

Black Campbell Entertainment Presents

THE DEATH JADE



Filmed in 70mm UBIQUITY

THE DEATH JADE

An Adventure for the Ubiquity Role Playing System

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1. INTRODUCTION

This adventure is designed to be used with the Ubiquity system that drives *Hollow Earth Expedition* and other roleplaying games, but it would be easy enough to strip the serial numbers off the characters and situations and present it with *Spirit of the Century* or other Fate-based games, as well. This game is designed to be played by two to six players in about four to five hours.

The Death Jade is set in 1936, shortly before the Second Sino-Japanese War begins, but could easily be tweaked to fit an existing campaign. Pre-generated characters are provided for those groups looking for a pick up game, and can be tweaked to fit the player's needs. The characters were designed to be experienced, if not expert, adventurers rather than starting types. There are six pre-generated characters to start with, all with some connection to each other to ease the start of play.

If the players decide to use their own characters, or the game master wants to use this adventure as part of an ongoing campaign, it is suggested that you use the characters of Anastasia Rusikova and Roland Kessik as NPCs to aid in getting the adventure rolling. They are needed as plot devices to hire and direct the characters into the adventure (or replace them with existing PCs or NPCs that would work...we're all about the freedom, here.)

NOTES:

Throughout the adventure, you will see the references that look like this ATHLETICS 3 or WILLx2 2 — These reference a test the character(s) must roll. The capitalized word is the skill or attribute needed, and the number is the number of successes that need to be achieved.

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2. SETTING BACKGROUND

It is Spring 1936, and the drums of war are beating in China. Japanese aggression has been on the rise for some time in Manchuria, and the communists under Mao have been using the Nationalist weakness in the west to snatch control of the provinces on the Mongolian frontier. Outside of the Nationalist capital of Nanking, a short car trip or train ride from Shanghai, the *Kuomintang* (or “the Nationalist government” or KMT, for short) is weak, with warlords ostensibly under the command of Chiang Kai Shek’s government, ruling portions of the countryside. Everyone knows there is a fight coming between the various powers, but no one wants to believe it will happen soon.

Shanghai, notorious for being the “roughest city in the world,” is the hub of commerce — both legal and illicit. The Chinese areas around the edges of the city are tightly controlled by the Green Gang, a criminal “triad” that is closely tied to the *Kuomintang*, the Nationalist government of China. The heart of Shanghai is the International Settlement, a strip of land conceded to the European powers decades ago. It is an area of opportunity and wealth set in the midst of the crushing poverty of the native city.

Even the Settlement is as divided as China — the British and French sectors make up the majority of the Settlement, with the Japanese

holding the portions of the Settlement northeast of the river. There are no real borders between the sections of the Settlement, and while they are ostensibly governed by the same Board of Directors, they are *de facto* separate entities. There are Russians displaced by the Revolution, Japanese and Soviet spies and provocateurs, American sailors and marines, and Jews displaced from Europe...

There are a multitude of industries. Many of the native companies are focused on textiles and traditional crafts, while large Western companies use Shanghai for cheap labor. The heart of the International Settlement is “the Bund” — the port that lines both sides of the Hwangpo River that snakes through Shanghai.

Here, law and order is maintained by the Shanghai Municipal Police — made up mostly of British and Chinese policemen — and it is a hardened group of gunslingers, snipers, and martial arts experts. The maze-like streets and warrens are filled with poverty and criminals willing to use violence in an instant. With no real checkpoints between the Settlement and the “Chinese City” criminals can slip away and return with impunity. Shanghai is a place where life is cheap and death comes fast.

3. THE DEATH JADE



ACT 1

SCENE 1: PEARL OF THE ORIENT (MAY 1936)

The characters meet at the Pearl of the Orient nightclub on a corner of Nanking Road. The club is in a rather plain Western building, although the facade at the street level has been done up in Art Deco. The entrance is guarded by a pair of tough-looking Chinese men, dressed in tuxedos, and the big double doors are black lacquered with gold deco design work.

The interior of the club is similarly Art Deco, with gilded designs against black and red walls. There is a large bandstand from which a jazz band comprised of blacks and Chinese is playing. The dance floor makes up half the room and has a gold starburst on polished black tile. Around this are two terraces of aluminum tables and chairs. There is a spectacular set of chandeliers overhead. The hostess is a stunning, dark-haired Russian woman — Jenya — in *qipao*, and the wait

staff are all Chinese men in white livery, or women in Chinese dress. Everything is wreathed in cigarette smoke.

The clientele inside the Pearl is a mirror of the International Settlement — a bit more than half the patrons are European or American, with a large number of American sailors and marines who have just gotten paid. The Chinese customers come from the wealthy and politically-connected, and are dressed in fine fashion. The women either in Chinese *cheongsam* (locally called *qipao*) or in immaculate-forged versions of European designers; the men in tuxedos.

This is the domain of Roland Kessik, or as he is called by the Chinese of the Settlement, “Boss Banana.” His half-British heritage is a sore spot when dealing with the locals, as it makes him a successful member of society, but it also makes him an excellent conduit for illicit business between the Green Gang and the Westerners of the Settlement. With him, as always, is his bodyguard John Mack, a former sergeant in the Indian Army.

Kessik is almost always here when not away on business, as he has an apartment on the third floor, above the offices. It has several bedrooms.

The characters assemble at the club by Kessik's request — a free meal and drinks tab isn't something you turn your nose up at, after all! Once they are all present, Kessik shakes free from his greeting patrons and join them with Mack in tow.

BUT THAT'S RACIST!

The term "banana" was a common one in China, at the time, for mixed children. It is presented here for verisimilitude, but if it makes you uncomfortable, dump it!

