

The Imperial Age

True20 Edition



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The Imperial Age

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by Walt Ciechanowski



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PREFACE

The Imperial Age is dead. Long live *The Imperial Age*!

As I write this, I've just finished the final draft of *The Imperial Age: the True20 Guidebook to Victorian Adventures*. It is the culmination of three years of efforts from various authors and a few blown deadlines. I know it's been worth it.

The original *Imperial Age* line covered a lot of ground, from scientific detectives, monster hunters, and anarchists to mediums, hermetic disciples, and alienists. We've produced new rules for magick and inventions. We've walked through the streets of London and traveled from Bombay to Calcutta. We uncovered literary adversaries and added a touch of faerie and fantasy to the Victorian Era. I enjoyed developing every product in the line.

Still, there was so much more to do and, going forward, we wanted a tested, supported rules system behind *The Imperial Age*.

I truly feel that *True20* is a perfect fit for our needs. It is a simpler, robust version of its parent, familiar enough to grasp yet more streamlined. At its core, *The Imperial Age* was always more about flavor than rules, and *True20* supports that concept admirably.

You hold in your hands (virtual or physical) the culmination of three years of development, redesigned from the ground up to offer a complete Victorian experience. From its beginnings, *The Imperial Age* was envisioned as a toolkit, and that philosophy is embedded in this product. Within these pages you'll find adaptations of most of your favorite *Imperial Age* products and those that didn't make the cut will soon have books of their own.

For those of you that have joined us over the last year, thank you. For those of you visiting *The Imperial Age* for the first time, welcome!

Now, before we get started walking through the last decades of Victoria's reign, I'd like to thank the authors that have made this edition possible; Erica Balsley, Scott Carter, Donna K. Fitch, and Scott Rhymer. I'd also like to thank Gareth-Michael Skarka, without whom *The Imperial Age* would never have been possible.

Enjoy!

Walt Ciechanowski
Imperial Age Line Developer
March 19, 2009

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The great questions of the day will not be decided by speeches and majority decisions...but by iron and blood.
--Otto von Bismarck

It is an age of war. British forces fight in Afghanistan and South Africa. The Mahdi's army marches across the Sudan. Native American tribes continue to fight the United States of America. China fights France over control of Southeast Asia and Japan over Korea before plunging into civil war. Spain loses the last of its New World possessions to the USA. Britain fights the shortest war in history with Zanzibar.

It is an age of scientific discovery and imagination. Thomas Edison lights up the world and Karl Benz replaces the horse. Men like Robert Louis Stevenson, Jules Verne and H.G. Wells stretch their imaginations from the depths of the sea to the conquest of time to the question of human nature. Railroads, telegraphs, telephones, and the Suez Canal connect the world like never before.

It is an age of the occult. The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn teaches the secrets of Western hermeticism while the Theosophists incorporate Eastern mysticism into their studies. Spiritualists contact the dead. The Society for Psychical Research attempts to ascertain the truth about the paranormal.

It is an age of social reform. The struggle between autocracy and democracy plays out across the world, as the people demand constitutions and their governments react accordingly. Socialism gains ground, while those who won't wait for change usher in a new age of terrorism.

Mostly, however, it is an age of Empire. Europe scrambles to carve up Africa. America dips into the Pacific. The British and Russian Empires vie for control of Central Asia. British forces in India push east into Burma. The Meiji Dynasty transforms Japan while the Qing dynasty struggles to modernize China. Above all else the sun never sets on Victoria's subjects.

It is *The Imperial Age*. Welcome.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The Imperial Age is a genre book for *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* set in the late Victorian era, circa 1880-1900. *The Imperial Age* begins with the premise that the rules found in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* and the next two chapters of this book are all that's required to run games set in the last two decades of the Nineteenth Century. The rest of the book is a toolkit. You can add or discard as much as you like, based on the needs of your campaign.

Breaking down the rest of the book by chapter:

Chapter Two describes the Imperial Age. You'll find genre information, a brief overview of the world of the late Nineteenth Century, and a timeline.

Chapter Three offers an in-depth look at London, useful for campaigns set in the seat of the British Empire.

Chapter Four offers new hero creation rules that are broadly applicable to all *Imperial Age* campaigns. Here you'll find new backgrounds, skills, feats, drawbacks, and equipment. We also offer a hard currency option for Narrators that prefer to conduct business in hard currency rather than wealth levels.

Chapter Five offers fighting styles appropriate for Victorian heroes, including Sherlock Holmes' baritsu. It also offers dramatic rules for chases.

Chapter Six focuses on Adventure Stories. Take your heroes to exotic lands as agents of imperialism, soldiers fighting foreign wars, or explorers seeking lost treasures. Rules on mass combat and traps are included.

Chapter Seven focuses on Detective Stories. Information is provided on crafting mysteries as well as new rules for heroes. A new role, the Scientific Detective, is included.

Chapter Eight focuses on Espionage Stories. This includes foreign and domestic espionage, as well as terrorism (bomb-throwing and assassinations).

Chapter Nine focuses on Horror Stories. Information is provided on designing horror stories, the monster hunter as a hero archetype, scientific wonders, magic rituals, and rules on fear, terror, and corruption.

Chapter Ten focuses on Occult Stories. Information is provided on real world occult traditions, crafting occult stories, and historical occult organizations. A new role, the Occultist, is included, as are rules for using the Four Laws of Magick in your campaigns.

Chapter Eleven focuses on Steam Stories. Information is provided on the various types of “steam” campaigns, from steampulp to steampunk. Rules are provided for designing engines and automata (including automaton heroes) as well as adding prosthetics to heroes. Rules are also provided for engine combat.

The Imperial Age is modular. If you want to run a historical campaign set in East Africa, then you’ll only need Chapters 2, 4, and 6 (and possibly 5). If you want to run a city-based mystery campaign, then you’ll only need Chapters 3, 4, and 7 (and possibly 5 again. In both cases, you’ll probably dip into the other chapters on occasion.

Again, don’t feel like you have to use everything. If you like the occupations in Chapter Four but don’t want to use the drawbacks, then leave the drawbacks out. If you want to stick to the core rules for your detective stories, then you can use this book as a reference on London and how to design mysteries. If you want to open up the options and let your players use the hero creation rules in Chapter Four and the other chapters, then by all means do so! A baritsu-practicing occult detective could be a lot of fun!

REINVENTING THE WHEEL

There were many instances during the development of *The Imperial Age* where we felt that we were covering similar ground as another *True20* product. This left us with a few options. Do we make alternate rules, pull the material from the other sources, or just reference the other sources? Each option had its benefits and drawbacks.

In the end, we decided to take a middle path. We included only what we felt was necessary from other products to make *The Imperial Age* stand on its own and refer the reader to the original source for expanded options. We covered similar ground with alternate rules in cases where we felt the original sources (such as the OGL versions of *The Imperial Age* magick and engine rules) retained the flavor of the original *Imperial Age*.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

For purposes of verisimilitude, *The Imperial Age* uses a few terms that differ from other **True20** products or have specific usage to this product.

America: Shorthand for the United States of America.

Automaton: A robot.

Continent: When capitalized, the "Continent" refers to continental Europe.

Engine: Any (usually) steam-powered machine.

Fantastical powers: Any type of power, whether paranormal or scientific in origin.

(Great) Britain: While technically "the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland," Great Britain is used both to distinguish it from Ireland and because people from the United Kingdom are called "British."

Great Powers: The strongest nations in the Imperial Age; often Imperial Powers. Usually, the Great Powers include Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Great Britain, and Russia. Sometimes, especially towards the end of the Imperial Age, this will also include Japan and America.

Imperial Age: When not bolded or italicized, "the Imperial Age" refers to the last two decades of the Nineteenth Century (1880-1900). We've cheated a bit, as our two decades actually cover 11 years.

Magick: Both magic and magick are used in this book. "Magick" specifically refers to hermetic magic that follows the Four Laws of Magick (see the Occult Chapter).

Monstrosity: A creature or monster.

Psychical: The term used for psionics in the Imperial Age.

TRUE20 REFERENCES

Throughout this supplement we refer to various **True20** related products. This can cause a problem where the main rulebook is concerned; the revised edition of **True20 Adventure Roleplaying** includes the **True20 Companion** and eliminates the sample settings found in the original edition. To avoid confusion, we cite **True20 Adventure Roleplaying** only if it applies to both editions. Otherwise, we cite the **True20 Companion** if the information can only be found in the revised edition. Sample settings, such as **Mecha vs. Kaiju**, are cited separately, as most of them have their own sourcebooks anyway.

By the way, if you have the original edition of **True20 Adventure Roleplaying**, don't worry. If we thought material found in the **True20 Companion** was important, we've reprinted the information here. That way you don't have to run out and buy another rulebook to fully utilize **The Imperial Age**.

CHAPTER TWO: THE WORLD OF THE IMPERIAL AGE

"The sun never sets on the British Empire."

--Popular Saying

The quotation of this chapter is a paraphrase of Scottish author Christopher North, who wrote in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* "His Majesty's dominions, on which the sun never sets" in 1829. What was true in 1829 was even more so in the last two decades of the Nineteenth Century. Great Britain controlled at least part of every continent on the globe bar Antarctica.

While the World of the Imperial Age is a large place, both in time and space, the Narrator is encouraged to focus on one part of the Imperial Age and make it her own. Perhaps the heroes are London investigators, soldiers at an outpost in East Africa, or civil servants in Calcutta. British heroes have many reasons to be anywhere all over the world during this period.

THEMES

There are common themes that run through the literature of the period. Narrators can incorporate these themes into their Imperial Age campaigns in order to enhance historical immersion.

IMPERIALISM

As *The Imperial Age* takes its name from this theme, it is probably best to address it first. Imperialism is generally defined as one nation exerting its influence on other territories. This could be direct colonization (such as the original Thirteen Colonies of America) or by gaining political and economic control of another area through favorable trade agreements and control over foreign policy. This was most notable in the Scramble for Africa, which was spurred on by the Great Depression (known as the Long Depression after 1929). With shrinking markets at home, the Great Powers needed new areas to invest and acquire raw materials.

Imperialism usually took one of two forms. Colonialism was the most direct. The conquering power would throw out the conquered government and install its own. The native population was disenfranchised and often pushed aside to make room for the colonists. By contrast, a Protectorate was more indirectly controlled. Native governments and institutions were kept in place so long as the government acknowledged the superiority of the imperial power. Often the imperial power would keep an Envoy and garrisoned troops nearby to ensure compliance.

It's important to note that many people thought (or convinced themselves) that imperialism was a good thing. Most of the conquered were more "primitive" peoples that could benefit from the civilization that the imperial powers brought with them. Many missionaries spread Christianity through these newly conquered regions, and slavery was universally abolished during the Imperial Age as a result of Great Power influence in slave trading areas.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

Beginning in 1873, the Great Depression (as it was known during the Imperial Age; modern scholars have renamed it "the Long Depression" for an obvious reason) was felt across Europe. Falling prices cut into businessmen's pockets even as it increased the average worker's standard of living. With improvements in canning and refrigeration, foodstuffs could be imported more cheaply than purchased from local farmers. This was especially noticeable at the start of the Imperial Age, when heavy rains and disease had wiped out many local crops.

In England, the effects of the Great Depression was felt the most in the countryside, as prices for foodstuffs had dropped to the point where they could no longer sustain local agriculture. Many farmers left the country for opportunities in the growing cities. Rents went unpaid and a lot of farmland just went to waste or became pastures for livestock. While the Great Depression ended in the mid-1890s, England would have to wait until the next century for its farms to recover. Great Britain seemed to barely notice, as it was the world's largest importer and exporter, which kept its economy thriving.

While not conclusively tied to the Great Depression, the Scramble for Africa coincides with it. New lands meant new markets and raw materials and the Great Powers and associated businesses worked hard to acquire them. This era also

saw the beginning of the modern corporation, as large businesses had to restructure their methods to keep pace with expanding markets and trade.

TRAVEL

Victorian readers hungered for stories that would take them to exotic (usually Asian) places, such as Bangkok, Bombay, Calcutta, Hong Kong, and Shanghai. While the steamship and the Suez Canal dramatically cut travel times around the world, many people couldn't afford to take long journeys to other lands. Travel novels filled that need, allowing readers to explore exotic places and cultures through the senses of the characters. Western households that could afford it imported carpets, furniture, clothes, and foodstuffs from the exotic East.

While a travel novel in and of itself would hardly make a good adventure, Narrators should keep in mind that the journey is often as important as the destination when designing exploratory adventures, especially in comfortable trains and ships (*Around the World in Eighty Days* (1872) is a prime example of fusing the travel and adventure themes). In addition, the lost world genre is a combination of the travel novel and historical romance. These lost worlds were peppered with liberal borrowings from real world exotic or historical cultures, such as Romans, pirates, and Crusaders.

WESTERNIZATION

Another important theme in the Imperial Age is westernization. Westernization is essentially a polite way of saying "abandoning your native cultures and beliefs and replacing them with ours, primarily for our economic benefit." While westernization does include the spreading of Christianity to the rest of the world, the term goes much further. The British, with varying degrees of success, transported their civil service model to other cultures. Railroads, telegraphs, and other machines found their way to India, China, and Japan. Combat tactics changed forever as the rifle replaced the spear and bow and the machine gun tore through charging armies. Some leaders, such as the Emperor of Japan, saw westernization as a necessity in order to compete with imperial cultures.

Westernization also included political dominance. Many early trade agreements turned into imperial influence and eventually conquest. The two competing models were imperialism and colonialism. Imperialism left native cultures largely intact, with local rulers that swore fealty to the ruling country. The ruling country would only interfere when it was convenient, providing oversight and modernizing the nation (to the Victorian mind, "modernization" and "westernization" were the same thing). Colonialism, on the other hand, was direct rule by the ruling country, often displacing local populations with its own people. Colonialism was a more popular option in places where the natives were loosely organized and resources were easy to get.

SOCIETY

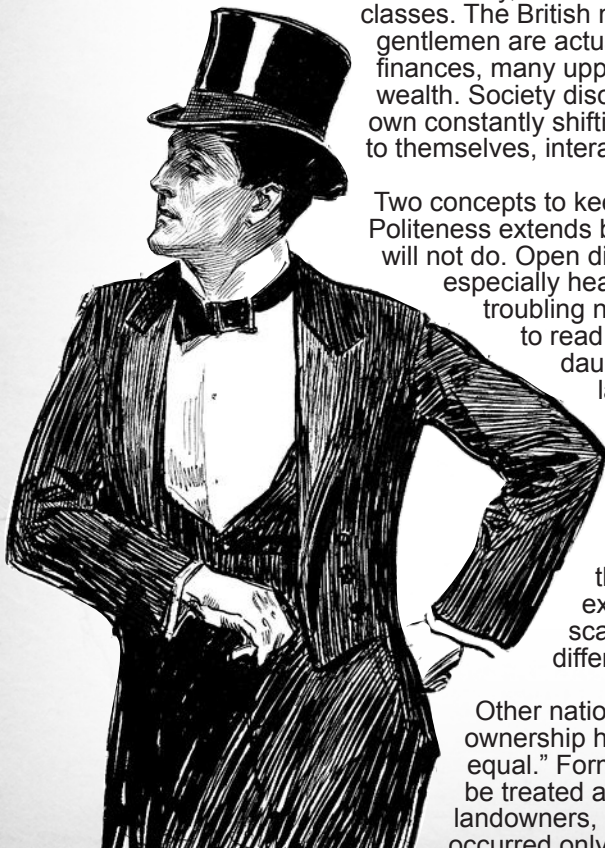
Society plays a large role in Victorian England. Officially, British society is divided into two classes, noble and commoner. Each is represented by a House in Parliament. Industry and trade, however, made some commoners very rich, and although they could never be nobles (which is a birthright); they shared little in common with the rest of their class.

Victorian society, therefore, understood that British society was in fact made up of three classes. The British middle class apes the upper class in ritual and some middle class gentlemen are actually wealthier than some of their "betters." Faced with dwindling finances, many upper class bachelors take middle class or foreign wives to acquire wealth. Society discourages such cross-pollination, of course, and each class has its own constantly shifting rules of etiquette and manner. Classes are encouraged to keep to themselves, interacting with each other only when necessary.

Two concepts to keep in mind when using society are politeness and scandal. Politeness extends beyond etiquette; there are simply things that a member of society will not do. Open displays of emotion were not permitted in polite society. Men, especially heads of households, will keep from discussing business or delivering troubling news to women. A common practice is for the head of the family to read a newspaper and then relate appropriate news to his wife and daughters. A gentleman or his wife would never be seen doing manual labor, that's what servants are for. And although the coin had long since left circulation, the guinea was used to quote prices for art, horses, land and professional fees.

Scandal is the one thing that a member of society must avoid. Having a mistress, for example, is not nearly as bad as society finding out about it. Many marital partners will quietly accept that their partner has a paramour as long as they are discreet. This extends to other vices as well, especially overindulgence. It is also scandalous for the upper class to engage in business (patronage is a different matter).

