bear ungainly, carapace pincers in place of forearms and hands, which the monstrosity flails about and snaps at anyone posing a threat. Despite its oceanic origins, the crab-man remains vulnerable to seawater.

**Orangutan Beast:** At first this creature appears like an oversized orangutan, but the human face and monstrous claws betray its mutated nature. It swings swiftly through the jungle treetops, swishing by like a gentle breeze disturbing the palm fronds. The beast ambushes its prey from above, dropping down and flailing its elongated hairy arms at enemies, hoping to slash them with its claws. It also possesses incredible strength for climbing trees, throwing opponents, and smashing buildings.

The heroes have several opportunities to encounter these monstrosities:

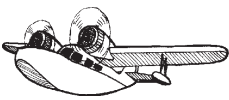
**Follow the Path:** If the heroes investigate the lifeboat or simply come across a path the mutants have hewn through the jungle, they might track down one of the creatures. Note that the orangutan beast travels through the treetops, so instead of following a path of broken underbrush, the characters should look for snapped palm fronds and claw marks on the upper tree trunks. Assuming they follow the path in the correct direction by listening for sounds of movement or conflict, the heroes come upon a mutant which reels about and attacks when it detects their presence.

**Rura-Tonga Town:** At an appropriate moment the heroes hear a scream from one end of town as one of the monsters bursts into a bungalow. Perhaps the beast surprised Allen Brennan when the writer sat down on his porch to spend the morning typing. The creature might also have crashed through "Curd" Johnson's distillery equipment, provoke an initially angry and then terrified reaction from the crazy fellow. If they characters don't react soon and dispatch the beast, the ex-big-game hunter Rawson might emerge from the jungle and blast the thing to bits with his shotgun.

**Terror in Suva:** The heroes might pursue one of the creatures deep into the jungle toward Suva, one of the native villages on the island. Although the men of Suva have some skill at fighting with fishing spears and clubs, they cannot keep the monstrosity from tearing apart huts, destroying outrigger canoes, and terrorizing the naturally superstitious natives, who believe the monstrosity is some manifestation of angered ancestors come to exact revenge from them. If the characters can protect the villagers from the beast, drive it off, or even kill it, they win greater esteem in the eyes of the natives, who now believe them capable of combating malevolent spiritual forces.

**Back to the Lifeboat:** If the heroes have proven efficient hunters, the sole remaining creature stumbles frantically back to the beach where the lifeboat landed, struggles to maneuver the boat into the water, and paddles haphazardly toward the stranded freighter. The heroes might try intercepting it or could simply shoot the lifeboat until it sinks. The monster displays a vehement hatred for salt water; it tries to pull itself out of the surf if the boat sinks, and ultimately drowns thrashing about trying to escape from the ocean.

Once the heroes finally dispatch all three rampaging mutants, they return to Rura-Tonga town to discover they face a new challenge.



## EPISODE THREE: THE PLAGUE BEGINS

Once everyone calms down from defending themselves from the berserk atrocities that escaped from the Japanese freighter, several residents of Rura-Tonga begin showing early symptoms of the epidemic. The virus has through various means reached the island; the characters or others who investigated aboard the *Siranui* could have brought it back from their expedition; those who fought off the mutants (or examined their corpses) could have carried the virus; or it simply might have carried to land on seabirds.

The plague symptoms begin with general illness, fever, weakness, and vomiting. At first victims can still move about, as if they had a case of the common cold, but after several hours they weaken so much they can do little else but languish in bed. At this point the virus causes large, itchy splotches to form all over the skin; these soon fester and begin oozing pus. Victims descend into a comatose state which soon resembles death to the average person; those with medical training who examine supposedly “dead” victims realize they’ve entered a death-like state of stasis while their body undergoes the unnatural metamorphosis into a ghastly mutant form.

The heroes might realize that infected victims could eventually develop into raging beasts that could terrorize the island and put the residents’ safety at risk. They must find some way to stop the disease symptoms from progressing and keep the virus from infecting others.

### MEDICAL MEASURES

The heroes might think of several ideas drawing on medical resources in Rura-Tonga town that might at least help treat plague victims, if not find a cure.

**Quarantine:** The heroes might take the most natural step to stem the spread of an epidemic by quarantining the victims in one place where they can receive medical attention yet remain apart from others who aren’t yet infected. Sally McKinsey refuses to let infected people stay in her bar, but her brother Ian retrieves a large field tent from his warehouse along with enough cots and blankets for those infected. Clearing and leveling a stretch of sandy beach along the lagoon shore provides a good spot for a quarantine tent. The heroes might also try convincing the Anglican missionary Reverend James Carlisle to use his small church as a quarantine and treatment center.

**Medical Supplies:** The heroes have to search to find enough medical supplies to treat infected victims. Although Ian McKinsey can provide a quarantine tent, cots, and blankets, his warehouse has nothing a doctor could use beyond booze and bandages. If the characters believe alcohol might help (at least in cleaning festering skin lesions), they find Sally McKinsey eager to provide whatever she has in her bar. Getting booze from “Curd” Johnson might prove more difficult, but he has plenty of the strongest spirits on the island. Beth Carlisle, daughter of Reverend James Carlisle, has some basic medical training and a doctor’s bag containing some surgical tools, bandages, and quinine, but nothing to treat a plague, and certainly not enough for everyone who’s infected. Fresh water abounds from the numerous springs supplying the town with water, and burners in the Matilda Hotel’s kitchen can heat water if necessary.

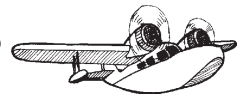
**Chateau Gauthier:** Anyone approaching Chateau Gauthier for aid receives a gruff refusal from the sentries posted at the guard shack. They refuse permission to proceed up the road to plead with Gauthier himself and send the characters on their way.

### THE CURE

No traditional medical solution can cure plague victims. At this point the heroes might deduce the role seawater plays in affecting the plague after viewing its harmful effects on any monstrous mutants who wander back into the ocean.

Anyone suffering from any stage of the plague—even those in the comatose, metamorphosis stage—can cleanse themselves by immersion in seawater. A natural chemical found in tropical seawater enters the system through the skin, mouth, and nose and renders the plague virus impotent; the body slowly heals on its own, naturally purging itself of the virus, now rendered harmless.

Once a victim awakens from stasis in a fully-mutated form, however, immersion in seawater only causes pain, bodily disintegration, and ultimately death. By this stage the virus has fully transformed the person into a horrific semblance of its own unstable form.



Gauthier and his mercenaries wish to remain sheltered from the commotion in town on their protected spit of land, though they take interest in any activity aboard the Japanese freighter.

## **BACK TO THE FREIGHTER**

The heroes might venture back to the *Siranui* to search for some clues leading to a cure amid the laboratory wreckage. Sifting through the debris—smashed furniture, papers, broken glass, journals, destroyed medical equipment, spilled supplies—reveals nothing immediately useful. Most of the strewn pages and files require an extremely fluent knowledge of Japanese to fully understand the scientific terminology. The overall state of disarray in the laboratory makes finding, interpreting, and piecing together any clues about the disease’s origin or cure nearly impossible. Should they return to the *Siranui*, any infected characters become further weakened during their explorations, reminding the heroes that they don’t have much time to cure this epidemic.

Assuming they left the Chinese prisoners locked in the hold and left to their fate, the heroes hear a wild commotion of roaring and banging below decks on their return to the ship. If they left the prisoner cage open, they might encounter more beastly human-animal mutants rampaging across the ship. Now the heroes have to worry about containment: do they eliminate the monstrosities one by one, do they cut loose the remaining lifeboats, or do they make arrangements to blow the entire freighter using the explosives in the second cargo hold?

## **TRIBAL ADVICE**

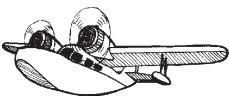
If the heroes decided to seek advice from one of the native villages, or if they simply wish to see if the plague has spread there, they might harness the tribal knowledge of the local flora. Chief Lautoka might even suggest this if characters encounter him in Rura-Tonga town. The heroes can reach Levu in an hour if they jog along the jungle paths or take Grijzen’s fishing boat along the coast.

After they explain their situation and examine any villagers infected with the disease, the characters meet Kavana, an old island woman wise in the legends and ways of their people. She proposes three possibilities that might help stem the plague symptoms or cure victims altogether:

**Natural Remedies:** Kavana leads the heroes into the nearby jungle and points out unripe mangoes, a broad-leafed bush, and a freshwater plant with a flexible stalk. By crushing the mango meat, broad leaves, and chopped stalks, they can make a salve that—when spread on skin lesions of those infected—slows the progression of the disease and offers some physical comfort to victims. It won’t stop the virus, but the salve temporarily boosts the body’s immunity to slow its evolution toward the monstrous metamorphosis.

**Circle of Ancients:** When the natives of Levu encounter a serious crisis, they consult the spirits of their ancestors at the Circle of Ancients, a sacred place a short walk into the jungle from the village. Kavana and Lautoka lead the heroes there after emphasizing the holy and secret nature of the place. The shrine consists of a clearing bounded by immense wooden tiki statues set in the ground, all facing inward. Kavana explains each statue represents a famous ancestor the villagers respect with solemn reverence. Those seeking guidance or healing stand in the center of the clearing, chant a summoning prayer, and wait for the ancestors to act in their own way. The heroes might try this themselves, or position an infected person amid the tiki statues to see if the spirits heal them. Whether or not the ancestors have any effect on the plague remains debatable. If other cures the characters pursue do not bring about any results (especially after they encounter the beached Japanese sailor in “Episode Four: Survivor”), the ancient spirits might serve as the only remaining means for resolving the adventure.





**Tears of the Mountain Goddess:** Given this desperate situation (especially if several villagers become infected), Kavana and Lautoka agree to show the heroes their holiest of holy places in the hopes it might cure the plague. The natives believe that hot springs located west of Levu where the jungle meets the rising volcano slope are the tears of the mountain goddess, a sacred place visited in only the most dire of times. Kavana and Lautoka believe the spirit of the mountain goddess would not take offense if outsiders sought to cure their illness by drinking this water or even immersing themselves in the warm pools. In fact, the hot springs contain enough salt in the mineral-rich water to cure the disease, and the heat opens the pores, speeding the absorption of minerals into the body. People in the earliest stages of the disease don't have too much trouble traveling along the jungle paths and up the slope to the hot springs. The heroes must organize some way to carry those who have weakened to the point of immobility to the pools, possibly by stretchers or litters borne by healthy townspeople or villagers rallied to overcome their overall fear of the plague to help those in need.

## EPISODE FOUR: SURVIVOR



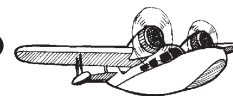
As the characters struggle to find a cure for the slowly progressing plague infecting the islanders, someone discovers a mysterious survivor from the Japanese freighter who holds the key to curing the epidemic.

Someone discovers the sailor washed up on one of the island's outer beaches (not in the lagoon). The heroes might come upon him if they travel along the beaches or the nearby waters on their way to Levu. If the characters don't find him, one of the natives out fishing spots the sailor and offers him help back to the village; others run to get the heroes so they can examine the survivor.

The sailor exhibits signs of having suffered the plague—splotchy lesions covering the skin and a general weakness throughout his body—but after a few moments of observation seems to be slowly gaining strength and healing the lesions. If the heroes watch him for a longer period, they confirm that his body has somehow cleansed itself of the plague. (Having jumped overboard before the virus sent his body into a coma, his immersion in sea water prevented the disease from progressing and mutating his body.)

The crewman speaks only a little English, so heroes must have some working knowledge of Japanese to more thoroughly question him. Shozo Miyano served aboard the *Siranui* as a lowly crewman responsible for helping to maintain the proper functioning of the engine room and other mechanical systems. He only knows the ship carried prisoners, though the army soldiers and other personnel oddly referred to them as “lumber” and “logs.” The soldiers kept the crew away from any portions of the ship where prisoners were housed or moved. Shozo heard terrible screams, knew something horrible was going on, but didn't dare say anything lest they toss him in with the doomed Chinese rabble. Two days ago, with much of the crew either sick or dead, the *Siranui* floundered in a storm. Shozo admits he lost his senses, raged insanely around the ship, and eventually found himself overboard, clutching a piece of floating debris bobbing in the sea. He spotted an island in the distance and tried swimming there, but soon lost consciousness. When Shozo woke, he was safely on the sandy shore feeling much better.

Shozo, his story, and his improving condition should point the heroes toward immersion in seawater as the cure for the epidemic. If the characters don't follow this line of investigation, someone else who witnesses Shozo's rescue or hears his story suggests it.



Taking the sick or comatose down to the beach and immersing them in the lagoon waters (or offshore for infected villagers) proves relatively easy, especially if the heroes earlier erected the quarantine tent on or near the beach. After soaking in seawater for several minutes, unconscious victims awaken, and ill people begin feeling noticeably better. With a proven cure in hand, the heroes can help supervise the treatment for everyone infected. Everyone who survives, and those healthy individuals who also immerse themselves just in case, develops a basic immunity to any remaining virus going around the island.

## **EPISODE FIVE: DESTROYING THE SIRANUI**

The *Siranui* has listed on the reef outside the lagoon all day, but eventually the tide comes in and the freighter faces the possibility it might drift free of the reef and either float close to Rura-Tonga's shores or off to infect some other inhabited island. The heroes might also comprehend the threat that the surviving Chinese prisoners have mutated into abominable monstrosities. In any event, someone must destroy the *Siranui*.

(The heroes might come to this conclusion earlier in the adventure—particularly after examining the Japanese freighter closely—simply skip ahead to this portion and then resolve the rest of the scenario with a revised order of episodes.)

To blow up the freighter the heroes must travel back to the *Siranui* and board her, rig the explosives in the cargo hold with a fuse, light it, and evacuate the ship posthaste. Several factors might complicate this plan. The characters must find a reel of fuse line somewhere in the hold or some other portion of the ship occupied by army personnel; this requires a *Hard search* roll. They could also improvise some other kind of detonator from personal items or material scavenged from the ship.

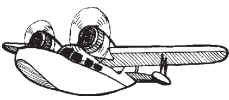
If any infected Chinese prisoners remain from earlier, they have since mutated into furious creatures similar to those that tore across the island in “Episode Two: Raging Monstrosities.” They seek to inflict their anger on anything animate or inanimate they find on the *Siranui*, including heroes attempting to rig the dynamite in the hold to explode. As an additional threat, several beasts find the remaining lifeboats and try deploying them to escape the freighter and row to Rura-Tonga. The characters must either destroy these abominations one-by-one as they swarm up from the forward cargo hold, or quickly detonate the dynamite to eradicate everything aboard the ship.

If the heroes choose not to destroy the *Siranui*—or if the mutants deter or delay their plans to do so—the freighter mysteriously explodes on its own at some climactic moment in the action. If the raging mutants break into the other cargo hold and arm themselves with the weapons they find there, they might accidentally discharge a firearm into the crates of dynamite and destroy the freighter.

Assuming the Imperial Japanese Navy lost contact with the *Siranui* earlier and presumes she encountered trouble, they might have dispatched a submarine to destroy evidence of the laboratory ship. To ensure the ship does not fall into the wrong hands, a submarine lurking in nearby waters launches a full spread of four torpedoes; any heroes still on deck might notice them speeding toward the freighter in time to leap overboard before the entire ship explodes in a tumult of flame.

## **EPILOGUE**

Once the heroes have found a cure for the epidemic and destroyed the *Siranui*, they have managed to eradicate most traces of the virus in and around the island. What isn't killed in the seawater eventually dies without a living carrier to sustain it. The characters might exercise caution when initially contacting other visitors or traveling



## **EPIDEMIC PREVENTION RESEARCH LABORATORY**

By the start of the Pacific War several special units with seemingly innocuous covers operate in Japanese-controlled territory, including the infamous Unit 731, which conduct sadistic experiments on human captives for the duration of World War II.

The practice of using captives for experimentation begins in 1932 in Manchuria, where “scientists” subject prisoners to a variety of experiments with chemical and biological agents. Its cover—the “Political Department and Epidemic Prevention Research Laboratory”—obscures the fact that it serves as a branch of the dreaded Japanese secret police, the Kempei Tai.

This becomes the first of several “research groups” operated by both the Kempei Tai and the Imperial Japanese Army; they don’t become widespread until the Sino-Japanese conflict escalates in 1937. These facilities are established with supposed health concern agendas which allow them to operate near population centers from which they drew their subjects and other resources.

Most experiments push the human body beyond physical limits: exposing people to toxic chemical and biological substances; subjecting victims to extreme environmental conditions; removing limbs or performing surgery without anesthetic; testing weapons on live humans; and other such sinister, unspeakable horrors people could not believe one human being would inflict upon another. Some speculators concoct wild theories about Japanese medical experimental programs, claiming they dabble in stimulating biological mutations, attempting to breed “super-humans,” and harnessing the power of aliens visiting earth from faraway planets.

Although Japanese forces try to eliminate evidence of these “research facilities” and their gruesome experiments, such atrocities slowly come to light after their defeat in 1945.

to other destinations, but the fact that the plague doesn’t manifest itself after they affect the cure should serve as proof that the danger has passed.

Few people in official channels believe anything the heroes claim about the Japanese running inhuman experiments on a freighter, even if they managed to scavenge shreds of evidence from the ship itself. Japanese officials deny such a vessel with that name ever existed, and assert that the rescued sailor Shozo Miyano came from some other ship caught in a storm. Although Reverend Carlisle and his daughter Beth don’t accompany the characters on any of their expeditions to the *Siranui*, they take a keen interest in any descriptions of the facilities aboard the freighter and any evidence the heroes retrieve. Future visitors—possibly undercover agents for various intelligence agencies—might visit Rura-Tonga to gather information about the plague outbreak and stories that it supposedly started aboard a freighter stranded on the reef.

The fate of Shozo Miyano ultimately remains with the heroes. Since he’s a legitimate Japanese citizen he naturally seeks to return home. Diplomats or officers from the nearest Japanese consulate or military base might work to bring him back to Japan; even with diplomatic relations strained these days, Shozo should have no trouble leaving Rura-Tonga and heading home. Whatever he knows about the experiments aboard the *Siranui* or its sinister purpose remains minimal. How the characters handle this situation could affect their relations with any Japanese officials they meet in future scenarios.



# DOOM OF THE LOST LIBRARY

April 3, 1938—The deal sounded good at first. Accept a hefty fee to fly a Yale professor to a long-forgotten island following an ancient map. Said something about ruined temples, a medieval Hindu legend, and a forgotten treasure. He'd pay for everything, even if some associates from Rura-Tonga accompanied us, and offered us a share of any riches we find. It sounded a little far-fetched, but how could I refuse? Now that we're circling the island, with its overgrown jungle and hints of sinister ruins peeking through the treetops, I'm not too sure....

The monthly supply freighter brings a strange passenger to Rura-Tonga. Professor Carter Dudley steps onto the Rura-Tonga dock and immediately sets out chartering Captain Sharp's airplane for an expedition. He claims to know the location of a long-forgotten island in this region that supposedly holds an ancient treasure amid its remnants of a lost civilization.

Professor Dudley isn't quite what he seems, and has a more sinister agenda than simply exploring an island's distant history and looking around for interesting artifacts and treasure.

## **EPISODE ONE: MEET PROFESSOR DUDLEY**

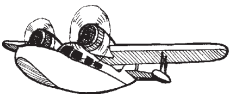
Carter Dudley looks the part of a middle-aged college professor in his threadbare trousers and shirt. Although he's slung his stereotypical tweed jacket over his shoulder, a neck tie still restricts his neck, causing sweat to drip down his balding head and bare face. He dabs at the perspiration with a dingy handkerchief and adjusts the round spectacles sitting on his nose. A short fellow, he has a slightly pudgy physique and a friendly face that reminds people of a personable pink pig.

Dudley introduces himself to everyone he meets—"I'm Professor Carter Dudley, an Oriental cultures scholar from Yale University; pleased to meet you."—with a vigorous, clammy handshake and a toothy grin. His jovial, affable personality delights everyone he meets. Dudley talks in an animated voice about his work studying medieval Indian history and Hindu legends. Dudley claims he's spent his entire life researching the culture of the Indian subcontinent, spending summers exploring its cities, temples, and ruins, and examining relevant texts in libraries and museums around the world.

During his researches Dudley uncovered a lost Hindu legend of an Indian prince who, fleeing the Moslem hordes invading from Persia, packed his people and riches into ships and sailed into the Pacific Ocean seeking an island shelter where he could re-establish his kingdom. Dudley relates the "Legend of Prince Karnata" (see sidebar) to anyone willing to listen, then expounds on how, while researching this tale, he came across and acquired a medieval map from a musty bookstore in India. After consulting maps, making various navigational calculations, and consulting similar stories in regional cultures, Dudley pinpointed the island's location, only 250 miles west of Rura-Tonga.

Armed with this evidence, Dudley approached Yale University for a grant to fund his further explorations of this legend. He obviously won the funding given the hefty fee he promises Captain Sharp for the use of his aircraft and his piloting expertise. He also provides the cash to purchase any necessary expedition supplies from Ian McKinsey's Mainland Shipping Company (though the Grumman seaplane can't carry much cargo with a full load of passengers). During the time the heroes observe Dudley in Rura-





Tonga town they watch him spend money freely on drinks for others, a fine room at the Matilda Hotel, and fancy meals from the kitchen.

For someone like Professor Dudley, following up this research with a successful expedition could really make him—and those who help him—famous and wealthy.

## PREPARATIONS

Although the adventure ostensibly begins *in media res* on the flight to the lost island, allow the characters some pre-story time to spend any funds Dudley gives them to purchase ostensibly useful supplies for the expedition.

Ian McKinsey's Mainland Shipping Company can provide the following supplies (with quantities, where applicable, in parentheses):

- backpacks (4)
- binoculars (2)
- blankets
- canteens (4)
- cigarette lighters (5)
- crowbars (2)
- electric torches (2)
- grapple (1)
- lanterns and fuel (2)
- pencils and sketch paper (1)
- pen knives (3)
- picks (2)
- rations
- rope (100 feet)
- shovels (2)
- tents (2)

## THE LEGEND OF PRINCE KARNATA

In the 11th century armies from Persia began invading India. They brought with them a new religion, Islam, devoted to one deity instead of the multitude of gods and goddesses the Hindus worshipped.

Prince Karnata—a young but astute ruler of a kingdom along India's east coast—feared these strange new invaders would sweep across the continent to pillage his cities, persecute his people, plunder his wealth, and suppress his religion. He offered his subjects a means of escape: Karnata constructed a fleet of ships large enough to evacuate most of his followers along with their wealth and livestock. The refugee fleet sailed into the eastern oceans seeking a new home far from aggressive and intolerant invaders.

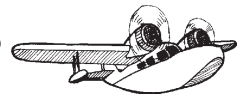
Many years later the fleet finally found a suitable island after enduring numerous hardships and undertaking an entire epic of misadventures analogous to those experienced by Odysseus in Homer's *Odyssey*. Prince Karnata erected a grand temple dedicated to the elephant-headed god of wisdom and learning, Ganesha, that he might watch over their new enterprise in establishing an island kingdom far from home. Here the monarch deposited the vast library he'd rescued from his palace as a resource to future generations who could now carry on their way of life without interference from others.

The refugees covered the island with beautiful temples, grand estates, carefully managed farms, and other industries to ensure their survival. Their Hindu culture and traditions

endured without threat from invaders. After a century, however, tensions began building as certain families grew in prominence and others fell into poverty. Beggars crowded around the secure walls of treasury vaults. Various factions worked openly and covertly against each other, undermining their resources and wealth. Eventually many people turned to Kali, the black goddess of destruction, to wreak vengeance on their enemies.

One night after performing sinister rituals in Kali's temple, the frenzied throngs of worshippers charged into the streets, wantonly slaying everyone they met, burning buildings, and even turning on each other in a bloodthirsty rage. A handful of peaceful citizens took shelter in the temple to Ganesha on the far side of the island and implored the god to save them. Legend claims the god smashed his mighty foot down in the middle of the island, splitting it in two and forming a vast lagoon that separated the land controlled by Kali's followers from that held by Ganesha's subjects. The resulting earthquake destroyed many of the remaining buildings and killed many people. The survivors degenerated into a primitive state and, after the passage of centuries, reverted to savage forms driven by raging animal instinct.