The following information should be given to the character that plays Kessik ahead of time, allowing him to brief the others. It will allow the GM to bring the players in more quickly by having them interact, rather than simply giving them a "here's what you know" start to the adventure:

"Gentlemen, ladies...I am Roland Kessik, owner of the Pearl. I have a business proposition for you. There is a man of some import who needs an object found and he is willing to pay handsomely for it.

"Previously, he contracted with Count Feodor Rusikov to find the piece in question, but he has gone missing. The gentleman is hoping we can find the object before others do. There are apparently other parties involved. [*Kessik was not informed who these others might be.*]

"The piece in question is the *Dongiun Jade*, a piece of the meteorite that supposedly

foretold the death of the *Huang di*, the First Sovereign Emperor of China. The emperor carried the stone as a reminder of the prophesy, but also as a rejection of the same. It is said that during his quest for immortality, the Emperor's spirit was transferred to the stone until he could be revived — if you believe such a thing — nevertheless, the piece is of incalculable value, both historically and financially.

"Our prospective employer is offering \$30,000US to any who can recover the piece, split between us." [*The average yearly wage was \$1300US...this is a small fortune.*]

Anastasia Rusikova

If she has been chosen as a player character, here is what she would know:

Her father, with whom she owns the Cyrillic Tea Room — a combination bookstore, tea room, and curio shop — was hired to find some piece of art by "Curio Cheng", a man tied to both the Green Gang and the *Kuomintang*, the Nationalist government. He's a big fish in the Shanghai and Nanking ponds, so the money is there.

Her father has been missing for the last week or so, after making a trip north to Xian. She also knows her father's research is most likely still on the premises.

If Rusikova has not been chosen as a player character, the GM should use her as an NPC to give the characters access to her father's work. She will not be present at the initial meeting, and they will encounter her in Scene 2. She will want them to bring her father back and will tack on another \$5,000US to do it.

If the characters push to find out who the opposition might be, jump to the encounter with Curio Cheng.

After the meeting, if the GM needs to pad for time, you can give the characters the chance to socialize in the club. If you really want to set the mood, play some period jazz while all this is going on.

SCENE 2: CYRILLIC TEA ROOM

The next day, they can go to Rusikov's shop in the British sector. The shop is on one of the tight side streets, near the canal, and the smell of the polluted water is pretty powerful through the fog that permeates Shanghai this morning. The shop has its sign in English and Mandarin, but the lettering on the large window is in Cyrillic. It takes up much of the block, having been several smaller houses or apartments that Rusikov bought and joined over the years.

The old count was a victim of the October Revolution and barely escaped with his life.

Most of the Russian expatriates circle around the tea room, and his daughter is considered one of the up and coming hostesses in the city.

STREETWISE 3 to know he's also the cynosure of anti-Soviet and anti-Maoist activity in the city. He is also a very good amateur archeologist who made his name and money by discovering red-haired mummies in the Tarim Desert a few years back.

The tea room is a throwback, more Edwardian in furnishings and the multitude of bric-a-brac that fills the place. (Everything is for sale...) The front room is part restaurant/part bookshop, and there

is a kitchen from which the smells of cooking emanate. The cuisine is filling, cheap, and Russian — blintzes, pyzy, strong tea, stronger booze — and the back rooms are filled with

Meeting Curio Cheng

If the characters push to meet Cheng, they will be able to do so the next evening at the Shanghai Social Club, a massive colonial edifice on the park holding the horse track. While Cheng will have a bodyguard with him, his real protection is the multitude of whites at the club. No one is going to start anything with the rich and powerful of the International Settlement around them.

Zhang Jongjiang is a broker in things that can't be easily gotten. His main business is raiding the Chinese countryside for artifacts to sell European collectors and museums, and he has done very well for himself.

He wants the *Dongjiao* for obvious reasons — someone wants to buy it. He will not reveal his sources beyond that they are with the Cultural Ministry.

If they have already played through Scenes 2 and 3, and they bring up the interest of the *kang-te*, he will want them to get there first, and will make any legal issues disappear.

The Chinese are a superstitious people, in general, and he suspects the Japanese want to use the legend the stone holds the wisdom and spirit of the First Emperor to lend legitimacy to the puppet emperor's claims to rule China (for the greater glory of Japan,

bookshelves sagging under the weight of thousands of books in nearly every language imaginable.

Even early in the morning (it opens at nine), the sitting room is crowded with Russians with no place else to go. The hostess is a red-haired, elven-faced girl standing nearly six feet tall: Anastasia Rusikova.

If she was chosen as a player character, she will have had the opportunity to go through her father's study last night or this morning, looking for his notes on the *Dongiun* jade.

The count's personal library is deep in the building, behind the library with its on access to another side street that parallels the canal. It is two stories high, with a metal spiral staircase to the second level, rolling ladders to access tomes higher on the shelves, maps on easels, tables of relics and curios, a massive roll-top desk, and other detritus of a life of exploration. The place smells strongly of pipe tobacco and the leather of the furnishings, as opposed to the stale cigarette smoke and cooking of the rest of the place.

His research on the stone is neatly catalogued in it's own folder, and it is thick with notes tying to the works he used to track the stone, as well as slips of paper with names and

addresses or phone numbers of the people he'd contacted. INVESTIGATION (Research is the specialty) 4 to tear through his work over the course of the morning. It's all there, but they will have to play catch-up with the old count.

A success will tell them his last point of contact was a Hiro Asano, a businessman in cloth in the Japanese sector of Shanghai, and it seems tied to a hand-drawn map in Mandarin that he has folded in the file. (A STREETWISE 4 will inform the characters that he is suspected to be Japanese intelligence.)



Two successes will tell them the area is near Xian, in the north. ACADEMICS or STREETWISE 3 will tell them it's an area under nominal Nationalist control, but it is actually the purview of General Feng, a

Chinese “Christian” warlord who has been battling both the Maoists and Japanese in Manchuria. He is unpredictable, and had already caused trouble for the *Kuomintang* when he took Chiang Kai Shek prisoner (or as a “guest”, depending on who you talk to) for a few weeks during a power play with the KMT.