Other nations have their own class systems. In America, for example, land ownership has created a de facto elite even though "all men are created equal." Former slaves and other Americans of African descent also tend to be treated as a lower class. In Russia, the peasantry resented the noble landowners, especially those that had formerly been serfs (emancipation occurred only a decade prior to the Imperial Age). These sentiments will come



to a head in the beginning of the next century... In the colonies and empires, social classes are divided by race and ethnicity as well.

Sexuality

Whether warranted or not, those living in the Imperial Age are considered prudish (derisively called "Victorian morality") when it comes to sexual matters. While this perception is generally limited to the upper classes in general and British society in particular, it can be said that most western literature was very delicate in regards to sex. Polite conversation would never include any sexual topics. While this attitude was maintained in public, very different attitudes arose in private. Courtship was a very formal affair and allowed for little time between prospective partners to get to know each other. Marriages were based on social desirability, not romantic love. This enforced prudery fuelled interest in literature about sexually charged vampires and dashing rogues.

In an Imperial Age campaign, such a situation often leads to married people having affairs, or single people (often male) sneaking around to be with women that he could never marry. These affairs can be used for blackmailing purposes, or allow for unlikely characters to have intimate information. Even player characters can use this to their advantage, using their wiles to gain benefits.

PROGRESS & INDUSTRIALIZATION

Another key theme in the Imperial Age is progress. Science has captured the imagination of the public, and there seems little that science will not achieve. Railroads, telegraphs, and steamships connect continents. A canal has been dug through the Suez. Factories churn out machine-made products. Gaslight keeps cities alive well into the night. Electric light bulbs and telephones are making their debuts.

This scientific and technological progress has fired the imagination of novelists. Jules Verne would write about vessels that could swim beneath the ocean, take to the air, or even shot into space. H.G. Wells explored the concept of a time machine, first in the short story "The Chronic Argonauts," (1888) and later his better known novel ***The Time Machine*** (1895). The latter novel was in part an allegory on social classes, with the far future being divided between the beautiful Eloi, a childlike race with everything provided for them, and the hideous Morlocks, a bestial, industrial race that provides for the Eloi, who is in fact their food source. Neither race is as intelligent as the time travelling protagonist.

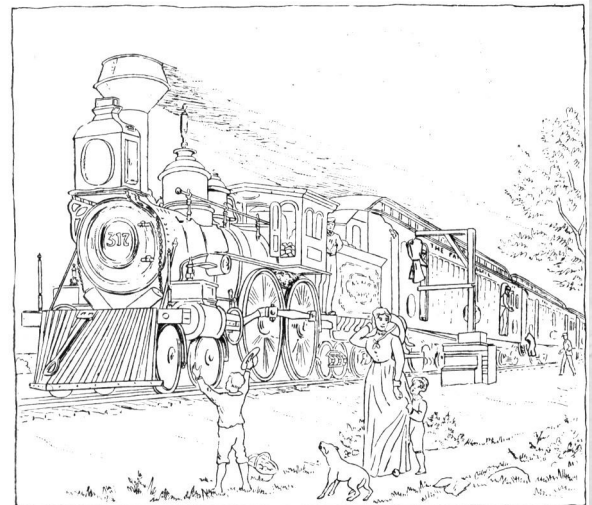
While perhaps not as extreme as the Morlock future, Progress and Industrialization in the Imperial Age did have its downsides. The poor flocked to the cities in the hopes of finding factory work. What they found was low wages, poor working conditions, and crammed slums (also known as rookeries). Smokestacks belched black smoke into the air and stained clothes, obscured vision, and, in extreme cases, caused suffocation or drowning (as those who lost their way fell into rivers). Disease tore through the densely populated rookeries. Human evolution, promoted by Charles Darwin, suggested that man was little more than an advanced machine, possibly with no God to guide him.

Needless to say, this dark side of the industrial revolution and evolutionary thought also fuelled novelists. A few decades prior to the Imperial Age, Mary Shelley wrote ***Frankenstein, or a Modern Prometheus*** as a warning about man daring to play God. The works of Charles Dickens, many of which showcased the plight of the London poor, are still very popular. During the Imperial Age, Robert Louis Stevenson would combine science and the restraints of polite society in ***The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde***.

Railroads, Above and Below

The railroad had a significant impact on workforce habits and a nation's national identity. Whereas before one needed to work within walking distance, commuter rails enabled workers to live further away from the city and, more importantly, from the poisoned air. Entire communities sprang up along the rail lines to support commuters and their families. Railroads also allowed people to go farther quicker than ever before, allowing for the concept of the "day trip." Working families in London, for example, could take a train to the seaside resort of Brighton and return in the same day.

The London Underground would also have a significant impact on London's urban life. This subway, first opened in 1862, changed the way people moved around the city. The city center itself was connected when the Circle Line opened in 1883. The subway was linked to regular rail lines, enabling outsiders to travel through the city without ever leaving the trains. The Underground soon became the favored mode of transportation throughout London.



PSYCHIATRY

When one thinks of the birth of modern psychology or psychiatry, Dr. Sigmund Freud almost immediately jumps to mind, scribbling on his notepad as he asks a reclining patient about his childhood. Unfortunately, Freud and his contemporaries (including the almost as famous Dr. Carl Jung) really only established psychoanalysis as a valid science in the early part of the 20th century.

For a long time, most western scholars believed mental illness to be the result of demonic possession. As a result, victims of mental illness were often perceived as sinful or evil (how would an evil spirit take possession otherwise?) and remedies involved driving out the evil spirits, demons, or the Devil himself. By the seventeenth century, mentally ill people were locked away in prisons or asylums just to keep them away from normal society. At the same time, the general public began to see mental illness as something to be treated rather than the fault of demons.

There were many efforts in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to understand the human mind. In 1775, Franz Mesmer attributed faith healing and exorcism to the "animal magnetism" of the priest, rather than divine intervention. In other words, it was the priest himself that possessed the power to reach into another person's mind and body to heal them. As Mesmer continued his work, the French Faculty of Science could find no physical reason for this "animal magnetism."

Benjamin Rush, the "Father of American Psychiatry," published the first psychiatric textbook in 1812. Amongst his very controversial opinions was the idea that patients had the ability to heal themselves from within. In 1842, Scottish physician James Braid developed hypnotism out of mesmerism, believing that a doctor could help a patient enter a psychological state conducive for healing.

During this period, many mental hospitals were constructed. By the mid-nineteenth century, mental hospitals throughout the western world were places where the mentally ill could come and be treated humanely while relieving the burden on their families of caring for them. Previous prison-like methods, such as shackles and chains, were discarded in favor of allowing the patient some freedom while alienists attempted to cure them.

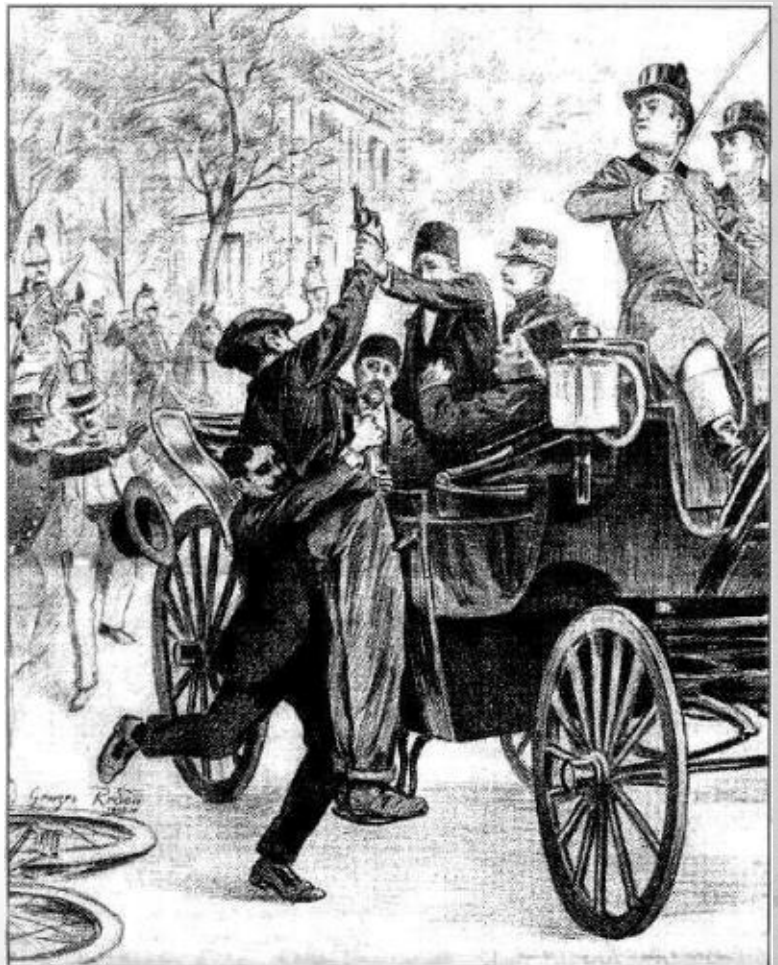
By the Imperial Age, however, many alienists and hospital workers lost faith in the ability to cure their patients. Mental hospitals became akin to a rest home; it was a place where the mentally ill came to stay until they died. Members of the hospital staff were custodians rather than healers and no one bringing a mentally ill friend or relative to the mental hospital had any expectation that the patient would return to normal society.

REVOLUTION

While America and France had their major revolutions in the previous century, the nineteenth century was almost continually marked with revolutionary fervor. Many dissatisfied subjects and citizens, mainly from the lower classes of their respective societies, would stoke the fires of revolution. Partly spurred on by Karl Marx's Communist Manifesto, popular revolutions exploded across the European continent. For the most part, these revolutions were suppressed. Communism made a resurgence during the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, when a socialist government emerged to take over Paris. This Paris Commune reigned for two months until it was defeated by the regular army. Communism would remain an issue throughout the European continent throughout the Imperial Age, although somewhat curiously Britain and America were virtually untouched by the fires of communism.

All western nations were subject to terrorism. Since it advocated an overthrow of the government, anarchism was often equated with terrorism, even when the terrorists weren't anarchists. Significant terrorist activities throughout the Imperial Age included assassination attempts on the German, Russian, Chilean and British leaders (the attempt on Russian Tsar Alexander II was successful). In Britain, anarchism was equated with Irish separatists (the Fenians). While Fenian terrorist attacks were primarily used as scare tactics, they made assassination attempts on Queen Victoria and stabbed the Chief Secretary of Ireland to death in 1884.

Communism and related equality movements could provide interesting background color or the motive behind intrigues. Terrorist attacks can add an element of surprise to any Imperial Age campaign. Indeed, the heroes could be in a public building or park on an unrelated adventure when an anarchist bomb or assassination attempt springs out of nowhere. In a covert campaign, the heroes could be secret agents tasked with eliminating terrorist threats.



THE OCCULT

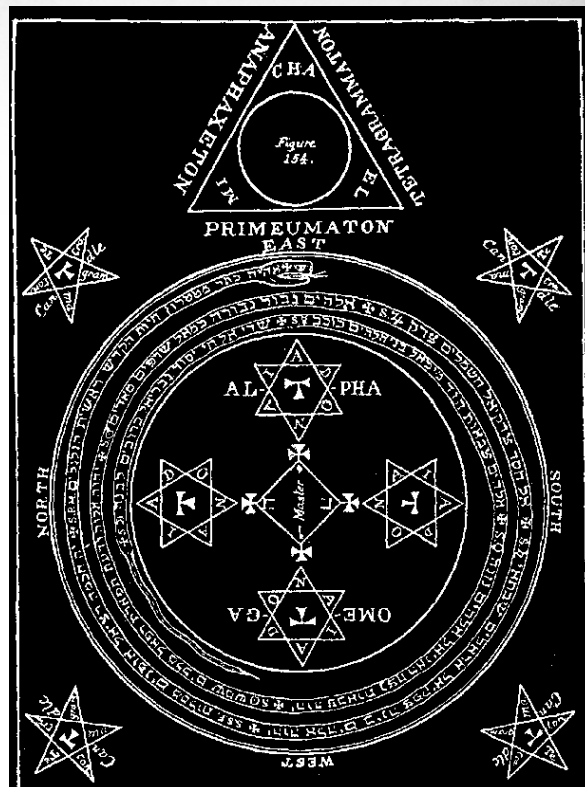
While the Imperial Age is marked by increased interest and application of science and technology, magic and folklore did not go quietly into the night. Indeed, throughout the world, people continued to make offerings to fairies or place wards upon their households and children. Victorian literature tended to portray faeries as tiny winged humanoids or small humans with stocking caps (these latter types were usually called elves). Sometimes these creatures would be portrayed as stunningly beautiful humanoids, especially in Scandinavia (it is this perception that the fantasy elf is modeled).

The Imperial Age also saw the rise of another phenomenon, the practice of magic as a science. In previous centuries magic was considered the province of religion, either as miracles bestowed by the gods, or as a tool of demons or devils. Occultists in the Imperial Age, however, believed that magic was a natural force that could be harnessed through precise rituals (hermetic magic or "magick"). This led to a rise of occult organizations such as the Theosophical Society, the Martinist Order, and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. Many of these organizations modeled themselves after the Freemasons, known for their secret gestures and rites of initiation. Members still met in secret, as practicing magic was still not acceptable to the general public. French author Leo Taxil caused quite a stir when he invented a black magic order, the Palladian Order, as a secret cult of Freemasons.

Spiritualism, or the ability to speak with the dead, was also prevalent in the Imperial Age. The American Fox sisters became world-renowned for summoning spirits that would make their presence known by rapping (a knocking sound). They were discredited in 1888 when one of the sisters revealed how she could make rapping sounds by cracking her toe joint. Still, spiritualism continued to be popular throughout the Imperial Age and gained some legitimacy in the scientific community.

Although a religion and not a magical practice, Christian Science, founded by Mary Baker Eddy in 1875, taught (and still teaches today) that, since man is made in God's image, man is perfect. It is man's own misperceptions of the material world that causes injury and through special prayers designed to see the spiritual reality man can heal himself. While not specifically banned, many Christian Scientists refuse medical attention, believing that all they need is the power of prayer.

Narrators that wish to incorporate the occult into *Imperial Age* campaigns will have to determine whether any or all of these occult beliefs are true. It is possible for a campaign to have fairies while hermetic magic doesn't work. See the **Occult Stories** chapter for more information on including the occult in your campaign.



THE AGE OF OCCULT STEAM

While *The Imperial Age* is designed for modularity and customization, it was necessary for us to establish a "default" setting when crafting our official *Imperial Age* adventure line. We took a "kitchen sink" approach, allowing you to use the full range of options offered in this book.

The default starting year for the Age of Occult Steam is 1880 and, to the public at large, the world is as the history books recorded it. Victoria is Queen of Great Britain and Empress of India and European states are busy carving chunks of Africa for themselves. William Gladstone is about to retake his post as Prime Minister from Benjamin Disraeli. The Second Afghan War is drawing to a close.

Beneath this mundane veneer, however, preternatural forces lurk in secret. Practitioners of magick really can cast hermetic spells, while certain alienists can unlock the mind's full potential. Faeries lurk in the shadows of the cities and deep in the wilderness. Mediums do occasionally contact the dead. Those aware of such things do their best to keep the public in the dark for fear of persecution and reprisal. To the average Victorian, ghosts, goblins, and wizards are the stuff of folktales and penny dreadfuls.

While the power of steam has been driving locomotives and ships for decades, more outrageous inventions are the province of inventors of questionable sanity. While the general public is more willing to accept the notion of strange steam-driven contraptions than magick and fairies, they are still rather skeptical and dubious as to the practicality and safety of such designs. While a keen inventor has the power to reshape the world, it simply hasn't happened yet.

THE IMPERIAL WORLD

The following is a brief overview of the world during the last two decades of the Nineteenth Century. This overview is not by any stretch exhaustive; Narrators are encouraged to do further research on topics that they want to incorporate into their campaigns. Thankfully, this is mercifully easy to do in the Twenty-First Century.

As it is likely that most *Imperial Age* campaigns will revolve around Great Britain, most of the nations and events highlighted are connected to British interests. Further *Imperial Age* supplements will address other parts of the world in greater detail.

EUROPE

The Great Powers of Europe include Austria-Hungary, Great Britain, France, Germany, and Russia. The Ottoman Empire, a formidable power prior to the Imperial Age, is now in decline. By contrast, the middle of Europe, which had been a patchwork of small states at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, united to produce Italy and Germany.

Ever since the Treaty of Paris in 1815, the Great Powers have been playing a delicate game of maintaining the balance of power. While there have been isolated incidents of open war between them (the Crimean War and the Franco-Prussian War being among the most notable), Europe has been relatively peaceful. This Continental peace would continue throughout the Imperial Age.