The legend inspired several Indian adventurers in later years to undertake expeditions to find Prince Karnata's lost island to retrieve some of the valuable manuscripts he brought to the library and recover any of the immense treasure supposedly scattered throughout the ruins.



McKinsey has no weapons for sale, though for an exorbitant price he can find three sticks of dynamite and fuses.

The heroes should bear in mind—as Captain Sharp reminds everyone—the Grumman seaplane can only carry so much in its small cargo area and the passenger compartment.

## **ULTERIOR MOTIVES**

In undertaking this expedition, Professor Dudley pursues a hidden and sinister agenda. Although he's a real professor at Yale and has spent his life pursuing research into Hindu culture and history, Dudley leads a secret life as a self-taught sorcerer versed in the sinister magic of the goddess Kali. He's been seeking Prince Karnata's lost island for years. Dudley believes an ancient text—the *Atharva of Kali*—exists in the library that contains arcane rituals intended to empower the goddess' chief servants with supernatural abilities. If he can perform these ceremonies in the temple of Kali, Dudley thinks he can advance his own magical powers to new and dreadful levels.

The professor has kept his cult life secret, conducting research as a sideline on his usual academic travels and practicing his dark arts surreptitiously in the basement of his Connecticut home. For the past few years he has quietly pursued evidence proving the legend of Prince Karnata, including clues, artifacts, and maps leading to the lost island, all the while knowing it hid a fantastic library and an evil temple to Kali.

Dudley carries out his arcane research with amoral persistence. He did not actually purchase this map from an old bookshop in New Delhi as he claims, but stole it from an antiquities dealer he murdered in Calcutta. The cash Dudley so easily spends actually comes from Yale University, but not from a grant. In reality he embezzled it from university funds to pay for this expedition. The institution administration doesn't know he's undertaking an independent expedition, nor has it uncovered any evidence of his embezzlement scheme. The faculty granted Dudley a sabbatical for mental health reasons and believe he's visiting various spa towns throughout Europe.

On this final leg of his journey, Professor Dudley intends to lure the characters to join his expedition with generous amounts of cash, the appeal of exploring the remnants of a forgotten civilization, and the possibility of finding a treasure trove among the island's ruins. Once he's used them to transport him to the island and find the arcane manuscript in the hidden library, Dudley hopes for an opportunity to slip away and “disappear,” heading to the ruined temple of Kali to perform the final rituals to magnify his magical powers.

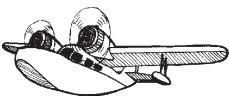
## **DUDLEY'S SPELLS**

Despite his somewhat inept appearance in public, Dudley really possesses knowledge of ancient rites dedicated to the Indian goddess Kali. After years studying hymns, spells, and liturgies of this ancient cult, and countless nights practicing them in his secret basement study, he now has the ability to cast several low-grade enchantments that tap into the power of his patron deity. With his ultimate goal so close in such a remote location, Dudley has no qualms about casting these spells in the open once he reveals his true intentions at the island and betrays the heroes.

Dudley can easily conjure several minor enchantments using his *cast magic* ability to succeed at the difficulties attached to specific rituals listed below. Each time he casts a spell, however, Kali demands a price. After invoking each rite, Dudley must make an *endurance* roll. At first he must pass it at a *Routine* level, but subsequent spells require him to pass a *Challenging*, *Hard*, and finally an *Improbable endurance* test. Should he fail he suffers physical penalties as if lightly wounded, and must either rest for 1–6 hours or consume a substantial meal to shake off these disadvantages and regain the ability to cast more magic.







**Professor Carter  
Dudley  
(Mastermind)**

Competent Skills:

- bargain \_\_\_\_\_
- bureaucracy \_\_\_\_\_
- charm \_\_\_\_\_
- climb \_\_\_\_\_
- dodge \_\_\_\_\_
- fight \_\_\_\_\_
- run \_\_\_\_\_
- search \_\_\_\_\_
- shoot \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

- archaeology \_\_\_\_\_
- bluff \_\_\_\_\_
- cast magic \_\_\_\_\_
- endurance \_\_\_\_\_
- excavate \_\_\_\_\_
- intellect \_\_\_\_\_
- investigate \_\_\_\_\_
- notice \_\_\_\_\_
- persuade \_\_\_\_\_
- sleight of hand \_\_\_\_\_
- stealth \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Skill:

- research \_\_\_\_\_

Gear:

- pen knife \_\_\_\_\_
- pencil and pad \_\_\_\_\_

None of these spells require any ingredients to perform; Dudley must simply intone the enchantment and make several arcane gestures with his hands.

**Kali's Ever-Gazing Eye:** (*Routine*) This spell enables Dudley to enter a short trance lasting no longer than 15 minutes during which he can telepathically monitor the heroes' progress from afar. He receives only an overall visual impression of their actions with no sound or voices. This spell derives its power from Kali's third, all-seeing eye. Although characters cannot resist or otherwise foil this spell, those making *Hard notice* rolls gain an uncanny sense that they're being watched.

**Consuming Terror:** (*Challenging*) Kali possessed a legendary ability to rob male victims of their strength before attacking them. This enchantment, when successfully cast at an individual or a group within sight, stuns them in a shocked daze (assuming they fail a *Hard intellect* check to resist the spell's initial effects). They simply stand in place, unable to act from sheer terror. Victims of this spell may try rousing themselves from this terrified stupor once every five minutes by successfully rolling a *Challenging intellect* check. Women and animals, however, remain completely immune to this spell.

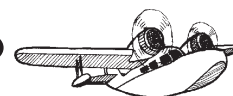
**Bloodthirsty Dance:** (*Hard*) Hindu mythology claims that Kali once entered a frenzied, destructive dance by drinking the blood of a demon she vanquished. This spell enables a sorcerer to enchant one or several victims within his visual range into "seeing red" and sending them into a flailing, berserk dance during which they might inadvertently attack nearby allies. Victims appear like they're bobbing marionettes at the ends of a crazed puppeteer's strings. They might bash at each other with fists, or use weapons and other gear in their hands to strike at each other. Targets of this spell may try shaking its effects every minute by making a *Hard intellect* roll. Otherwise they continue to dance and flail until they collapse from exhaustion (after about 10 minutes) or are pummeled into unconsciousness by other victims.

## EPISODE TWO: EXPLORING THE ISLAND

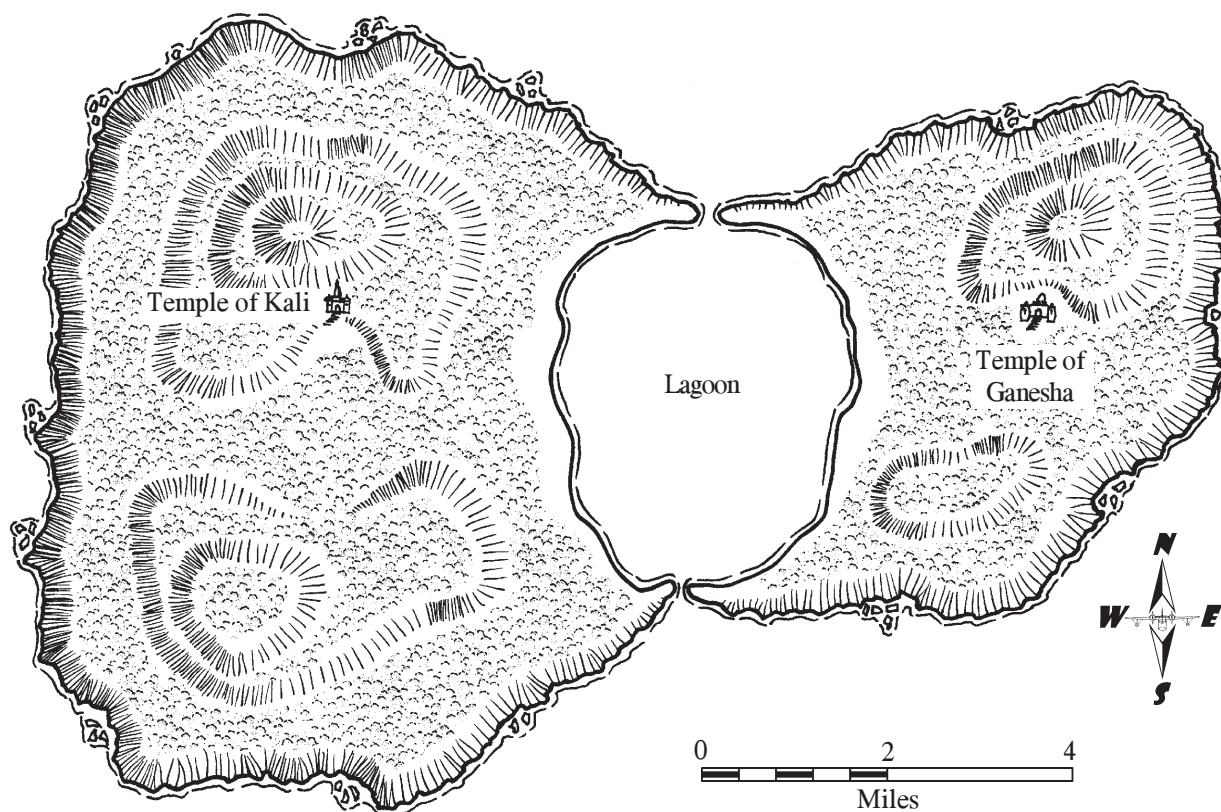
After making preparations at Rura-Tonga and comparing Dudley's antique map to current navigational charts of the area, the expedition sets out in Captain Sharp's Grumman seaplane. The flight to the lost island remains uneventful, if a bit cramped. With the passengers and extra expedition gear, the Grumman's passenger compartment gets uncomfortably crowded.

The navigational computations seem accurate, and after an hour's flight the heroes spot an island matching the description on both the map and in the legend of Prince Karnata. Flying around the coastline offers an aerial view of the terrain. The island consists of two distinct sections divided by a vast lagoon with narrow inlets at each end. If the crew flies low over the lagoon or chooses to land in it, those making *Routine notice* rolls realize the calm, blue waters teem with sharks. Mountainous terrain rises from the interior of each remaining half of the island, with everything but the shoreline and some rocky high ground covered in lush jungle foliage. Anyone making a *Hard notice* roll thinks they spot signs of ruins amid the dense rainforest.

Cliffs rise along the coasts farthest from the lagoon, but the shore in the lagoon and along the rest of the island consists of a sandy beach. The crew can easily land the Grumman seaplane and dock at any of these accessible shorelines. From here the characters can explore the island on their own guidance or through gentle prodding from Professor Dudley, who claims the temple to Ganesha and the lost library stand on the smaller, easternmost of the two island halves. During their explorations the heroes have a chance to encounter some of the island's inhabitants as well as its ruins.



## PRINCE KARNATA'S ISLAND



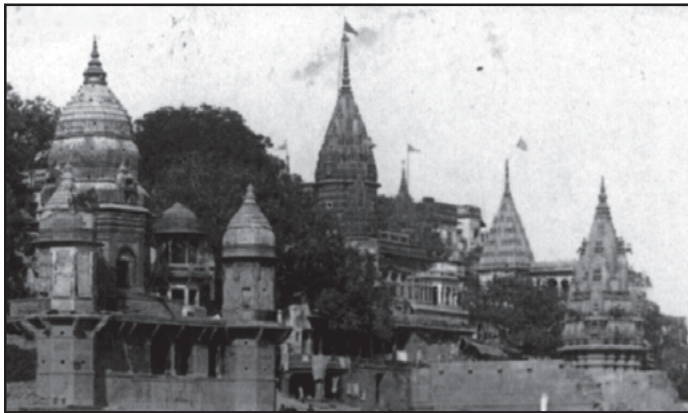
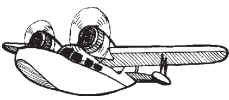
## COAST GUARDIANS

When the characters initially beach the seaplane along the coast they realize they've found the right island even before they enter the jungle. Stony faces of wild Hindu gods stare out at them from the edge of the overgrown rainforest. Every 50 feet a ten-foot-tall statue stands guard along the beach (even the shores fronting the lagoon). They rise from the ground at slight angles, past earthquakes having upset their foundations and tilted them unevenly.

The gods depicted in these sentry statues differ along each half of the island. On the eastern side dedicated to Ganesha the statues take the form of portly, elephant-headed warriors armed with battle axes; the sculptures on the western side of the island look like multi-armed, savage-faced female goddesses wearing belts of skulls and wielding swords. Anyone versed in Hindu mythology can tell from the deity's fangs, lolling tongue, and third eye that she is Kali, the Indian mother goddess of death and destruction.

A tangled growth of clinging vines covers the statues, leaving only ominous hints of their true nature visible: glaring eyes, fanged mouths, twisting trunks, and sinuous arms. Most stand in varying states of disrepair, some having lost heads and arms; the features of those facing the sea have weathered into smoother, less distinct forms.

Anyone with appropriate language experience (who also makes a *Hard languages* roll) can decipher the inscriptions on bases of the less worn statues: "Those who trespass upon the lands of Prince Karnata shall meet their doom at the hands of his servants and the gods who watch over him."



### JUNGLE RUINS

Movement through the dense rainforest covering the island presents difficulties from the thick undergrowth covering extremely rocky, uneven ground. As the heroes scramble over low mounds of vegetation they realize the blocks have even edges and smoothed or decorated sides; practically the entire terrain consists of the overgrown ruins of a once-great city.

After several minutes clamoring through dense foliage, the characters discern avenues between the mounds that seem to offer easier passage with less overgrowth. These paths follow the routes of old streets that survived the island's catastrophe centuries ago. They wind through canyons of crumbled ruins, allowing for easier passage to various locations on the island. Although they can

proceed faster along these routes, the heroes put themselves in a defensively dangerous position for ambush; mounds of rubble tower over the streets, offering hiding places for attackers and advantageous higher ground.

If any heroes decided to simply start excavating a mound of rubble to look for treasure, they spend at least a half hour digging through the ruins. Each attempt requires a *Challenging lift* or *strength* roll; those who fail sustain minor injuries from tumbling rocks or shifting debris. On a subsequent *Hard search* roll the character discovers some small trinket with no great value beyond its worth to archaeologists. The islands inhabitants long ago scavenged any valuable treasures from the rubble and deposited them in their respective temple vaults.

### BLACK APES

At some point while exploring the western half of the island the heroes encounter a savage species of black orangutan, quite possibly a descendent of the original, Kali-worshipping inhabitants.

The characters initially worry that someone's watching them as they proceed through the jungle. They hear foliage brush and break, but see nobody following them over the ground. Rocks tumbles down from rubble piles without anyone nearby to disturb them. The heroes notice treetops swaying yet see no breeze wafting through the branches. As they progress through the jungle, the heroes begin sensing more tangible signs of life beyond the dense foliage. Distant hoots and growls echo off the mounds of debris. Branches snap just over the nearest pile of rubble.

The characters finally meet these beasts in an ambush. Savage, ape-like creatures with extremely long limbs burst from behind the mounds and trees. The monsters look like huge orangutans, but instead of the characteristic orange fur, they have shaggy, black hair. They thrash at the heroes with long claws at the end of their gangly arms, barking and howling in rage. After a moment, however, they break off the attack and retreat back into the dense jungle as quickly as they emerged.

After the initial ambush the apes retreat and keep their distance from the characters to pursue their own sinister agenda. As servants of Kali, they follow orders from the goddess' representatives and priests, including Dudley.

Depending on his progress translating and casting the rituals in the *Atharva of Kali*, he might command his newly acquired minions to harass or mislead the heroes. Once he's undergone the transformation increasing his sinister powers, he orders the black apes to herd the characters to the Temple of Kali to meet their ultimate doom at the hands of the newly ascended high priest of Kali. (One of his first directives commands the apes to take control of the heroes' seaplane and post a guard at it: see "Aircraft Ambush" below.)

The apes haunt the western portion of the island dedicated to Kali, using the trees and ruins of the temple there as their lair. They have an insurmountable fear of water,

#### Black Ape (Henchman)

Competent Skills:

- climb \_\_\_\_\_
- dodge \_\_\_\_\_
- jump \_\_\_\_\_
- lift \_\_\_\_\_
- notice \_\_\_\_\_
- stealth \_\_\_\_\_
- survive \_\_\_\_\_

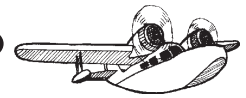
Expert Skill:

- fight \_\_\_\_\_

Natural Defenses:

- claws \_\_\_\_\_





which not only limits their ability to assault the seaplane, but keeps them from crossing the 50 feet of shallow water at each entrance to the lagoon leading to the eastern side of the island.

## **AIRCRAFT AMBUSH**

If the heroes left anyone back at the seaplane to guard it, the black apes attempt to assault it, chasing the sentry away and taking control of the plane. Assuming the characters hauled the plane up onto the sandy beach to keep it from drifting away with the tide, the apes have a chance to rush the guards and set up their own sentries lingering around the aircraft and hiding in the nearby jungle. If the heroes left the plane alone, the apes post their own guards hidden just within the jungle shadows and ambush the characters if they return to the aircraft.

If the characters anchored the plane even a few feet offshore, the apes might emerge to threaten anyone guarding it, but they do not enter the water to either assault the guard or take possession of the *Flying Fish*. They return to the jungle to wait in ambush for the other heroes to return.

Dudley needs the seaplane to return to civilization after he performs the rituals enhancing his magical powers. He believes he can pilot it himself after watching the crew during the flight to the island, though his ego might blind his intellect when it comes time to prove himself.

## **SHARK LAGOON**

The lagoon separating the island's two halves probably formed from a long-eroded volcanic crater. A swarm of tiger sharks glides menacingly through the calm, blue water. They don't bother the floatplane if it lands in the lagoon, though characters must taxi to shore and beach the craft before disembarking; even wading ashore after anchoring the plane exposes them to shark attacks.

The two halves almost touch at each end, separated by about 50 feet of water no deeper at low tide than two feet (though this is still deep enough for sharks to try, rather clumsily, to attack anyone trying to cross).

The denizens of each half of the island avoid these shores, since the sharks prey on any living creature foolish enough to wade into the water and present a tasty target.

## **ELEPHANT ENCOUNTER**

Characters exploring the jungle of the eastern half of the island might encounter several elephants living in the maze of dense foliage and rubble mounds. Perhaps they descended from the Asian elephants Prince Karnata and his refugees brought with them. They might actually be the transformed descendents of the inhabitants who long ago worshipped Ganesha, or at least house their spirits, forever cursed to roam the island and protect it from invaders.

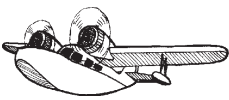
These creatures amble along well-worn paths, munching on leaves, grass, and fruit, and keeping watch for malevolent trespassers. The heroes first notice signs of them: crushed underbrush, toppled trees, large footprints. As they proceed into the jungle, they hear distant sounds of something large moving through the foliage. Occasionally they see far-off treetops sway as if someone bumped against their trunks.

## **DUDLEY'S STRATEGY**

Give the heroes the freedom to explore any location on the island they please; however, Dudley's enthusiasm steers them on a course toward exploring the eastern half of the island and uncovering the lost library near the ruined temple to Ganesha. While the heroes deal with the guardian statues intent on preventing evildoers from entering the temple, Dudley evades everyone and runs off gleefully to find the library. Here he searches through the bound volumes and scrolls for the *Atharva of Kali*, the liturgy that can help him attain greater supernatural power. Depending on the characters' actions, they might not reach the library themselves.

At this point—with the *Atharva of Kali* in hand—Dudley “disappears,” avoiding the heroes and making his way to the temple of Kali on the other side of the lagoon. If Captain Sharp left the seaplane beached on the shore nearest the temple of Ganesha, Dudley shoves off, boards, and fires up the engines enough to taxi across the lagoon to the other side; the loud noise of the aircraft engines alerts the heroes that someone's tampering with the seaplane. If the heroes left the plane on the other side of the lagoon, Dudley borrows any tricks they used in crossing the shark-infested waters. Alternately, he wades the 50 feet on his own, tossing a large pack of rations some distance away to appease the sharks and draw them away from his route.

He then makes his way westward through the jungle to the temple of Kali. Like the animated statues in Ganesha's temple, the black apes recognize him as a servant of the sinister goddess and obey his command as their rightful leader. Dudley needs to buy time to conduct the rituals in the presence of Kali. He orders the apes to secure the Grumman seaplane and capture anyone left guarding it. They defend Dudley while he performs the rituals to increase his magical powers and harass the characters should they attempt to interfere before his ultimate transformation. During this time the heroes continue exploring the island and search for the “missing” scholar, a search that probably brings them to the ruined temple of Kali...just as Dudley's coming into his power (see “Episode Three: To Kill A Sorcerer”).

**Guardian Elephant  
(Henchman)**Competent Skills:

endurance \_\_\_\_\_

lift \_\_\_\_\_

notice \_\_\_\_\_

run \_\_\_\_\_

search \_\_\_\_\_

strength \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skill:

fight \_\_\_\_\_

Natural Defenses:

tough skin \_\_\_\_\_

trample \_\_\_\_\_

tusks \_\_\_\_\_

Very few elephants remain, so they carefully choose when to appear and interact with or ambush the heroes. They prefer to act indirectly by toppling trees in the characters' path, causing small landslides among the piles of debris, and trampling through the nearby forest and growling menacingly.

The creatures can sense a person's motivation and deep desires; they can determine if they harbor good intentions or evil schemes. Although the characters remain pure in their motives, Dudley exudes an extreme malevolence from his hidden, sinister dedication to the goddess Kali. The elephants do not possess an innately malicious nature, but at one point they do seemingly ambush the entire group while actually attempting to assault Dudley and prevent him from finding the hidden library in the Temple of Ganesha.

The elephants remain dedicated to protecting their patron god's temple. Unfortunately their bodies are too large to fit between the gateway pillars or the narrow passages leading to the inner sanctum, so they cannot enter the temple even if trying to defend it.

Should the heroes encounter an elephant while Dudley is not in their presence, the immense beasts seem affable, dallying with the characters, accepting food, and otherwise behaving gently. They do not speak, but seem intelligent enough to answer questions by nodding or shaking their heads. Using their trunks and a few gentle head-nudges, the elephants try to encourage the heroes to abandon their quest for the Temple of Ganesha and leave this half of the island.

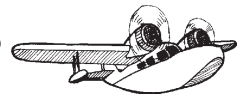
**TEMPLE OF GANESHA**

Deep in the heart of the smaller, eastern half of the island, built up against the lone, rocky peak rising from the jungle, stands a ruined temple to the elephant-headed Hindu god Ganesha. Although the walls and several upper levels remain visible from outside, only a single stone gateway allows entry into the main courtyard. Characters seeking to circumvent these barriers can try scaling the rocky slopes to surmount the walls, but this requires a *Hard climb* roll.

The gateway leads into a courtyard with a columned portico running around all four sides. Vines cover most of the ornately carved columns. In some places massive ceiling blocks have fallen. A worn staircase opposite the gate leads up toward the mountain entrance to the inner temple. Two tall stone statues of elephant-headed warriors brandishing axes flank the great arched door leading inside. The enduring spirit of Ganesha has imbued these colossi with magical power to come alive to forcibly prevent anyone from entering the inner temple. As the heroes climb the stairs and approach the archway, the statues disengage themselves from the tall niches in which they reside and stomp forward to attack the heroes.

At first the archway appears as the only means to enter the inner temple. During the confusion of combat, however, any characters taking cover in the columned portico can examine the adjacent walls for cracks leading to interior chambers or secret panels allowing surreptitious entry; successfully finding one of these requires a *Hard search* roll. This also allows Dudley—who seeks cover at the first sign of a fight with the supernatural guardian statues—a means to slip unnoticed into the temple, seemingly disappearing in the confusion, to start his own search for the hidden library and the *Atharva of Kali* that will enhance his magical powers.