Three successes will tell them that the map leads to the actual tomb of the *Huang di* himself! It is near Xian, and the jade should repose with him. There is a note about Asano’s interest in the piece. Specifically, that Asano may be looking for the piece for Henry PuYi — the last Qin Emperor and now *Kang-te* Emperor of Manchukuo (as the Japanese call their puppet state of Manchuria).

Might the Japanese have had something to do with the disappearance of her father?

They will be interrupted by the arrival of a half dozen Chinese man, dressed in Western fashion and, at first, attempting to appear nonchalant. They are here to do violence, however, and are armed with pistols and butterfly knives, and are intent on taking the file on the jade, and stopping any who are searching for it.

This, obviously, is where the fun starts. If they injure or kill more than three attackers, the others will flee, which could lead to a foot chase through the crowded streets of the city. The men will lead them through the food stalls and past the “night women” who are carrying the waste of various households. Whether they catch one of the escaped men, or question one of their attackers in the study, they will extract some information with a successful INTIMIDATION or INVESTIGATION 3. If they succeed, they

will find out the men are from General Feng — the Christian General of Xian — and they will never let the *Kang-te*, that Japanese puppet, find the jade! With an extra success, they will learn there are at least another half dozen of their men looking for where the Japanese are keeping her father; they suspect Asano has him in his warehouse on the Hwangpo River.

SCENE 4:

With a successful CON 3, Rusikova or the others can cover up the fight and avoid the arrival of the Shanghai Municipal Police. If they are unsuccessful, this will require Shrapnel (if someone is playing him) to try and use his connections with the force to avoid an inquiry by the police. Otherwise, if they’ve no one playing Shrapnel, they will have to bribe the police or come up with a convincing lie to avoid the police taking them in for questioning with a CON or BUREAUCRACY 4.

SCENE 5: NORTHERN & EASTERN DISTRICTS

The characters can get a ride by rickshaw or taxi across the Soochow Creek to the Northern District. This district houses much of the Japanese and American presence in the city, while the Germans are in the Eastern District.

The style of the place is still Western, but the signage now has a combination of Chinese and Japanese languages, but the billboards are hawking American products like Coca-Cola, Salem cigarettes, and Goodyear tires. There is a light, but visible, *kempeitai* — the Japanese military police — presence on the streets. These soldiers are ostensibly part of the Shanghai Municipal Police, but Shrapnel will

know they have a tendency to make the violence-prone SMP look like kittens.

The Asano Textile Exports Company is located off of Kungping Road, on the riverside. There is a street car line not too far away on Broadway East that runs right back into the Central District, where the Pearl of the Orient is located.

If they reconnoiter the area carefully, or leave someone (like Sally) to watch the area, a PERCEPTION or STREETWISE 3 would quickly reveal that they aren't the only ones watching the place. There are a few men, posing as homeless — but to the eye used to the street dwellers of Shanghai — are not: they are too clean, too aware, and trying too hard to be inconspicuous.

If they've spotted the fake homeless watching the place, they'll realize they've also been reporting on a regular basis to a big Lincoln saloon car parked a block away. The car has International Settlement registration plates, and a hard-looking man who has been alternating between reading the newspaper and watching his surroundings.

If they try to engage the man, either by STEALTH 3 or more directly, he will pretend he doesn't know what they are going on about, unless they get physical, then he and the rest of his crew will try to subdue or escape in the car.

As nighttime comes on, these "homeless" will congregate at the car and switch into plain black shirts and pants in preparation for their raid on the textile warehouse.

ACT 2

SCENE 6: ASANO TEXTILE EXPORTS

They have a few options that leap to mind. The first is to go straight at Asano: go to the Textile company and confront him, but with a STREETWISE or ACADEMICS/CULTURE 3 they would realize that rudeness would get them nothing from a Japanese, and would most likely have the police called on them.

Second, they could go in under the guise of tracking down Count Rusikov, and while they might not get an admission they have him (this would require a CON or DIPLOMACY 5 to succeed!), they might with a successful EMPATHY 3 or PERCEPTION 4 realize the man is nervous, and lying about knowing where the count is. Pushing him on the matter, however, would play against them due to the Japanese abhorrence of direct conflict and rudeness. However, they would have a good idea that the assassins Feng sent were telling the truth.

The last obvious option is to buy into the assassins' story that the count is on the premises and wait for an opportune moment to break into the place and find him. Night time would seem the obvious time to do this, but it turns out that the warehouse section of the company is operating 24 hours a day with poor Chinese laborers packing and loading cloth and other products onto the ships at the company dock on the wharf.

Another possibility is sending Shanghai Sally (or similar character) into the warehouse, surreptitiously, to have a look about. As a young street urchin, people tend to look right through her, and the workers might even assume she is a new hire. Sally would have to



get a CON 3 or STEALTH 4 to get inside without being harassed and look around.

If successful, she will realize that the warehouse and the business offices are on the first floor, with the warehouse having a two story high roof. There are several Japanese men, dressed in Western-style business attire, working in the offices. (Most of them are actually involved in the textile trade, but all of them are deputy members of the *kempeitai*.) In all, there appears to be between a dozen and 18 men working in the front offices during the day, with there is steady traffic between the ground floor and the rest the second floor which is accessed by a set of stairs to which have a guard positioned at the top, armed with a Type 14 Nambu 8mm pistol (Dam: 3L Rng: 50' Cap: 8 Rate: M Spd: A).

There are, however, a few windows between the warehouse and these upper rooms. The windows have been papered over to give them privacy from the warehouse operations, but a successful LARCENY 2 would get the locks opened and allow her inside.