Eastern Europe is undergoing a transformation, as the Ottoman Empire loses influence in the Balkans and Austria-Hungary and Russia attempt to expand their influence. There is also agitation for Pan-Slavic unity in some parts of the Balkans and the ethnic tensions inside Austria-Hungary constantly threatened to pull the Habsburg Empire apart.

NAMING CONVENTIONS

The Imperial Age has a definite focus on Great Britain in the last two decades of the 19th century. With this in mind, contemporary names and terms are used instead of their modern equivalents for flavor purposes, except where it would cause confusion or is blatantly offensive. For example, "Peking" is used in place of "Beijing" as the capital of China. By contrast, "Muslim" is used instead of "Moslem" or "Mohammedian," and "Hindu" is used rather than "Hindoo."

In the same vein, wars are named from a Western or British point of view. While the modern reader may refer to the First Anglo-Afghan War, British subjects in the Imperial Age would simply call it the First Afghan War. Similarly, the First Boer War was commonly known as the Transvaal War throughout most of the Imperial Age, as there was no Second Boer War until the end of the 19th century.

POLITICAL ISMS

It can be difficult for the modern reader, especially the modern American reader, to appreciate the types of political parties that existed in the Imperial Age. While the definition of authoritarianism hasn't changed, twenty-first century definitions of conservatism, liberalism, and socialism don't quite fit. Here's a quick primer on the big three:

Conservatism was generally equated with nationalism, imperialism, and paternalism. Paternalism was the belief that the masses were too uneducated to make national decisions; that was best left to educated elites (such as the old aristocracy). Conservatives were generally suspicious of markets and advocated protectionism.

Liberalism was concerned with the government's obligation to protect individual rights. Liberals wanted more representation in government (although not necessarily universal suffrage; most liberals only wanted to give those they considered responsible citizens the right to vote). Liberals also promoted free trade.

Socialism in the Imperial Age was fueled by Marxism, which highlighted the discrepancy between what a worker produced versus how he was compensated. The new working class wanted more rights and a better bargaining position with their employers, which manifested in organized labor unions. Socialism railed against long hours, poor working conditions, child labor, unequal pay, racism, and lack of universal suffrage.

As the middle class (especially industrialists) grew and corporations outgrew regional concerns, Conservatives adjusted to accommodate them, embracing liberal ideas such as free trade and *laissez faire* capitalism, as well as offering favorable legislation for corporations. Liberalism suffered as a result, and liberals that did not embrace conservatism found themselves marginalized or absorbed into socialism (more commonly known as Labor by the end of the Imperial Age).

GREAT BRITAIN

Great Britain, of course, must be addressed first, as most **Imperial Age** campaigns will use it as their foundation. The superior British navy has as much to do with preserving the peace in Europe as the numerous treaties between the Great Powers, and Britain fears that a European rival, most likely Germany, may build a fleet that rivals her own. Britain was right to be concerned, as Germany's industrial might would rival its own by the end of the Nineteenth Century (and America would outpace them combined).

With the Great Depression and heavy rains, agriculture was no longer sustainable. Many former farmers moved to the expanding cities where industry was booming. Divorced from their home regions, these new workers began to organize for better wages and working conditions. While meeting fierce resistance, the Dock Strike of 1889 led to the formation of a strong Union.

Many British subjects tired of Britain's imperial ambitions, which often led to what was deemed unnecessary bloodshed. In fact, at the start of the Imperial Age, Britain is embroiled in two wars; one in Afghanistan and one in South Africa (after just ending the costly Zulu Wars). Britain's weariness with war around the world helped bring the Liberal Party (see sidebar on political philosophies) to power under William Gladstone in 1880. The new government wanted to stem Britain's colonial aspirations. Events, however, would embroil Britain in yet another African conflict, this time in the Sudan, and prompt it to more directly control Egypt and the important Suez Canal. Britain would also find itself conquering Burma and embroiled in the South African War by the end of the Imperial Age.

Britain would struggle with the question of Irish Home Rule throughout the Imperial Age. While Gladstone's government wanted to give Ireland some form of autonomy, Irish Republican groups argued for independence. Militant Irish republican factions would pepper London with bombs throughout the Imperial Age as well as conduct assassinations and assassination attempts (see the **Espionage** Stories chapter for more information). The issue of Irish Home Rule would paralyze the government during the middle of the Imperial Age and, while there were two failed attempts to pass a law, the question would remain unresolved until the next century.

FRANCE

France recovered from its humiliating defeat in the Franco-Prussian War rather quickly. The Scramble for Africa (of which France took the largest amount of territory) and France's conquest of Indochina helped forge a sense of national unity and pride.

France survived a couple of potential stumbles during the Imperial Age. While defeating China in a war over control of Tonkin (in what is today the northern part of Vietnam) in 1884-1885, France found themselves fighting a much more formidable opponent than they thought. The war dampened French colonial ambitions, although France would find itself controlling most of Southeast Asia by the end of the century.

France's second stumble was a potential military coup. At the end of the 1880s, the republic born from the Franco-Prussian War almost became a dictatorship when General Georges Boulanger, a popular soldier and politician, was in a position to provoke a coup d'état in 1889. To the dismay of his radical supporters, Boulanger's royalist allies attempted to put him on a new throne. Boulanger did not take the opportunity, and as his opponents moved against him he fled the country, eventually committing suicide in Brussels in 1891.

The Eiffel Tower was built in 1889 as a gateway to a fair commemorating the centennial of the French Revolution and would soon become France's national symbol.

France would enter the Franco-Russian Alliance in 1892, largely to contain Britain and Germany. France had never forgotten the Franco-Prussian War and competed with Britain over Africa and Southeast Asia. Relations between Germany and Russia, formerly close, had deteriorated to the point where the Tsar believed war with Germany to be inevitable. Russia also had concerns about British influence in Central Asia. This alliance would remain until 1917, during the Great War.

GERMANY

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 shocked the Continent. France had the largest army in Europe, and the North German Confederation, led by Prussia, easily defeated it (this war inspired Invasion literature, with Germany being a frequent culprit). Prussia used this muscle to unify Germany with the Prussian King at its head. From that point forward, the new German Empire played a game of catch-up with the rest of Europe.

Otto von Bismarck, the "Iron Chancellor," was instrumental in Germany's meteoric rise to the forefront of European politics. Bismarck was a master negotiator, creating many treaties to further German interests. Throughout the Imperial Age, Germany secured its position with a number of treaties, usually involving Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Russia. Germany also got involved in the Scramble for Africa and hosted the Berlin Conference (1884-1885) that would establish the rules of partitioning Africa.

Germany is a growing industrial power throughout the Imperial Age. Coal and steel production saw significant increases and Germany was a strong exporter of manufactured goods. By the end of the Imperial Age, Germany had surpassed Britain as the leading European industrial power. It is this sleeping giant that other Great Powers fear will one day awaken and overrun the Continent.

RUSSIA

Russia enters the Imperial Age with violence, backing the rebels in the Second Afghan War as part of the Great Game with Britain over control of Central Asia. This would continue throughout the Imperial Age as both sides attempted to check the other's expansion.

Tsar Alexander II barely makes it into the Imperial Age, as he is assassinated by terrorists in 1881. His son and heir, Alexander III, rolls back the liberal reforms of his father and advocates a three-pronged policy of one language (Russian), one religion (Eastern Orthodoxy) and one form of government (autocracy). He instituted harsh policies towards his Jewish subjects and closed down the institutions of other nationalities (primarily German, Polish, and Swedish) within the Empire. He also expanded the powers of the police to achieve these goals.

In spite of his harsh internal policies, Alexander III had a soft touch in foreign affairs. While Russia was still considered a strong threat, the Tsar was careful not to instigate a war with any of the major powers. He treaded lightly against Britain in the Great Game and, in spite of deteriorating relations, kept the peace with Germany. Like many Continental nations, Alexander III put protectionist policies in place while increasing grain exports and industrializing Russia.

Alexander III died in 1894 and his son, Nicholas II, took the throne. For the rest of the Imperial Age he would continue his father's autocratic policies, ignoring calls for reform. Perhaps the greatest accomplishments of his reign during the Imperial Age were the Hague Convention of 1899, which placed limits on warfare (aerial bombing, chemical warfare, and hollow point bullets were banned) and the completion of the Great Siberian Railway, which opened East Asian markets to Russia.

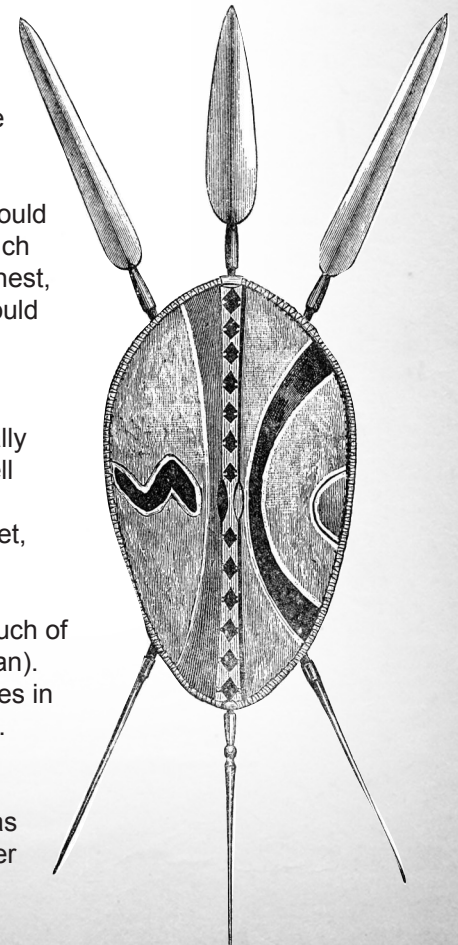
AFRICA

From a European perspective, most of the map of Africa was blank at the start of the Imperial Age, with a few scattered coastal settlements being the extent of European influence. For centuries, Sub-Saharan Africa was simply an obstacle to sail around, and even this was circumvented with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. This would change in the beginning of the Imperial Age as European explorers discovered the rich resources that Africa had to offer. The "Scramble for Africa" would soon begin in earnest, and by the end of the Imperial Age only two African nations, Ethiopia and Liberia, would remain free from European control.

The Berlin Conference of 1884 created standards for colonial powers to follow when carving out pieces of Africa. A nation could only claim and hold colonies if they actually possessed them, which required negotiation and treaties with local authorities as well as an administration and police force. Also, the power would have to notify the other signatories to the Berlin Treaty of their claim. If any of these requirements weren't met, then another power was free to lay claim to the region.

During the Scramble, France concentrated on West Africa while Britain controlled much of South and East Africa (Britain would also exert its influence over Egypt and the Sudan). Belgium and France would control parts of Central Africa while Germany took colonies in East, West and South-West Africa. Italy, Portugal and Spain also held parts of Africa.

One positive aspect of European imperialism was the international prohibition on slavery. Some areas of Africa, especially in the Arab-influenced East Africa, there was still a thriving slave trade at the dawn of the Imperial Age. As these areas came under



European influence and control, local governments were forced to ban the sale and eventually the existence of slavery. Two West African nations, Liberia and Sierra Leone, were established by America and Britain respectively as homelands for ex-slaves. While Sierra Leone remained under British control, Liberia was independent and enjoyed American support.

CONGO FREE STATE

When the modern reader looks at a map of Africa during the Imperial Age, one expects to see color-coded areas of British, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish control. There is, however, an odd colored area that stands out from the rest, covering a large part of Central Africa. That color represents...Belgium?

Yes, Belgium. In 1876 Belgian King Leopold II arguably started the Scramble for Africa with funds from his own back pocket. Technological advances (such as quinine and the steamship) convinced him that an acquisition of the African interior was feasible and he believed that great riches could be found there. While the Belgian government was loath to provide funding for such an enterprise Leopold simply funded the expeditions on his own.

Leopold set up the International African Association as an assembly to fund, explore, and share information on the African interior. Under the guise of the IAA, Leopold sent famed explorer Henry Morton Stanley into the Congo from 1879-1884 to negotiate treaties on Belgium's behalf. This sparked the scramble, which led to the Berlin Conference of 1884 that set rules for African colonization. One of the results of this conference was recognition of the interestingly named Congo Free State.

Leopold essentially treated the Congo Free State as his own private property rather than a Belgian colony. He reorganized the region in order to make it attractive to entrepreneurs and soon cultivated a thriving rubber industry. Unfortunately, the new police force, the *Force Publique* (FP), became notorious in their enforcement of rubber quotas; including floggings, rapes, and dismemberments (hands were taken for infractions and held as trophies).

During the early 1890s, the Congo Free State had to contend with Arab slave traders for control of the eastern parts of the region. In addition, some FP officers used their soldiers to promote their own economic well-being rather than military concerns. In spite of these challenges, the Congo Free State managed to regain control of the entire country by the mid 1890s.

EGYPT

Egypt begins the Imperial Age as a nominal part of the Ottoman Empire, having been virtually independent since 1805. The building of the Suez Canal, however, had put Egypt into great debt with both Britain and France. This gave the two European powers great influence over Egyptian policy and when the khedive (Egyptian ruler) attempted to resist this foreign intervention he was replaced. This sparked a power play by Colonel Ahmed Urabi that resulted in a nationalist government. As this threatened their interests, Britain and France attacked. Egypt would lose the conflict and effectively become a British Protectorate in 1882.

The British government had not envisioned a long-term occupation, but the new consul general of Egypt, Sir Evelyn Baring (Lord Cromer in 1892) argued that it was necessary to enact the reforms that the Egyptian administration needed. While the French decried their diminished role in Egyptian affairs, Britain was able to convince Europe to accept its position in Egypt and pledged to keep the Suez Canal open to all traffic.

For the rest of the Imperial Age, Britain would determine Egyptian foreign policy while Lord Cromer governed its internal affairs. While there were nationalistic calls for Egyptian self-government, Lord Cromer was able to quash any opposition.

SUDAN

Sudan had been ruled by Egypt since 1820. By the dawn of the Imperial Age, Egyptian government corruption and mismanagement led to a revolt under religious leader Muhammed Ahmad. He proclaimed himself the Mahdi (a prophesized leader that would end the world of corruption) and declared a jihad against Egyptian control in 1881.

In 1884 the British considered the Sudan a lost cause and made preparations to withdraw the remaining British and Egyptian troops. General Charles Gordon was chosen to head the withdrawal effort, as it was feared that the Mahdi's forces would cut down evacuating Egyptians without strong British support. Unfortunately, General Gordon's sense of honor (which prevented him from leaving until he was assured all Egyptian soldiers were safe) and a slow British deployment of reinforcements led to the siege of Khartoum, where Gordon was headquartered. Gordon was killed when the city was overrun in 1885 and the British left the Sudan under the Mahdi's control. The Mahdi himself would die a few

months later.

The newly independent Sudan was now a Muslim theocracy. The Mahdi, claiming visions from God, modified religious laws to support him and the new state. After his death, Sudan was embroiled in a power play among his three former deputies. During the late 1880s, Sudan would undertake a number of unsuccessful military campaigns to expand its territory into Egypt, Ethiopia, and Central Africa.

In 1892, Britain decided to re-conquer the Sudan in order to gain control of the Nile. The British feared that the Sudan was too politically unstable and, if they didn't conquer it, another Great Power certainly would. In 1896 British Field Marshal Herbert Kitchener would lead Anglo-Egyptian forces against the Sudan and successfully conquered it in 1898.

Soon after the conquest, Britain and France were embroiled in a territorial dispute over the southern Sudan in the Fashoda incident (1898). War between the two Great Powers was possible, but Kitchener was able to convince France to abandon their interest. While Sudanese nationalists expected a local leader, the British installed Kitchener as the leader and the Sudan effectively became a British colony. Kitchener, made a baron for his efforts in the Sudan, instituted popular reforms in the country, rebuilding mosques, declaring Friday (the Muslim holy day) as a day of rest, guaranteed religious freedoms, and reformed debt laws.

SOUTH AFRICA

The British have owned the Cape Colony since the Napoleonic Wars. The Boers, descendants of the former Dutch colony, moved into the interior to remain relatively free from British rule. This brought them into conflict with the Zulu and over the course of the mid-Nineteenth century Britain attempted to consolidate its control over South Africa. During this period, gold and diamond mines were discovered in the Boer-controlled areas, increasing the interior's desirability to the British. In the south, British farmers found it difficult to employ native labor and began importing Indian workers. This would result in the largest concentration of Indians in Africa.

The British came into conflict with the Zulu nation in the late 1870s, resulting in the Zulu War. After a disastrous defeat in the Battle of Isandlwana, the British would decisively defeat the Zulus in 1879. The British kept a presence in Transvaal, which led to resentment from the Boer population. This degenerated into armed conflict in 1880 in what would be called the Transvaal War. Boer sharpshooters proved to be formidable opponents. A truce was declared in 1881 that allowed Britain to keep nominal rule on the condition that British forces be withdrawn from the Transvaal.