Beyond the entry portico and arched gateway stands a vast cavern, the central shrine to Ganesha. Colonnades run along three sides of the chamber, hiding the sanctuary's walls in pockets of shadow. Ornately carved columns cut from the living rock support the ceiling. Stairs from the colonnades to the main floor provide a place where worshippers once sat. The far wall contains an arched niche running the full height of the cavern. It frames an immense stone statue of Ganesha, the elephant-headed god, holding a ceremonial axe, lotus flower, scepter, and a bowl in his four hands, each rendered in gold-plated metal. Unlike the guardian statues outside, Ganesha



does not come to life to take vengeance on those who enter his inner sanctum. Heroes who remove the regalia from the statue's hands might incur the god's wrath later, but they gain valuable prizes for the expedition.

Braziers before the statue once burned with coals; now only the diffuse light from outside illuminates the sanctuary with a foggy iridescence. An intricately carved altar once intended for offerings now holds only the dusty remnants of flowers, bread, and fruit left here at some final ritual. Any donations of value were long ago collected or stolen.

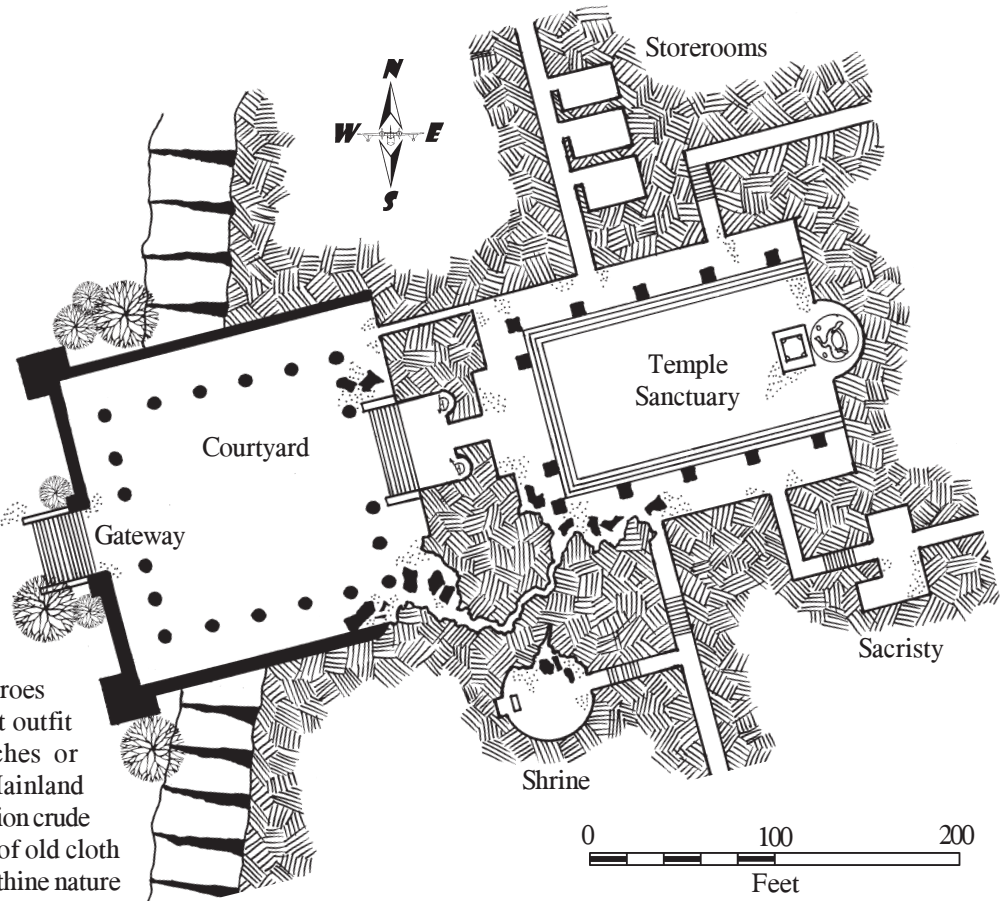
The shadowy colonnade, though choked with fallen rocks and creeping vines, conceals several smaller archways leading to a maze of passages and chambers carved within the mountain. To explore them the heroes need some light source; if they didn't outfit their expedition with electric torches or flashlights from Ian McKinsey's Mainland Shipping Company stores, they can fashion crude torches from fallen branches and bits of old cloth littering the ground. Given the labyrinthine nature of these caves, allow the heroes to encounter any chambers, hallways, or traps that might increase their suspense and delay their discovery of the hidden library until Dudley has a chance to find the *Atharva of Kali* and escape to the other side of the island. If Dudley hasn't slipped away yet, he manages to "disappear" while they characters examine the main temple chamber or go off to explore the numerous side passages.

Any relics recovered from this labyrinth—including copies of inscriptions, fragments of carved decoration, small statuary, or chunks of decorated walls—could possibly increase the scholarly value of the expedition by contributing to museums, researchers, or papers on Hindu mythology and Indian culture.

The heroes can explore various corridors and chambers that once served the temple. The encounters below appear in order from those closest to the main temple cavern to those deepest under the mountain:

**Sacristsy:** Several rooms near the main sanctuary once served as staging areas where priests prepared to conduct ceremonies to the Hindu gods. Each contains a font or basin for ablutions and shelves for storing vestments, holy items, sacred regalia, and other ritual implements (long since plundered). An arched niche set behind a small altar once served as a devotional shrine where priests could mediate before worship.

**Decorated Corridor:** Most of the initial corridors the heroes explore contain ornately carved friezes along the walls at eye level. They depict scenes from Hindu mythology featuring the gods carrying out legendary feats. Given their age and infrequent earthquakes typical of Pacific islands, several sections have fallen and smashed on the floor. Although the broken portions offer little to salvage, ambitious characters might pry significant scenes or figures from the wall to take back as archaeological evidence of the island's existence and its medieval history.



**Guardian Statue  
(Boss)**

Competent Skills:

- intimidate \_\_\_\_\_
- notice \_\_\_\_\_
- search \_\_\_\_\_
- throw \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

- endurance \_\_\_\_\_
- lift \_\_\_\_\_
- strength \_\_\_\_\_

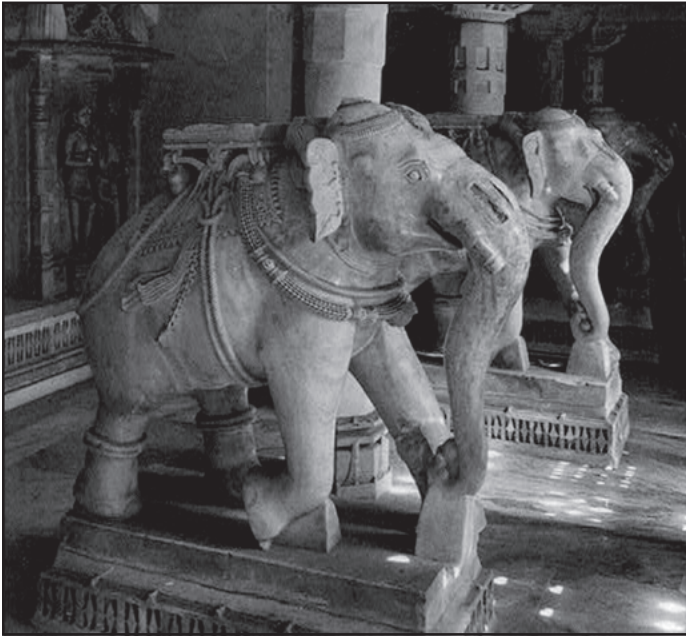
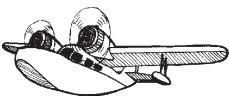
Signature Skill:

- fight \_\_\_\_\_

Natural Defenses:

- battle axe \_\_\_\_\_
- stony skin \_\_\_\_\_





**Storeroom:** The underground temple contains many chambers of various sizes once used as general storerooms. They contain little decoration beyond basic architectural elements (carved doorways and shelves) and have nothing of value, either materialistically or academically. Heaps of smashed wooden chests, rotted cloth sacks, bare animal bones, and broken pottery clutter each chamber. Many such rooms show evidence people once lived in them—crude beds from furs and leaves, remains of cook fires, crudely carved utensils, and other detritus—probably in the island society’s final, desperate days.

**Shrine:** A moderately sized, domed chamber once served as a chapel dedicated to one of the other benevolent deities of the vast Hindu pantheon. Broken stone benches offered seats to devotees. Long ago the altar received offerings presented to the god’s statue, though today only dust remains. The figurine might still occupy the niche carved in the wall behind the altar. Reliefs carved into the walls depict scenes from the deity’s legends and show the island’s inhabitants in worship tableaux. Decoration carved around the archways and ceilings have fallen, crushing some of the benches and littering the floor with debris. If they closely examine the rubble (and make a *Hard search* roll) the heroes might find artifacts

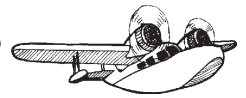
worth retrieving: small metal statues of the gods, fallen bits of decorated wall, or ceremonial vessels.

**Bats:** A colony of bats nests in the high ceiling of a vaulted corridor or domed chamber. When the heroes approach the bats panic and flutter around in a swarm, attempting to flit past the characters, through the passageways, and into the open air outside. This sudden, fluttering cloud of bats could cause panic, split up the group, and otherwise spread confusion. (If Dudley hasn’t slipped away yet, this might provide just the right diversion.)

**Grave Niche Passage:** The characters enter a passageway with oblong niches carved in the walls. Each decorated alcove contains the skeletal remains of a long-dead priest or devotee to Ganesha. Tattered, dusty clothes still cling to the bones, though any personal possessions or talismans they clutched were long since removed. Anyone with medical knowledge making a close examination of the skeletal structure notices that the bones seem unusually thick for humans, and that the skulls show evidence of mutation toward something that resembles an elephant with mouths of broad molars and downward-sloping tusks.

**Armory:** Broken wooden racks, piles of rusted chain mail, tarnished shields, dented helmets, corroded weapons, and moldering battle flags cover the floor of this high-vaulted chamber. Arched niches in the walls once displayed coats of mail and armor on wooden stands. Although these artifacts might prove valuable as relics from this displaced Indian civilization, most have deteriorated so much that they wouldn’t survive transport without crumbling into rusty dust or moldy clumps.

**Meditation Cells:** The priests who once lived here maintained simple quarters. The heroes enter a large chamber (perhaps a common room or refectory) with numerous, identical doorways lining the walls. Each still has a heavy, wooden door swinging on hinges to open on a simple, small meditation cell. From the outside it appears each priest decorated his cell with paintings and carvings depicting Hindu deities and ancient Vedic texts. Debris in the corners includes moldering prayer books, melted candles, bowls, bedding, and personal items. If characters decides to take a closer look without taking precautions to secure the door in the open position, the heavy wooden slab slams shut once they enter the cell and clear the doorway. To bash down



the door requires a *Hard strength* roll, while finding a hidden catch to release the door requires an *Improbable search* test.

**Slick Stairs:** Although the underground complex contains sloping corridors and stairways, one set of descending steps the heroes begin negotiating has a thin, glistening covering of slippery slime. Anyone stepping on this must make a *Hard agility, coordination*, or related roll to grab hold of the wall or a nearby companion to keep from slipping on the slick stone and tumbling down into the darkness. If they survive any damage sustained in the fall, they might find themselves deposited at the base of the stairs in a chamber like the cistern, sepulcher, or pitfall that contains other dangers.

**Sepulcher:** An ornately carved sarcophagus stands at the center of a decorated, domed chamber. Its heavy lid sits askew atop the casket, evidence that someone robbed the grave long ago. The inscriptions claim this sarcophagus contains the remains of a prominent priest who served the temple. Robbers plundered any grave goods buried with him; only the moldy skeleton remains in the tomb. Like those in the grave niche passage, the priest's remains exhibit bizarre, elephantine mutations. Anyone studying the carved figures adorning the walls determines they tell the story of how the priesthood of Ganesha survived after the disaster that struck the island; their struggle against the cannibalistic worshippers of Kali on the other side of the island; and their slow metamorphosis into elephantine creatures.

**Moldy Passageway:** The heroes pass through a corridor where thick, spongy mold has obscured the wall decorations and created a creepy, organic decor of its own. To pass

**MONSTER LAIR**

At some point the heroes stumble into the lair of a subterranean creature nestled in a chamber or hewn out of a crevasse in a corridor. A nest of insects could have heartily fed a now-formidably sized monitor lizard who lies in wait in a shadowy hole. A gigantic spider might have covered an entire passageway with its sticky webbing to trap and ambush unwary wanderers. An enormous python could coil in a room with a vast depression once used as a cistern. Feel free to populate the abandoned, subterranean passages in the Temple of Ganesha with some of these enormous creatures:

**Monstrous Python  
(Boss)**

Competent Skills:

- climb \_\_\_\_\_
- dodge \_\_\_\_\_
- search \_\_\_\_\_
- survival \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

- notice \_\_\_\_\_
- stealth \_\_\_\_\_
- strength \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Skill:

- fight \_\_\_\_\_

Natural Defenses:

- crushing jaws \_\_\_\_\_
- scaly skin \_\_\_\_\_

**Giant Monitor  
Lizard (Boss)**

Competent Skills:

- dodge \_\_\_\_\_
- search \_\_\_\_\_
- stealth \_\_\_\_\_
- survival \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

- climb \_\_\_\_\_
- notice \_\_\_\_\_
- strength \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Skill:

- fight \_\_\_\_\_

Natural Defenses:

- toothy jaw \_\_\_\_\_
- tail lash \_\_\_\_\_

**Huge Spider  
(Boss)**

Competent Skills:

- strength \_\_\_\_\_
- search \_\_\_\_\_
- stealth \_\_\_\_\_
- survival \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

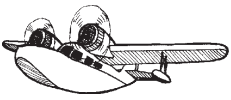
- climb \_\_\_\_\_
- dodge \_\_\_\_\_
- notice \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Skill:

- fight \_\_\_\_\_

Natural Defenses:

- poison bite \_\_\_\_\_
- web spinning \_\_\_\_\_



the mold fronds without brushing against them requires a *Hard dodge*, *coordination*, or related test. Touching the frothy mold could have several deleterious effects: acid covering the outer layers could eat away at equipment, dissolve clothing, and burn skin; an ejected spore cloud could at least obscure vision or even poison characters; extruded mold slime could make the floor extremely slippery (like the “Slick Stairs” above).

**Cistern:** A vast, domed chamber holds a pool of water once used for bathing or drinking. Water still trickles into it at one end from an ornamental statue set against the wall or cracks in the ceiling that allow water to drain into the room. The uneven floor or loose edging stones might trip a character and send him reeling into the murky waters. Debris might make rescue difficult by snagging legs and clothes and dragging people underwater. An unseen foe beneath the surface might also complicate matters (including the monstrous python and giant monitor lizard from the “Monster Lair” sidebar).

**Deadfall Slab:** While walking down a corridor the lead character trips a pressure plate that sends a massive block of stone sliding down from the ceiling along carved grooves in the walls. The heroes must make a *Hard dodge* roll to dive out of the way and clear the deadfall slab before it crushes them. Depending on which way each character leaps, the deadfall could split up the group or possibly trap the characters in previously unexplored passages, forcing them to find an alternate route that might lead to more dangerous territory.

**Pitfall:** As the heroes proceed down a corridor they walk across a cantilevered floor slab that suddenly tilts, sending everyone sliding down into a pit. Those who make *Hard dodge* rolls might leap for the far side of the pit or over the upward tilting end of the slab. Everyone else tumbles down into a pit. What awaits them at the bottom of the pit could vary: they might simply fall onto a pile of old debris that cushions their fall; they might splash into a murky pool of water; they could slide through steep, slick passages that eventually deposit them elsewhere in a deeper level of the temple catacombs (like the “Slick Stairs” above). Getting anyone out of the pit (assuming it doesn’t lead elsewhere) requires rope, a grapple, and some *Challenging climb* tests.

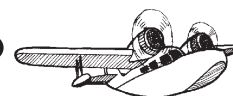
**Treasury:** At the deepest level of the temple, after braving numerous challenges and dangers, the heroes find the treasury. Before entering they must find some way to open the two, massive bronze doors carved with faces of guardian demons and protective texts. Each of the six demon heads leers back at the characters, their toothy mouths open as if ready to bite intruders. The doors don’t seem to have any obvious means of opening them, such as pull-rings, hand-holds, or knobs, and they don’t open inward.

A crowbar wedged between the doors levering them apart requires a *Hard strength* roll to open them a crack, with another similar roll prying them apart wide enough for one person to narrowly squeeze through. The real trick to opening the doors fully involves the six demon heads leering from the bronze doors. Using any holy item recovered from within the temple (one of the artifacts held by the Ganesha statue, or even a broken fragment of a sacred vessel or figurine), the heroes must touch each of the demons on the head. After proper contact, each toothy mouth shuts in turn, transforming the growling demon faces into frowning expressions, lips pursed and fierce eyes closed. The holy relics de-activate a magical locking mechanism and open the doors to the treasury. (Alternately, if the heroes haven’t thought to collect any artifacts, they might hit each of the six demon heads squarely with a hard implement to open the doors.)

Unfortunately the treasury was looted long ago. Creeping vines and carpets of fungus cover the floors and walls, while water drips from several cracks and a few holes in the ceiling where stone blocks fell. Characters combing the ground find little more than a handful of gold coins of medieval Indian origin and a few broken artifacts with any valuable gold or jewels long since pried off.

At the center of the treasury sits a long, ornately decorated wooden casket. The material shows signs of deterioration due to age and humidity, so the heroes can easily





crack it open despite the heavy padlock on the latch. Inside, on a rotted silk pillow, sits a three-foot-long elephant tusk. Anyone making a *Hard cultures, history, scholar*, or similar roll might recall that Ganesha possessed only one tusk; various legends claim he lost the other one in battle or tore it off to use as a writing implement. Perhaps Prince Karnata's people revered this ivory tusk as the one the god lost. On its own an elephant tusk of this size has great value in the world ivory market. For its supernatural qualities, see the "Ganesha's Tusk" sidebar. Unfortunately it remains the only wealth of note left in the treasury.

## HIDDEN LIBRARY

When the heroes reach the library, they find an ornate set of metal doors swinging wide open, any magical or mechanical lock disengaged. The library consists of a vast domed chamber, with arched niches carved out of the wall in which various manuscripts were once stored. The humidity has turned the piled parchment scrolls, codices, and books into moldy sponges. Broken tables and benches once provided places to read and copy documents.

At the room's center stands a square stone sarcophagus covered in medieval Indian script: wards against opening the lid, countless spells of protection, and warnings against disturbing the contents. The heavy lid lies broken on the floor, the sarcophagus empty. Scorch marks—so recent they still smell of sulfur—cover the lip of the stone container. Apparently the lid preserved any parchment inside from the ravages of time and the jungle humidity.

Several other passages lead off from the library, as well as one portion of the wall that collapsed to reveal light, air, and a narrow cave leading to the surface. Perceptive heroes might hear Carter Dudley's maniacal laughter as he scampers away toward the other side of the island to find sanctuary in Kali's temple, read the *Atharva of Kali* he just took from the library, and tap into the dreadful power of the dark goddess.

Should they try following Dudley, he manages to cause a cave-in along whatever route they take in pursuit, either by dislodging a weak ceiling or calling on Kali's powers to slow the chase.

## EPISODE THREE: TO KILL A SORCERER

Once he has the *Atharva of Kali* and has managed to delay the heroes in their pursuit, Dudley frantically flees through the jungle, avoiding any elephants, and makes a beeline to the temple of Kali on the other side of the island. His major obstacle remains crossing the shallow edges of the lagoon. If the heroes left the seaplane moored on this side of the island, he attempts to commandeer it, starting the engines to taxi to the other side of the island (where the black apes post a guard on the aircraft).

When he reaches the western side of the island Dudley receives aid from the apes, who sense his allegiance to Kali and recognize his authority as her rightful high priest. They form a loose escort to the Temple of Kali and post guards along the coast to hinder any attempt the heroes might make to land there.

Assuming the characters pursue Dudley, they must find some way to cross the lagoon and reach the western half of the island, defeat an initial picket of black apes waiting to ambush them, and make their way through the jungle and the Temple of Kali, where the rest of the apes await Dudley's coming into true power.

If they simply focus on retrieving the seaplane and leaving the island to return to the safety of civilization, Dudley completes the rituals necessary to fully tap into Kali's power. He becomes a formidable threat that could rise to conquer the Pacific and Southeast Asia or even ally with a belligerent power to tip the scales in the coming war.

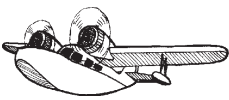
## GANESHA'S TUSK

Although the three-foot-long ivory elephant tusk in the treasury possesses material value, it also serves as a vessel for several enchantments. Whether it's really Ganesha's tusk is unimportant; the former inhabitants of the island revered it as such and imbued it with certain magical qualities. This artifact cannot be destroyed by mortal means. Despite the powerful enchantments within, the tusk is cumbersome to carry, requiring both hands to manage unless someone rigs up a backpack or sling. The relic also gives the bearer several magical advantages:

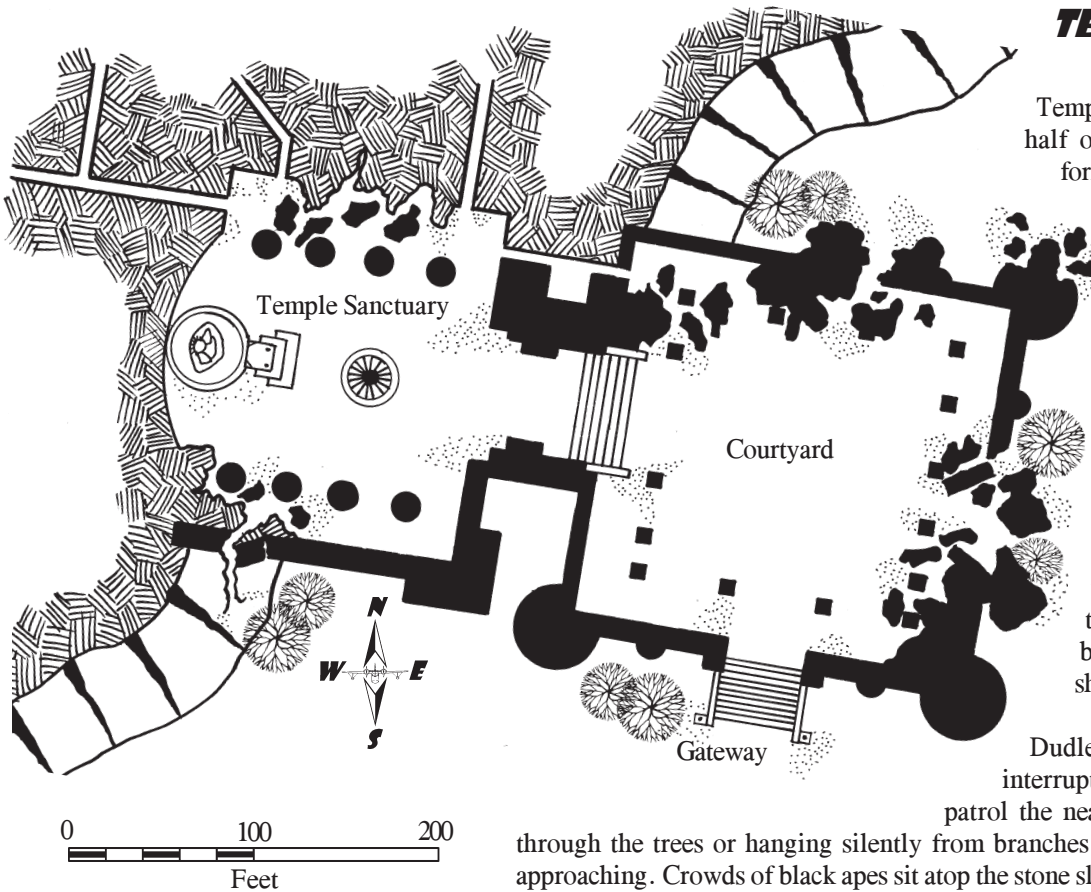
**Protection:** The tusk grants immunity from any spells Carter Dudley casts against anyone holding, carrying, or touching the tusk at the time the professor taps Kali's dark powers. Nearby targets do not receive this protection unless they, too, actively touch the tusk.