If she ties this, she will need a STEALTH 4 to not be spotted by the Japanese guard on the upper floor. He is also armed, with a Nambu. There is a large front room that betrays its purpose: there are wireless sets and telephones, code books and scratch pads (many of their cloth orders are actually bits of intelligence that are part of their code work), file cabinets galore with files on suspicious and dangerous persons throughout Shanghai (there are files on all of the characters, save Sally), and maps of Shanghai and northern China, with cryptic notations all over them. It is some kind of intelligence center for the *kempeitai* intelligence.

There are three other rooms that face the warehouse. One is some kind of infirmary that is used for questioning people, there is a small room with a pair of bunk beds, and the last has a wall of large kennel-like cages. Inside one of these is the count. The old man has been worked over pretty soundly, and is in terrible shape.

SCENE 7: RESCUING THE COUNT

Their best bet is to hit the place after most of the men go home for the evening. While a six Japanese remain to oversee the nighttime deliveries and the loading of the ships, the warehouse workforce drops to only a dozen or so. It's the perfect time to hit the warehouse.

Unfortunately, Feng's people have the same plan. They will have to move quickly to stay ahead of the soldiers, or wait until they have "rescued" the count, then take the old man from them and make good their escape. There will be several options for making good their escape: on foot or using the streetcar, catching a rickshaw, stealing one of the small motorboats on the river, or stealing the Lincoln Feng's men have.

MOOKS!

The characters will face Japanese and Chinese opponents. Adjust the number of the opposition to fit the number of players.

Def: 6 Attack: 6N Stun: 3 Health: 6
Assume that Athletics, Acrobatics, and all Combat skills are 6 (save Firearms 5.)

SCENE 8: GETTING AWAY

If they do the last option, they could conceivably steal the rather nice Lincoln to aid in making good their escape. STREETWISE 3 to find the path least likely to encounter trouble, or they could just run hard down Broadway to the Bund bridge and the Central District. If they speed through the streets, they will pick up a *kempeitai* pursuer on a Riuko copy of a Harley-Davidson motorcycle, who will give chase, but will not attempt to engage them.

They can attempt to lose him in the traffic of the city, a combination of cars, rickshaws, and animal drawn carts. They will have to beat a DRIVE 3 not to be stopped or hit anything, but also beat the motorcyclist's DRIVE (skill level 5.) If they can stretch their lead to long, they can make a DRIVE test vs. his PERCEPTION of 5 to lose him.

| CHASE TRACK | | | | |
|-------------|-------|--------|------|---------|
| Caught | Close | Medium | Long | Escaped |

If they did not lose the man, they will have to either cause him to wreck his bike or somehow incapacitate him, otherwise he'll be able to report back to the *kempeitai*.

If they choose the boat option, they'll be able to escape without issue, and if they use the rickshaws, they will only be able to go in pairs and could split up to confuse the Japanese. If they take the streetcar, they'll be followed by a *kempeitai* motorcyclist who will report their position if they don't spot him (PERCEPTION 3) and find a way to evade him (STEALTH 3).

The obvious place to take him is the tea house, but a safer bet would be the upstairs floor of the Pearl of the Orient.

SCENE 9: TAKING STOCK

The count will reveal the Japanese know where the tomb is. Their interrogation techniques were...highly effective. They don't have much time! He can show them the position of the emperor's tomb (if they haven't figured it out) and that he is entombed in some kind of large complex. It is likely there will be a myriad of traps to overcome. They should be careful.

The count is in no condition to join them. They will have to do this by themselves. Kessik can easily arrange for train tickets to Xian in the north. It's about a day's travel by

rail, with stops in Nanking, Hefei, and Nanyang. They will have most of the next morning to purchase or collect the information and gear they need for their trip.

If someone is playing Kessik, a thing he can do at this point that the GM might want to bring up is to try and use his Green Gang contacts to get some kind of official cover from the *Kuomintang* that would help them with the General's people.

To do this, he will need to call in favors from "Big Eared" Du Yeushang. Du is so well connected that he is able to run his illegal opium smuggling trade with nary a peep from the KMT. With a successful



BUREAUCRACY

4 test, he can get a meeting that morning with one of Du's lieutenants, Ping Weichung. Another successful BUREAUCRACY, CON, or DIPLOMACY 4 can convince Ping that the *Dongiun* jade could be used to great effect

by the former and last Emperor of China to aid the Japanese in their quest to conquer their country by lending him an air of legitimacy.

If successful, they will need to stop in Nanking.

ACT 3

SCENE 10 (OPTIONAL): NANKING, CHINA

If Kessik is a PC and/or they made the attempt to contact the KMT through the Green Gang, they will be met in Nanking by an official from the government. He is David Cho, an aide to Soong Mai-Ling — the president's wife — and is here at the behest of both the Cultural Minister, who had originally paid Curio Cheng to find the stone, and the Ministry of War.

He will talk to them on the train, which is being held up just for this meeting, in the first class dining car (which has been cleared out for the meeting.) Lady Soong has expressed her deepest thanks to them for bringing this matter of Henry Puyi to their attention. They agree that the use of the *Dongiun* jade by the so-called *kang-te* could sway opinion at a very delicate time.

The Japanese and their puppet emperor have been making inroads in recruiting some of the leaders in Inner Mongolia to their side, and having the legitimacy of the stone could bolster their position in Northern China.

To that end, he is giving Kessik (or the PC “leading” the team a presidential writ making them a deputy minister of the Cultural Ministry. This confers on them a certain level of authority (a resource of STATUS 2: giving

a +4 to social tests with Chinese officials) in regards to the jade and its procurement. The warlords should honor it.

They are to find the jade and retrieve it before agents of the Japanese do. this writ gives them authority over General Feng in this matter. (STREETWISE 3 to know that doesn't mean it will necessarily get the general to behave well; that will take some fast talking on their part!)