One of the reasons for the Boer success in the Transvaal War was a lack of commitment on the part of the British. The British saw little gain in committing more forces. This might not have been the case had the British known about the gold mines, which were discovered in 1886. This discovery would plant the seeds for the South African War at the end of the Imperial Age.

By the end of the 1890s, the Boer republics, notably the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, were alarmed by the influx of British workers. These workers soon outnumbered the Boers and it was feared that Britain may establish a stronger presence in the republics. Boer efforts to coerce the British workforce to leave exploded into war with Britain once again, a war that started in 1899 and would last until 1902, when the British would decisively win. This war would be notorious for the development of the civilian concentration camp and the most costly, disastrous, and longest war Britain waged between the end of the Napoleonic Wars and World War I.



CECIL RHODES, THE RED LINE, AND THE SECRET SOCIETY

Cecil Rhodes was an English businessman and diamond miner that would have a large impact on British Imperialism in Africa, especially in the public's mind. Cecil Rhodes stoked British imperial ambitions further into Africa, pressing for a "red line" (an unbroken tract of British controlled territory) from the Cape to Cairo.

Rhodes attempted to use his position (he was eventually made Prime Minister of South Africa in 1890) to negotiate mining treaties with tribes in the northern parts of South Africa and beyond. He obtained a charter to form the British South Africa Company to pursue new opportunities north of the border in Central Africa. These new lands would be organized into a new country called "Rhodesia" in 1895.

Wishing to completely unite South Africa under British rule, Rhodes turned his attention towards the Boer Republics. Rhodes often thought of overthrowing them and his brother was now the leader of a union of British workers in the Transvaal. Rhodes supported the disastrous Jamestown Raid in 1895, in which British police officers in neighboring districts attempted to ignite a British worker uprising in the Transvaal. The attempt failed miserably, and Rhodes was forced to resign as Prime Minister in 1896. While he continued to work within the region, he'd never attain his former glory.

Rhodes is perhaps best known to modern readers as the founder of the Rhodes scholarships, which were established in his will. Rhodes was one of the wealthiest people in the world when he died in 1902 and his will allowed worthy students to receive a paid scholarship to Oxford University. Narrators may find it interesting that his first will, written in 1877, called for the formation of a secret society dedicated to the British conquest of the world. In an espionage or occult campaign, Rhodes may establish this society during the Imperial Age, supporting it with his vast wealth.

ZANZIBAR

Originally part of Oman, Zanzibar became its own principality in the middle of the Nineteenth Century. Zanzibar was noted for its spices and slaves. Controlling a large swath of coastal East Africa, Zanzibar became a driving force in the slave trade, in which it was estimated that 50,000 slaves would pass through Zanzibar each year. British influence in the region led to the Sultan of Zanzibar banning the trading of slaves (but not slavery itself) in 1876.

During the early Imperial Age, European claims in East Africa conflicted with Zanzibar's interests. This came to a head in 1885, when Germany claimed a large swath of East Africa. The Sultan assumed that Britain would support his protestations, but the British government did not want to get embroiled in another war. Instead, the Sultan found himself targeted by German warships which sailed unopposed into the harbor. Britain did intervene diplomatically and a joint British-German commission established that most of the East African coast (10 nautical miles wide) belonged to Zanzibar. Unfortunately, this territory was short-lived; by 1892 Zanzibar would lose all of its mainland holdings to Britain, Germany and Italy.

British interests in Zanzibar increased and by 1890 Zanzibar had become a British Protectorate. When the Sultan died in 1896 a contender to the throne, Khalid bin Barghash, declared himself the new sultan without British support, which was required under an 1886 treaty. As Britain favored another candidate, Khalid was ordered to step down. When he did not, British naval vessels bombarded the palace as a pro-British Zanzibari force approached almost unchallenged. A cease fire was called 40 minutes after the bombing had started, making the Zanzibar War the shortest war in history.

The new sultan, Hamoud bin Mohammed, was indebted to the British and ended slavery in 1897, compensating slave owners for their losses. Queen Victoria decorated him for this act and his son was brought to Britain for his education (this son would take the throne in 1902).

ASIA

While the Great Powers were preoccupied with Africa during the Imperial Age there was certainly still great interest in Asia. Great Britain continued to control the Indian subcontinent and slowly expand its borders while engaging Russia in the Great Game over Afghanistan. France would take over much of Southeast Asia. Persia remains independent, but allows foreign powers to determine its policies.

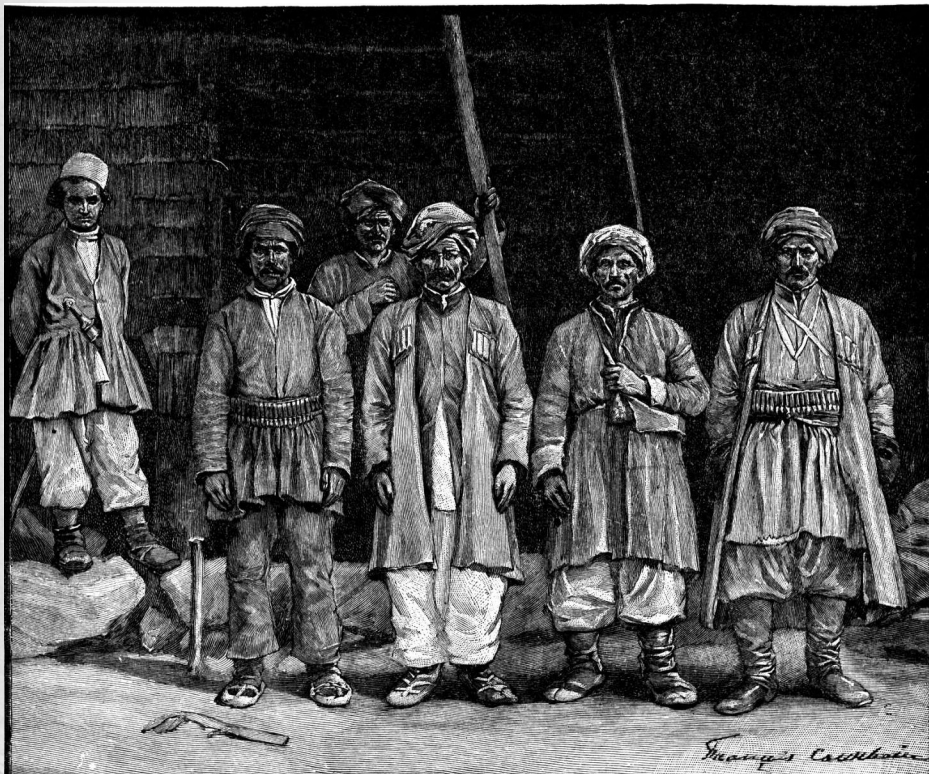
The two large powers of East Asia, China and Japan, struggled to remain relevant and independent during the Imperial Age, hoping to bridge the economic and technological gaps with the Great Powers. The two powers, with European aid, would clash over Korea in the mid 1890s.

AFGHANISTAN

As both British and Russian interests spread towards Afghanistan, both embarked on what British author Rudyard Kipling would call "the Great Game." The British feared that Russian encroachment into South Asia would threaten their Indian interests, while the Russians feared that British encroachment into Central Asia would threaten their interests.

Britain's first attempt to take direct control of Afghanistan during the First Afghan War (1838-1842) was a failure. However, due to further Russian encroachment and conflict with Persia, Sher Ali, the Amir of Afghanistan, looked to Britain for support. Britain, however, treated Afghanistan as a buffer state and would only supply it with arms and money, not troops. Sher Ali's relationship with Britain soured as he realized that they would not aid him against Russia.

In 1878 Russia sent an uninvited delegation to Kabul, the capital. The British demanded that the Amir receive a British delegation as well but the Amir refused, going so far as to say he would stop it if it approached uninvited. Britain responded by invading Afghanistan and touching off the Second Afghan War.



Amir Sher Ali appealed to the Tsar for assistance but received none. He returned to Afghanistan and died in early 1879, leaving his son, Mohammed Yaqub Khan, in power. Yaqub signed a treaty with Britain soon thereafter, but an uprising in Kabul led to the slaughter of Britain's Resident, guards and staff. Yaqub was suspected of supporting the uprising and forced to abdicate. Considering its options, Britain decided to install Yaqub's cousin, Abdur Rahman Khan, over Yaqub's brother, Ayub Khan. Ayub revolted, defeating British forces in the Battle of Maiwand in 1880. British forces won a decisive victory two months later in the Battle of Kandahar, ending the rebellion.

With Abdur Rahman on the throne, Britain withdrew its forces. Abdur

Rahman would earn the nickname "the Iron Amir" through his consolidation of power. Abdur Rahman suppressed many rebellions, transplanted tribes to break traditional strongholds, forced his subjects to convert to Islam, and created a regular army. He also granted provincial governors great authority but kept them in check through an intelligence network. He also brought in foreign exports to upgrade technology.

Throughout the Imperial Age, the British government remained in control of Afghanistan's foreign policy. This enabled Britain to negotiate Afghanistan's borders with surrounding powers, such as the Pandeh Crisis in 1885 (when Russia seized an oasis and battled Afghan troops). Britain also drew the Durand Line between Afghanistan and India in 1893, which cut through Pashtun lands, causing unrest in the region. This would come to a head in 1897, when a Pashtun force besieged a British Garrison at Malakand. The vastly outnumbered British troops were able to hold out for six days until reinforcements arrived and ended the siege.

In spite of this, the “Iron Amir’s” reign is a stable one that allows for a peaceful transfer of power to his son upon his death in 1901.

INDIA

Prior to the arrival of the British, India was a patchwork of small states separated by language, religion, and ethnicity. There was little notion of a national identity, which made it easier for Britain to establish control by negotiating with each local ruler. Britain practiced an imperial, rather than colonial policy with India. Englishmen rarely stayed after making their fortunes, infusing British ranks with new blood every few years.

Britain had established contacts with the Indian subcontinent since the early 1600s. This led to direct control by the East India Company and, in 1858 following the Sepoy Mutiny, Great Britain itself. The British government used India to solve the embarrassing prospect of Queen Victoria’s daughter, also Victoria, from outranking her mother when her husband ascended the German Imperial throne by granting the British Queen the title of “Empress of India.” The opening of the Suez Canal made access to and from India much easier, cutting the travel time to three weeks rather than four months.

During the Imperial Age, India is a patchwork of princely states (local leaders acknowledging British rule) and directly administered regions. Many Indian (Sepoy) and Nepalese (Ghurkha) soldiers fight in the Second Afghan War, which ends in 1880. In 1884 British Somaliland in East Africa is added to British India, of which it would remain a part until 1898. Burma is added in 1886 following the Third Burmese War (1885-1886). Baluchistan is conquered and added to British India in 1887. The Northwest Frontier would rebel in 1897, leading to its defeat and the creation of the Northwest Frontier Province in 1900.

The last two decades of the nineteenth century were ones of gradual transition to notions of self-government. Perhaps ironically, the British consolidation of India, its governmental and economic policies, and western culture gave many Indians a true sense of a national identity. At first, Indians thought to control India from within the existing British structure. Many felt that, through western education and loyalty to the crown, Indians would begin to replace Englishmen in governmental positions. Unfortunately, Indian admission and promotion within the Indian Civil Service was rare, and those that did get in were often fired on the flimsiest of excuses.

It didn’t take long for Indian resentment at this process to percolate into agitation for self-rule. The Indian National Congress (INC) held its first meeting in Bombay in 1885. As the INC was primarily driven by Hindu Indians, Muslim Indians tended initially to support the peace of British Rule (the independence-minded Muslim League



would not organize until 1906). These independence movements were often fragmented by culture as well as religion. Some Indians wanted to return to traditional methods and values, while others embraced Western ideas. During the Imperial Age, the English often dismiss the influence of the INC, but continued repressive policies stoke the fires of independence.

In spite of strong British control, it is important to note that both the French and the Portuguese held a handful of settlements along the Indian coast during the Imperial Age. The French possession of Pondicherry actually had ties to the Roman Empire.

CHINA

China struggled throughout the Imperial Age. An ancient, prideful culture, China's dismissive attitude towards foreigners flew in the face of the political, economic, and military reality that it was China that lagged behind. Unlike Japan, which embraced industrialization and modernization, China was slow to reform its agricultural economy and traditional institutions.

Unfortunately, Europeans and Americans were quick to exploit China's weaknesses. After a humiliating defeat against Britain in the first Opium War (1839-1842), China was coerced into signing very favorable trade terms with Britain, France, and America. Under the treaty-port system, certain cities were declared "open." In open port cities, foreigners were immune from Chinese law and answerable only to their consuls for their actions. In addition, Britain acquired Hong Kong as a colony.

Anti-foreign sentiment built after these concessions and exploded into the Second Opium War (1856-1860). Unfortunately, China was already engaged in the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864) and could not effectively defend against the combined Anglo-French forces. In the end, the summer palaces were burned. The emperor fled Peking and would die the following year. Prince Gong would sign the treaty at the Convention of Peking and China's humiliation in the eyes of its government and people was complete. China was forced to grant freedom of religion, give more land to Britain, pay reparations, legalize the opium trade, and hand over 300,000 miles of territory to Russia.

Empress Dowager Cixi became the de facto ruler of China for the rest of the 19th century. China was in shambles; humiliating defeats from foreign forces, 20-30 million dead in the Taiping Rebellion, and rampant corruption in the government bureaucracy. Ruling from "behind the curtain" (as tradition held that women shouldn't engage in politics), Cixi would remain the de facto head of the Qing dynasty for 40 years, even during the reigns of her son the Tongzhi Emperor (1861-1875) and her nephew the Guangxu Emperor (1875-1908).

In 1861, Cixi and Prince Gong addressed the modernization of China with the Self-Strengthening Movement. The basic idea was that China would adopt Western technological innovation while maintaining Chinese traditions. Unfortunately, many of the reforms were hampered by conservatism; the government did not want to make radical changes. China remained primarily an agricultural economy and private enterprises were heavily managed by the government.

In 1884 China fought France for control of North Vietnam in the Sino-French War (1884-1885). The French were victorious and China's military organization (relying on autonomous regional forces) was found inadequate. Specifically, the northern fleet refused to aid the southern fleet which had engaged the French.

In spite of modernization, China's navy would effectively be destroyed in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), which was fought over influence over Korea. This further deteriorated confidence in the Qing dynasty. Parts of China fell under British, French, and Japanese influence, creating a crisis that could have ended in a partition of China. In response, the emperor enacted the ineffective Hundred Days Reform (1898), in which he issued a number of reforms. These reforms included a plot to remove Cixi, who had held on to power when the new emperor had come of age. Cixi's allies detained the emperor and put Cixi back in charge of the administration. The Empress Dowager ended the reforms.

ENGLISH SOCIETY IN INDIA

Unlike Great Britain, the major distinction among residents of India is race; you're either European or Indian. Most Englishmen and women were of roughly the same social class; upper middle (lower class soldiers generally didn't mix). Life in India was also transitory; you came to seek your fortune and you left when you made it. Thus the English did as expected when faced with such an alien predicament; they created a stratified society.

Englishmen used their military or Indian Civil Service rank as well as their length of time in India to determine their ranking in society. If anything, English Indian society was even more rigid than London society. Weddings were expected to be performed as traditionally English as possible and garden and dinner parties were treated more formally than one would expect back home. With no want for Indian servants, English wives often had little to do, making "society" seem that much more important.