**Fear:** The tusk instills fear in any lesser minion of Kali—such as the black apes, but not Carter Dudley—initially causing them to stop their current activity immediately, cower in fear, and finally flee in a terrified frenzy. The bearer must openly brandish the tusk, requiring the use of both hands. The tusk might offer a significant bonus to any *intimidate* or *willpower* roll the hero makes to frighten Kali's followers.

**Smite:** Any hero using the tusk as a weapon against any minions of Kali—including Carter Dudley—inflicts triple the normal amount of damage usually caused by a heavy, blunt instrument. If they hold it by the tapered end, heroes can use the tusk as a club, though it still seems unwieldy.



### TEMPLE OF KALI



This sister structure to the Temple of Ganesha on the eastern half of the island shares a similar form. Built against a mountainside, the temple has a main gate leading to a walled and columned courtyard, with stairs leading to a vast columned hall built partially on the surface and mostly under the mountain. A wide, deep pit dominates the center of this hall, a centerpiece of many ghastly rituals into which unwilling victims were hurled. Dudley sits in meditation studying and contemplating the *Atharva of Kali* at the very back of this columned hall in the shadow of Kali's statue.

A horde of black apes protects Dudley and keeps the heroes from interrupting his studies. Pairs of apes patrol the nearby jungle, swinging quietly

through the trees or hanging silently from branches to detect and ambush anyone approaching. Crowds of black apes sit atop the stone slab roof covering the colonnade courtyard and cram between the columns; all hoot, holler, and flail their elongated, hairy arms in their impatience to see Dudley emerge as a true priest of Kali to lead them in conquest. Deeper inside the underground columned hall, a handful of the largest, most powerful apes wait patiently in the shadows, serving as bodyguards to personally make sure nobody interrupts Dudley until he comes fully into Kali's power.

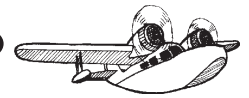
Dudley completes his meditations over the *Atharva of Kali* and enacts the ritual elevating his magical powers at a dramatically appropriate moment in the scenario. This might occur as the heroes prepare their plans to assault the temple or just as they break through his bodyguard to assail him. If they manage to interrupt the final ritual, they prevent him from attaining power and becoming a far more dangerous adversary. Dudley should gain his new, stronger abilities only if the characters have a chance to defeat him after facing all the challenges of reaching the temple's inner sanctum.

Upon completion of the ritual, Dudley's magical abilities swell dramatically; in his *Any-System Key* stats, *research* becomes relegated to an Expert Skill and *cast magic* rises to become his new Signature Skill. This increases his ability to more efficiently cast the three enchantments offered as samples in Dudley's Spells in "Episode One: Meet Professor Dudley." It also enables him to cast other magic of a more destructive nature, like spells that generate fireballs, summon Indian demons, levitate rocks, and cause earthquakes.

### ATTACK STRATEGIES

Given all these obstacles, the heroes might pursue several strategies in penetrating Kali's temple and stopping Dudley from using the spells in the *Atharva of Kali*:

**Head On:** If the characters feel particularly confident, think they have overwhelming firepower, or possess some kind of superior advantage, they might simply assault the



temple and its simian guardians directly. Once they pass the outer sentries, they must face the hordes of black apes crowding the outer courtyard. Such odds might seem overwhelming, but if the heroes reconnoiter the area and choose this strategy, they know what they're getting into.

**Cracks in the Courtyard Wall:** Like the ruined Temple of Ganesha on the eastern side of the island, the courtyard wall here shows evidence of age, including some missing stone blocks and cracks where vines and tree roots have forced their way between the masonry. These gaps are large enough to enable the heroes to pass through, but once inside they must sneak behind the jeering ape hordes and slip into the temple unnoticed. Should just one simian spot them, they could face an overwhelming adversary.

**Mountain Passages:** Earthquakes, landslides, storms, and the passage of time have opened passages leading from the nearby mountainside deep underground into the warren of corridors beneath the Temple of Kali. This approach allows the characters to avoid all but the most outlying black ape patrols and enter through the labyrinth of passages leading right to the sanctuary where Dudley pours over the *Atharva of Kali*; however, it presents a different set of challenges. Aside from the obvious hazard of crawling through unstable caves, the inner corridors of Kali's temple have old yet still functional traps waiting to annihilate the characters. For some ideas on possible traps—including the pitfall, moldy passageway, slick stairs, and deadfall slab—check out the description of the Temple of Ganesha in “Episode Two: Exploring the Island.” Make sure, however, that all these traps have some damaging or deadly element to them to remain suitable to Kali's bloodthirsty nature.

**Ganesha's Tusk:** No matter what approach the heroes take to infiltrate the temple, they might ultimately face a horde of savage apes intent on tearing them apart. If they discovered the treasury in Ganesha's temple and brought the tusk relic with them, the characters have a powerful instrument of fear, divine weapon, and ancient protection against the black apes and Dudley.

**Appeal to Ganesha:** If any characters have come to a greater spiritual realization during their exploration of the island and have immersed themselves in the Hindu gods to such a degree that they entertain true belief in their powers, they might successfully call on Ganesha to help them face the challenge ahead. “Signs” from the god might point the way to hidden passages in the mountainside leading into the subterranean labyrinth of temple corridors. An earthquake, thunderstorm, or rockslide might scatter, confuse, or even dispatch attacking apes. Even if they plead for this aid beforehand, it doesn't necessarily arrive until a dramatically appropriate moment, especially if they're wildly fending off a torrent of bloodthirsty black apes.



### **SEND IN THE CAVALRY**

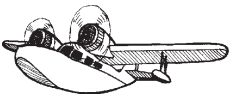
If the heroes suddenly find themselves in dire straits no matter what strategy they take, send in “the cavalry” to at least turn the tide, if not save the day. The elephants of the eastern side of the island, sensitive to the plight of good and evil, realize the characters need their aid. Disregarding the sharks guarding the lagoon passage (and losing several of their number to them), they charge through the jungles to the temple of Kali—trampling apes, goring them with their tusks, and tossing them with their trunks—to aid the heroes. This might occur at an opportune moment or as a seemingly direct result of calling on Ganesha for aid.

## **EPILOGUE**

How this scenario ends determines whether it stands alone as a fantastic adventure into Indian legend or the origins story to a new threat to the free nations of the world.

If the heroes destroy Carter Dudley and prevent him from unleashing the terrifying power of Kali upon the rest of the world, they can reach their float plane and fly back to safety and civilization. Although black apes still roam the western half of the island, they are so demoralized by Dudley's defeat that they wander around aimlessly and confused, posing little threat to the characters. Depending on the explosive nature of Dudley's defeat—or for a dramatically appropriate ending to the adventure—the island itself might slowly sink into the sea, crumble in a tumultuous earthquake, or





otherwise explode around the heroes as they dash for their seaplane. They manage to prevent Dudley from using Kali's power to influence the coming world-wide conflict.

If the heroes fail to defeat Dudley and manage to escape the island despite his amplified spellcasting abilities, they leave behind a powerful adversary they might face again in the future. Though they might return to Rura-Tonga safely, the characters could discover that Dudley eventually manages to leave the island and forms an alliance with a growing political and military threat: Japanese special forces intent on using Dudley to aid their planned invasion of India; underground Indian nationalists seeking to employ Kali's power in freeing their country from British colonial rule; a secret kabal of Nazi occultists seeking to harness supernatural powers for the Third Reich. The high priest of Kali appears at some later time—possibly during their adventures on Rura-Tonga or maybe in subsequent campaigns set during the coming war—to lead a unit of magically trained soldiers against the forces of good.

Should the heroes manage to escape with any artifacts, they might interest buyers of archaeological treasures and make enough cash from the sales to effect any repairs to the *Flying Fish*, pay off loans of lost supplies and equipment, and have a little left over for themselves. Writing a report of their discovery of a medieval Indian colony on a lost South Pacific island might earn some pocket money and recognition in a scholarly journal or pulp magazine of fantastic tales. If the characters took the Tusk of Ganesha they might sell it simply based on its value as ivory; they might find a buyer of divine or magical artifacts who might pay more for it based on its purported enchanted properties. If Dudley remains at large, they might need the relic later to oppose his sinister plans.

# **WRATH OF THE MOUNTAIN GODDESS**

April 21, 1938—This morning an earthquake rocked Rura-Tonga and sent everyone into an uproar. Sulfurous clouds wafted up from the island's peak, instilling fear that the long-dormant volcano might erupt at any moment. Right now everyone's crowded around the Matilda Hotel giving Sally McKinsey an earful about leaving the island. I'd be happy to oblige some of them—I could use the money—but until the supply freighter stops by later this week, I won't have the replacement parts to reassemble the Grumman's port engine. Nobody's bungalow collapsed, and so far nobody's been hurt, but people have to panic. The only person missing is old Chief Lautoka, who wasn't in his souvenir shop this morning. There's not much we can do here in town, so I'm rounding up a small expedition to hike out to the native villages on the island, Levu and Suva, to make sure they're okay, too.



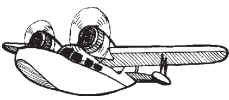
A major earthquake shakes Rura-Tonga and sends the town's residents into a panic. With the island's peak smoking and the stench of sulfur strong in the air, many fear a volcanic eruption. Since Sharp's seaplane requires replacement engine parts before it can return to service, and the periodic supply ship isn't due until week's end, nobody can really do much. The residents need to vent their panic, though, and crowd the Matilda Hotel to complain to Sally McKinsey. She has to take action, and asks Captain Sharp to assemble some friends to travel the paths through the jungle to make sure the natives living at Suva and Levu survived the quake. She hopes along the way they might discover any signs of further volcanic activity, and that the natives might offer some way to escape an impending disaster.

## **EPISODE ONE: ACROSS THE ISLAND**

The heroes set out along a jungle path leading to Suva, one of two native villages on the shores of Rura-Tonga. McKinsey provides them with basic provisions for the trip (food and water, a shovel and ax, two machetes, rope, and a waterproof tarpaulin), plus a satchel of basic medical supplies in case the natives fared worse than people living in town. The journey takes only a few hours, but several hazards await the heroes:

### **STEAMING CREVASSE**

After hiking a hour into Rura-Tonga's interior, the heroes reach a point where a long crevasse has opened up in the ground. The path continues on the far side, 10 feet over the steaming crack in the earth. The heroes can hike through the thick jungle around it, or choose to cross here. Hacking their way through the



### RURA-TONGA'S WILDLIFE

This small tropical island hosts an abundance of wildlife—parrots, turtles, scavenger lizards, coconut crabs—most of which scurries about in a confused panic during volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. A few species could threaten characters foolish enough to wander off the jungle paths and coastal beaches. Though most remain harmless unless taunted, most now exhibit a panicked frenzy that might affect heroes wandering through the jungle.

The characters might inadvertently disturb animals who suddenly panic to escape. Swarms of fruit bats, single monitor lizards (as large as five feet long), and wild boar could bolt from their safe havens and startle the heroes. Only the wild boar pose any physical threat; should they charge the characters in their frenzy they might slash at their legs with sharp tusks.

As they dash through the jungle, the heroes might run into the Pacific species of boa constrictor, its coiled body writhing in branches at eye level. The snake surprises unsuspecting characters more than anything else, for at this moment it instinctively prefers to flee rather than hunt.

A nest of agitated, swarming insects remains the worst natural enemy the heroes could disturb. Thousands of angry insects immediately seek to take vengeance on those who've stumbled upon their hive. The characters must swiftly flee, swatting at the swarm that stings and bites if it catches up with them. To evade the insects the heroes must outrun them or immerse themselves in water. Most suffer a few bites that cause a minor irritation, though anyone caught in the full cloud of the swarm might sustain serious damage.

dense jungle undergrowth could take hours, and would expose the heroes to brief but unpleasant encounters with snakes, insect swarms, and small wild boars (see sidebar above). They have several options in crossing the chasm:

**Construct A Bridge:** The heroes have various tools (shovel, machetes, ax) and supplies (the tarp and rope) with which to construct a temporary bridge using nearby trees and vines. A half hour's work and a successful *Challenging strength* check from at least two heroes (an hour without a successful check) creates a bridge stable enough for everyone to cross.

**Swing Across:** By anchoring their rope in a nearby tree (requiring a *Challenging climb* roll to get up there), they can swing across one at a time. Holding onto the rope requires a *Routine strength* check.

After the first character reaches the other side, though, the earth shakes, the mountain rumbles, and steam shoots from the crevasse during another tremor. Anyone caught on a temporary bridge during the quake must make a *Challenging dodge* roll or lose their footing. Those swinging across on a rope must make a *Challenging endurance* check or their grip slips. If any characters fail, they must make a *Challenging dodge* roll to grab onto the bridge, rope, or chasm wall before they plunge into the abyss. Anyone crossing after the tremor must make similar checks to avoid infrequent steam plumes shooting from the even more sulfurous crack in the earth.

#### Monkey (Henchman)

Competent Skills:

dodge \_\_\_\_\_

fight \_\_\_\_\_

jump \_\_\_\_\_

run \_\_\_\_\_

survival \_\_\_\_\_

throw \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skill:

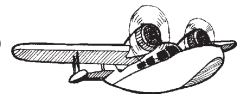
climb \_\_\_\_\_

### MAD MONKEYS

After traveling a short while along the jungle path past the crevasse, the heroes notice a crowd of chattering monkeys in nearby trees. The creatures scream and begin throwing nuts, stones, and sticks. It seems they're angry at the characters for some reason—perhaps the creatures blame them for causing the volcanic disturbances rocking the island.

The heroes must dodge past the simian onslaught while evading thrown debris. The monkeys do not follow. If anyone attacks the monkeys, they quickly scatter and another, stronger tremor shakes the ground. Everyone must make a *Challenging dodge* roll to remain on their feet. When the aftershock subsides, they still hear rumbling: a rockslide crashes down the mountain toward them! Everyone must make a *Challenging run* check to avoid the avalanche. Those who fail might avoid damage by making a *Challenging dodge* roll to leap out of the way of crashing boulders; otherwise they suffer serious damage from the rockslide.





## **SACRED SITES**

If the heroes gained the villagers' trust in *Ship of Ghouls*, they might have visited two sites the natives consider sacred: the Circle of Ancients and the hot springs called the Tears of the Mountain Goddess. They could try visiting these places to gain some insight into what has angered deity controlling the volcano and how they might appease her.

The immense wooden tiki statues encircling the clearing called the Circle of Ancients now lean drunkenly at different angles from the rumbling of frequent tremors. Attempts to contact the village ancestors in the hereafter—even chanting the proper summoning prayer—elicit no response; but the ground shakes with another earthquake, causing the statues to sway menacingly back and forth, threatening to fall down on the heroes.

The hot springs on the volcano slope west of Levu no longer look like the sacred waters of the mountain goddess, but seem more like her fury unleashed. The water roils and bubbles, with occasional jets of steam shooting small geysers into the air. An unearthly red glow hellishly illuminates the pools from deep below.

Visiting either sacred site offers little insight into the reason for mountain goddess' rage. Instead they demonstrate the force of her fiery fury and the need to swiftly appease her.

## **EPISODE TWO: VENGEFUL SPIRITS**

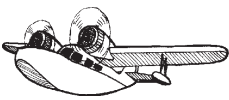
The heroes arrive at the village of Levu at midday to find the entire populace kneeling in front of the chief's hut, beating their chests, throwing sand over their heads, and weeping with their tear-streaked faces to the ground. Chief Lautoka kneels among them, crying the hardest. When asked why everyone's so upset, the Chief mournfully informs them that they're all going to die soon:

**“The great mountain goddess of Rura-Tonga has had enough of us. We mistakenly welcomed strangers to our island and allowed them to build houses within the mountain's shadow and fly their aerial machines around her peak. The mountain goddess is displeased and will destroy us all with smoke and fire. Someone must appease her fiery wrath with a token sacrifice, and only we are to blame; long ago we drove away the only ones capable of quenching the volcano's anger.”**

The Chief quickly corrects anyone expressing concern about the “sacrifice” being a living person. “Only the holy man Tavano can craft the tiki idol necessary for the sacrifice, and we exiled him from this island long ago.” Read “The Tale of Makara and Tavano” to the heroes to enlighten them about this story from Lautoka's past.

The Chief urges the heroes to take one of their ocean-going outrigger canoes to a nearby atoll to treat with Tavano, return with a consecrated tiki idol, and toss it into the volcano of Rura-Tonga. If asked why the villagers don't undertake this quest themselves, Chief Lautoka cowers in fear, grinds his head against the sand, and cries, “The angry spirit of Tavano's father, Makara, lurks in the waters surrounding the island of exile waiting to rend the flesh of those who betrayed him.” To emphasize his point, Rura-Tonga rumbles menacingly again with another volcanic tremor.





### THE TALE OF MAKARA AND TAVANO

As told by Chief Lautoka...

When I was a child, the people of Levu and Suva had one shaman who presided over sacred ceremonies for both villages. But then the holy man Makara and his son Tavano, to whom he had shared his mystical wisdom and tradition, committed a terrible crime. Our village was governed by a well-loved chief, Onatoa, who evenhandedly mediated disputes among our people and imparted wisdom to guide many villagers. Makara and Chief Onatoa rarely agreed on anything, and many suffered because they could not work together to solve Levu's problems.

One night a villager returning from Suva discovered Makara and Tavano performing a ritual of dark magic in a jungle clearing.

Upon returning to Levu, the villager discovered Chief Onatoa dead in his hut! Everyone blamed the holy man's dark magic for the death of this beloved leader. Makara and Tavano fled the raging crowd. Tavano managed to escape in an outrigger canoe and fled to a nearby island. His father wasn't so lucky. The villagers caught Makara and tore him to pieces in their wrath.

Since then Tavano has lived in exile on his island, with the spirit of his father swimming as a guardian near the reefs. The villagers of Rura-Tonga have gone without a holy man all these years. Only he can perform certain essential rituals—blessing the boats, calling the fish, consecrating the nets, cleansing places for new huts—and most importantly, creating and blessing the sacrificial tiki idol to appease the anger of the mountain goddess.

### GREAT SHARK SPIRIT

The heroes take one of the village's outrigger canoes and begin their journey to the island of Tavano's exile. To paddle past the breakers near the beach, one character must make a *Hard seafaring* check; reduce the difficulty to *Hard* if any other heroes take up a paddle and succeed at a *Challenging strength* roll. If the character steering the canoe fails the seafaring roll, a giant wave swamps the craft, washing overboard any heroes who don't make a *Challenging strength* roll to hold onto the canoe. Once they reach the open ocean, steady paddling should bring them to a lonely, tiny atoll near the horizon after about an hour.

Before they reach their destination, however, Makara's spirit emerges from the ocean depths to harass the heroes. Anyone making a *Routine notice* roll spots a large shark fin cutting above the water nearby. It soon veers toward the canoe and the shark bumps the hull. After a moment, the shark begins attacking the canoe, trying to take a bite out of the characters. Each time the shark successfully hits the canoe, each hero must make a *Challenging strength* check to hang on and keep from falling overboard, where they immediately become the shark's primary target (assuming they also make *Routine swim* rolls to stay afloat). If the shark inflicts serious damage on the canoe, it tips over, dumping all the heroes into the ocean. They must make *Routine swim* tests to remain afloat while the shark attacks whichever one looks tastiest. The heroes may fight back at the shark with whatever weapons they possess, including the canoe's paddles (though these inflict minimal damage).

### CRAB GUARDIANS

After they've fended off the great shark spirit of Makara, they see a thin strip of land rising out of the ocean ahead. The small atoll consists of a single rocky spire towering over a low jungle, with most of its shores covered in sandy beaches and enormous black boulders (probably sheared off from some ancient volcano peak ages ago). Those making a *Routine notice* check see a single man sitting calmly atop the spire.

Once they reach the beach, the heroes run the outrigger up the sand and haul it ashore so the tide doesn't pull it out to sea. As they collect their gear and head into the jungle, they hear scratching noises coming from a nearby pile of boulders. Two immense rocks suddenly unfold pincer arms, eyestalks, and spiny legs—giant coconut crabs now irate at the heroes for disturbing their afternoon in the sun. They attack the characters, scurrying along the beach or smashing through the jungle undergrowth in pursuit.

#### Great Shark Spirit of Makara (Boss)

Competent Skills:

dodge \_\_\_\_\_

stealth \_\_\_\_\_

survival \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

notice \_\_\_\_\_

strength \_\_\_\_\_

swim \_\_\_\_\_

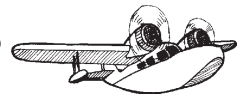
Signature Skill:

fight \_\_\_\_\_

Natural Defenses:

teeth \_\_\_\_\_

thick skin \_\_\_\_\_



## **TAVANO'S PERCH**

After hiking a short distance through the jungle, the heroes reach the base of the rocky spire upon which Tavano has perched himself. The old man sits cross-legged in the sun, calmly gazing over the waters toward his old home of Rura-Tonga. To reach him each character must make a *Hard climb* test, though using the rope (if they kept it) gives them a bonus to this roll.

At the top one hero has enough room to sit and convince Tavano to help them and the inhabitants of Rura-Tonga. Allow him to explain his mission and make a *Hard intimidate, persuade*, or other appropriate roll to sway Tavano to give them a sacrificial tiki to quiet the mountain goddess. After hearing a successful plea, Tavano only flashes a broad, toothless smile. “When I heard the mountain rumbling, I prepared a special tiki to sacrifice to the island’s temper.” He pulls something from behind a nearby bush and hands over a small tiki figure carved from wood. Only a foot long, its blocky, stylized features stare blankly back. “Drop this into the fiery mouth of the mountain, and it will appease her wrath,” Tavano instructs.

He waves good-bye as they descend from his lonely peak and return to their outrigger canoe. Assuming they employed benevolent techniques of persuasion with the old holy man, they manage to slip past the giant coconut crabs and the angry shark spirit of Makara (assuming it survived the earlier encounter). But if the heroes bullied, threatened, intimidated, or otherwise harmed Tavano to get the tiki, these perils still wait to pounce upon the characters on their return journey to Rura-Tonga.

### **Giant Coconut Crab (Boss)**

Competent Skills:

dodge \_\_\_\_\_

search \_\_\_\_\_

survival \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

lift \_\_\_\_\_

notice \_\_\_\_\_

strength \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Skill:

fight \_\_\_\_\_

Natural Defenses:

pincers \_\_\_\_\_

hard carapace \_\_\_\_\_

## **EPISODE THREE: KIDNAPPED SACRIFICE**

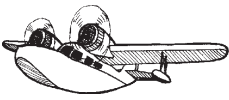
When the heroes return to Rura-Tonga (either Levu or the town) the people meet them with grave news; fearing that the mountain goddess might rain her fiery wrath upon them, the villagers of Suva have kidnapped a victim to offer the deity as a sacrifice. While the heroes paddled off to the atoll to negotiate with Tavano and retrieve the ceremonial tiki idol, superstitious natives from the other village of Suva decided that only a living human sacrifice tossed into the volcano can appease the irate mountain goddess. While the people of Rura-Tonga town panicked during the frequent tremors and eruptions of smoke from the island’s peak, Suva’s best hunters crept through the jungle and kidnapped a suitable victim. Using a natural tranquilizer brewed from local plants and fish oil, the natives subdued Beth Carlisle—daughter of the island’s Anglican missionary—and dragged her unconscious from the town to their village to prepare her for the ritual offering to the mountain goddess. (As an option, substitute any other character who might motivate the heroes to dash to his or her rescue.)

When the heroes return the villagers of Levu and the townspeople believe the natives at Suva hold Beth captive, preparing her and conducting the proper rituals to make an acceptable offering to the mountain goddess. Depending on how swiftly they act, the characters might catch the other villagers at a crucial moment when they can intervene:

**Village Preparations:** The Suva natives first take Beth back to their village to prepare her for the ceremony. They dress her in a diaphanous white robe with a belt of woven palm fronds around her waist and a laurel of tropical flowers on her head. The natives take the precaution of binding her hands and feet with rope to prevent her from escaping. Beth begins waking up from the herbal tranquilizer just as a muscular brave slings her over his shoulder for the hike up the mountain.