With that, they will be sent on their way, as agents of the state!

SCENE 11: XI'AN, CHINA

The train will arrive late the next day. As they pull in, there are dozens of soldiers waiting, members of Feng's army, and they are here to arrest the group. The lieutenant in charge is polite but firm: they are under arrest. If they resist, he will have them shot. If they come quietly, they will be disarmed, but not injured. They are loaded in an old Ford BB pick-up truck, rusted and in ill health, and are escorted by the troops — all of them on horseback. Not a tank or other modern military vehicle to be seen.

They are taken to the general's camp outside of town. There are thousands of men preparing for battle. They have older rifles, a few armored cars and a pair of tanks from the Great War, as well as a trio of combat biplanes, but most of their artillery are on horse-drawn carriages, or are Vickers and Maxim guns from the Great War. The surprisingly young man is wearing an olive drab uniform without any insignia or bit of flair, save for the rosary with the cross around his wrist. General Feng has been in charge of the Shaanxi province for some time, and his

spies report that the “Combined Army of Inner Mongolia” nothing more than a collection of brigands and deserters, has been marching this way. They are coming for the stone.

He will listen to their entreatments, stone faced. They need a BUREAUCRACY, CON, OR DIPLOMACY 4 (+4 dice if they have received official sanction from the KMT) to sway the man. If they fail, the GM should make them think they succeeded; if they do succeed, he will simply be playing on the up and up.

Feng will tell them a story:

“When the Qin Shi Huang, the first Sovereign Emperor of China, heard about the meteor that fell in Dongiun, and the prophesy supposedly carved into the rock by the Celestials, he was skeptical. No, he was more than that — he was contemptuous.

“As the first man to rule all of China — to their mind, the whole of the world — the *huang di* could conceive of no power that could fell him. He had the portion of the rock with the prophesy carved away to find it was made not of the base metals like most of the

mass of the rock, but of sensitive, creamy jade — almost as white as alabaster.

From that he had carved a phoenix, the symbol of renewal, to show his renunciation of this prophecy, and wore it around his neck during his attempts to find the Elixir of Life, the secret of immortality.



“History tells us the emperor failed in his efforts. As we all know, the only real immortality is found in Our Lord and Savior... but there are other, darker tales that say, unable to find the old sage that knew the secrets to immortality, he turned to unclean magicians, demons from the Devil — before his name was known here — for the promise of eternal life.

“The emperor died shortly after, but his jade, the *Dongiun* stone, is supposed to hold his soul until the Devil can come for it. Those of the emperor’s

bloodline who hold the stone can hear his thoughts, and it is said, can control his “secret army.”

Feng, of course, doesn’t know what this secret army is, but he assumes that they are demons, sent by Lucifer to destroy the world. They cannot let the jade fall into the hands of the false emperor. His bloodline, while

tainted, may still be close enough for the stone to work its curse!

They have only a day or two to find the tomb and the stone before his army must engage the Japanese-allied Mongolians. After that, he cannot vouch for their safety. Even his call for reinforcements from Nanking cannot see aid from the Nationalists in anything less than a week.

Find the jade...and then, for the good of the world, they must destroy it!

SCENE 12: THE SEARCH

If one of the characters is an archeologist, or they are playing Steele, this is where he gets to shine. Finding the tomb is not just a simple matter of going to X marks the spot and digging. they will have to search the plains east of the encampment where the count's maps suggest the place is. They must find the landmarks, use transits and other equipment

to find the most likely place to dig, and then get the diggers that Feng has impressed into service to aid them.

They have a day to do all of this — it's a near impossible task! INVESTIGATION (the speciality is SEARCH) 4 to find the place. For three style points, however, they can find it in the most mundane way possible...one of them falls through the roof of the tomb while walking across the field! Either way, they will break through into one of the antechambers of the tomb complex.

SCENE 13: THE TOMB OF HUANG DI

As they investigate, they will have to be very careful. Most of the danger is not from traps, but the extreme age of the find and the poor condition of the supports. ATHLETICS 3 to move around without damaging anything.

In the main chamber, they will be floored by what the find: a massive cavern filled with



terracotta figures, men and horses, alike. The likenesses are uncanny, and the faces are all unique — like someone turned a real army into stone figures. The chariots are real, the weapons are real. And in the middle of them all, standing on a massive war chariot, is the Emperor's likeness: a slightly overweight, powerfully-built man with impressive beard and eyebrows, and a hard expression.

For 2000 years, this secret army has been lurking underground, waiting to be called to battle. The Chinese characters should roll their WILLx2 vs. 3 to remain calm; otherwise, they will start to feel the weight of prophesy on them. The jade that holds the emperor's spirt, and which in the right hands could awaken his secret army...the one looming all around them!

But where is the stone? At that point, the ground will shake and dirt will rain from the roof overhead. they can hear the sound of explosions through the ground.

The Mongolians are here.

The characters will have to search the great hall and the little antechambers by torch and flashlight...where could it be?The whole time the sound of explosions is getting closer, and they can faintly hear gunfire. Meanwhile, they can roll INVESTIGATION (SEARCH is the specialty) 4 or ACADEMICS (HISTORY) 3 [or if someone remembers Feng's speech] to realize it is around the emperor's neck! Unless someone remembers it straight off, they will have fifteen to twenty minutes of running around looking for it.

They will find the jade phoenix is perfectly carved into the emperor's armor. Do they want to desecrate the piece just to see if the

jade is underneath? When they chip away, they will uncover a beautiful phoenix of creamy white jade that seems to almost glow from inside as it catches the light!

SCENE 14: HERE COMES THE JAPANESE!