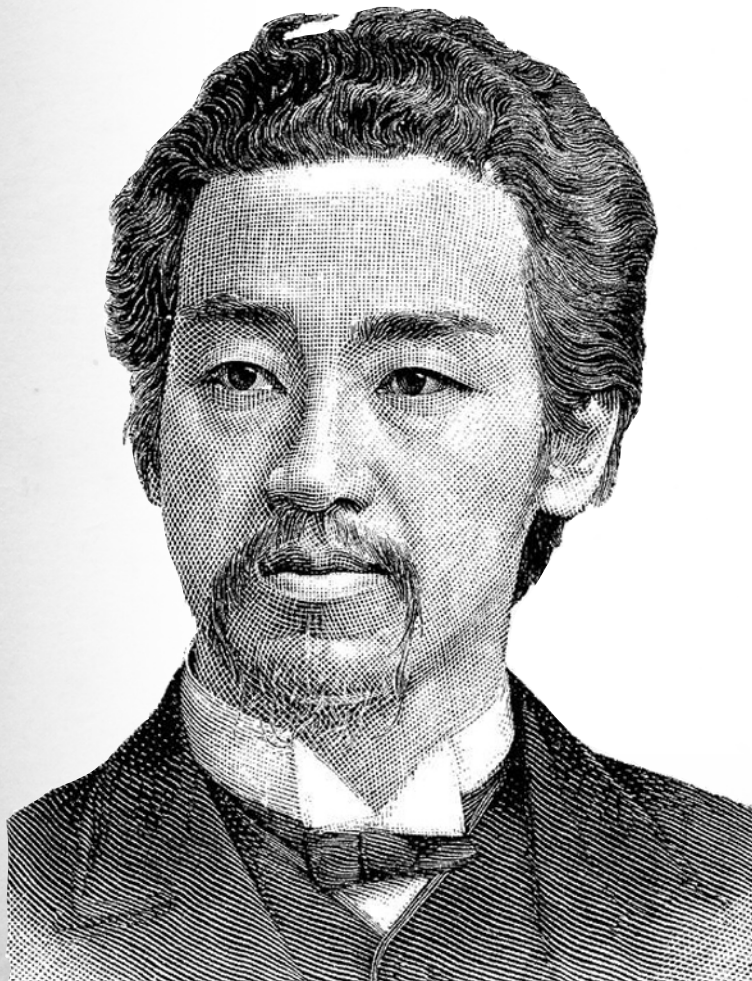
The Empress Dowager would throw her support behind the Boxers, a sect of martial artists ("Boxer" is a Western appellation, as boxing was synonymous with unarmed combat) that wished to end foreign influence in China, including Christianity. When they murdered the German Envoy in Peking, the foreign powers demanded redress. Instead, the Empress Dowager declared war on all foreigners.

The provincial governors, with strong links to the foreign powers, refused to join the Empress Dowager. An alliance of eight nations (America, Austria-Hungary, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and Russia) would eventually crush the rebellion at the very end of the Imperial Age.

JAPAN

After the Meiji Restoration (1868) which ended the Tokugawa shogunate, Japan underwent a serious transformation into a modern nation. Foreign advisors were hired to modernize the military and develop industries. Japan would become the first Asian industrialized nation and dominate Asian markets. Many former samurai daimyos (lords) increased their wealth through investing in these new industries.

At the dawn of the Imperial Age there was a push for a Western-style constitutional monarchy. During the 1880s



MYSTICAL BOXERS?

One of the reasons that the Empress Dowager threw her support behind the Boxers (initially she suppressed them) was due to a demonstration of their supernatural might. As the Boxers were experts in Wushu (Kung-Fu), the modern reader may find the notion of Chinese mystical martial artists almost cliché. In an occult campaign, the Boxers may have adepts among them.

This also works for a horror campaign. Western audiences shuddered when they read about the brutality (whether real or imagined) of the Boxers against Christian missionaries, Christian converts, foreign legations and their families. Perhaps these murders are part of rituals that fuel the Boxers' powers.

On the flip side, the Narrator may wish to portray the Boxers as heroic mystical martial artists defending their traditions against the gunpowder and steam of the foreign powers. In a truly fantastic campaign, the Boxers could wield sacred magic against the steampulp monstrosities of foreign invaders.

various constitutional proposals were considered, including America's (considered too liberal) and Britain's (considered too unwieldy). A constitution was finally granted in 1889, although the government remained authoritarian. Only about 1% of the population was eligible to vote for the election of members of the House of Representatives, while the House of Peers was made up of nobles and imperial appointees.

Japan would clash with China over Korean influence in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895). Japan feared a foreign presence in Korea, believing that it would hurt national security. China and Japan almost clashed during the Imo Incident (1882) when a Korean revolt took place against the pro-Japanese government and the Gapsin Coup, when a Japanese-supported coup took place. In both cases tensions were relieved, but in 1894 war finally broke out between China and Japan when Chinese forces, at the request of the Korean emperor, entered Korea to help put down a rebellion. Japan sends troops despite Chinese and Korean objections.

After the rebellion was suppressed, neither side withdrew. For the next month, Chinese and Japanese diplomats debated Korea's fate. The debate ended when Japanese forces stormed Seoul, the capital, and installed a pro-Japanese government. The new government ended all treaties with China and gave Japan the right to expel Chinese forces from Korea.

The war was decidedly one-sided. The Japanese army

and navy inflicted heavy casualties on their Chinese opponents and China was forced to sign a treaty that recognized the independence of Korea, cede territory to Japan, and pay war reparations. Japan had established itself as a Great Power, tempered only by a move from Russia for it to relinquish control of Port Arthur in return for more money. Russia would then lease the land from China, stoking tensions with the Japanese that would culminate with the Russo-Japanese War in the next decade.

STEAMPUNK JAPAN

Fans of cyberpunk fiction and RPGs (especially works written in the 1980s-early 1990s) will recall heavy Japanese influences. Japanese corporations ruled the world and Japanese culture permeated Western societies.

This same attitude could be applied to Japan in a steampunk campaign (see the **Steam Stories** chapter). The Japanese government created zaibatsu, financial and industrial conglomerates that worked to modernize Japan. In a steampunk campaign, these zaibatsu could effectively take control, exerting their influence through giant war machines and corporate culture. Increases in technology could enable Japan to increase foreign contact, with Japanese corporate and cultural influences quickly affecting Asia and the Americas before taking Europe by storm.

In such a setting, Victorian society's fascination with Egypt and the Middle East could be replaced with Japan. Bodyguards and private soldiers could model themselves as samurai, kimonos could replace the smoking jacket, and afternoon tea could resemble Japanese tea ceremonies.

AUSTRALIA

Australia is a model of boom or bust, depending on the decade. In the 1880s, the six colonies that made up Australia were in the midst of a land boom. Trade unions developed and Australian workers enjoyed high wages that were unheard of in Europe. Unfortunately, the Great Crash of 1891 began a decade-long depression. As a result, Australia weathered many strikes and the Liberal Government, formerly an ally of labor, turned against workers. Racism also intensified, leading to tough immigration laws. In 1899 Australia would elect a Labor government, the first one of its kind in the world.

NORTH AMERICA

While the focus of *The Imperial Age* is on Great Britain, it's likely that many Narrators and Players will be more familiar with American history and perspective in the late 19th century. It's important to remember that the United States of America simply wasn't the Great Power it would become in the next century, although, like Germany and Japan, it was a rapidly rising nation.

Both Canada and Mexico are enjoying newfound freedoms. Canada has been given autonomy from Great Britain, while Mexico shed a brief period of a French-backed Empire (1864-1867). Throughout the Imperial Age, Mexico was economically unstable and the government became increasingly autocratic.

South of Mexico, three Central American nations united as the Republic of Central America (1896-1898). Consisting of El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, this republic recalled an earlier attempt to unite Central America in the early Nineteenth Century. The new republic dissolved when a military coup took place in El Salvador.

European powers maintained a presence in North America, especially in the Caribbean. Great Britain controlled the Bahamas, British Honduras, Jamaica, and most of the Lesser Antilles except for a few islands owned by France and the Netherlands. Spain controlled Cuba and Puerto Rico until the Spanish-American War, when the islands were handed over to the United States of America.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

In the aftermath of the American Civil War (1861-1865), America underwent the Reconstruction era. The Reconstruction was intended to reincorporate the former Confederate States back into the union, as well as establish the status and civil rights of Freedmen (former slaves that had been freed as a result of the Civil War). Unfortunately, many white Southerners resented their treatment at the hands of the victorious North as well as the elevation of Freedmen (which outnumbered

white Southerners in some states), spawning a number of terrorist groups that burned schools and intimidated African-Americans and their allies. Some even resorted to murder, especially by lynching.

Disenfranchisement and intimidation weren't limited to outlaws. Throughout the Imperial Age, Jim Crow laws were passed in the South that made it difficult for African-American and poor whites to vote. By 1890, such laws were making their way into Southern state constitutions. In addition, segregation between African-Americans and whites spread throughout the South. Segregation even found support amongst African-American leader Booker T. Washington, who argued that African-Americans should concentrate on creating economic stability before demanding political and social equality. Official segregation got a big boost in 1896, when the Supreme Court ruled that segregation was Constitutional so long as African-Americans received equal treatment as whites under such laws.

In the West, the federal government was embroiled in the Indian Wars up through 1890. These wars, instigated by encroachment on indigenous tribal lands and violations of treaties led to many clashes between the American military and Native American tribes. Ultimately, the military was victorious and the Native tribes were forced to assimilate or live in the reservations set aside for them.

THE GHOST DANCE

The Ghost Dance was a religious movement found amongst western Native American tribes that prophesized a return to the way things were before European influence. Specifically, the dead would rise and drive whites off ancestral lands and restore the buffalo herds (driven almost to extinction by overhunting) and the Native American way of life. The approach was pacifistic; the Native Americans themselves were usually forbidden to fight and instead perform songs and dances revealed to prophets from spirits of the deceased. As the movement spread, some interpretations were less pacifistic; some Native Americans believed that they could create Ghost Shirts that would repel bullets.

In 1890, the U.S. Government became increasingly worried about ghost dances, believing that they would lead to rebellion. Thousands of troops were sent to the Great Sioux Reservation of South Dakota as the government struggled to help the Sioux through a difficult harvest (caused mainly by U.S. policy). Ghost dances continued to rattle the soldiers. Tensions were at the breaking point and, when a deaf Lakota-Sioux warrior refused to hand over his firearm (as he couldn't hear the order), the military opened fire with their machine guns at the Wounded Knee Massacre, killing at least 300 Native Americans. It was believed that a medicine man was performing a ghost dance at the time and encouraged the warriors to put on their ghost shirts. Needless to say, the shirts did not protect against bullets.

In an occult campaign, the Ghost Dance could be a powerful force. Perhaps the U.S. Military really did have to deal with Native American adepts and brought adepts of its own to counter them. In a horror campaign, perhaps Native American medicine men really did start hearing spiritual voices in the Imperial Age, offering great rewards for their obedience. What are these spirits and why are they interfering now? Do the Ghost Shirts really work and just what are the Native Americans summoning when they sing and dance?

THE KU KLUX KLAN

A number of secret organizations sprang up against the Federal Government in the aftermath of the American Civil War. Many of these were Confederate veterans looking to effectively change the outcome of the war and return the South to its antebellum culture. Most of these groups resorted to terrorism and often wore hoods and robes to disguise their identities and strike fear in their victims. They whipped and murdered African-Americans and Unionists, burned schools, and discouraged pro-Republicans from voting. By the late 1860s the federal government started fighting back and the Ku Klux Klan was effectively ended by the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871.

While the Ku Klux Klan would not see a resurgence until the early next century, neo-Confederate sympathies and racism did not end with the Klan's dissolution. Indeed, more public groups would organize to influence voting and legislation, and racial segregation became a Southern institution during the Imperial Age. It would not be a stretch to keep the Ku Klux Klan as a secret organization pulling the strings of politicians and industrialists behind the scenes. In horror campaigns, perhaps the murders are part of a dark ritual to summon a demon that will return the South to its former glory. In occult campaigns, perhaps Klan adepts use powers to keep their activities secret. In an espionage campaigns, the Klan could be influencing government officials both inside and outside the United States, perhaps preparing for a second War for Southern Independence.

America's second president of the Imperial Age, James Garfield, was shot by an assassin in July of 1881. He died of infection from a bullet lodged in his torso. Alexander Graham Bell had devised a metal detector to look for the bullet, but, unbeknownst to him, Garfield's metal bed frame prevented the metal detector from working properly. He died in September and Vice-President Chester Arthur became President.

During the Imperial Age, America became an industrial powerhouse. With an abundance of natural resources and growing urban populations, American manufacturing would soon surpass that of Britain, France, and Germany combined. There was a dark side as well. White workers feared competition from African-Americans and Chinese immigrants. In 1882 Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act which put a moratorium on Chinese laborers entering America.

Workers also feared exploitation by their employers. The Knights of Labor were formed in 1869. A union dedicated to bettering working conditions, the Knights of Labor were uncharacteristically inclusive, admitting African-Americans, women, and even employers into the union. Still, the Railroad Strike of 1886 dealt a fatal blow to the Knights, as escalating violence turned public opinion against them. The Haymarket Riot in Chicago in the same year also turned public opinion against unions, as an anarchist bomb during a union rally killed eight police officers and a number of civilians. 1886 would not, however, be the end of unions, as the American Federation of Labor was also founded that year.

While a "Great Power," the United States of America was not an imperial power (depending on one's perspective of the Indian Wars) through most of the Imperial Age, as its last territorial grab was the purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867. That would change with the annexation of Hawaii and the outcome of the Spanish-American War. The war was primarily fought over Cuban independence from Spain. At the conclusion of the war, America would find itself in possession of Cuba, Guam, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico.

CANADA

The Dominion of Canada was created in 1867, granting the former British colony a great degree of autonomy. Canada would be in charge of its own affairs, while Great Britain would set its foreign policy. The Dominion was largely created to unite Canada against America, as Britain feared that America may start annexing Canadian lands. Newfoundland and Labrador, having its own Dominion government since 1854, did not join the Dominion of Canada and would have its own Prime Minister and government throughout the Imperial Age.

Like its neighbor to the South, Canada had its own issues with its Native population and descendents of the original colonists. Canada had a significant French population, largely descended from French colonists when eastern Canada (primarily Quebec) was New France. This caused political tension, as French Canadians generally had no affinity for the British Crown.

These two tensions crossed paths in the North-West Rebellion in 1885, when the Metis tribe and others revolted against Canadian rule. They were led by Louis Riel, a French Canadian that had been in exile in America after the Red River Rebellion in 1869-1870. After the rebellions were defeated, Riel was captured, put on trial, and hung. The Prime Minister's refusal to commute Riel's sentence fostered Quebecois nationalism and increased the power of the Liberal Party. This was further enhanced in 1890, when the Manitoba government abolished funding for Catholic schools and French as an official language, contrary to the Manitoba Act. This created a political crisis that forced the Prime Minister to resign in 1896 and replaced with Canada's first French Canadian Prime Minister, Wilfrid Laurier. Tensions would again arise over Canada's participation in the South African War at the end of the Imperial Age.

SUEZ CANAL OF THE WEST?

For centuries, European ships had to sail around the coast of Africa to access South and East Asian markets. This was circumvented in 1869 with the opening of the Suez Canal, which greatly reduced travel times. A similar condition affected the Americas, especially in the North, where the only way between the east and west coasts was to sail around South America.

In 1882 France determined to solve this problem as they had in the Suez by beginning construction of a canal through what is today Panama. Unfortunately, the project was plagued by disease and poor planning, leading to a cessation of the project in 1889. This caused a major scandal in France, as the project was so fraught with corruption that 104 members of the French legislature were involved (the participation of two Jewish speculators also fueled anti-Semitism).

The New French Canal Company formed in 1894 to finish the project, but it was hampered by speculation for a canal by America (primarily in Nicaragua). France correctly feared that an American project would make its own canal redundant. This led to foot-dragging, with the Company merely maintaining the site while it sought a buyer for the project. The Long Depression hampered American efforts, and at the end of the Imperial Age there is still no canal through Central America.

1897 would see the start of the Klondike Gold Rush in the Yukon. Many Americans, unemployed from the Long Depression, came north, primarily from Seattle and San Francisco but also as far away as New York. Most were motivated more by the adventure than the gold; one of these was novelist Jack London, whose experience influenced some of his greatest works. Some Canadians feared that the influx of Americans would lead to an American claim to the Yukon, but the North West Mounted Police under Sam Steele maintained order.

SOUTH AMERICA

While Africa is in the midst of colonial and imperial domination, South America is in a post-colonial era. Most of the continent is independent; the only mainland states under foreign control are the Guianas (British Guiana, Dutch Guiana, and French Guiana). All of the independent nations are republics except for the Empire of Brazil, which will become a republic midway through the Imperial Age.

At the beginning of the Imperial Age three nations are involved in the Saltpeter War (1879-1883). Saltpeter had become a valuable commodity and Chile claimed control over saltpeter-rich coastal areas of Bolivia and Peru. After an unsuccessful mediation attempt by the United States of America, Chile advances on Lima and effectively takes over Peru. A Peruvian resistance forms (possibly with American assistance) and eventually wears down Chilean will. A peace treaty is signed in 1883 that temporarily grants Chile most of the disputed lands. The occupied areas are supposed to vote on whether to remain Chilean after 10 years, but as a result of disputes the matters won't be resolved until After the Imperial Age. Perhaps the greatest loss is Bolivia's, as the result of the war leaves it landlocked.

BRAZIL

Brazil occupied the unique position of having the only Latin American monarchy through the first decade of the Imperial Age. Following the Paraguayan War (1864-1870), Brazil saw the need to update and reform its economy and military. Under the Emperor's guidance, railroads were built, revenues increased, and the population exploded. Industry was booming and attracted many immigrants.

Growing industry allowed the Emperor to make good on his promise to end slavery and turn Brazil away from a plantation-based economy. The emperor had agreed to end slavery in 1831, bowing to pressure from Great Britain. The Empire gradually freed the slaves. The African slave trade was outlawed in 1850. In 1871 the Law of the Free Womb granted freedom to all children born to slaves. In 1884 all slaves over 60 were freed, and in 1888 all slaves were free without compensation to slave owners (slavery had been banned in certain parts of Brazil a few years earlier, but these were provincial, not national efforts).