**On the Path:** The villagers proceed on the jungle path from Suva up the volcano slope with a band of braves brandishing clubs at their lead, followed by the warrior carrying Beth, who begins writhing and protesting about her fate. Those who follow chant a mournful dirge begging the mountain goddess’ forgiveness. Given the narrow nature of



**Suva Brave  
(Henchman)**Competent Skills:

dodge \_\_\_\_\_

fight \_\_\_\_\_

seafaring \_\_\_\_\_

stealth \_\_\_\_\_

track \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skill:

survival \_\_\_\_\_

Gear:

club \_\_\_\_\_

the path, the natives cannot hike more than two abreast. The surrounding jungle offers the characters plenty of cover should they try sneaking up on the procession.

**Fiery Crevasse:** The villagers eventually emerge from the jungle and climb the ever-steeper volcano slope until they come to a ledge overlooking a red-glowing crevasse. Although the path up the mountainside limits them to single-file passage, the rocky shelf allows them to crowd around the steaming fissure. Here they chant a hymn to the mountain goddess as several men prepare to toss Beth Carlisle into the crevasse to the boiling lava far below. If the heroes fail to act by this point and the natives toss her over the edge—or if she somehow falls into the fissure during a scuffle—she’s saved at the last minute as the rope binding her wrists catches on an outcropping of rock several feet down the crevasse; of course, now the heroes must not only push their way through the crowd of villagers, but find some way to rescue Beth before a tremor shakes her free and sends her plummeting to her doom.

In any situation, the heroes must choose a course using either negotiation or force. One of their best speakers must gain the crowd’s attention, make several *persuade* rolls, and deliver some solid roleplaying to convince them that the sacrificial tiki they obtained from Tavano will, if tossed into the volcano in place of a live offering, appease the angry mountain goddess. Showing off the tiki at a dramatic moment may help these efforts.

Using force might offer a faster way of resolving the situation and rescuing Beth, but has long-term repercussions for those living on Rura-Tonga. Remember that the natives have remained benevolent and helpful until now. Any hostile action resulting in critical injury or death could seriously damage relations not only with the villagers at Suva but with natives living at Levu as well.

Most of the braves carry wooden clubs and staves as both ceremonial items and weapons. Should they fight off any attacks from the characters, they strike intending not to kill the heroes but beat them into unconsciousness so they no longer interfere with the villagers’ immediate mission to climb the mountain and toss the hostage into the first lava-filled crevasse they find.

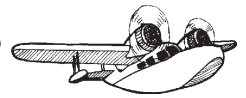
## EPISODE FOUR: RUNAWAY TIKI

After they rescue Beth the heroes must proceed up the jungle paths and rocky slopes to the heights of the volcano, where they can toss the tiki and quell the fiery mountain goddess. If they intercepted the natives from Suva and resolved the situation with the villagers amiably, they already have a joyous crowd rejoicing at the immediate prospect of quieting the volcano. Otherwise a throng of natives from Levu intercepts them on their climb, accompanying the procession with jubilant drums, songs, flutes, and dancing.

Tavano’s seeming eagerness to help those living on his former island is not completely without a dark side. As they near the fiery crevasse into which they intend to sacrifice the idol, a violent tremor shakes the earth, tossing everyone to the ground. As the earthquake subsides, the tiki suddenly comes to life with mischievous magic Tavano cast over the statuette. Terrified that someone’s going to toss in into the volcano, it jumps up, squeals, and runs off on its stubby wooden legs into the jungle!

At first the tiki relies on speed and surprise to outrun pursuers. Once the heroes begin chasing it in earnest—after making an initial *Routine notice* roll to realize it’s missing—the tiki uses other strategies that force the characters to negotiate other obstacles:

**Run Away:** Any time the tiki finds itself in the open—especially after initially escaping from the heroes on the bare volcano slopes—it runs on its stumpy wooden legs for the nearest cover. Uneven ground, jumbled rocks, and craggy lava formations cover the mountain slopes, providing many tight spaces where the tiki can seek refuge from pursuing characters. If it reaches the jungles, fallen trees and hollow logs can also offer shelter to the fleeing tiki. During this chase, the heroes might have to dodge over obstacles



created by the volcano’s imminent eruption—steaming crevasses, boiling mud pots, tumbling rockslides, unstable ground, frenzied animals, and even small lava floes.

**Up A Tree:** Once it reaches the jungle, the tiki can scurry up a tree and hide in the high branches out of the characters’ reach. If spotted, the animated statuette could hurl coconuts down on their heads to harass them. The heroes could climb the tree to try grappling with the tiki, or vigorously shake the trunk to try and dislodge it.

**Animal Ambush:** The tiki runs into a thicket with the heroes hot on its trail when the commotion disturbs some of the animals native to the island trying to hide from the frightening tremors. The wild boars, fruit bats, or parrots burst from the cover in a terrified frenzy, startling the characters and slowing their chase.

**Monkey Allies:** The tiki finds the mad monkeys from “Episode One: Across the Island” and, using its high-pitched, annoyed tiki voice, convinces them to defend against the pursuing heroes. They throw nuts, stones, and sticks at the characters, and even jump on their heads or cling to their legs to prevent them from following the tiki. If the heroes consider negotiating with the monkeys—somehow persuading them that tossing the tiki into the volcano will quiet the fuming mountain and bring peace to the island animals—the creatures might turn on the tiki and attempt to catch it themselves!

**Aerial Escape:** The tiki scurries up a tree and finds a large parrot or fruit bat that in its panic, flies off swiftly with the tiki in tow, heading for some other part of the island. To catch it the heroes must run a fair distance, dodging various obstacles created by the volcano’s imminent eruption, until the creature drops the tiki or lands in an area it considers safe.

The entire time the heroes actively pursue it, the tiki continually cries in a high-pitched voice how it doesn’t want to die in the volcano. It only ceases this incessant weeping when it tries hiding from the characters.

The heroes must take care how they catch the tiki. Shooting at it may destroy the wooden idol. Violent traps might also break it apart. Grabbing it by hand requires an opposed *fight* roll against the tiki’s *dodge* skill. The characters might also try bargaining with, intimidating, or persuading the tiki to coerce it into surrendering. These require *Hard* skill rolls, although good roleplaying could give heroes a slight bonus.

## **EPILOGUE**

Assuming the heroes catch the tiki and hurl it into one of the fiery chasms high on the mountainside, the volcano fumes a little more, knocks everyone to the ground in a gasping fit of tremors, and finally subsides. Rura-Tonga experiences no further earthquakes or eruptions, and life returns to normal. The characters gain more esteem from the townspeople and the respect of the villagers of Levu; reactions from the natives in Suva depends on how the heroes handled Beth’s abduction in “Episode Three: Kidnapped Sacrifice.”

What if the heroes don’t catch the tiki and don’t toss it into the flaming crevasse?

- The tiki and tribal magic have no magical influence at all over volcanic eruptions, but they subside anyway after another day or two of rumbling that worries most of the natives and many townspeople, who make plans to evacuate as soon as possible.
- The eruptions grow more powerful and intense, until a few hours later when the mountain really blows its top. The heroes must scramble to evacuate the town (and possibly the villages), complete or jury-rig repairs on their plane, seek assistance from a reluctant Gaston Gauthier, and somehow get everyone to safety.
- If the tiki escapes unharmed, it might show up unexpectedly in subsequent adventures as a mischievous imp playing pranks, taunting the heroes, and generally causing mayhem.

Since Rura-Tonga serves as the base for this campaign, ensuring its safety remains a top priority for subsequent adventures.

### **Tiki (Henchman)**

Competent Skills:

climb \_\_\_\_\_

jump \_\_\_\_\_

run \_\_\_\_\_

stealth \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skill:

dodge \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Since the tiki is only a foot tall, its small size increases the difficulties for characters to seize or shoot it.

# ROCKETS OF THE RISING SUN

May 7, 1938—We're out flying a search pattern over the open ocean; either we're looking for a strange species of fish or we're tracking down some kind of new weapon the Japanese are testing. This morning a throng of excited natives from Levu crowded around Chief Lautoka's hut. They were sailing in one of their large outrigger canoes when they saw a strange, shiny fish leap from the ocean, dive back in, and swim rapidly toward them. When it jumped out of the water, they noticed smoke and flames spewing from its oddly shaped tail. Then it submerged and didn't surface again. If it wasn't some odd new species of fish then it just might be some new Japanese ship, weapon, or plane. It terrified the natives, who no doubt returned to their village to spread frightening rumors. Chief Lautoka worried these stories would scare his people enough to stop fishing in the open ocean—he asked if we would fly out, look around, and find some definitive proof that the seas were still safe. In return he'd give us a plane-load of local goods we could easily sell in Port Moresby for some extra cash. It sounded interesting, so I rounded up the usual crew and started the pre-flight check on the Flying Fish....

Natives fishing in waters far to the north of Rura-Tonga spot a disturbing species of fish and race back to the island to tell their chief. Lautoka fears if the heroes don't find some evidence of the fish's origins and its benign nature, the natives could stop fishing altogether for fear this strange creature might attack them.

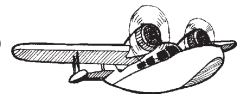
The heroes can question the fishermen, though they must take care not to intimidate or agitate them lest they clam up out of general apprehension. The natives estimate they spotted this strange creature about 50 miles due north of the island...within 150 miles of the Japanese Mandate. They describe it as having several large, square scales covering its body instead of a sheen of smaller, rounded ones. Its tail was rather odd, having two upright, squared fins instead of the single pointed vertical fin of a shark. The fishermen confirm that the strange fish was not one of the large metal whales that sometimes surface to disgorge men from their tall dorsal fins (known to some as submarines).

The heroes can embark on a trip to the sighting area on the *Flying Fish* to make an aerial search for signs of the strange fish or any other unusual activity in the region.

The strange fish is, of course, a prototype missile the Japanese are test-launching from a secret island base just within their territory to the north. Upon investigating the general area in which the native fishermen spotted the "fish," the heroes encounter another rocket test and have a brush with the submarine sent to monitor the targeted landing zone. By following the missile's contrail they can find the island with the secret launching facility, brave it's numerous hazards, and deal with the hidden military base.







## **EPISODE ONE: A STRANGE FISH**

The heroes near the area where the fishermen spotted the strange creature and begin flying in a standard search-and-rescue pattern to look for any sign of the fish. The blue South Pacific waters stretch endlessly to the horizon, with no points of reference like islands or ships, just high clouds and sparkling sunshine.

Anyone making a *Hard notice* roll spots a submarine lurking just beneath the surface of the clear South Pacific waters. From this angle, however, nobody can identify its country of origin.

As the heroes fly along—possibly distracted by spotting the submarine—an airborne object streaks out of the northern sky on a collision course with the *Flying Fish*! Only those making an *Improbable notice* roll see the missile coming at them from the distance; by they time the alert the pilot or take evasive maneuvers, the rocket's nearly upon them. The captain or co-pilot must make a *Hard pilot* roll to avoid a brush with the airborne missile; failure doesn't result in an impact, but sends the *Flying Fish* into a dangerous spin from which the pilot must recover lest the plane make a very bumpy landing in the ocean (preventing any timely investigation of the floating missile later).

Once the heroes recover from this brush with death they easily spot the metallic object floating in the waves not a mile away. They can easily fly down, land on the ocean's surface, and investigate, though they must do it quickly before it becomes waterlogged and sinks.

### **THE ROCKET**

Once they've landed the characters can maneuver right up to the missile floating on the surface. The characters realize it's no fish, but a rocket or torpedo of some kind. It bobs in the waves at an angle, tail up, nose down, with two long fins midway along the body keeping it balanced. The tail, as the most visible part, strikes the heroes as unusual; it consists of a horizontal stabilizer with two square vertical stabilizers, all mounted just above what looks like an exhaust port. The center fins extend three feet from each side of the body. It all looks like a rocket ship out of a Saturday afternoon matinee science fiction serial.

Unfortunately they can't really examine the tapered metal nose unless they somehow tie a line to it and hoist it up. Should they somehow manage to expose the nose, they notice a small metal nub protruding from the top; the impact detonator for the explosive warhead inside! As long as the rocket tip doesn't bump anything, the missile won't detonate. Defusing the impact trigger requires a *Hard demolition* roll under ideal circumstances (a stable work area, not the limited and undulating workspace on the *Flying Fish*).

The heroes must work quickly before water floods the combustion and fuel chambers, causing the missile to sink. They have only a few minutes to complete their examination; if they have rope aboard, they can tie a line to the tail and hoist it to keep it afloat. Getting a close look at it requires characters to emerge onto the seaplane's nose from the forward hatch, though one person can use the side hatch into the main cabin. Any

disturbance to the plane could easily put the heroes outside or out the hatch off balance and topple them into the ocean.

Taking the missile with them poses some difficult challenges. Assuming the characters have somewhat stable access to the rocket, they can use a tool kit to try disassembling portions of it and loading individual parts into the seaplane; but the entire rocket, particularly the fins,

### **OH, THAT'S NICE**

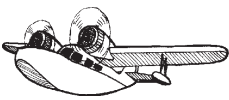
What if the heroes show no interest in investigating the report of the strange fish and, therefore, set the scenario on a completely unexpected course? Follow through with the logical events given the background circumstances. Jump ahead several weeks when the Japanese, in a more aggressive test of their rocket system, launch a salvo of long-range missiles from a specially outfitted ship to see how well they can saturate a single target: Rura-Tonga town! As they watch explosives rain down on the settlement, the heroes might think to take to the air, track down the launch ship, and follow it back to the base to deal with it after it's already converted from a test-launch site to a full-fledged rocket factory. Dealing with the destruction and possible evacuation of Rura-Tonga town could also form the basis for a short adventure.

#### **Experimental Japanese Rocket**

Top Speed: 400 mph

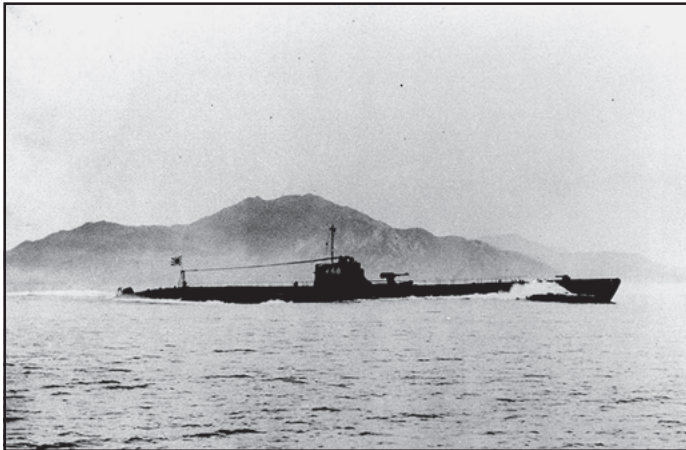
Range: 200 miles

Ordinance: 1,000-lb  
bomb



tail, and fuselage, won't fit. Hoisting the missile and securing it beneath one of the wings won't work without somehow rigging it clear of the propellers; besides, it weighs the aircraft down so much, and in such an imbalanced attitude, that it can't lift off more than a few feet from the ocean surface. If they tied a line to the missile, they might try towing it, but the drag slows the plane so it can't take off; it can only tow the rocket on the surface.

A thin, wispy trail of black smoke arching up into the northern skies betrays the missile's origins. Given the calm weather, the heroes can take off in their floatplane and follow the smoke trail long enough to discover the island from which it was launched: see "Episode Two: Mutant Island."



## SUB ATTACK

The heroes carry out their examination of the rocket under the watchful eyes of a Japanese submarine captain. The submarine deployed from a secret island base to patrol the landing zone during a rocket test, observe the projectile in flight, and note how close it comes to landing at the target coordinates.

Unfortunately the technicians adjusting the rocket's range settings didn't take into account the new warhead payload they installed, so the submarine was a few miles away when the missile landed. Seeing outsiders in the vicinity—and flying an airplane, the principle threat to subs—the captain proceeds to the rocket landing site submerged, which slows his progress but ensures stealth. He observes the scene from the sub's raised periscope and watches the heroes examine the missile. His orders require him to eliminate anyone

who witnesses the landing or retrieves the rocket, even at the cost of destroying it.

The captain waits for a moment when the characters seem most engaged with their examination of the rocket before surfacing and initiating the attack. Since the seaplane's draft is too shallow for torpedoes, the captain orders the submarine to surface so the crew can use the vessel's main deck gun and two machine guns. The sub surfaces at long range for its machine guns and on the side of the floatplane opposite where the characters clamor over the rocket.

Only extremely vigilant heroes spot the surfacing sub before it attacks the seaplane. The machine gun positions fire first while the rest of the crew works feverishly to prepare the main deck gun to blast larger salvos at the plane bobbing in the waves.

The easiest defense is a swift retreat. As long as the heroes cut the missile loose to sink into the ocean, they can start the floatplane engines, taxi away from the submarine, and take off well out of the range of its machine guns. The deck gun poses a viable threat only if they remain on the ocean surface; it cannot track such a swift-moving target as the seaplane taxiing or flying aloft.

Daring heroes might try towing the rocket with the floatplane to send it on a collision course with the submarine; if the impact detonator at the warhead's tip touches the sub's hull, it explodes and severely damages the craft. Remember that the characters can't really take off with the missile tied to the seaplane hull or towed from a line.

Once the characters take off and leave the range of the submarine's guns, they can return to Rura-Tonga or continue investigating the rocket's origins by following its smoke trail northward.

If the characters need a little encouragement to follow the rocket's smoke trail to the island, insert an additional encounter with a second missile. As they take off and veer away from the Japanese submarine, another rocket streaks from the north, seemingly aimed directly at their plane. They must make a desperate attempt to veer out of its path before it arcs downward and splashes into the ocean. It leaves behind a more distinct smoke trail leading northward toward the island base.

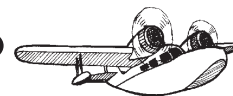
### Japanese Submarine

Top Speed: 22 mph  
surfaced, 10 mph  
submerged

Range: 6,000 miles

Crew: 60

Ordnance: 5-inch guns  
(2), anti-aircraft  
machine guns (2),  
torpedo tubes (4  
fore, 2 aft)



## EPISODE TWO: MUTANT ISLAND

The heroes can easily follow the rocket's smoke trail from the air. It leads almost directly north into the Japanese Mandate territory. Although it grows more faint as they proceed, they deduce that it comes from an island with a broad expanse of jungle on one side, a tropical lagoon on the other, and a small range of barrier mountains separating the halves.

Characters who make a *Hard notice* roll spot indications of habitation on the lagoon side of the island from far away: glimpses of a few concrete buildings built at the base of the mountains, a concealed pillbox or antiaircraft gunnery emplacement along the coast, a freighter undergoing repair work. If the heroes fail to spot the defenses and head toward the lagoon, Japanese guards spot them and train the antiaircraft guns on them. A few sudden bursts of flak should more than deter the heroes and force the seaplane to veer away from the defenses; if necessary, the Japanese can launch one of their amphibious planes (a Nakajima E8N spotter floatplane) to attack the *Flying Fish*.

If the characters' seaplane sustains severe damage, it might set down in the ocean, glide to a bumpy landing on the beach along the far side of the island, or crash into the vast jungle on the other side of the mountains. (If the crash destroys the seaplane, finding another way off the island becomes a primary motivation for the heroes for the rest of this scenario.) Should they try landing near the lagoon side of the island, their adventures take a sudden detour as they're quickly hunted down and captured by Japanese sentries and imprisoned in the concrete base built into the side of the mountains. Assuming the heroes veer away from the antiaircraft fire and land on the other side of the island from the lagoon base, the Japanese leave them to their fate; they know the horrors lurking for them in the dense jungle there.

When the Japanese first came to this island, the military used it as a secret laboratory facility to conduct biological experiments to develop ideal organisms for warfare: giant-sized creatures to unleash on enemy troops, mutants capable of eliminating tanks, and genetically modified humanoids to serve as hardy soldier stock (see "Mutant Men" below). The main facility consisted of a security bunker and laboratory caves

### "LET'S GO HOME"

The rest of the scenario focuses on the characters discovering the island with the secret Japanese rocket base. What if the heroes insist on returning to Rura-Tonga with whatever information or evidence they have of the missile's existence?

Follow events through from the Japanese perspective. Even if the heroes manage to somehow destroy the submarine, the crew still has time to radio a report that foreigners discovered the rocket, and that they probably came from the nearest island, Rura-Tonga. Japanese commanders order an all-out attack on the island that hits shortly after the heroes return. The assault comes in several waves:

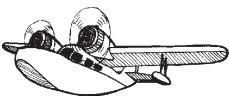
**Commandos:** A team of fanatical Japanese naval commandos lands on the beaches and, working in conjunction with well-armed thugs from Gaston Gauthier's estate, attempt to capture the town and round up the villagers in a makeshift prison camp. The commandos come from a submarine prowling the waters near Rura-Tonga to keep an eye on its inhabitants and openly

intervene should such a dire security situation arise. If necessary the surfaced sub provides support with its two machine guns and its deck gun.

**Aerial Assault:** Aircraft launched from bases or carriers in the Japanese Mandate soon arrive to provide air support by strafing people and dive-bombing buildings used by those opposing the commando force. They patrol the beaches, firing on anyone trying to escape, and ensure no unauthorized boats or planes leave the island.

**Rocket Strike:** As a final option, the Japanese might launch a salvo of the experimental rockets armed with explosive warheads at Rura-Tonga. Although they aren't terribly accurate, they rain down indiscriminately on targets across the island, including the town, native villages, jungle, beaches, and the volcano itself. The characters must fend off the attack, escort the inhabitants to safety, and hide out in the jungle as Imperial Japanese troops eventually land to subdue the entire island.





carved out of the mountain highlands; scientists used the jungle as a dumping ground for successful and failed projects to see which ones would survive and dominate. A bio-genetic accident wiped out the scientists and soldiers stationed here and enabled the mutants to run amok through the facility and the jungles. When the Japanese military sent a rescue force, it determined that—despite the island’s strategic value—it wasn’t worth regaining control of the jungle portions. Instead it established a technical development and testing station in the mountains facing the lagoon where scientists developed and later began manufacturing rockets for military use. The mutants now act as a deterrent for the Chinese slaves working in the underground factory; those who escape have nowhere to flee except the vast waste of the ocean or the deadly, mutant-infested jungle.

### HUNTED BY MUTANTS

The jungle side of the island serves as a home for several monstrous mutants developed by the Japanese when they used the island for biological experiments. Once the heroes recover from their plane crash on shore or in the jungle interior, they quickly realize that as long as they remain on this side of the island, they can easily fall prey to several hungry, aggressive mutants lurking in the jungle.

During their time on shore or in the jungle, the characters get an unnerving feeling that something isn’t right. As they initially explore their surroundings, they occasionally catch a glimpse of a human skeleton sprawled in the underbrush, hanging from tree limbs, or otherwise discarded amid the jungle. Close examination—combined with a *Challenging medical* roll—identifies broken bones that indicate the bodies were smashed, bitten, or otherwise mangled.

As the heroes assess the damage to their seaplane, gather supplies, and formulate a plan of action, they hear ominous sounds in the jungle; huge creatures moving furtively through the underbrush, halting, breathing, waiting for an opportune moment to strike.

Some of these monsters are enormous aberrations of the island’s natural inhabitants, such as the monstrous python, giant monitor lizard, and huge spider (use their stats from “Doom of the Lost Library”). Others are obscene combinations of beasts mutated into immense monstrosities. Two mutant creatures pose the greatest threat to the heroes.

The **giant snakeapede** combines the body of an immense python with the numerous legs of a centipede. A pair of carapace pincers from a crab extend from a joint just below the snaking neck. Though the monster loses its natural ability to curl around and crush prey, its sheer size, massive jaws, and snapping pincers offer formidable threats in combat. The snakeapede initially confuses its prey by stomping the ground with its numerous legs; with the body stretched out to its full 100 feet, victims don’t really know from which end the attack might come. When the heroes least expect it, the creature bursts through the dense jungle underbrush, snapping at everything with its pincers and jaws.