There are several ways the adventure could play out from here, depending on time, or intent of the GM. The tomb is a great place for a final fight with the Japanese, who have slipped around the main fight — the Combined Inner Mongolian Army's attack was simply to distract Feng's people from the real objective: the jade.

Depending on the proficiency of the characters, the GM may want to adjust the opposition forces, but if using the pre-generated ones, they will have two opponents each. These opponents, naturally, are ninjas.

NINJAS!

Def: 6 Attack: 6N (9L w/ sword) Stun: 3
Health: 6

Assume that Athletics, Acrobatics, and all Combat skills are 6 (save Firearms 5.)

There are a few ways this is likely to end:

1. They defeat the ninjas and escape the tomb with the *Dongiun*. They must now evade Feng and his troops who — if they failed the roll to convince him to help them, will be waiting to take possession.
2. They are defeated by the ninjas and whoever is left will have to escape to gain help from Feng and his troops, or take on the remaining Japanese before they can

reach their Nakajima Ki-34, a copy of the DC-2 (see page 127 of the *Secrets of the Surface World* sourcebook.)

3. They evade the fight and escape. They will then have to elude Feng and the Japanese long enough to find one of the pickup trucks the general's army has back at camp and make good their escape.

There are a myriad of variations on these three basic outcomes that the GM should be ready to roll with...you never really know what your players are going to do, after all.

Unless they are beaten by the Japanese, you should keep the pressure on during and after the ninja battle with sections of the tomb roof collapsing from artillery explosions.

Afterward, they will be emerging on the outskirts of a battle between two battalion-strength forces, both with tankettes from the Great War and artillery. There should be explosions, and gunfire, and thanks to their position behind most of the action, they should be able to gauge that the fight seems to be going Feng's way.

That said, they might also figure the Japanese had some way to get a dozen ninjas in and out of the area — that would be their airplane, currently only manned by two pilots armed with Nambu pistols and sour breath. It might occur to them to take the aircraft and fly to Nanking. (It does have the range...)

If they failed to get the jade, but survived, they will find themselves in a worse position: Feng's soldiers will have orders to arrest them and they will find themselves having to escape or be detained for several weeks until they are released when the KMT forces arrive. The Nationalists have bigger fish to fry as there are conflicts all along the border

with Inner Mongolia, and there are rumors the Japanese are moving south from Manchuria.

There's a war in the offing!

Where you go from here depends on whether you are using this adventure as a one-off game, or using it as part of an pre-existing campaign, or to kick start a new one. If the first, go to Scene 14, otherwise, see the *What Next?* for suggestions.

After a few days of rough driving, riding, or walking from Xian, the characters would have been able to get aboard the train back to Shanghai (or Nanking, if they had received government support.)

SCENE 15: (IF THEY GO TO SHANGHAI)

After arriving in Shanghai, they can repair to the Pearl of the Orient to contact Curio Cheng that they have the piece. The broker won't be more than an hour before he arrives at the club with a handful of guards, a case full of money, and a big smile. He will pay them off and thank them for their efforts. It's just a shame this little misunderstanding with the Japanese might have sparked an even bigger conflict with China.

He will leave as quickly as he came with the *Dongjun* jade.

SCENE 15: (IF THEY STOP IN NANKING)

The characters will be met on the platform by Curio Cheng, David Cho, and a squad of KMT soldiers. They already had reports of the action in Xian, and the government is mobilizing to meet the Mongolians, should they make another push into China.

They will receive the jade and pay them, with a signed letter of thanks for their service to China, signed by Chiang Kai Shek himself! After that, they will be released to be on their way, with a cryptic promise that there may be other work the government might have for them, if they hang around Shanghai.

WHAT NEXT?

This adventure is designed to be a stand-alone piece, but the savvy GM will notice the potential for using *The Death Jade* as a set-up to kick start a campaign set in China, or games based on the venerable trope of tomb raiding adventurers.

The adventure takes place a few months before the start of the vicious Second Sino-Japanese War, and the GM could use the events from this adventure to make it the spark that starts the war.

Another option is to take the mystical route. Maybe the jade *does* hold the spirit of *Huang Di* and it is looking for a receptacle from which to take over the world. In that case, Scene 13 could unfold quite differently, with one of the players or NPCs being possessed by the emperor and bringing his terracotta army to life, so that they can ride out and defeat the Mongolians. (See the third installment of *The Mummy* series of movies for some ideas on how this might work.)

At the very least, some of the characters here could be incorporated well into an existing campaign to give players hooks for adventuring in Shanghai, from spy missions or illicit jobs with the Green Gang, to hazardous archeological digs under the noses of the Japanese or the Maoists with the count or his daughter.

4. CHARACTERS

The characters for this adventure were created with the Ubiquity rules from the core rulebook for *Hollow Earth Expedition* and the *Secrets of the Surface World* sourcebook.

Thomas Steele

Archetype: Tomb Raider

Motivation: Fortune & Glory

Nationality: American Age: 36

Ht: 5'9" Wt: 155 lbs

Hair: Black Eyes: Green

ATTRIBUTES:

Body: 3 Charisma: 3

Dexterity: 3 Intelligence: 3

Strength: 2 Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes:

Size: 0 Move: 5 Perception: 6

Initiative: 6 Defense: 6 Stun: 3

HEALTH: 6

STYLE: 4

RESOURCES:

Contacts 2: +4 antiquities & academic community.

Fame 1: +2 in archeological circles

TALENTS:

Charismatic

FLAWS:

Gloryhound - style pt. when his showboating gets him in trouble.

Impulsive - style pt. when he leaps before he looks.

Scoundrel - -2 social tests that know his reputation.