Unfortunately for the Emperor, all was not well in the Empire. A number of interest groups thought that the Imperial system was antiquated and needed to be replaced in order to modernize industry and the military. A conspiracy grew between military officers and the urban middle class which resulted in a successful coup in 1889. The Emperor went into exile in Europe and Brazil became a republic after a brief military dictatorship.

The new United States of Brazil was established as a constitutional democracy in 1891, although few had the right to vote. The economy was based on cash crops, such as coffee, rubber, sugar, and cotton and Brazil imported most of its own needs. A boss system developed where a locally dominant landowner would dole out favors in return for loyalty. The landowners essentially owned their local governments and ran their plantations like fiefs. Each region of Brazil specialized in certain products that they sold to American and European markets.

ALTERNATE PATHS

For many *Imperial Age* campaigns, sticking to history may not matter. Most detective stories won't change history regardless of whether the heroes discover the culprit. Horror stories tend to either be on a small enough scale that it won't affect history (e.g. make it through the swamp alive) or on such a large scale that it effectively ends the campaign (e.g. failure to stop a summoning ritual kills everyone in London and allows a large demon to walk the earth).

Other campaigns may allow for alternate history as matter of course, especially where the occult or fantastic steam is involved. Even without such devices, the stakes may be high enough in an adventure or espionage campaign that the heroes' failure could change the course of history. Exposing a secret alliance, failure to get key information to a general during a war, or disrupting a supply chain could have serious repercussions.

Some Narrators may wish to change history just to shake things up and put the players on notice that anything can happen. Having the heroes confront Confederate agents working with Arab slave traders in East Africa in 1881 will certainly put the players on notice that they can no longer trust their history books. Changing history can be liberating, as the Narrator no longer needs to be tied to the outcomes of actual events.

This section looks at a few ways in which you can change history to suit your campaign or keep your players on their toes.

BUT THAT'S NOT HOW IT HAPPENED!

You'd be surprised how much of "history" is based on hearsay or biased accounts. History is written by the winners, and in many cases certain events were misremembered or made up out of whole cloth. As long as you keep history generally on the same course, you have wiggle room to make up events or change how they actually happened.

For example, history records General Roberts as leading the British relief force to overcome the siege of Kandahar in 1881. As Narrator, however, you could have Roberts kidnapped by Russian spies. Faced with an embarrassing international incident, the heroes must rescue General Roberts while his subordinates carry out his orders. If the heroes are successful, then Britain can sweep the incident under the rug and pretend that General Roberts had never been kidnapped. If the heroes fail, then the British and the Russians strike a secret deal to free Roberts and, again, history records otherwise.

Heroes can also become involved in minor stakes. Many villages, missions, and outposts needed to be evacuated during wars; whether the heroes succeed or fail in one instance, while important to them, probably won't be recorded in the history books. Most casualty lists are estimates, leaving ample room for the heroes to effect an unnoticed change in one direction or the other.

FIXING HISTORY: THE RUBBER BAND THEORY

Some Narrators may want their Players' actions to affect history but they don't necessarily want to move the world in unanticipated directions. Such Narrators may want to subscribe to the "rubber band" theory, in which history will, over time, correct itself. In other words, even if history is changed in 1883, by 1895 the world still looks pretty much as it would if history hadn't been changed.

To take a minor example, suppose the heroes mess up the Battle of Kandahar. The British are repulsed and the rebel Afghan forces are victorious. Undaunted, the British rally with more troops and decisively defeat the Afghan forces in the Second Battle of Kandahar two weeks later. By 1882, this has simply become another battle in the Second Afghan War and history progresses normally.

To take a more extreme example, perhaps the Jubilee Plot succeeds due to the heroes' failure to prevent it and Queen Victoria is assassinated. Edward takes the throne and now the rest of the Imperial Age is considered the Edwardian Era. As per the rubber band theory, British policies and actions remain the same, so beyond declaring "God Save the King!" not much changes historically.

HISTORY IS FINE... UP UNTIL NOW

Roleplaying games developed from war games. Most war games involve replaying a historical battle. If the players are history buffs, then everyone knows what led up to the battle and, if the battle is played as it actually unfolded, what the outcome would be. Still, that doesn't prevent the players from changing history with new tactics, nor does it detract from the enjoyment of the game.

A similar approach can be taken with *The Imperial Age*. Assume that history unfolded the way it was supposed to before the start of the campaign and then anything goes. Most campaigns won't last long enough for changes to have much of an impact on your campaign. If the heroes manage to rescue General Gordon from Khartoum in 1885 and the campaign is only going to last until 1886, then the historical deviation won't matter.

This position can keep history buffs on their toes, as their knowledge of history will only go so far. After all, even in the war games, following the exact same path won't necessarily lead to the same results, thanks to the dice.

VAGUELY VICTORIAN

Some Narrators may wish to go further afield, presenting a campaign that has some historical trappings, but the political and social landscape is much different. This is especially likely in occult or steam campaigns, in which European explorers have to contend with native adepts or fantastic steam engines changes the face of warfare. Campaigns that start with an alternate reality out of the gate immediately inform the Players that anything can happen.

Alternate earths could also deviate in the present or near future. A Narrator inspired by "the Battle of Dorking" might want to place the British heroes in the middle of a German invasion of England. Perhaps a socialist revolution succeeds in overthrowing Queen Victoria.

Finally, a deviation (perhaps caused by fantastical powers) could cause the Imperial Age to arrive earlier or later than it did in the real world. Randall Garrett's Lord Darcy tales take place in the modern world (1960s-70s) but the society is clearly "Victorian." Heroes and villains use sword canes and revolvers, while the world is lit by gaslight. As another example, a continuing Roman Empire might bring about an earlier Imperial Age, with the Roman Empire vying for control of the Atlantic against the competing Songhai Empire and the Aztec-Incan Alliance.

Normally, the changes occur within the last hundred years or so, allowing for the setting to retain some familiar elements. Offered here are a few recent divergences for a "vaguely Victorian" campaign. These alternative histories are offered "straight," with no occult or steam elements. A Narrator could easily include such fantastical elements as driving forces behind the divergences.

- **Empress of North America**

The American Revolution could have easily gone the other way, especially if cooler heads had prevailed. Under this variant, the Thirteen Colonies remained British and, along with Canada, became a British North America. Under British pressure, slavery would have been ended in America much earlier. In 1876, Queen Victoria takes the title "Empress of North America."

In the Imperial Age, Britain may not be as aggressive in Africa, as it has the natural resources of America to exploit. Also, the heroes could meet British Narrator characters that would be Americans in a historical Imperial Age. Perhaps Grover Cleveland is the Prime Minister of the Dominion of North America, while Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt leads a British Regiment against the Boers in the South African War with Edgar Rice Burroughs under his command.

- **Wellington's Failure**

The French victory and capture of Duke Wellington at the Battle of Quatre Bras forced the Seventh Coalition, Austria, Britain, Prussia, and Russia, to sue for peace in the Treaty of London in 1815. With an unbroken French Empire, Prussia is never able to unite the German states and at the dawn of the Imperial Age the middle of Europe is still fractured, with Austria, Britain, France, and Prussia each influencing different German states.

France helped negotiate peace in Canada during the Lower Canada Rebellion in 1837, purchasing Quebec from Britain and installing a French colonial government. With strong French support, Maximilian still sits on the throne in the Empire of Mexico. Africa is essentially divided between Britain and France, although Egypt is under French control.

In this campaign, France is a stronger force and is entangled in North America. This threatens America and the Monroe Doctrine and may lead to a war between America and France.

- **The German War**

The British government had an anti-Imperial stance at the dawn of the Imperial Age, giving Germany an edge in negotiating control of East Africa. If Britain had taken more of a hard line, then it's entirely possible, and indeed probable, that Britain and Germany would have gone to war in the mid 1880s.

Invasion literature fed British fears of a homeland invasion, either from France or Germany. War with Germany would realize that fear. The Narrator could take this campaign in many directions; the heroes could be negotiating or uncovering secret treaties or war plans, they could be fighting German troops in Africa, or they could be defending England from a German invasion.

• Whistlin' Dixie

If "what if Hitler won?" is the most popular alternative history story, then "What if the Confederacy won?" is a close second. When General Stonewall Jackson led the Confederate Army to victory in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, the North was horrified. President Abraham Lincoln valiantly tried to continue the struggle, but he lost the election to George Pendleton. Pendleton's first act as president was to sign the Treaty of Richmond in 1864, which stretched the Mason-Dixon Line to the Pacific.

This parallel is interesting because it has little effect on the maps of Europe, Africa, and Asia. It does, however, put America on the brink of war and would certainly make Canada and Mexico nervous. It's unlikely that the USA would have purchased Alaska, leaving Russia with a foothold in the region. The USA may employ Pinkertons to spy on and disrupt CSA operations, while the CSA, as noted at the beginning of this section, may provide a market for a renewed slave trade.

ANOTHER TIME, ANOTHER PLACE, ANOTHER SPECIES

While there is a strong presumption that an *Imperial Age* campaign is going to take place in a recognizable world of the 1880s and 1890s, Narrators may adapt all or part of these rules for other types of campaigns. Some of the most common ways to use *The Imperial Age* in non-standard campaigns are listed below.

OUTSIDE THE BOUNDARIES

The decision to place the Imperial Age between 1880 and 1900 is an arbitrary one. Queen Victoria's reign took place between 1837 and 1901; Charles Dickens' works spanned from 1836 to 1870. Sherlock Holmes' final adventure took place in 1914. Even veterans of the Crimean War, which took place from 1853-1856, came home to a recognizably Victorian London.

It would require little work for a game master to set an Imperial Age campaign in another decade. Virtually all of the advice given here and other supplements in the line can be easily adapted. For example, a campaign set in the early 1860s would include the American Civil War and make travel to south and East Asia more prohibitive (as the Suez Canal won't be open until 1869). The Edwardian Era of 1901-1910 is little more than an extension of the Imperial Age.

FANTASY EARTH

Fantasy Earth is a world based on actual history, but cloaked in the standard fantasy tropes, including multiple sentient races, clerics of different faiths that wield actual power, and fantastic creatures roaming the wilderness. Fantastical powers are also common elements of fantasy earths.

There are roughly two approaches to fantasy earths. One is the "rubber band" model. The fantasy tropes tug and pull at history, but by the Imperial Age, most of history manages to snap back into place. The major political powers are still familiar, the same monarchs sit on the thrones (though perhaps sporting elongated teeth or pointed ears), and the same conflicts continue. This model allows the Narrator to introduce fantasy tropes as background color, but has little effect on the world at large.

The "speculative model" is more demanding. Under the speculative model, the Narrator determines how the addition of fantasy tropes has impacted the world, creating an imperial age that may bear little resemblance to the original. Maybe the half-elves of Albion (England), after centuries of rule and interbreeding by the human Roman Empire, have finally won their freedom and are now trying to compete as a world power while the Romans are busy fighting the Aztec Republic. The speculative model shares many points with the alternate earth model below.

A DIFFERENT WORLD

An *Imperial Age* campaign can also take place on a completely different world that models the real world. While this is similar to the Piecemeal or World Upgrade models, the Different World campaign uses the real Imperial Age as a model and files off the serial numbers. It is possible for a Different World campaign to be a historical campaign in that there are no fantastical abilities elements but the Narrator has the creative freedom to create a society to be the way he wants it to

be. The comic series *Ruse* by CrossGen comics took place on a fantastical abilities-laced Different World.

It's possible to use the Different World model for a small setting. Many fictional stories take place on "a Different World," such as the fictional country of Ruritania or the fictional city of Gotham. The heroes could be members of a small fictional country in Eastern Europe, a fictional principality of India, or even a fictional city within the borders of one of the Great Powers.

TIMELINE

The following is a list of some key events that took place in each year of the Imperial Age. For a more complete list of wars, see the **Adventure Stories** chapter.

1880

France declares Bastille Day (July 14) a national holiday.
Spain suppresses Cuban revolt.
Chile makes gains in Saltpeter War.
Boers drive British out of Transvaal.
Pro-British Amir installed in Kandahar, ending Second Afghan War.
Australian criminal Ned Kelly is captured and executed.

1881

Tsar Alexander II of Russia assassinated. While Polish revolutionaries are responsible, the Jews are blamed, causing a pogrom against Russian Jews.
Britain recognizes Boer governments in Orange Free State and Transvaal.
Tunisia becomes French protectorate.
France controls Vietnam.
USA President Garfield is shot. He later dies of blood poisoning.
USA outlaw Billy the Kid killed.
First electric tramway opens in Berlin.

1882

Italy joins Germany and Austria-Hungary in defensive alliance.
British occupy Egypt.
Mahdi uprising begins in Sudan.
Phoenix Park murders take place in Dublin.
Last attempted assassination of Queen Victoria. Defendant found insane.
Britain passes Married Woman's Property Act, which allows married women to own their own property.
Pogroms and expulsions of Russian Jews lead to major Jewish emigration to USA.
Pro-Chinese coup takes over Korea.

1883

Saltpeter War ends. Bolivia is now a land-locked country.
Brooklyn Bridge opened in New York.
Krakatoa erupts in Java, killing over 30,000 people.
Buffalo Bill forms "Buffalo Bill's Wild West," which would tour Europe in 1887-1889.
Orient Express opens.

1884

Fenian bomb damages Scotland Yard.
Germany takes Cameroon, Southwest Africa, and Togo.
Chinese troops withdraw from Southeast Asia.

1885

Congress of Berlin establishes rules for African colonization.
Britain passes the Land Act. Irish peasants receive large loans to buy Irish lands from English.
Germany turns Tanganyika into protectorate.
Belgium acquires Congo.
French secure Madagascar.
Third Burmese War starts.
China and France sign treaty, giving French control of Southeast Asia (Indochina).
New York City receives Statue of Liberty from France.
First skyscraper completed in Chicago.
Canadian transcontinental railroad completed.
Daimler and Benz create first automobile.

1886

Irish Home Rule Bill defeated in British Parliament.
Apache chief Geronimo surrenders to USA.
Haymarket Massacre in Chicago.
American Federation of Labor founded.
Indian National Congress founded.
Slavery abolished in Cuba.
Gold discovered in South Africa.
Britain and Germany divide East Africa between themselves.
Third Burmese War ends with British control of Burma.
Dr. Pemberton invents Coca-Cola.

1887

Britain establishes Nigerian protectorate.
British add Baluchistan to India.
Queen Victoria celebrates her Golden Jubilee. A plot to assassinate her is foiled.
France establishes French Indochina.

1888

Jack the Ripper strikes in London.
Brazil abolishes slavery.
Chile colonizes Easter Island.
Kodak camera invented.
First Chinese railroad opened.

1889

Dockers strike in London. Its success encourages trade unionism elsewhere in England.
Child labor abolished in Britain.
Royalists in France attempt coup.
Miners strike in Germany.
Italians establish colony in Eritrea.
British colonization of Rhodesia begins.
Indian lands in Oklahoma given to white settlers in USA.
Brazil becomes a republic.
Japan creates constitutional monarchy between Emperor and Parliament.
Eiffel Tower completed in Paris.

1890

Bismarck dismissed as Chancellor.
Spain allows universal suffrage.
Battle of Wounded Knee ends Sioux resistance
"American Frontier" officially ceases to exist in USA.
Japan holds first general election.

1891

London Metropolitan Police headquarters moves to New Scotland Yard.
France and Russia sign an entente.
Construction starts on Trans-Siberian railroad.
Brazil adopts Constitution.
Chile embroiled in Civil War.
Basketball invented.

1892

Oklahoma holds last American open land rush.
Federal troops break up miners' strike in Idaho.
Ellis Island opens to process immigrants to America.
Indian Councils Act allows Indians to be elected to legislatures in India.
Railroad between Johannesburg and Orange Free State completed in South Africa.
Severe famine in Russia.

1893

France takes control of Timbuktu.
Siam recognizes French control of Laos.
America annexes Hawaii.
Great Northern Railroad opened between Mississippi River and Pacific Ocean.
Anti-Saloon League established to advance American temperance movement.
Anti-Pinkerton Act restricts the U.S. Government from hiring the Pinkerton Agency.

1894

The Dreyfus Affair begins in France. A Jewish officer is accused of selling secrets to Germany.
Anarchist bomb kills French President.
Britain occupies Buganda and Uganda.
Ottomans suppress Armenian independence movement.
Italian-Ethiopian War.
Sino-Japanese War begins over control of Korea.

1895

Britain intervenes to stop Armenian massacres.
Sino-Japanese War ends.
Marconi invents wireless radio.
Lumiere brothers invent motion picture camera and projector.