At first the characters might mistake the **crustacemorph** for a horde of small salt-water crabs swarming inland along the jungle floor. Millions of tiny crabs, each connected to the other by a shared appendage, undulate across the ground

#### Giant Snakeapede (Boss)

Competent Skills:

- dodge \_\_\_\_\_
- intimidate \_\_\_\_\_
- search \_\_\_\_\_
- survival \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

- notice \_\_\_\_\_
- stealth \_\_\_\_\_
- strength \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Skill:

- fight \_\_\_\_\_

Natural Defenses:

- crushing jaws \_\_\_\_\_
- carapace pincers \_\_\_\_\_
- scaly skin \_\_\_\_\_

#### Crustacemorph (Boss)

Competent Skills:

- dodge \_\_\_\_\_
- search \_\_\_\_\_
- survival \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skills:

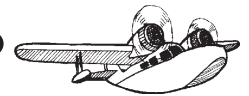
- intimidate \_\_\_\_\_
- fight \_\_\_\_\_
- notice \_\_\_\_\_
- stealth \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Skill:

- strength \_\_\_\_\_

Natural Defenses:

- bashing pseudopod \_\_\_\_\_
- carapace skin \_\_\_\_\_



seeking sustenance from rotting fruit, dead animals, or vegetation. Their clicking pincers and scrambling legs emit an ominous sound like a soft rain falling on the leaves. This teeming blob of crustaceans initially pokes an appendage at the heroes, with several crabs nipping at exposed skin to “sample” an individual. The mutant quickly determines the characters represent a viable food source; the crustacean then attempts to engulf the heroes so its composite parts can nibble away at them for sustenance. If it encounters resistance, however, the mass gathers itself into a hulking, amorphous blob towering over the heroes and swatting at them with crawling pseudopods. Should it become cornered or otherwise bested in a fight, the crustacean can rear up most of its bulk to crash down on the heroes like a massive wave, crushing the characters and momentarily stunning them while the mutant seethes off into the jungle.

The jungle offers few hiding places from gigantic creatures that easily brush trees aside and smash through undergrowth. This side of the island offers little high ground unless the heroes head for the mountain range, where they have a better chance of finding cover among the ravines, boulders, and crags as they ascend to the heights.

**MUTANT MEN**

A refugee band of mutant humanoids hides in the mountains, scraping a miserable existence from the island’s resources and living in fear of Japanese troops and the monstrosities lurking in the jungle. Assuming the heroes encounter them—if they climb into the mountainous highlands or run into a patrol while exploring the jungle—they could attempt to form an alliance with them in assaulting the rocket base on the far shores.

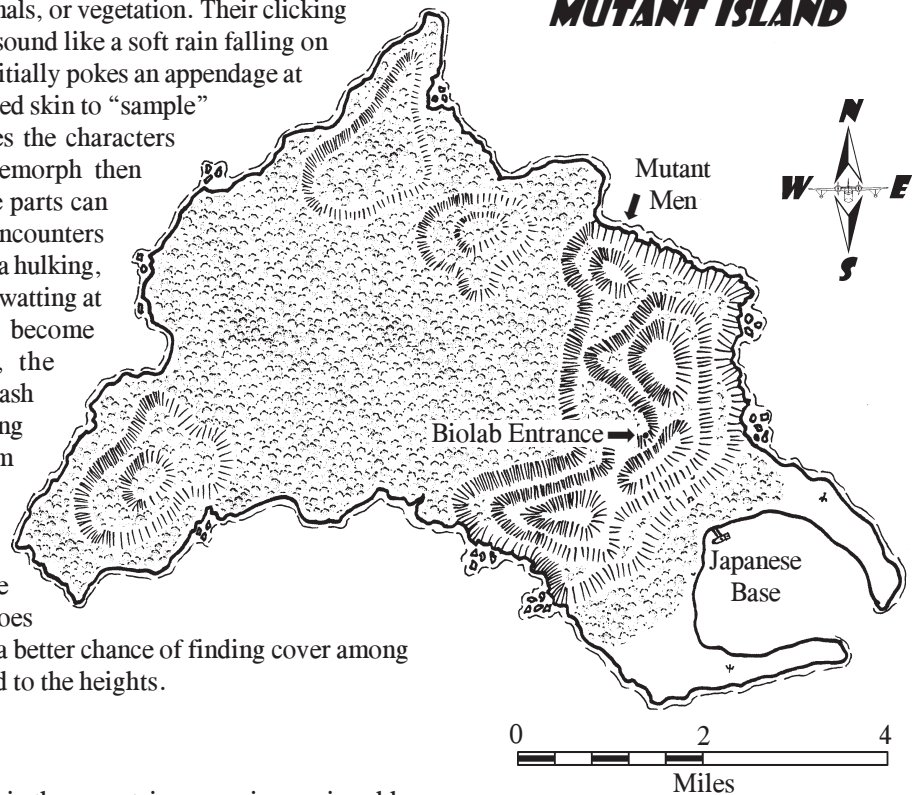
The Japanese bio-engineered these mutants by combining genetic material from humans, boars, and bears in an effort to create brutally strong soldier stock. The experiments had some unfortunate side effects—the creatures had limited intelligence, couldn’t follow orders, and rebelled against their masters—so the Japanese scientists abandoned the project when this and other bio-engineering projects on the island ran amok.

The mutant men have the short, brutish bodies of bears with oversized boar heads. They lumber around erect on their hind legs, shoulders slouched, and tusked boar head wagging from side to side with each step. Stubby fingers on their meaty forepaws can manipulate simple objects, pick up things, and make basic gestures. The tusks can prove deadly in combat when they charge and gore at foes, though their paws sport long, sharp claws that slash at opponents, too.

Their mouths cannot form words, but the mutants understand others and can communicate simple concepts through a series of grunts and gestures. These refugees survive because they can eat and gain nourishment from nearly any biological matter, both meat and vegetable. They live in constant fear of encountering the jungle’s monstrous terrors or the Japanese troops guarding the lagoon and the installation on the far side of the island. These mutants shelter in caves on the northern tip of the mountains from whence they range seeking food and water in the jungle. Although the abandoned laboratory offers more shelter, the refugees avoid it as the former site of their earlier torments.

Depending on heroes’ plans they might try recruiting the mutant men to help scout out the other side of the island, assault the secret base, or steal some kind of

**MUTANT ISLAND**



**Mutant Man  
(Henchman)**

Competent Skills:

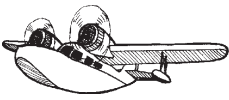
- dodge \_\_\_\_\_
- notice \_\_\_\_\_
- stealth \_\_\_\_\_
- strength \_\_\_\_\_
- survival \_\_\_\_\_

Expert Skill:

- fight \_\_\_\_\_

Natural Defenses:

- tusks \_\_\_\_\_
- claws \_\_\_\_\_
- thick skin \_\_\_\_\_



transport. Once the characters establish contact with the refugees, they must prove they pose no threat to the mutants and that acting together serves their best interests. This requires some compelling roleplaying and a *Hard persuade* or *con* roll to convince them to join forces. The heroes must help the mutants overcome their principle fear of the Japanese soldiers and their powerful weapons, luring them with some promise of a better life: ridding the island of the Japanese, providing a safe haven from the larger, ferocious mutants in the jungle, finding a storehouse of tasty foodstuffs, or offering some means of leaving the island altogether.

If the heroes successfully form an alliance with the mutant men, they gain a small force of about 12 brutish bodyguards willing to follow simple orders. Their continued loyalty depends on the characters' leadership abilities and continued successes in obtaining their objectives; successive failures undermine their spirits and make them more likely to flee in the face of greater opposition.

### **ABANDONED BIOLAB**

The deserted laboratories where Japanese scientists genetically engineered the island's monstrosities sits just above the tree line on one of the central mountains. A few surface installations remain visible against the jagged rocks: a bunker entrance, two pillboxes with apertures for machine guns, a toppled ventilation tower, the crumbled stump of a taller guard tower, and an observation bunker with narrow window slits, all constructed of poured concrete. To reach them the heroes must scale a steep, rocky slope (requiring *Challenging climb* rolls).

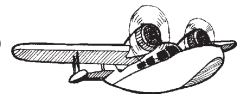
The characters easily find a way inside. The heavy, steel door that once blocked the main bunker entrance sits open and askew, half torn from its hinges. The ruined ventilation and guard towers allow passage to the facility's interior, though a few, easily moved concrete slabs block the way. A hole in one of the pillboxes, possibly caused by an explosion inside, widened a firing slit and created an entrance through which someone can crawl.

The biolab interior remains as dilapidated and ruined as the outside. Sickly light-green paint peels from the once-antiseptic walls. Water drips through cracked concrete and gathers in fetid pools on the floors. A few lights still glow dimly, providing basic illumination and proving the abandoned biolab still drains some power from the active installation on the other side of the mountain.

Despite the initial destruction caused by escaping mutants, the Japanese managed to salvage any useful equipment, leaving only twisted metal, smashed glass, and rocky debris. If the characters insist, they can sift through the rubble, search different rooms, and try to glean some information from the wreckage. While exploring they can identify the purpose behind several chambers: biological laboratories, store rooms, menageries for un-mutated animal stock, offices for scientists, an operating room, sickbay, and holding cells for humanoid and animal-sized mutants. Their explorations don't come without possible dangers. Jungle insects that constructed nests inside some chambers near the surface swarm characters who accidentally disturb them. Unstable ceiling blocks fall when anyone slams a door, shifts debris, or bashes against walls and equipment. Spilled bio-chemical components have formed acidic, sentient slimes that undulate across surfaces in search of food to digest. Unexpected crevasses in corridor floors threaten to swallow unwary characters. Deadly mutants from outside sometimes wander through the corridors hunting prey.

All the interior corridors lead to an abandoned guard room with one large, metal door in the wall. Its reinforced design, oiled hinges, and smooth metal indicate it was installed at some later date after the biolab's original construction. Despite its more recent installation, the hatch shows signs that something strong tried bashing its way through without success. Although a simple handle promises to allow one to open the door from this side, a latch on the other side keeps it locked and inaccessible from the





biolab. The characters can circumvent this simple security measure by using a long piece of metal debris like a prybar to jam open the latch. The hatch leads into the underground rocket construction facility on the other side of the island, entering through a small cave behind some clutter in the assembly cavern.

## **CAPTURED**

The Japanese forces operating the secret missile assembly base on the lagoon side of the island might capture unwary heroes. The soldiers know of the dangers lurking on the far side of the island and presume if the heroes land there that the deadly mutants will finish them off (this is also the reason they don't worry about escaped Chinese slaves who have nowhere to go). If the characters land anywhere near the rocket base, however, Japanese troops swarm out of their barracks and guard posts to apprehend them.

Should the heroes fall into Japanese captivity, their first priority becomes escape. Exploring the island, uncovering the secret facility, and finding transport off the island become secondary objectives. The troops take captured characters to the base built into the side of the mountains overlooking the lagoon. They must escape from individual prison cells or the interrogation room, find their way out of the subterranean base, and evade Japanese guard patrols.

## **EPISODE THREE: SECRET BASE**

Ultimately the heroes should infiltrate the secret Japanese base on the lagoon side of the island. They might require spare parts to repair their seaplane. If Japanese defenses damaged their aircraft beyond repair, they might sneak into the installation in the hopes of finding some other transport off the island. The characters could reconnoiter the base as spies, attempting to assess its defenses, determine its purpose, and map its facilities. They might try liberating the Chinese slaves working in the factory or attempt to steal evidence of the secret Japanese rocket project under development.

The installation includes a host of individual facilities, some intended to provide defense and others, mostly underground, producing rockets for future tests and long-range attacks. The lagoon stands out as the most obvious feature on this half of the island. Two low arms of naturally formed volcanic rock reach out from the main mountain range, with short beaches and some foliage covering them. A single entrance remains large enough to admit small ships. A freighter floats moored at the end of a long pier jutting out from the beach nearest the mountains. Thick jungle hides most of the facilities along the base of the mountains and the entrance to the underground installation.

## **BASE DEFENSES**

The installation maintains several security precautions to protect itself against ships and planes navigating too close, and against unauthorized personnel who manage to sneak ashore.

Most soldiers the characters encounter carry the standard infantry Arisaka 38 rifle, a bayonet, and one hand grenade, no matter their other duties (anti-aircraft gunner, machine gunner). Since the island sits just within the territory of the Japanese Mandate, and has so far faced no immediate threats to its security, most of the guards exhibit a carelessness in their duties except in the presence of their superior officers. Those with stationary duty manning machine guns in pillboxes and towers take turns napping or reading. Soldiers on the anti-aircraft guns sit around much of the time with only one casually scanning the skies now and then. Even sentries on foot take frequent rests in the shade of palm trees.

### **Japanese Soldier (Henchman)**

#### Competent Skills:

dodge \_\_\_\_\_

endurance \_\_\_\_\_

fight \_\_\_\_\_

notice \_\_\_\_\_

survival \_\_\_\_\_

#### Expert Skill:

shoot \_\_\_\_\_

#### Gear:

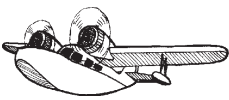
Arisaka 38 rifle \_\_\_\_\_

bayonet \_\_\_\_\_

hand grenades \_\_\_\_\_

canteen \_\_\_\_\_

knapsack \_\_\_\_\_



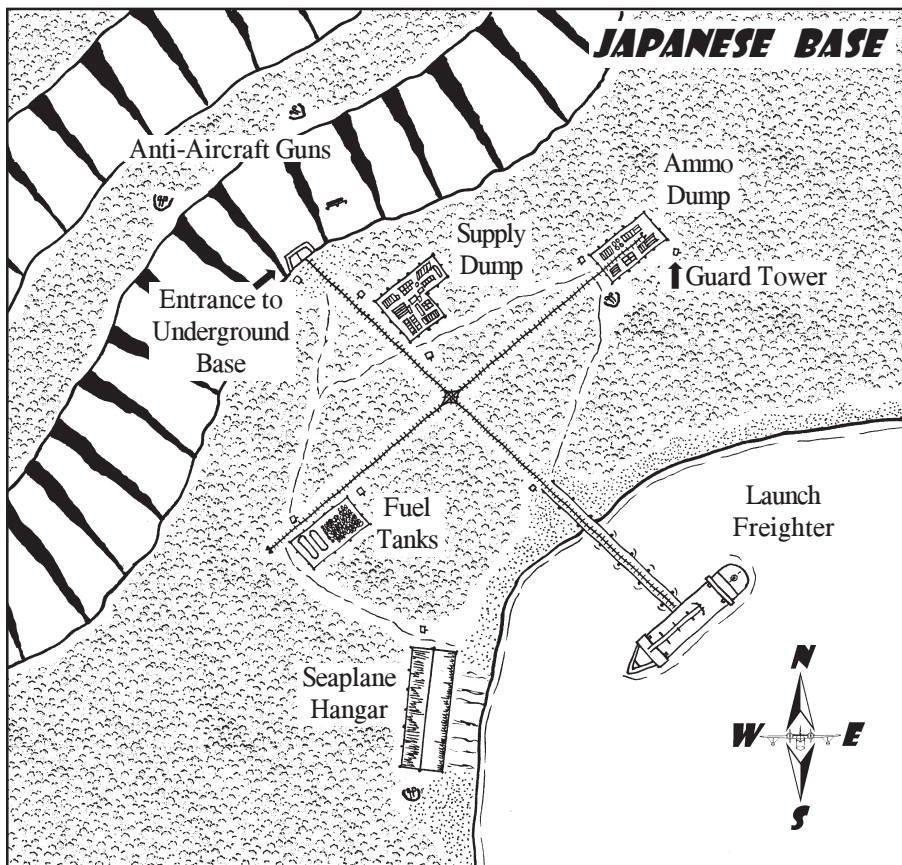
The few officers on the base carry Nambu pistols and katanas, while the handful of technical personnel go unarmed. For more details on Japanese military personnel, see the first chapter, “Welcome to Rura-Tonga.”

Each location has a hand-cranked telephone linked with the main control bunker through a line strung through the jungle. The commander can also activate the alarm klaxon along these lines; most buildings and underground chambers sound the alarm through sirens, while in remote posts (guard towers, pillboxes, and gun emplacements) the phone simply rings a steady alert tone.

Any kind of alarm—a shout, whistle, or gunfire from any personnel, or the loud klaxon from the buildings—sends everyone into a heightened and restless state of agitation. Slipping past anyone at this point proves an extreme challenge, since the soldiers prefer to shoot things than take a more level-headed approach that might result in capturing prisoners for interrogation.

**Sentry Patrols:** Pairs of soldiers patrol all areas of the base, from the shoreline and docks to the above-ground buildings and underground caverns. Since they undertake other duties around the installation too sensitive for slaves—moving supplies, wrangling slaves, loading boats and planes, transporting completed rockets, maintaining base facilities—their patrols seem thin in places. They still manage to pop up when the heroes least expect it, though evading them in the rocks, jungle, and buildings doesn’t prove too difficult.

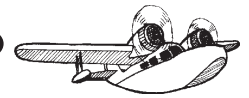
**Pillboxes:** A few concrete pillboxes sit nestled among the rocks along the coast looking out over the ocean and the lagoon. A single metal entry hatch allows access to an outer duty room and then the inner watch post. Two soldiers occupy a pillbox at any given time, one snoozing or reading in the duty room and another leaning on the heavy machine gun mounted in the long, thin window slit that allows the sentry to gaze out over his field of fire.



**Coastal Guns:** Two larger pillboxes sit on the beach facing away from the island. Each has a 5-inch gun capable of firing on approaching ships. Though small in comparison to most naval guns, these weapons allow the base to defend itself from long-range naval activity while it prepares the rest of its forces (including armed seaplanes) for a counterattack. The guns remain ineffective against personnel on the outer beach.

**Anti-Aircraft Emplacements:** Two sandbagged enclosures along the lagoon beach and two more built into the mountain-side provide firing platforms for light anti-aircraft guns to shoot down unwelcome planes flying too close to the island. Four soldiers crew each gun, though most lounge around the sandbags while one maintains the illusion that he’s scanning the skies for unauthorized aircraft.

**Guard Towers:** Within the cover of the jungle stand several guard towers built of palm trunks and bamboo. They rise just within the tree line to offer a view of open areas nearby, including the lagoon and clearings within the



jungle. Bamboo ladders climb 20 feet up one of the support beams and allow access to the thatch-roofed cabin through a hole in the floor. Two sentries occupy each tower, one manning the heavy machine gun and the other napping.

**Seaplane Hangar:** The base keeps a small seaplane hangar on the lagoon beach for launching amphibious aircraft for patrol, reconnaissance, and attack missions. The aircraft sit beneath a massive tent made from camouflage netting suspended from tall poles and palm trees. The base's compliment of aircraft includes three Nakajima E8N spotter floatplanes—to serve short-range patrol duties and intercept other aircraft and ships that venture too close to the island base—and one Kawanishi H6K flying boat for long-range patrol and transport. They taxi down the beach to the lagoon water, where they take off and land. Soldiers keep the sloping beach between the hangar and lagoon clear of all obstructions; they sweep the sand flat to eliminate evidence that aircraft travel between the water and hangar. A wooden shack nearby provides quarters for the pilots and two mechanics, while a nearby fenced enclosure houses fuel drums, crates of spare parts, and ammunition. Four sentries patrolling in pairs regularly stand guard in and around the hangar. Given the nearby trees and the trailing camouflage net, those inside or near the hangar have a very limited field of view to anywhere else on the island other than the lagoon.



## ***SURFACE INSTALLATIONS***

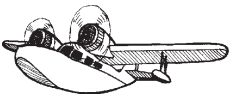
Several elements of the base remain in plain sight on the lagoon, while those exploring the jungles nearby can discover other locations that gain some degree of camouflage from the surrounding foliage and carefully placed netting.

**Launch Freighter:** A small freighter sits at the end of a dock that reaches toward the center of the lagoon. It rides high in the water, indicating it doesn't carry much cargo. Anyone taking a moment to reconnoiter the ship notices that an upward-sloping metal ramp with rails runs lengthwise along the deck from aft to fore. A few soldiers patrol the decks, while two technicians scamper around the ramp, making adjustments, welding new pieces into place, or measuring the rails to ensure proper alignment. The crew usually stays below decks unless they're getting underway or maneuvering for a launch operation. The freighter is too large for the heroes to commandeer and adequately manage for an escape.

**Dock:** A pier built from cut palm trunks juts out from the shore into the lagoon to allow access to the freighter. A narrow-gauge railroad track runs the entire length of the dock to allow easy transport of supplies to and from moored ships. The rails cross the beach and disappear into the jungle in the direction of the mountains. A lone tugboat sits tied up alongside the dock; the base uses it to position the freighter and aim its rocket-launching ramp in the correct direction. The vessel is seaworthy, if slow, and can operate with a small crew. The heroes might commandeer it for their escape, but won't have the speed to outrun any pursuing aircraft or ships.

**Railway Tracks:** The narrow-gauge railway tracks connect the dock with several key locations around the base. It begins on the dock and runs almost straight to a massive metal door in a cliff at the base of the mountains. Switches allow individual cars to veer off to other essential locations housing freight like the ammunition dump, supply depot, and fuel tanks. Since the island has no steam locomotive, slave workers push the small freight cars along the tracks as needed. Flatbed cars allow laborers to load almost any kind of cargo, including ammunition crates, fuel drums, even chemical tanks and rockets using special wooden cradles.





**Supply Dump:** A low barbed-wire enclosure houses basic supplies to support the base. These include boxes of dry foodstuffs, tanks of drinking water, crates of spare equipment, tents, extra airplane parts, and bulk components and fuselages for rockets. A pair of sentries regularly patrol this enclosure, mostly to keep errant slave workers and greedy soldiers from getting at the food.

**Ammo Dump:** A much higher barbed-wire fence—mounted on palm-tree trunks 10 feet high—surrounds the ammunition dump. Inside sit crates filled with ordnance for all the weapons on the island (machine guns, pistols, rifles, aircraft-mounted guns), plus the 1,000-pound bomb payloads for the rockets. A small guard shack near the locked gate through which the narrow-gauge railroad tracks pass offers shelter to two sentries and their machine gun. Two more sentries patrol the ammo dump perimeter.

**Fuel Tanks:** Another heavily guarded enclosure (with the same defenses as the ammo dump) contains 55-gallon drums with aviation gasoline and diesel fuel for the base's generators. Specially designed pressurized tanks hold liquid gas for rocket fuel. The guards here have instructions to subdue intruders without using firearms, since a stray bullet could pierce a container and spark the fuel. Igniting any of the fuel would set off a chain-reaction explosion that could instantly incinerate the entire jungle—and any base installations—between the mountains and the lagoon.

## UNDERGROUND BASE

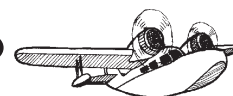
The main portion of the base resides beneath the rocky slopes of the central mountain. A main blast door leads to a network of passages and ramps connecting the installation's sensitive areas.

The narrow-gauge railway tracks ultimately lead to the large double doors in a cliff face at the base of the mountain. The reinforced, steel doors swing outward on roller tracks; hidden counterweights inside slam them shut instantly at the first sign of an emergency (such as an explosion, attack, or accident). Four guards and an officer stand guard here at all times inspecting anyone entering or exiting the complex. Most of the traffic consists of soldiers, technicians, or supervised slave laborers, so they don't check papers; but they remain extremely suspicious of anything out of the ordinary (like the heroes approaching the doorway in the open).

Anyone climbing the mountainside in search of other means of entry might uncover two options with a *Challenging search* roll, though they must take care to avoid notice from the two anti-aircraft emplacements perched among the rocks:

**Ventilator ducts** enable air to flow into the underground complex. They consist of square concrete blocks with heavy steel grilles bolted over the opening. Assuming the heroes can remove a grille (on a *Hard strength* roll assuming they use an appropriate crowbar tool), the duct allows one person of moderate build to slip down into the shaft. The duct consists of round hole bored through solid rock at varying downward-sloping angles. Each major location in the base has at least one ceiling duct; larger chambers have more than one. Unless the heroes have some knowledge of which ducts lead to which facilities, they have a good chance of tumbling down from the ceiling with little cover and lots of commotion.