LANGUAGES:

English (native); Cantonese, French, Japanese, Mandarin

SKILLS LVL BASE RATING

Academics 2 INT 5 (2+)

Acrobatics 2 DEX 5 (2+)

Athletics 1 STR 3 (1+)

Bureaucracy 2 CHA 5 (2+)

Con 3 CHA 6 (3)

Diplomacy 2 CHA 5 (2+)

Empathy 2 INT 5 (2+)

Firearms 1 DEX 4 (2)

Gambling 1 INT 4 (2)

Investigation 2 INT 5 (2+)

Linguistics 3 INT 6 (3)

Streetwise 3 CHA 6 (3)

Stealth 1 DEX 4 (2)

BACKGROUND:

Steele is from a political family in New York, and took a master's in archeology. He was sent down from the University of Chicago for unethical behavior on a dig in Japan before finishing his doctorate in Chinese history. He has been working the Chinese antiquities market for the last four years.

WEAPONS:

Smith & Wesson M1917 .45ACP revolver

Dam: 3L Attack Rating: 7L Rng: 50'

Cap: 6(c) Rate: M Spd: A

Winchester M1912 12 gauge pump action shotgun

Dam: 4L Attack Rating: 8L Rng: 25'*

Cap: 5(i) Rate: M Spd: A

Edward "Ned" Shrapnel

Archetype: Private Investigator

Motivation: Money

Nationality: English Age: 36

Ht: 5'9" Wt: 155 lbs

Hair: Brown Eyes: Brown

ATTRIBUTES:

Body: 2 Charisma: 2

Dexterity: 2 Intelligence: 3

Strength: 3 Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes:

Size: 0 Move: 5 Perception: 5

Initiative: 5 Defense: 4 Stun: 2

HEALTH: 4

STYLE: 4

RESOURCES:

Contacts 2: +2 Police and criminal circles

Wealth 1: \$150 US/mo., has a nice, small house.

TALENTS:

Counterstrike - defending against unarmed attacks, if he wins the successes are non-lethal damage to his opponent.

Diehard - he is never stunned but is unconscious at health. He stabilizes automatically and dies at -7 Health

FLAWS:

Addiction: Alcohol and tobacco.

Dying, Emphysema - style pt. and -2 die to physical tests when he has a coughing fit.

Danger Magnet - style pt. when trouble find him.

LANGUAGES:

English (native); Mandarin

| <u>SKILLS</u> | <u>LVL</u> | <u>BASE</u> | <u>RATING</u> |
|-----------------------|------------|-------------|---------------|
| Athletics | 3 | STR | 6 (3) |
| Bureaucracy | 1 | CHA | 3 (1+) |
| Police | | | 4 (2) |
| Con | 2 | CHA | 4 2) (|
| Drive | 1 | DEX | 3 1+) (|
| Firearms | 3 | DEX | 5 (2+) |
| Gambling | 2 | INT | 5 (2+) |
| Investigation | 3 | INT | 6 (3) |
| Linguistics | 1 | INT | 4 (2) |
| Martial Arts, Defendu | 3 | STR | 6 (3) |
| Melee | 3 | STR | 6 3) (|
| Stealth | 2 | DEX | 4 2) (|
| Streetwise | 3 | CHA | 5 (2+) |

BACKGROUND:

He served in France in the last year of the Great War, then decided to try his luck with the Shanghai Municipal Police, where he was known for being "un-killable." He was part of Bill Fairbarin's "toughs" but quit when he got sick.

WEAPONS:

Colt 1911A1 .45ACP

Damage: 3L Range: 50' Cap: 7 (m) Rate:

A Spd: A

Countess Anastasia Rusikova

Archetype: Antiquities Dealer

Motivation: Survival

Nationality: Russian (Nansen)

Age: 26

Ht: 5'9" Wt: 115 lbs

Hair: Red Eyes: Blue

ATTRIBUTES:

Body: 2 Charisma: 3

Dexterity: 3 Intelligence: 3

Strength: 2 Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes:

Size: 0 Move: 5 Perception: 6

Initiative: 6 Defense: 5 Stun: 3

HEALTH: 5

STYLE: 3

RESOURCES:

Contacts 1: +2 Russian & antiquities community.

Refuge 2: Cyrillic Tea Room

TALENTS:

Attractive

Skill Mastery (Academics)

FLAWS:

Hunted, NKVD

Stateless - style pt. when causes her trouble.

LANGUAGES:

Russian (native); English, French, German, Mandarin

SKILLS LVL BASE RATING

Academics 2 INT 5 (2+)

Acrobatics 2 DEX 5 (2+)

Athletics 1 STR 3 (1+)

Bureaucracy 2 CHA 5 (2+)

Con 3 CHA 6 (3)

Diplomacy 2 CHA 5 (2+)

Empathy 2 INT 5 (2+)

Firearms 1 DEX 4 (2)

Gambling 1 INT 4 (2)

Investigation 2 INT 5 (2+)

Linguistics 3 INT 6 (3)

Streetwise 3 CHA 6 (3)

Stealth 1 DEX 4 (2)

BACKGROUND:

When she was eight, they lost everything in the October Revolution and barely escaped Odessa in her father's ship to French Tunisia. After her mother and brother died, her father moved them to Shanghai, where he set up their Tea Room, and threw himself into his amateur archeology studies.. She has a Nansen passport issued by the League of Nations, but officially has no country.

WEAPONS:

Colt Detective .38 Special Snubnose

Damage: 2L Range: 50' Cap: 6 (c) Rate: A Spd: A

Roland Kessik

Archetype: Criminal Boss

Motivation: Survival

Nationality: Chinese Age: 33

Ht: 5'8" Wt: 145 lbs

Hair: Black Eyes: Green

ATTRIBUTES:

Body: 2 Charisma: 3

Dexterity: 3 Intelligence: 3

Strength: 2 Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes:

Size: 0 Move: 5 Perception: 5

Initiative: 6 Defense: 5 Stun: 2

HEALTH: 4

STYLE: 5

RESOURCES:

Allies 2: Green Gang

Mooks 2: 20 average mooks at hand

Refuge 2: Pearl of the Orient nightclub

Wealthy: \$250US/mo., car

TALENTS:

FLAWS:

Criminal: style pt. when causes him trouble.