1896

Britain controls Ashanti Kingdom.
Ethiopia defeats Italian army, one of the few African successes against a European power.
Klondike Gold Rush begins.
First motion picture shows open.
Olympic games revived in Greece.

1897

Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.
Greece defeated in war with Ottoman Empire.
Uprisings against British in Northwest India.
Anarchists assassinate Spanish Premier.
Subway built in Boston.
Gold discovered in Klondike, Canada.

1898

America annexes Hawaii.
Spanish-American War. America occupies Cuba, Guam, and Philippines.
The Empress of Austria is assassinated by an anarchist.
Five boroughs unite to form an expansive New York City.
Yellow River floods and brings famine to China.
Britain acquires Hong Kong under 99-year lease.
Britain retakes the Sudan.
Britain and France avert war over the Fashoda Incident.

1899

Philippine rebels unsuccessfully attempt to free Philippines from America.
South African War begins.
Germany controls Rwanda.
Dreyfus Affair ends with Dreyfus' pardon, although he would not be exonerated until 1906.
The Hague establishes international court.
Boxer Rebellion begins in China.
Ragtime music starts in America.

1900

The King of Italy is shot by an anarchist.
Chile and Argentina agree on shared border.
British establish protectorate in Nigeria.
America places Alaska under military rule.

CHAPTER THREE: LONDON, THE CENTER OF THE WORLD

London is a very important city, perhaps *the* most important city, in *The Imperial Age*. It is the heart of the British Empire and, if not the focus of an *Imperial Age* campaign, will certainly be referenced or visited on occasion. Some Narrators may use London as the backdrop for an entire campaign.

Because of the Imperial Age's diversity and versatility, the London presented in this work is the historical London of the late Nineteenth Century. In order to ensure that this setting will be useful in all *Imperial Age* campaigns, no fantastic elements have been added. You are encouraged to personalize London as you see fit, incorporating fantastic elements that you've chosen to use for your campaign.



HISTORY

The history of the city is the history of England. In many ways, the city mirrored the ebb and flow of the country – from lonely outpost on the edge of the Roman Empire in the first century to the centre of the world in the nineteenth century – the commercial, banking, and shipping cynosure, and the premier naval and colonial power of the world.

Founded in 42 AD, Londinium was located on the strategic and commercially advantageous Thames River. This position allowed the city to receive trade from the interior of the island, and provided access to the sea, and beyond that the commercial network of the Roman Empire. The road system from the city gave the rich farmlands around the Thames valley access to the markets. These foot and cart paths would remain cut into the countryside, some being railed over in the nineteenth century, others graded and paved to provide swifter travel.

The city grew steadily, becoming the administrative centre of Britannia Superior by the second century. The settlement built a forum, a governor's house, baths, and of course, fortifications. The gates through the wall the Romans built give their names to neighborhoods now – Aldgate, Bishopgate, Aldersgate, Newgate, and Ludgate. The Romans worked to drain the marshes around Londinium and reclaim the land from the river, a precursor to the great land reclamation projects of the nineteenth century.

The Roman period of London is carved into the earth under the city. Catacombs worm their way under the city streets, home to the dead, but also the embryo of the sewers and cisterns that service the population today. Enlarged, modified, improved – the catacombs have mutated into underground railways, great bricked sewers, even a tunnel under the river from the Docks to Southwark. The old arched chambers of the Romans inform the design of the underground stations. And hidden from view, but still accessible with some work, are the old tombs of the Roman invaders.

After 410 AD, Britain was only a Roman province in name. Emperor Honorius had instructed the locals to look to their own defenses, just as the Saxons had begun their campaign to conquer the island. Within a few decades, the city had become largely deserted. The Saxons were farmers who lived in small familial or tribal villages, and had little need for cities. However, the arrival of Christian missionaries in 604 saved the place from ignominy. Churches were established in the old Roman towns, including Lundenwic, as London was called. (*Wic* refers to a port or commercial town. This Saxon word is enshrined in place names like Sandwich or Ipswich.) A bishop was assigned to the kingdom of East Saxon, and his cathedral was built in London. This was the first cathedral dedicated to St. Paul.

London ceased to be a Saxon city in the 800s. Viking raids on the countryside culminated in a raid in 842 of over three hundred ships, which sacked the town and disrupted trade throughout the island. "Danes" would use the city for their quarters in campaign to destroy Anglo-Saxon power in the area during 871-872. It would only be after a hard-fought campaign that King Alfred would recover the ruin of the place. Despite all this, London would rise again in 886, when Alfred re-established the city as a *burgh* – a walled city. This new city was located near the East End, with the former city – Aldwych – left to return to field.

This time London would flourish as a port town. Industry grew, in metalworking, bone working, and cloth making. Pottery from the mainland, stonework from Norway was imported in exchange for English woolen cloth and iron. Timber and stone houses grew up around and on top of the old ruins of the Roman town, like flowers from a grave. During the eleventh century rule of Edward the Confessor, much energy and money was directed to the development of a monastery to St. Peter, known as the "west minster." The royal palace was placed beside the monastery, and these buildings became the CENTRE of governmental power in the city.

The Normans would continue to use Westminster as the administrative centre of the city. William the Conqueror continued the development of the city, which was described by contemporaries as having a great city wall with many gates. Churches and castles abounded, and there were many markets and fairs. One contemporary, William Fitz Stephen described London as "the most noble city." The city would grow and shrink in size and population over the next three four centuries, but its general parameters went unchanged. Bounded by walls and shaped by Saxon and Norman streets, the bulk of London fit in the area we now call the City, with Southwark on the other bank of the Thames, and Westminster being the two distinct settlements unto themselves.

The city was large for its time, and was surprisingly wealthy. This was due to its excellent position and the presence of merchants from Flanders and Italy. Jews were encouraged to settle, bringing capital and debt. Their presence was marked in a street name – the Old Jewry. This money drew the other important organs of government, most notably the Treasury to the Westminster area, and this in turn drew more demand for the finer things, luxury imports and fine services and crafts.

The Black Death swept through Europe and hit the island by 1348. Within two years, the population of London, including its outlying towns was reduced somewhere in the range of 40,000. Rather than decimate the economy of London, the drastic

reduction in population most likely increased personal wealth, by decreasing supply for labor and allowing skilled workers in particular to demand higher wages. Housing was cheaper and available. England's war with France also required supplies and troops, creating possibilities for profit and advancement.

London had already had special concessions from the rulers of England. The city had their own courts, laws, and customs, and during the 12TH and 13TH Centuries, the city pressured the Crown to appoint their own sheriffs, and created its own administrative council. Citizenship in London was contingent on a civic oath and taxation. Once a citizen, a man acquired the right to trade, buy and sell property, and have the protection of the city's courts. Guilds and tradesmen controlled who could become a citizen of London.

This quasi-independence of the City and the wealth it controlled made it an important point of contention in the War of the Roses – when York and Lancastrian forces fought for control of the nation – and London usually supported the government in power at the time. With the ascension of the Tudor dynasty, London found itself the recipient of construction projects that improved the city, but also presented the monarchy in the best light.

London had experienced slow evolution that was centered in the area now known as the East End. At this time, the city was mostly constrained by the city walls, and was a series of winding streets between the Tower of London and St. Paul's Cathedral, with London Bridge connecting the city to Southwark on the other side of the Thames... Westminster was essentially a separate entity, the royal city occupying the ground from the River Tyburn to Charing Cross and the Strand. However, with the Tudor and Stewart periods, London experienced sudden rapid growth. One of the reasons for this was the Dissolution of Monasteries that occurred in 1536. These institutions were generally viewed as antediluvian and degenerate, but importantly, they held vast land grants in and about the city. Henry VIII, who was experiencing serious cash flow problems due to his extravagant lifestyle and international strife caused by his marital situation, found the monasteries a dangerous, but potentially profitable, element. Monasteries held as much as 60% of the land in certain areas. Stripping the monasteries of their land grants, Henry was able to parcel out the land to local landowners, favored courtiers, and government officials for a massive profit. This resulted in a spurt of building and the population of London quadrupled in the period between the Dissolution and 1700 – this despite more outbreaks of the plague and the Great Fire in 1666. London's numbers reached half a million, on par with Paris, by the eighteenth century.

The Great Fire changed a lot of the character of London. Three-quarters of the buildings inside the city walls were destroyed, along with St. Paul's Cathedral. Previously, buildings were primarily wood-framed, but after the fire, buildings were constructed of brick or stone. Streets were widened to increase traffic flow and separate the buildings to prevent fire from jumping from house to house. Sir Christopher Wren designed a street plan that would have been orderly and elegant, but the construction tended to follow the old streets and alleys of the city. However, the street frontages were built to specifications laid down by Wren, and this uniformity can be seen particularly in the streets of Bloomsbury. He also redesigned various churches throughout the city, including the current, spectacular St. Paul's.

The maritime trade of the eighteenth century brought more and more wealth in from India and the Americas. This money came through London, and landowners and the burgeoning middle-class spent much of their profits on construction and improvements in the buildings of the city. These colonial earnings funded planned neighborhoods in the West End. In addition to Marylebone, Chelsea, and Brompton, satellite communities like Islington and Hampstead grew up on the edge of London as a place for the middle-class and gentry to find a place to live outside of the city, but easily within reach of their work.

Georgian London also saw the beginning of "Clubland" – the gentlemen's clubs that line the roads in near St. James and Mayfair. Defined by politics or purpose, the club provided a civilized home away from home for government officials and other politically active men. In addition to the political clubs like Boodles or Whites, scientific organizations like the Royal Society, or the Traveller's Club; artistic and literary clubs; or military clubs like the Army and Navy created environments that were tailored to the interests of their members and provided a sense of elitism for the members.

The old walls of the city were demolished. More bridges were built across the Thames, facilitating commuting from the communities on the southern bank, and creating a new outlet for middle-class desire to live outside of the city itself. Workers followed the new industries to Southwark and Rotherhithe, and these neighborhoods broke down along class lines. By the middle of the century, most of the industry in the City proper revolved around breweries, newspapers, and government.

Along with the new, fine buildings came a desire to improve their environment. From the unofficial beginnings of the Bow Street Runners, the Metropolitan Police Force was created by Sir Robert Peel in 1829. Fire brigades were organized and funded by the city or the neighborhood. New building codes required new industry to relocate outside of the city, much of it downstream on the Thames.

Always commercial in character, London solidified its image as the centre of empire with the 1851 Great Exposition at Crystal Palace. The expo gave British industry and colonial producers the opportunity to show the world the wares produced by the nation and the tout the expanse of colonial enterprise. While much of the steel and production industries of England might reside in Birmingham, the coal that drove empire was extracted in Wales, and shipping was increasing centered in Southampton and Liverpool, London remains the seat of the largest empire in the world.

THE WEST END

Until the beginning of Victoria's reign, the West End had pretty much stopped at Hyde Park. The areas of Hammersmith, Fulham, Kensal Green, and Notting Hill were farmland at the beginning of the 1800s, but are now increasingly suburban in character. While farms still exist on the edges of these neighborhoods, they are part of other towns, like Acton and Kew.

Since the middle of the century, the *nouveau riche* of the middle-class has been looking for places near the city where they could live away from the noise and crime of London proper. As a result, the West End is the fastest growing area of the city, and is generally middle-class, professional, and quiet in character.

HAMMERSMITH

The lands in this area are predominantly owned by Lord Kensington, Lord Ilchester, and Mr. Gunter. While some of the plots are for sale and much of the housing here is for sale, the land itself is rented. A homeowner, thus, still has a rent to pay to whoever owns the development they are living in. More likely, however, one is renting a flat in the houses, rather than owning the house itself. This allows the less well-off of the middle-class and working class to find a nice home in a new building without the expense of buying a home or renting in a more expensive area of the city.

Once nothing more than a part of Kensington, Hammersmith is now a separate district with a distinct character of its own. This is a neighborhood of middle-class professionals who have taken advantage of the housing that was built in the last few years by local landowners. The houses here are built to a pattern, like Belgravia and Kensington, but are smaller and of a cheaper nature. Almost nothing of the fields that once were the norm here still exists.

This is a quiet neighborhood, with little police or criminal presence. Industry is small and mostly involved with breweries, small furniture manufacture, and other artisans. In the northern part of the district, where Uxbridge Road splits at Waterloo Place, the Shepherds Bush district provides employment for rail car servicing, and in the later 1890s has an electrical generating station for the underground.

Both Uxbridge Road and Hammersmith Road – the major westward arteries in the area, handle cart traffic into the outlying towns. The roads are paved and of good quality, and they see heavy usage on the weekends as the wealthy flee London to their nearby country estates.

Hammersmith is also a major thoroughfare for the railway to the towns of Richmond, Kew, and Ealing. Regular service moves through the area, so that the sound of trains is a constant background din. Hammersmith and Kensington Stations provide access via Victoria Station into London proper. One is only minutes from the City.

FULHAM

Just south of Hammersmith and bounded on three sides by a curve in the Thames, Fulham has seen rapid growth in the last half century. Originally an area of fields and light industry, Fulham is still a bit of the country in London. The place is bounded by Hammersmith and Brompton Cemeteries, each with a cricket field attached (Brompton also has the London Playing Field across the street.) A few commons and greens dot the district, including Hurlingham Park, which surrounds the house of the same name.

The grounds of Fulham Palace can be seen as one passes by on Fulham High Street to Putney Bridge. That bridge and Wadsworth Bridge provide access to London for the middle and working class families that live on the southern side of the river in Putney or Battersea.

The area is quiet, save near the railways that come over from the southern bank, and the area is solidly middle-class professionals and wealthier working class. Like Hammersmith, this neighborhood has predominantly new houses, built in the last couple of decades to a small, less-extravagant pattern as their Kensington predecessors. As with Hammersmith, many of these homes have been broken up into flats for workers who have jobs in the breweries, furniture and blacksmithing factories here.

Of note is the gas works on Sandy End Road and the West London Extension of the railway. There are a few factories in the area, and many of the employees use the nearby Chelsea Station to get to and from their labors.

KENSAL GREEN

North of Hammersmith is the other district which bounds London on the West. Kensal Green is wedged between the Paddington district of London and the towns of Ealing and Acton. Kensal Green is comprised mostly of new pattern-built homes owned by the St. Quintin, Talbot, or Lanbroke families. The All Souls Church Commission owns most of the rest (where the chapel and massive cemetery are.) The farms that used to populate this area are almost gone, although a few still remain around Wormwood Scrubs – a massive park owned by the St. Quintin. (Wormwood Scrubs was frequently used for early balloon flights, and in the early twentieth century had an aerodrome.)

Harrow Road goes through the area along the All Souls Cemetery and eventually takes one to Oxford. The Great Western Railway, the West London Extension, and the London & City Railway all come through this area, as does the Grand Junction Canal. As with Fulham and Hammersmith, the residents of Kensal Green are now mostly wealthy middle-class professionals and gentry. Quite a few of the government functionaries live out here, either in houses or flats rented by the landowners.

The main industry in Kensal Green is the Marylebone Infirmary, a large hospital that services the area, and St. Charles College, which specializes in medical training.

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

Kensington is an area that comprises several districts. At one time, most of the area was a land grant to Lord Kensington, but much of it has been parceled out and sold. Kensington is centered on Hyde Park, and includes neighborhoods like Brompton, Belgravia, and Chelsea; the working class neighborhood of Bayswater, the most flash flats of Notting Hill, and of course, Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens.

Kensington was, at one time, the most elite area in London, and is still home to royal dwellings like Marlborough House, but as the city expanded the district has become a series of middle-class and working class communities, interspersed with the stately homes of the wealthy.

KENSINGTON AND THE PARKS

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has been a royal holding since the Tudor period. The palace the district is named for was once home to the queen, prior to her ascension to the throne.

Originally, this district encompassed Hammersmith, Brompton, and Chelsea. Now Kensington is predominantly parkland and housing for the wealthy. Hyde Park and the Kensington Gardens take up much of the district and run together, with Hyde Park being to the east of the Serpentine River, a pool of water that meanders from Uxbridge Road to Knightsbridge. The Serpentine is used for rowing and sailing small craft. This artificial lake separates the park from Kensington Palace's Gardens. The park is the largest open area in the city at 630 acres!

The park and gardens are open to the public during the day, the gardens for a fee, and at night Hyde Park is open for scheduled affairs.

ROTTEN ROW

Central to the park's activities is Rotten Row – a long sandy path for horse and carriage traffic that parallels Knightsbridge Road. The row is used by the wealthy and privileged, who ride the circuit in the mornings. Here political opponents and allies will meet and discuss things from horseback. Men and women will flirt and make the necessary pleasantries.

Newcomers to London society may find the rules daunting. If one has a friend in the know, it is best to have that person take you to Rotten Row and conduct introductions with those in "the set." As always, a man never introduces himself to a lady first; he must wait for an introduction by the lady's chaperone, or for her to acknowledge him. Introductions to a social superior must also come from an acquaintance of that person, or one must wait to be acknowledged.