**Emergency escape hatches** allow base personnel swift exit from key locations in the event of a disaster. On the surface they appear like round nautical hatches with a wheel to engage the seal. The tropical climate has rusted portions of the hatches. Unsticking the wheel and opening the hatch requires a *Challenging strength* or *lift* roll. The hatch opens onto a round shaft cut into the rock wide enough for one person. It snakes along, sometimes at an angle, sometimes vertically, with metal ladder rungs driven into the stone to provide hand- and footholds. The shaft leads down to another door hatch opening into one of the key locations from which base personnel might have reason to escape: the barracks, assembly area, rocket hangar, and control bunker. The



characters have no idea which escape hatch leads to which location beforehand.

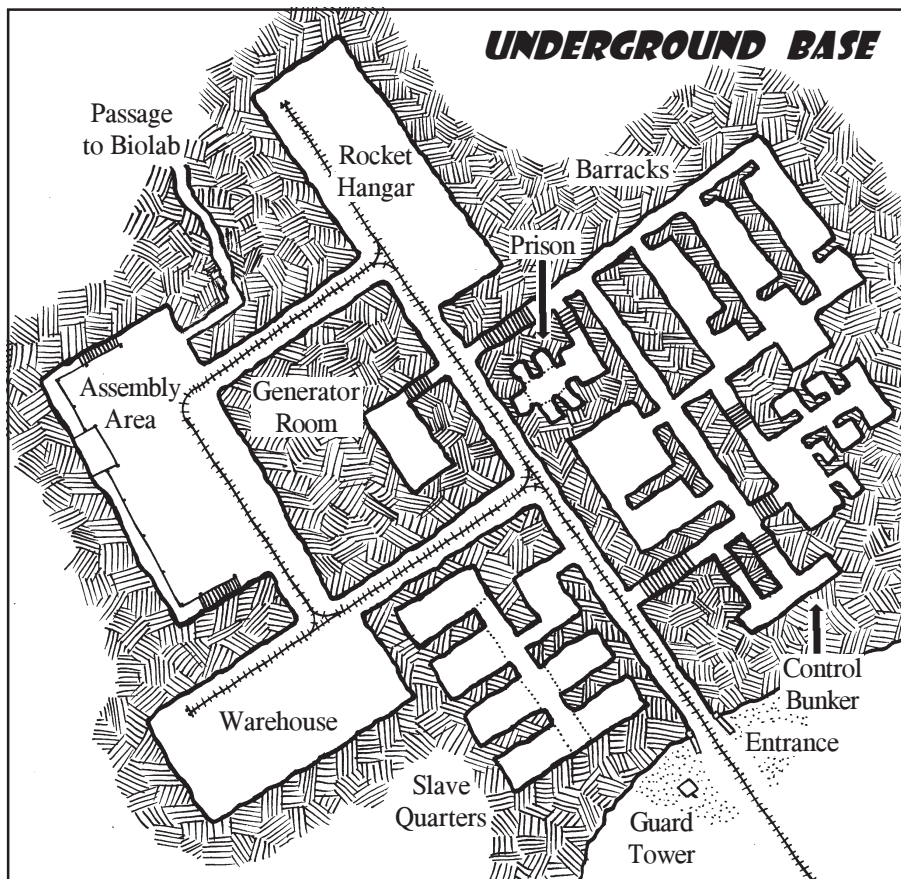
Once inside, the heroes enter a network of tunnels and passages connecting small chambers and expansive caverns. The narrow-gauge railway tracks run from the main entrance through large tunnels to several key underground locations integral in producing the experimental rockets: the warehouse, assembly area, and rocket hangar. Smaller side corridors branch off these main thoroughfares to allow access to other facilities. Pairs of sentries routinely patrol corridors while slave gangs (also supervised by soldiers) move small railway cars loaded with components, supplies, or missiles along the tracks. Electric lights mounted in the ceiling every 20 feet provide some basic illumination, but still leave plenty of shadows where characters might hide.

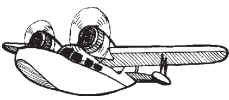
**Warehouse:** Piles of supplies fill this vast cavern, providing many hiding places from the two guards who march a patrol circuit between the entrances. Most of the goods here sit in sealed wooden crates or beneath weighted tarpaulins, but heroes can access them with a little work. If they have the time, they might search for potentially useful items

for their planned operations (reconnaissance, rescue, sabotage) within the underground base: basic tools, rope, spare parts for various machines found on the base, and small guidance, avionic, and fuel regulator parts for the rockets easily pocketed for future study. Anything even remotely explosive resides in the ammo dump outside.

**Slave Quarters:** Chinese slaves captured by Japanese troops and transported to the island work the factory lines assembling rockets and perform other heavy labor tasks. One of the corridors branching off the main passage contains barred entrances to several subsidiary caverns sealed by locked metal gates. The slaves live here in absolute squalor, sleeping on salvaged blankets, packing straw, dried palm fronds, and makeshift beds built from old shipping crates. Two pairs of guards stand watch at the small sentry post cave near the exit toward the main corridor, and two more soldiers march a tedious patrol up and down the access tunnel to make sure the slaves aren't acting up or trying to pry open the barred doors. These two soldiers also take care of feeding duties, one keeping the slaves in a particular cavern at bay with his rifle and bayonet while the other one unlocks the gate and pushes in a trough of food slop. Overall the slaves still have some strength left to labor for the Japanese, but their will has been broken by ceaseless work, incessant beatings, and inhuman living conditions. It would take an *Improbable persuade* roll to rekindle their hope of escape, along with proof of some credible plan that the heroes can safely rescue everyone from the island, or evidence that they've soundly defeated the Japanese. Even if freed, the mob of slaves could only provide an overwhelming diversion, since few remain in any shape to serve as competent combatants.

**Generator Room:** This underground chamber contains diesel generators that provide power to the base, particularly the underground facilities. The engines also power a nearby pump that provides fresh water from deep beneath the mountain. Two guards





and a technician occupy a small niche near the entrance slightly sheltered from the deafening diesel engine noise. Several metal drums containing fuel stand at the ready; enterprising characters might use the flammable substance to their advantage in creating a diversion or disabling parts of the base. Shutting down or seriously damaging the engines would plunge the underground base into darkness, causing confusion and alarm in both soldiers and slaves.

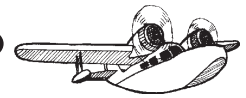
**Prison:** A small side corridor contains the base's brig for unruly soldiers and enemy foreigners captured on or near the island. Each cell—essentially a niche carved out of the prison passageway—has a barred wall with a locked door, a few scraps of cloth for a bed, and two tins, one for food and one for water. Only four prisoners occupy any cells: one drunk and rowdy Japanese guard left to cool his heels and sleep off his liquor; a delirious, feverish British sailor who washed ashore here after a storm swept him over the side of his merchant vessel; a Japanese technician whose conscience finally convinced him to object to both the rocket program and the use of slave labor; and a plain-looking woman who claims she's a famous female pilot who's aircraft crashed near the island (whether or not she's really Amelia Earhardt could easily remain a mystery). The first two prisoners require help to move, but the other two remain capable of acting

normally on their own if freed. A cozy guardroom near the passage to the main corridor serves as both sentry post for two soldiers and interrogation chamber when needed. Should Japanese forces capture any character on the island or prowling around in the subterranean base, they find themselves locked in a cell here in the prison.

**Barracks:** The base staff—soldiers, officers, and technicians—make their home in a series of connected caverns that satisfy their domestic needs. These include several barracks rooms where soldiers sleep on wooden bunks or canvas hammocks, more spaciouly appointed officers quarters where two men share accommodations, a cave where the technicians bunk, and a duty room for each group where they can relax or conduct business required for the base's efficient operation. A large kitchen cavern outfitted with stoves and some basic refrigeration units provides food for the Japanese personnel and slop for the slaves. These areas remain busy with base personnel at all times, as various shifts go off duty, take their meals, or conduct briefings about future operations.

**Assembly Area:** A vast cavern outfitted with industrial equipment serves as the primary factory where slaves construct rockets along a basic assembly line. Sentries loom over everyone from catwalks hanging from the ceiling and along the walls, accessible through metal staircases near the well-guarded cave entrances. The catwalks also lead to a control booth overlooking the entire factory floor. An officer and several technicians monitor progress from here and bark orders at workers over a public address system. Slave laborers assemble rocket components on a long platform with rails, connecting the engine chambers, nozzles, valves, pressurized hoses, and fuel tanks together before fitting the missile's outer skin plates, stabilizer fins, and tail around it. The components travel along the platform rails on a wheeled cradle that ultimately holds the final product. The slaves can assemble one rocket during the course of a 12-hour shift; at any given time three rockets sit in various stages of completion on the assembly line rail. Although well lit by overhead arc lights, the noise level, maze of machinery, wooden bins filled with components, and furious activity offer many opportunities for concealment or stealthy movement. The soldiers concentrate more on the slaves than anything else. Laborers who notice the heroes sneaking around try to mask their initial surprise, then do what they can to aid their





potential rescuers. The characters might use a variety of tools found here to their advantage: welding torches and their fuel supplies, wrenches, crowbars, hammers,

**Rocket Hangar:** Slaves wheel completed rockets along the tracks running through central passageways (the one's eventually leading out the main doors) into a storage hangar nearby. Rockets rest here on wooden racks, with a simple crane assembly used to lift them on and off flatbed cars for transport. One usually sits at the entrance, ready to roll out along the railway tracks to the pier and freighter, from which it launches under the careful watch of technicians. Two sentries guard the hangar, since the only authorized traffic consists of slave gangs transporting rockets and their commanding officer. Although the rockets stand ready for test-launching, they contain no fuel or warheads, both of which technicians add at the appropriate storage facility outside the caverns.

**Control Bunker:** Various locations throughout this long chamber serve as command points for the base and monitoring posts for test launches. Built into the mountainside, the bunker offers several long, slit windows through which personnel can oversee the exterior base facilities and watch the freighter in the lagoon launch rockets. Before one window stand several motion picture cameras on tripods waiting to film the next launch. A large control panel covers half the back wall with gauges and dials to monitor fuel, speed, temperature, and other factors affecting missiles. One corner contains the commander's desk; an overhead lamp lights a nearby table strewn with maps used for staff meetings. Two doors in the back wall—one at each end of the long bunker—offer entrance to the corridor outside (and the nearby emergency escape hatch). This area always has a steady stream of personnel: officers consulting with each other about security arrangements, technicians preparing for the next launch, soldiers carrying orders to other parts of the base. Even in a state of confusion or alarm, few in this area would overlook the presence of intruders like the heroes.

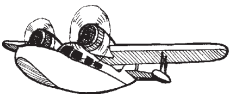
## **OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES**

The heroes have free reign in this episode to roam around the base (assuming the Japanese don't capture them), explore the facilities, sabotage installations, and liberate captives. Depending on their situation, the characters can explore the base and pursue various approaches based on their chosen objectives.

**Escape:** The heroes' primary goal—no matter what other objectives they hope to accomplish—remains finding some way off the island and back to civilization. Perhaps they landed their seaplane safely but need to find spare parts. If they crashed their aircraft, they might consider stealing one of the Japanese floatplanes moored in the hangar near the lagoon shore. (Stealing the freighter requires more than just the characters to accomplish, both in taking over the ship and sailing it, and remains a slow means of fleeing the island.) Achieving any of these objectives requires the heroes to infiltrate the base and steal the necessary parts or aircraft to ensure their swift and safe escape.

**Reconnaissance:** During their preparations to somehow escape the island, the heroes might decide to scout out the island, determine the extent of the Japanese base, and uncover or retrieve evidence of secret activities. The characters could sneak around observing base operations, taking notes, and exploring the extent of its facilities. They might collect solid evidence of the Japanese experimental rocket program, stealing components, collecting paperwork on test flights, or taking photographs. The heroes might also gather evidence of Japanese atrocities committed in the name of science on the island.

**Rescue:** The heroes might seek to liberate various people imprisoned on the island. Taking any of the captives from the subterranean prison cells remains the easiest option that still enables the characters to move quickly and independently. If they



encounter the mutant men, they might enlist their aid assaulting the Japanese base in return for a promise of escape from the island. Freeing the Chinese slave workers—after convincing them to rebel against their powerful masters—can create chaos first in the underground base and later around the lagoon, but they aren't easy to control and all seem to head for the freighter as their primary means of escape. The actual degree of “rescue” depends on the means available for mass escape from the island. If the heroes manage to only steal the largest floatplane, the multi-engine Kawanishi H6K flying boat, or they repair their own aircraft, they can fit themselves and a few other individuals (such as a few captives from the prison); all the characters have a tough time fitting on one of the smaller spotter planes. Taking over the freighter requires a mass of coordinated Chinese laborers and some assertive command skills from the heroes.

**Sabotage:** Once they realize the base's purpose and potential threat to Japan's enemies, the heroes could decide to disrupt the Japanese efforts to develop a fully operational rocket technology. Depending on their resources and jury-rigging expertise, they might try sabotaging supplies or ordnance in the depots or foul up machinery in the factory. If they're really ambitious, gain access to explosive substances, and muster some support from the mutant men or freed laborers, they might cause serious damage by detonating improvised bombs, setting off the ammunition depot, or igniting a fueled rocket. They might somehow lure or herd one of the giant mutants from the other side of the island through the biolab entrance, over the mountains, or around the shoreline to wreak havoc on the base.

## **CLIMACTIC ENCOUNTERS**

The heroes' objectives and strategies as pursued above can help set up some climactic scenes to highlight their escape. Use these climactic moments depending on the circumstances of the action at the height of the scenario:

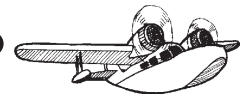
**Buried Alive:** If the action in the subterranean portions of the base gets too explosive, it might bring down corridors or even entire cavern locations. A collapse might trap heroes in a desperate situation, near a poisonous gas leak, ticking explosive fuse, or flooding cavern. They must dig through, blast away debris with improvised explosives, or find another way out through the labyrinth of tunnels while evading the danger at hand and Japanese opponents intent on killing them.

**Countdown:** The characters must escape before some event destroys them or their route to safety. Perhaps they set a fuse to detonate at a certain time, and obstacles delaying their flight put them near the explosion at just the wrong time. Maybe others (freed slaves, mutant men, or fleeing Japanese soldiers) race to use and possibly sever their means of escape before the heroes reach it.

**Mutant Menace:** If the heroes lured a monstrosity sized mutant to the base to run amok among the Japanese, it might inadvertently block their means of escape. Perhaps the creature wandered onto this side of the island while the Japanese were busy dealing with the intruding characters. They must find some way around the raging mutant or turn some of the installation's weaponry and other explosive resources against it.

**Airplane Fight:** If the heroes' plan for escape involves aircraft—either their own repaired seaplane or one of the Japanese patrol or transport amphibious aircraft—introduce some enemy personnel who attempt to stop them from escaping. This situation could lead to shootouts on airplane wings, fistfights inside cramped cabins, heroes clinging to wing pontoons, and everyone avoiding spinning propellers, all while the aircraft bounces over the waves during take-off or soars aloft in flight.

**Rocket Ship:** Characters who seek to commandeer the freighter reach it just as the technicians finish preparing another rocket for a test launch. Unfortunately the heroes



drive them away, leaving a missile on the launch rails, fuel vapors seeping from the exhaust nacelle, on a timed delay. The rocket, however, warhead armed, remains strapped in its position; when it ignites, it won't scream down the launch rail and into the sky, it simply explodes in its locked cradle! The heroes must defuse the ignition mechanism, unlock the cradle, or otherwise defuse the missile, all while attempting to get the freighter under way and repel Japanese soldiers intent on stopping them.

Feel free to improvise other climactic situations to top off the adventure based on the characters' method of escape and any mischief they've caused earlier.

## **EPILOGUE**

The adventure ends with the heroes' successful escape from the secret Japanese island base. They evade or eliminate pursuit and return to Rura-Tonga, possibly with freed captives in tow. Their actions have repercussions that might affect future activity in the South Pacific.

If the characters did not cripple or destroy the base, they might bring reprisals down on Rura-Tonga; see the "Lets Go Home" sidebar in "Episode One: A Strange Fish" for various scenarios in which the Japanese decide to take out everyone on Rura-Tonga who might know of their secret rocket program. This retribution might form an entire adventure of its own. Japanese vengeance might not occur immediately, especially if forces on the top secret island rocket installation must regroup and repair their base of operations...but it *will* come.

Heroes who escape the island with a Japanese seaplane, the rocket launching ship itself, any of the freed Chinese slaves, or the mutant men must decide how to explain their new acquisitions or eliminate the evidence of their activities against the Japanese. The heroes can make a report to authorities or try covering up their explosive escapades and any ramifications of their adventures.

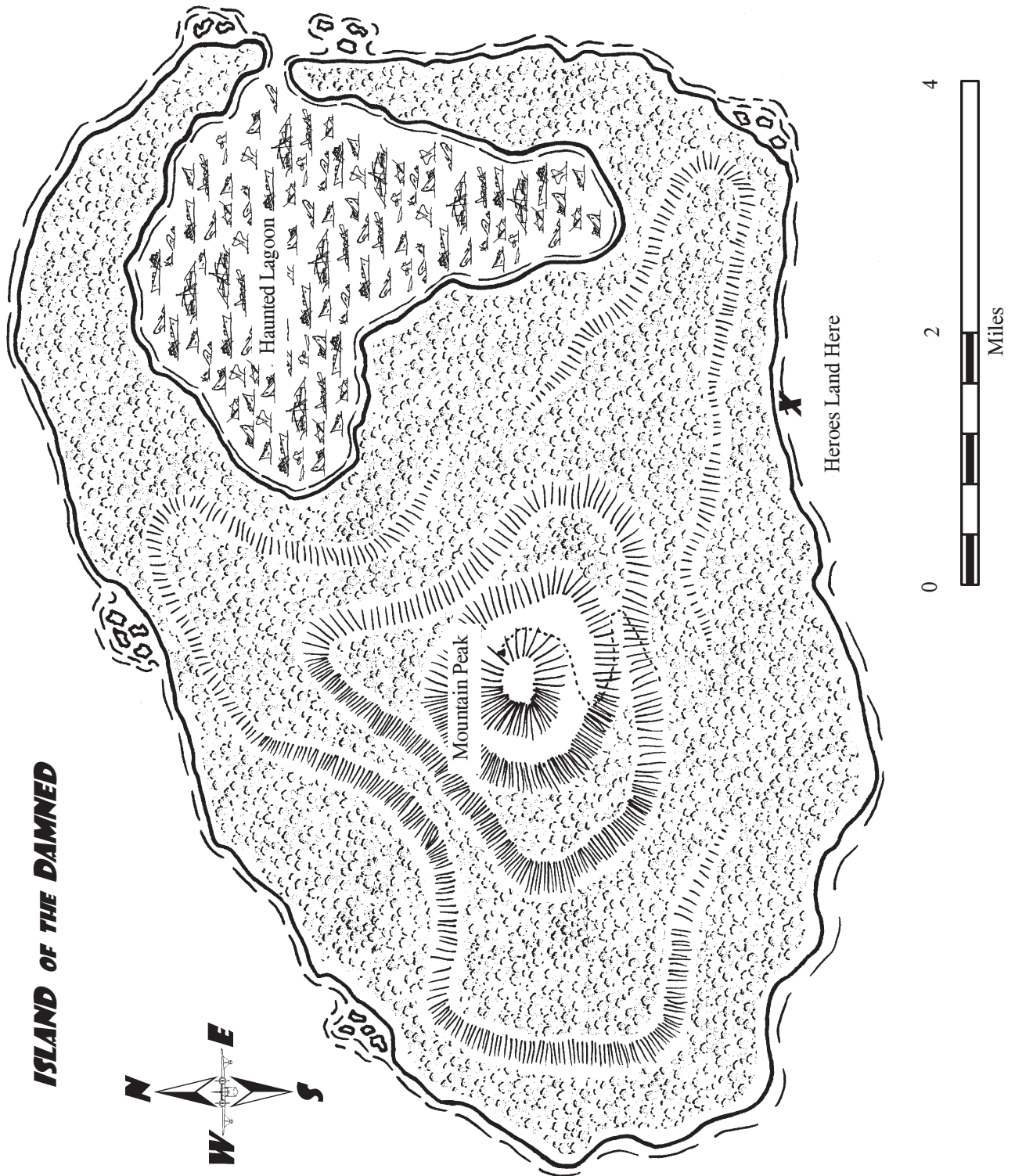
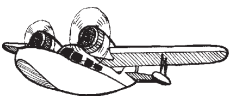
If the heroes return to Rura-Tonga with Japanese property (specifically a seaplane or the rocket launch freighter), they must devise suitably believable stories explaining how they obtained them, and should probably alter their appearance make them less obviously Japanese. The characters could easily dismantle even the larger seaplane into piles of spare parts ostensibly used for the island's charter flight operation. Although the heroes could salvage portions of the ship, they could not entirely dismantle it; they'd have to sail it into the open sea and sink it in the deep.

Transporting freed captives back from the secret base poses more problems. The characters might get away with explaining the presence of a few new people at Rura-Tonga, but returning with a plane- or boat-load of refugees might prove beyond reasonable explanation, especially to inquisitive or angry government officials from America, Japan, or the United Kingdom. Discreetly dispersing a crowd of escaped laborers to nearby islands could form the basis for an almost comical scenario, complete with well-meaning but clueless passengers creating unexpected problems and bumbling bureaucrats trying to catch the heroes engaged in incriminating activities. The mutant men pose a serious problem since they cannot easily or discreetly re-integrate into human society. The heroes might convince the local villagers to take them in and hide them among the jungles; or they might seek out an uninhabited island where they can subsist in peace.

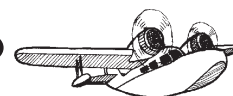
Regardless of whether they destroyed the base, the characters make determined enemies of the Japanese authorities who are now furious that their secret rocket program lies in ruins. Should they continue operations near the Japanese Mandate, they find Imperial forces increasingly hostile and intolerant of their presence.