Fanatical: Chinese independence

Half-breed: -2 die social tests with Chinese

LANGUAGES:

Cantonese (native); English, French,

Japanese, Mandarin

SKILLS LVL BASE RATING

Athletics 3 STR 6 (3)

Brawl 3 STR 6 3) (

Bureaucracy 1 INT 3 (1+)

Con 2 CHA 4 2) (

Diplomacy 2 CHA 4 (2)

Leadership 5 (2+)

Drive 1 DEX 3 1+) (

Firearms 3 DEX 5 (2+)

Intimidation 3 CHA 5 (2+)

Linguistics 3 INT 5 (2+)

Melee 3 STR 6 3) (

Ride 1 DEX 3 1+) (

Streetwise 1 CHA 3 (1+)

Stealth 1 DEX 3 1+) (

Survival 2 INT 4 (2)

Warfare 1 INT 3 (1+)

BACKGROUND:

The son of a Scottish banker and a Hong Kong socialite, he is a man between worlds. He came to Shanghai to escape his shame at not being white, nor Chinese, and quickly established himself as a conduit between the Green Gang and legitimate European businesses. He conduct business out of his nightclub and is driven around Shanghai in his beautiful, black Oldsmobile Eight

WEAPONS:

Walther PPK 7.65mm

Dam: 2L Attack Rating: 5L Rng: 50'

Cap: 7(m) Rate: M Speed: A

John Mack
(fmr. Sergeant, 9th Jat Regiment, 18th
Infantry, Indian Army)

Archetype: Soldier

Motivation: Honor

Nationality: Scottish Age: 42

Ht: 6'1" Wt: 225 lbs

Hair: Brown Eyes: Blue

ATTRIBUTES:

Body: 4 Charisma: 2

Dexterity: 2 Intelligence: 2

Strength: 3 Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes:

Size: 0 Move: 5 Perception: 4

Initiative: 4 Defense: 6 Stun: 4

HEALTH: 7

STYLE: 3

RESOURCES:

TALENTS:

Guardian - can provide a +2 to other's defense who can hear his warning.

Danger Sense - full defense even when surprised.

Tough

FLAWS:

Callous - style pt. when causes trouble

Loyal - style pt. when he acts against his interests out of loyalty.

LANGUAGES:

English (native); Hindi, Mandarin, Pashtu

| <u>SKILLS</u> | <u>LVL</u> | <u>BASE</u> | <u>RATING</u> |
|---------------|------------|-------------|---------------|
| Athletics | 3 | STR | 6 (3) |
| Brawl | 3 | STR | 6 3) (|
| Bureaucracy | 1 | INT | 3 (1+) |
| Con | 2 | CHA | 4 2) (|
| Diplomacy | 2 | CHA | 4 (2) |
| Leadership | | | 5 (2+) |
| Drive | 1 | DEX | 3 1+) (|
| Firearms | 3 | DEX | 5 (2+) |
| Intimidation | 3 | CHA | 5 (2+) |
| Linguistics | 3 | INT | 5 (2+) |
| Melee | 3 | STR | 6 3) (|
| Ride | 1 | DEX | 3 1+) (|
| Streetwise | 1 | CHA | 3 (1+) |
| Stealth | 1 | DEX | 3 1+) (|
| Survival | 2 | INT | 4 (2) |
| Warfare | 1 | INT | 3 (1+) |

BACKGROUND:

Mack joined the army at 15 and was posted to the Indian Army on the NW Frontier. He served in Greece during the Great War and retired six years ago. He came to Shanghai to join the police but got a better offer — as a bodyguard for Roland Kessik, a “businessman” in the International Settlement..

WEAPONS:

Webley MK VI .455 revolver

Damage: 3L Range: 50' Cap: 6 (c) Rate:

A Spd: A

Shanghai Sally (Hsu Shi)

Archetype: Street Urchin

Motivation: Survival

Nationality: Chinese Age: 13

Ht: 4'7" Wt: 95 lbs

Hair: Black Eyes: Brown

ATTRIBUTES:

Body: 2 Charisma: 3

Dexterity: 4 Intelligence: 2

Strength: 1 Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes:

Size: -1 Move: 6 Perception: 7

Initiative: 6 Defense: 7 Stun: 3

HEALTH: 4

STYLE 5

RESOURCES:

Contacts 2: +4 Shanghai underworld

TALENTS:

Alertness

Climb: x2 movement for climbing

Lucky 2: gains +2 die 2x/session

FLAWS:

Criminal - style pt. for trouble with police

Illiterate - style pt. when causes trouble

Poor - 1/2 monthly income

Young - style pt. when causes trouble

LANGUAGES:

Mandarin (native); English, French, Japanese

SKILLS LVL BASE RATING

Acrobatics 3 DEX 7 (3+)

Athletics 2 STR 3 (1+)

Climbing 4 (2)

Brawl 2 STR 3 (1+)

Con 3 CHA 6 (3)

Diplomacy 1 CHA 4 (2)

Gambling 2 INT 4 (2)

Cheating 5 (2+)

Investigation 2 INT 4 (2)

Larceny 2 DEX 6 (3)

Linguistics 3 INT 5 (2+)

Melee 2 STR 3 (1+)

Stealth 2 DEX 6 (3)

Streetwise 2 CHA 5 (2+)

BACKGROUND:

Hsu Shi was born sometime in 1923 in Shanghai. Her mother died when she was eight of diphtheria, and her father was not interested in his "girl-child." She has been on the street for three years and works as a runner for "Boss Kessik."

WEAPONS:

Small Truncheon

Dam: 1N Attack Rating: 4N