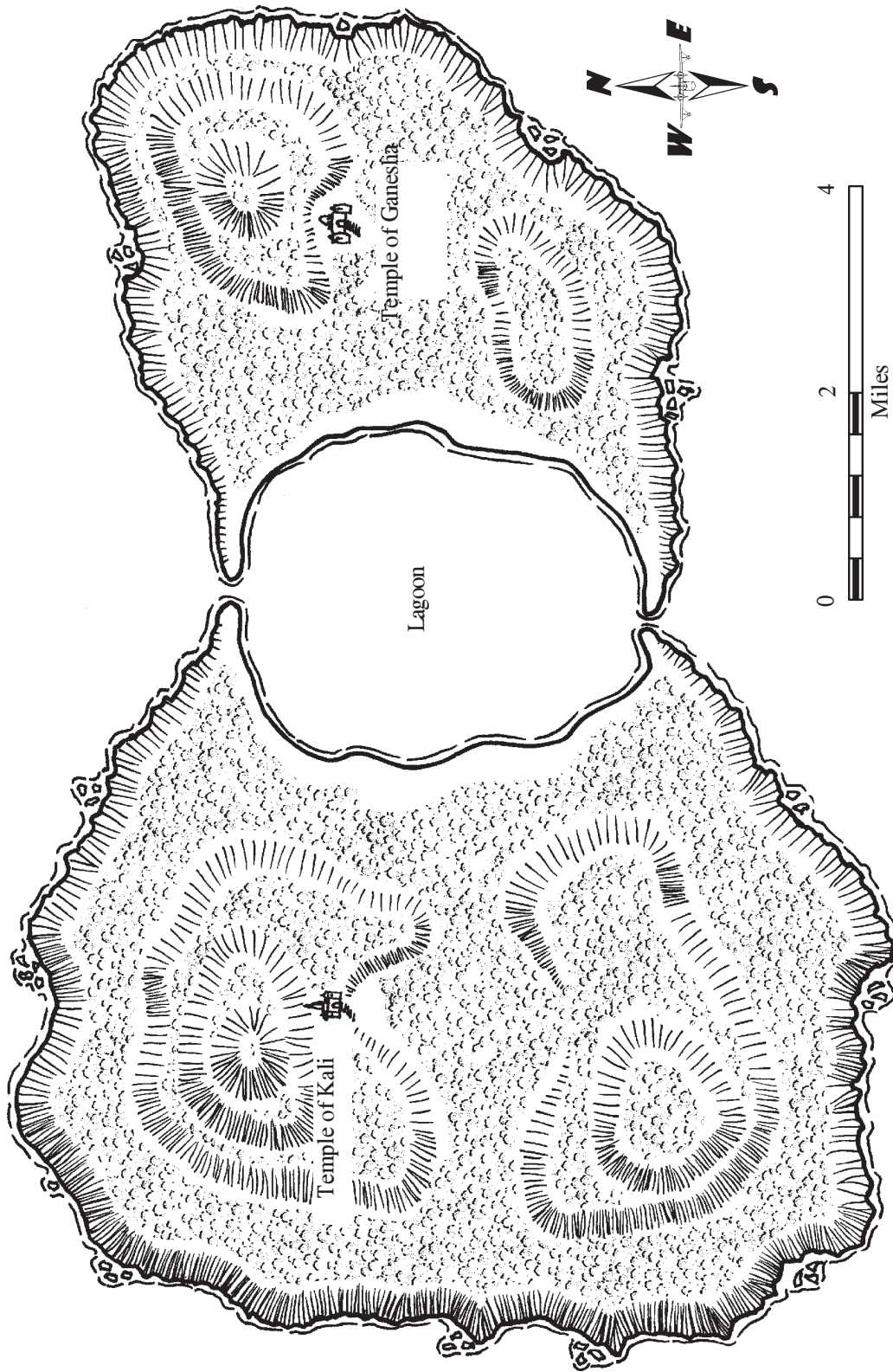




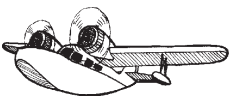
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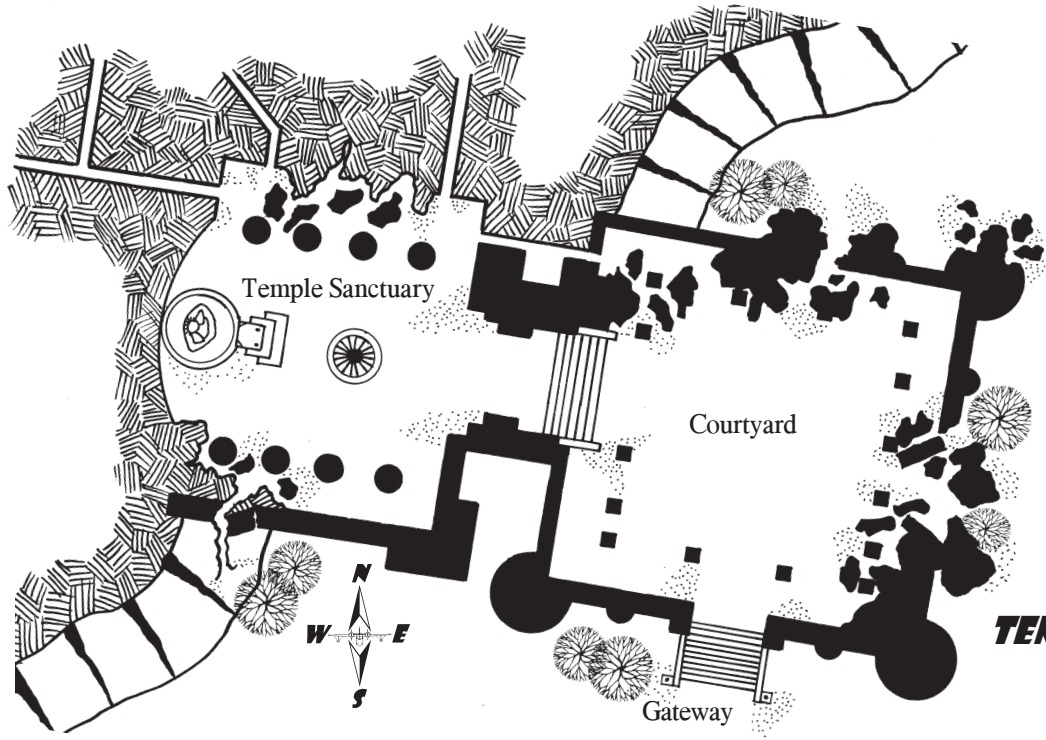
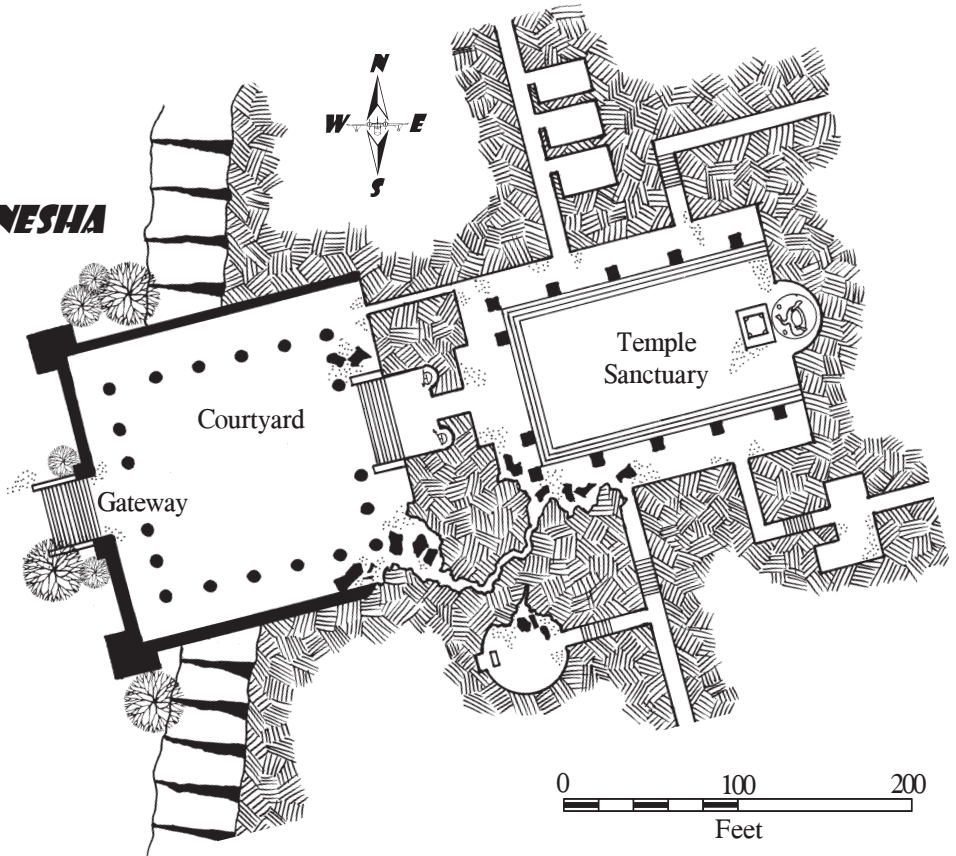
**PRINCE KARNATA'S ISLAND**



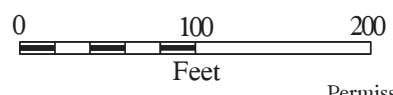
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**TEMPLE OF GANESHA**

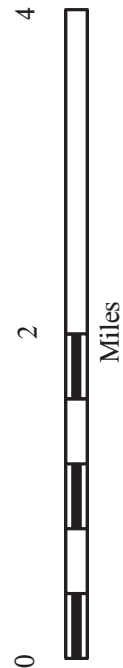
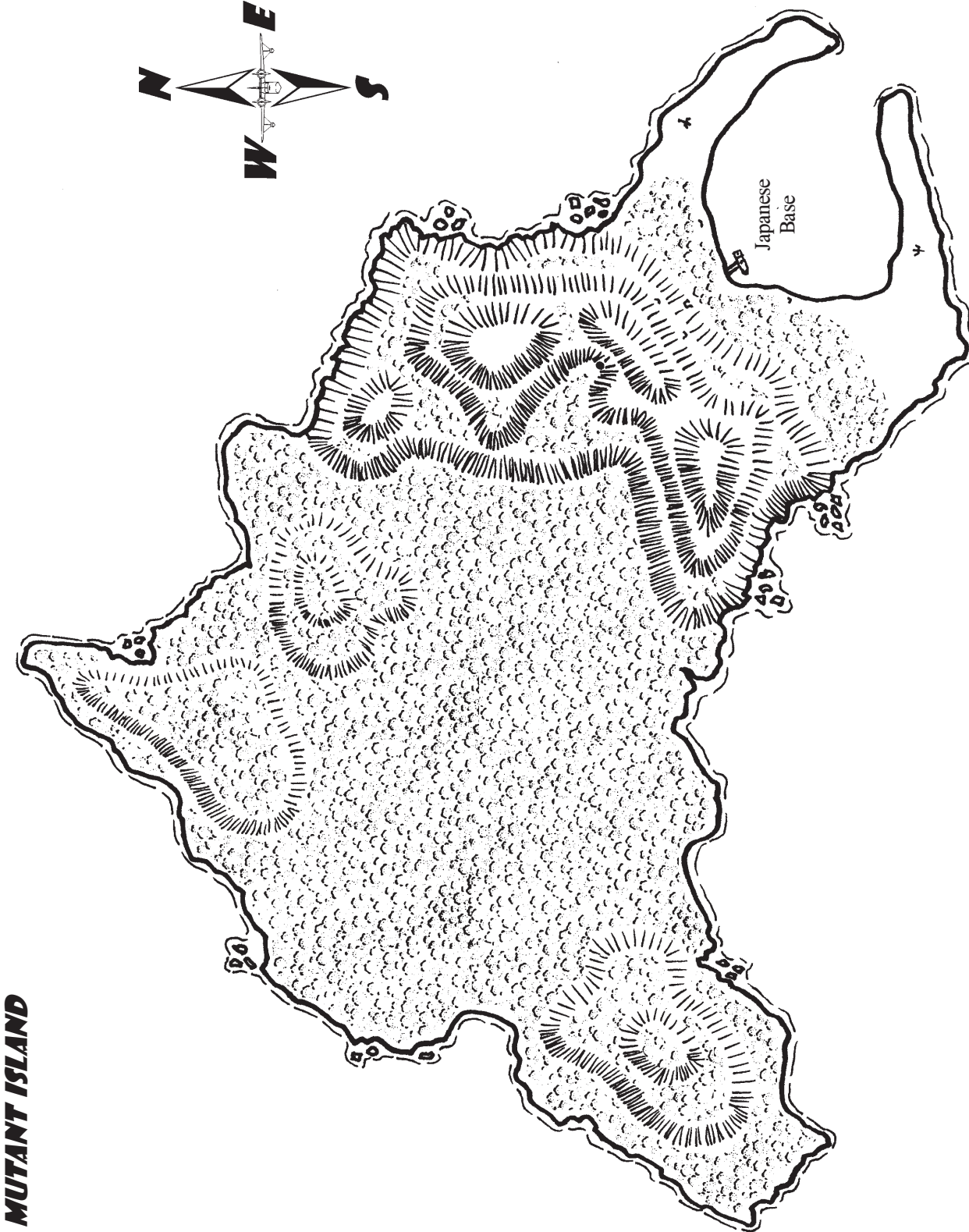
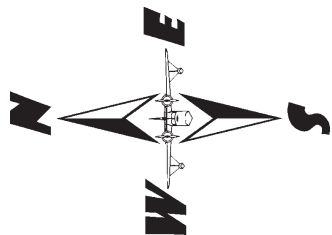
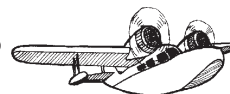


**TEMPLE OF KALI**



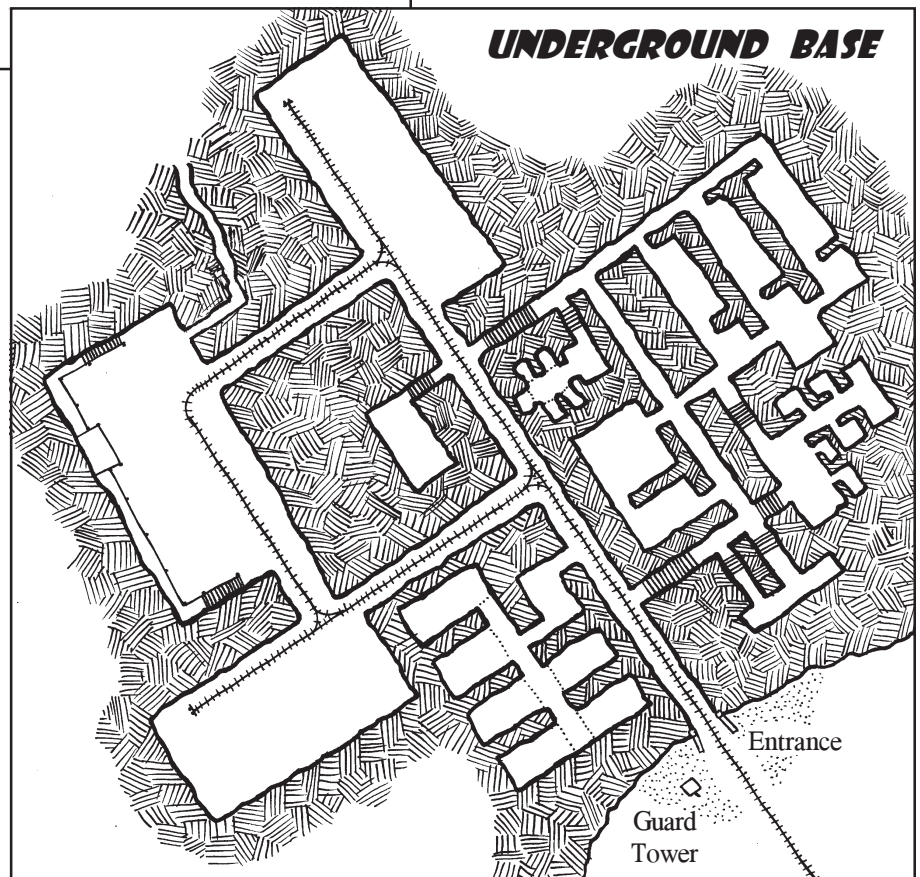
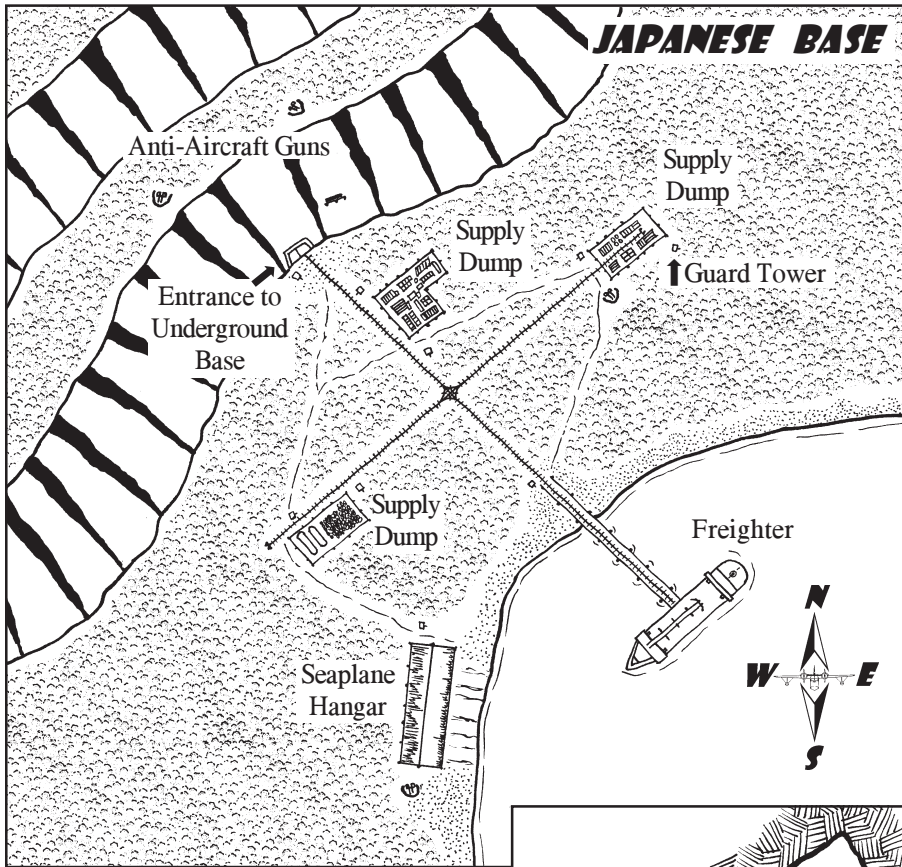
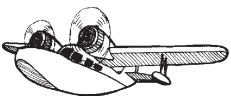
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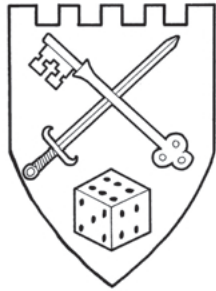
**MUTANT ISLAND**

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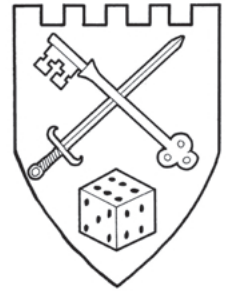


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# The Any-System



# Key



## An Adaptable Stat System

By Peter Schweighofer

The *Any-System Key* describes character skills and task difficulties in terms that easily translate into different game systems. These terms do not key into any one game engine, but serve as general guidelines to give readers an overall sense of how they fit within their own game's stat and difficulty scale. *Any-System Key* publications provide settings, characters, adventures, and other source material adaptable to your favorite roleplaying game.

### Character Stats

Assume characters have the average rating in most skills, with several rated at the level of a competent professional, a few considered expert in their field, and sometimes one signature skill for which the character is renown.

#### SKILL LEVELS

*Competent Skills:* Displays a professional level of training

*Expert Skills:* Possesses specialized knowledge

*Signature Skill:* Ranks among the best in the world

Three character levels further describe their abilities. Henchmen do not possess Signature skills and only have one Expert skill. Bosses have the usual complement of skills. Masterminds boost all their skills by one level; their Competent skills have the same value as Expert skills normally possess, Expert skills have values equivalent to the Signature level, and Signature skills increase by one increment beyond their maximum game value.

#### CHARACTER LEVELS

*Henchman:* No Signature Skill, only one Expert Skill

*Boss:* Normal skill levels

*Mastermind:* Skills boosted one level, Signature Skill gains bonus

An equipment category defines a character's possessions (or an animal's natural weapons) gamers can easily look up for damage, cost, and other stats in their preferred game.

#### Example:

Orc (Henchman)

*Competent Skills:* carouse, climb, intimidate, shoot, track

*Expert Skills:* fight

*Equipment:* leather armor, short bow, sword

### Task Difficulties

*Any-System Key* publications use four levels to describe the degree of difficulty for tasks undertaken by a person with professional training and proficiency in relevant skills.

#### TASK DIFFICULTIES

*Routine:* Low chance of failure (25%).

*Challenging:* Moderate chance of failure (50%).

*Hard:* High chance of failure (75%).

*Improbable:* Almost certain chance of failure (99%).

#### Example:

The characters must leap across a chasm to reach safety. Doing so successfully requires a *Challenging jump* roll; they have a moderate chance of failure, but also a moderate chance of success. If flames leaped out of the chasm, the difficulty might increase to *Hard*; not only must they jump the chasm, but they must withstand intense heat.

### Higher Level Games

Running a setting or scenario with heroes who seem to waltz through encounters? Simply raise the gamemaster character levels and the task difficulty levels. Nothing turns Henchman-level mooks into challenging opponents better than upgrading their Expert skill into a Signature skill.

### Fits Your Favorite Games

Game character skills have different degrees of competence defined by stats. Simply figure out which stats best represent the levels of Competent, Expert, and Signature skills and use those values when integrating *Any-System Key* material into your game.

The same applies for difficulties. Just match the *Any-System Key* difficulty descriptions with the corresponding values for rating tasks in your own game.



# Any-System Key Customization to:

Insert the name of your favorite roleplaying game system here.

## Skill Level Customization

**Any-System Key**      **Your System**  
**Skill Level**              **Skill Level**

Competent	
Expert	
Signature	

## Difficulty Customization

**Any-System Key**      **Your System**  
**Difficulty Level**              **Difficulty Level**

Routine	
Challenging	
Hard	
Improbable	

## Skill Name Customization

appraise _____	identify magic _____	run _____
archaeology _____	intellect _____	seafaring _____
bargain _____	interrogate _____	search _____
bluff _____	intimidate _____	sing _____
bureaucracy _____	investigate _____	shoot _____
business _____	joust _____	sleight of hand _____
carouse _____	law enforcement _____	stealth _____
cast magic _____	lift _____	streetwise _____
charm _____	medical _____	strength _____
chivalry _____	navigate _____	survival _____
climb _____	notice _____	tactics _____
command _____	persuade _____	track _____
cryptography _____	photography _____	tracraft _____
dodge _____	pick lock _____	wireless _____
drive _____	piloting _____	_____
endurance _____	poetry _____	_____
etiquette _____	research _____	_____
excavate _____	riddle _____	_____
faith _____	ride _____	_____
fight _____		
fly _____		
forage _____		
forge _____		
gunnery _____		

Visit Griffon Publishing Studio and the *Any-System Key* page at  
[griffonpub.home.att.net/NESys.html](http://griffonpub.home.att.net/NESys.html)

for more examples and sample stats.

*Any-System Key version 2.5, 11-17-08*







# ADVENTURE IN TROPICAL RURA-TONGA

## PACIFIC ISLAND PARADISE

*Heroes of Rura-Tonga* is a 104-page roleplaying game supplement presenting source material outlining elements for a 1930s pulp campaign in the South Pacific and five, full-length scenarios. *Heroes of Rura-Tonga* includes more than 30 pages outlining elements for a 1930s pulp campaign in the South Pacific:

- Description of Rura-Tonga, its history, environs, and inhabitants.
- Overview of political developments affecting the region.
- Information on period seaplanes, including the Grumman G-21.
- Briefings on Japanese forces operating in the area.
- Six archetypal heroes to use as pregenerated characters or templates for original characters.

The supplement also features five, full-length scenarios set in this exotic locale:

- **“Island of the Damned”** crash lands the heroes, along with a patrol of Japanese pilots, on an island inhabited by others castaways who satisfy their ravenous hunger by stalking the living.
- In **“Ship of Ghouls”** a derelict freighter mysteriously appears, threatening the settlement at Rura-Tonga with its horrid secrets: mutant abominations and a seemingly unstoppable plague.
- **“Doom of the Lost Library”** sends the heroes on a quest for a missing Indian treasure trove fraught with betrayal, ancient guardians, and divine magic.
- **“Wrath of the Mountain Goddess”** pits the characters against earthquakes, tribal superstitions, and a mischievous shaman on their mission to stop the island’s volcano from erupting.
- In **“Rockets of the Rising Sun”** the heroes investigate and attempt to sabotage new Japanese military technology that could unbalance a coming war in the Pacific.

This pulp-era sourcebook uses the *Any-System Key* to describe stats and difficulties in easily defined terms gamers can quickly customize to their favorite game engines. To use the information in this roleplaying game supplement you’ll need a copy of the *Any-System Key* (included) and your favorite roleplaying game system.

Author Peter Schweighofer follows his popular period *Pulp Egypt* sourcebook with another foray into the exciting world of pulp adventure. Schweighofer’s past work includes contributions to various incarnations of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*, the *Indiana Jones Roleplaying Game Raiders of the Lost Ark Sourcebook*, *Indiana Jones Adventures*, and the *Weird War II Afrika Korpse* supplement.



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