As a rule, a man may ride with a lady and discourse. If the lady is not his wife, he rides to her right, to let people know this, and thus avoid any embarrassing assumptions about their relationship. Wives ride to their husband's right.

One particular part of Rotten Row is "the Ladies' Mile", where many of the ladies will pause to discuss matters of the day amongst themselves – usually gossip about other ladies in the area. Here parties are planned and casual invitations to dinner given.

At the northeast side of the park on the Ring Road is the Marble Arch. At the arch is an area set aside for the exercise of free speech known as Speaker's Corner. Anyone may speak freely here, and all manner of topics are shouted to the public.

South of the park, Kensington is home to the Natural History Museum, the Imperial Institute, the Albert Hall, and the Kensington Museum. These grand edifices run along Princes Gate and draw heavy traffic from tourists – both from England and foreign nations. Smaller museums and artists shops are scattered throughout the borough, but the majority of the area is taken up with the houses of the wealthy. Unlike Belgravia, most of the residents here are gentry and aristocracy.

As a result, police presence is high in Kensington, and a military barracks is positioned in Hyde Park, between Knightsbridge and Rotten Row. Crime is low, save for petty theft and pick pocketing in the park area. Traffic is extremely high in the area of the museums and parks, but once one gets west of Kensington Gardens, this thins out, and the blocks around Holland House are quite peaceful.

NOTTING HILL

Attached to this latter area of Kensington is Notting Hill, a new development that took off in the middle to late part of the century. The neighborhood is stuck between Kensal Green (technically also part of the Royal Borough) and Bayswater, and in this listing includes the smaller sub-communities of Kensal New Town and Westbourne Green.

Only a few decades ago, this was an underdeveloped region that was home to working class and poorer middle class that labored in the nearby markets, breweries, and farms. Now, the character has changed, and is solidly middle-class and artistic. Houses that once went for under £100 are now selling for two to four times that. The street markets still abound, and there are plenty of working class still living in Notting Hill. Mostly, they live in Kensal New Town and Westbourne Green, where the racket from the Great Western Railway keeps the cost of housing down.

BROMPTON AND CHELSEA

Accessible by Kings Road and Fulham Road are the working class and middle-class neighborhoods of Chelsea and Brompton. Both neighborhoods are technically part of Kensington and the lands are owned by a hodgepodge of people. The largest landowners here are the Cadogan and Gunter families, as well as several charity foundations.

Both areas are dominated by cheap housing and charitable institutions. The largest employer and land holder here is Chelsea Hospital, which occupies almost a half-mile of grounds and buildings along the Chelsea Embankment of the Thames. The hospital grounds are a triangle, when viewed from above, bounded by Chelsea Bridge Road – the edge of Pimlico – and Pimlico Road. The hospital is home to the Chelsea Children's Hospital, one of the better facilities in the city and a major purveyor of health care to underprivileged children.

A workhouse for the poor is positioned on Fulham Road and Limerston Street. The Chelsea Union is nearby on Kings Road, and provides for placement of skilled laborers in positions. It works closely with



an infirmary for the poor a block away on Arthur Street.

Despite the wealth of charitable institutions, Chelsea is otherwise middle-class in character. The houses are mostly Georgian or pre-designed pattern houses like those in Hammersmith and Fulham. Many of the residents here either are artisans or work in the houses of the privileged in Belgravia, Kensington, or Marylebone.

Petty crime such as pick pocketing and burglary is common in this area, but there is little violent crime. Police presence is good, but not spectacular; much of it is centered on Hyde Park, and is strongest in the morning and on the weekends, when the rich are out for their rides. A robbery, for instance, might not even bring a police response and require the offended to find the nearest police station. A major incident, however, would likely bring a military response, as there is a military barracks on Chelsea Bridge Road.

BELGRAVIA

In 1826, Thomas Cubitt bought nineteen acres of Five Fields, the area south of Hyde Park on the boundary of Westminster. He developed the area into the series of fine squares and houses that make up Belgravia. The houses were quickly bought by the rich and connected. The neighborhood is only a few minutes' walk from Westminster, the clubs and theatre district of Mayfair, and the famed Rotten Row of Hyde Park.

On Knightsbridge Road, which runs along the southern edge of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, a street market appears every morning, save Sundays, at about five o'clock. The stalls go up and wheelbarrows are rolled in along the street near Hyde Park Corner. Just about everything can be had at the market – fresh fish from the Thames, fresh milk and cheese from the farms in Acton and Ealing, and other cheap goods. Flower and match girls ply their wares. Charity organizations have people out begging for alms. And police are vigilant for pickpockets.

Benjamin Disraeli calls the area "monotonous" due to the regularity of architecture. This was one of the first districts designed and built to plan – the houses all have a similar look, and surround paved streets with trees planned at regular intervals. The Squares all have a central park with wrought-iron fencing, a few benches for people to rest and relax, and orderly gardens of trees and flowers. Be it Cadogan Place, Belgrave Place, or Eaton Place, the streets and buildings all run together.

Belgravia is bounded by Hyde Park and St. James Park to the north, Sloane Street to the west, and Buckingham Palace Road and the palace gardens on the east. The streets are wide, paved, and not overly busy, save for the main arteries of Knightsbridge, Grosvenor Place, and the very busy Victoria Station at the corner of where Victoria Street, Vauxhall, and Buckingham Palace Road meet Grosvenor Place.

The residents here are wealthy, be they commoner or aristocracy. As a result, police presence is high and crime fairly low. The region is reasonably quiet, compared to the rest of the city, with only taxi and carriage traffic by and large. There are several hospitals and chapels in Belgravia, and a number of quite good coffeehouses. On Grosvenor Road, near Vauxhall Bridge, one can also find the British Museum of Art.

PIMLICO

Tucked between Chelsea and Whitehall, and the river, Pimlico is a prosperous, but lower and middle-class, neighborhood. Most of the people here are poorer professionals and skilled laborers. Two bridges, the Vauxhall and the Lambeth, connect it to the south bank of the Thames. Breweries, especially the massive Artillery Brewery and the Thorne Brewery, construction companies like Cubitt's Works, and other workshops are the main form of employment here. Public bathhouses for the workers are on Old Pye Street nearby. Along with the Chartered Gas Works and its rival the Equitable, this area smells constantly of chemicals and sulfur.

The sulfurous reek provides an appropriately hellish backdrop for the largest building in Pimlico. Just off of the Vauxhall Bridge and dominating the riverbank of the district is Millbank Penitentiary, the oldest prison in the city. Constructed in 1821, it became the model for how a facility of its type should be built. Six blocks, shaped in a vaguely triangular shape when viewed from above, are arranged in rosette around a central courtyard where the prisoners are exercised once a day. Each of the blocks is five stories high, and the place is depressing, even from the outside.

A smaller version of Millbank is nearby on Victoria Street. The Westminster House of Corrections is a gray Georgian dump that has been used for a debtors' prison in the past. It has three wings, and is now dedicated to straightening out the unemployed and criminal.

BAYSWATER

This part of the Royal Borough is wealthy, but more mercantile in character. Tailors, tinkers, furniture workshops, restaurants, and street markets dominate the area. Bayswater is served by Paddington Station, the massive terminus for much of the train travel into London from Birmingham and the Midlands. Underground stations connect the district to the rest of the city in minutes.

Bayswater *bustles*; the district is busy at all hours of the day or night. During the day, the markets are buzzing with customers from high and low houses in the West End. In the evening, restaurants and pubs do quick business. At night, clean up from the day before and preparation for the day ahead mean that people are moving around at all hours. Cartage is clattering around the streets at all times, and despite the new-fangled tar macadam on the roads, it's still noisy.

It is also a popular spot for the immigrant. Unlike the hovels of the East End, Bayswater is home to the skilled immigrant – the Swiss watchmaker, the Italian leather worker, the French tailor and seamstress, the German butcher. In the streets of Bayswater, one can hear the languages of the world spoken, loudly and quickly. It is especially a Jewish community that has several top-notch butchers and *kosher* markets in the neighborhood. On Portobello Road, there are a series of exceptional jewelers, many having immigrated from the Netherlands or Switzerland. Antique shops and other rare collectibles can be found in this market.

As one might expect, this much business means the criminal element is present in Bayswater. Much of it is well-organized and attempts to hide behind a veneer of respectability. Police presence is high, as the number of marks, access to the Underground, to omnibuses, and the cover of heavy traffic allow for quick theft and a quick get-away.

PADDINGTON

This area was one of the last to see heavy development. Church Commissioners owned most of Paddington, specifically under the direction of the Bishop of London. The area is comprised of new housing, much of it split up for flats that are rented by lower and middle-class who work in Bayswater or the great houses in Kensington and Marylebone.

Paddington is also one of the main terminals for the railways going north out of London. Paddington Station, a massive iron and glass building provides transit for good and people coming into London, and is close to the Bishop Street Station of the Underground (one of the first stations for underground rail system). Using the tube, one can get to any of the stations in London within an hour. This is one of the reasons many respectable working-class families live in Paddington. They are far away from the crime and filth of the East End and the factory areas in Southwark, but can get to work cheaply and quickly using the underground. Also a draw is St. Mary's Hospital, an Anglican-run infirmary with special rates for the poor.

Crime in the area is, to many of the upper-class, surprisingly low. These poorer folk that live in Paddington, however, are mostly honest and hard-working, and are hoping to improve themselves and their children by living in a cleaner, safer neighborhood.

MARYLEBONE

Right across Edgware Road from Paddington is Marylebone, an upscale neighborhood in which reside professional middle-class, wealthy commoners, and the aristocracy. It is heavily policed, and like Kensington, sees most of its traffic on the main thoroughfares like Edgware Road and Oxford Street. It is where one finds the famous Baker Street of the Sherlock Holmes mysteries, and the spectacular houses of the Duke of Portman and other noblemen. Wide, paved streets, much of them tar macadam by the end of the century, are tree-lined and orderly. The largest houses tend to front the squares in this area: Cavendish, Portman, Portland, and Dorset. Here also are the grounds of Harrow School, one of the finest public schools in the nation.

These squares are named after largest landowners in the district. Unlike Kensington, this is a Parliamentary Borough. While some people own their homes, most rent the land their houses stand on from the Duke of Portman and the Duke of Portland, providing those families considerable income. The area was developed in the late 1700s and early 1800s, and was part of an effort to create a "garden city" in the north of London. There are several grand churches, including the beautiful All Soul's at Langham Place with its circular floor plan and spire rising out of a columned roof. The Ophthalmic Hospital and the Orthopaedic Hospital are located in Marylebone.

To the north, Regent's Square separates St. John Wood and St. Pancras and creates the northern boundary of Marylebone (Oxford Street is the southern border.) It is Crown land, and is a popular place for a picnic or a moment's peace. The Royal Botanical Gardens are here, and for a small fee, visitors can marvel at the exotic flowers and plants there. The



royal nursery is here, as is the house of the Taxonomical Society. A zoological park is in the northern part of the park, with all manner of exotic creatures that can be observed for a fee. Saturdays, this fee is reduced (and waived for children,) to allow the poorer people of the city to come and experience the animals. On the east side of the park the cavalry from the nearby barracks practice their drills in the park many days of the week. The park is surrounded by covered shopping arcades and open-air terraces erected during the reign of George IV to mark the end of the Napoleonic War.

ST. JOHNS WOOD

This little community started as part of Marylebone and is a place of comfortable cottages and smallish homes. The land was owned by the Eyre family, and they still hold sizable amounts of the real estate, upon which residents rent their homes. In the last few decades, St. John Wood has become a fashionable address for actors and actresses, artists and writers. At least one of the mistresses of the Prince of Wales lives here.

St. Johns Church is here and runs an orphanage of the same name. This orphanage is the recipient of many a contribution from the wealthy and connected (for reasons one can guess at).

Professional middle class men, often secretaries and assistants to the aristocrats living in Kensington or Marylebone, take up residence here, since major roads like Edgware and underground access can sweep them to their employers' neighborhoods or to Westminster in a matter of minutes. It is also home to women whose wealthy patrons keep them in style.

Both crime and police presence are low. Traffic is light on the cobblestoned streets, and other than the trains that come

from north to Marylebone and Paddington Stations, the neighborhood is almost pastoral. The Lords Cricket Grounds are here next to Regents Park, and the matches bring a large turn-out, as the fields are next to an underground stop. The streets are mildly hilly, but become more so in the north, where St. Johns Wood heads up to Hampstead Heath. Here roads cease to be reliably paved.

ST. PANCRAS

On the east side of Regents Park is St. Pancras. Owned by Lord Southampton, this area is home to the Covent Gardens Workhouse, one of the main facilities where the poor can find work in the great houses of Marylebone or one of the many furniture makers in the district. (St. Pancras has, in fact, the largest number of furniture manufacturers in the city.) Dominating the region are small family-owned shops that do woodworking, blacksmithing and brass polishing, upholstery, cabinet making, and coach work for carriages and train cars.



Also here are the cavalry barracks for units assigned to London, and the New Women's Hospital, set up by the illustrious Elizabeth Garret Anderson, one of the first female physicians in the country. It is the only hospital to specialize in women's issues. The largest and most impressive building in the district is Euston Station, a gorgeous neo-classical terminal built in 1838, and which handles much of the train traffic from the middle of the country.

Unlike St. Johns Wood, St. Pancras is mostly populated by middle-class and working-class professionals in various trades related to furnishings. This is a hard-working district and crime is low, due to a combination of policing and people willing to interfere in criminal enterprises.

THE SEAT OF EMPIRE

Centered on Westminster are a few neighborhoods that house the organs of government, and are home to the most notable of aristocrats: the royal family. Westminster is king: home to Parliament, Scotland, Yard, and various ministries. Mayfair is the queen of leisure, where one finds art galleries, fancy shops, the theatrical district, and many gentlemen's clubs. St. James houses Buckingham Palace, residence of Her Majesty, and Marlborough House – the Prince of Wales' residence, as well as other stately homes.

WESTMINSTER

On Whitehall Street is the seat of government, Westminster Palace, or the Houses of Parliament. It is a Gothic revival building, designed by Sir Charles Barry and Augustus Pugin (who designed the interior). The building is a mass of fanciful spires and large towers. In the largest is Big Ben, the iconic clock that tolls the hour and can be heard across much of the West End and the City. Westminster Bridge crosses the Thames into Lambeth and supports much of the traffic from the southern bank into Westminster. North of the bridge, running along Whitehall to the Strand, are the major ministries of the government.

At the corner of Bridge Street and St. George Street is where the first traffic light was placed in 1868 to aid police in protecting foot traffic from the vehicles caroming about the intersection. It was originally a twenty-foot high pole with a policeman's helmet shaped top in which was a green light to semaphore at night, informing vehicles when to stop. The light was changed to red shortly afterward. The pole also had arms that would rise when traffic was to stop. This monstrous thing was replaced with smaller stop signals in the mid-1880s that used red lights for stop and green for go; smaller arms with STOP or GO would rise in time with the lighting and were electric powered. By the middle of the 1890s, busy intersections in Westminster, Charing Cross, and Mayfair would have these signals installed, much to the annoyance of omnibus and cab drivers and to the applause of pedestrians.

The Embankment project pushed back the Thames, creating a curve of concrete terrace from Westminster Pier to

Hungerford Wharf. The separate buildings of the Foreign Office, the India Office, and the Home Office were merged into a new neo-classical building in the 1880s and 1890s between St. James Park and Whitehall Road. Often Lord Salisbury could be found here, instead of in the Prime Minister's office, during his tenure. The Admiralty building was likewise expanded in after 1895 and nearly quadrupled in size. The Indian Museum went up early in the project and would have the new War Office parked alongside at the end of the century (on the original site of Scotland Yard).

The final monument of note is Trafalgar Square, at the north end of Whitehall, where it splits into Cockspur Street and the Strand. Here a large open square has a massive stature to Lord Nelson's victory in 1807. There are a series of fountains that have been installed that draw people from the neighborhood to get water. Large hotels surround Trafalgar Square and are some of the finest in the City.

HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

While Queen Victoria is the titular head of state, the real power of government resides with Parliament and the Cabinet. Legally, she remains the commander-in-chief of the armed forces and is the head of the Anglican Church, but her authority is now largely ceremonial. However, her influence is still sizable and can be exerted through the House of Lords.

Parliament is the legislative branch of the government. It is comprised of two houses: the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The House of Commons is made up of popularly elected officials. Elections must be held every six years, but can be called earlier by a vote of no confidence, or a strategic calling for elections by the prime minister. The majority party is called on to create "the government," which is the prime minister and his cabinet of ministers. The House of Lords is made up of peer of the realm, including the bishops and archbishops of the Church. The Lords are paid £50 for their participation in Parliament, but only if they are present for a full twenty-four hours. For this reason, you can often see members of the House of Lords asleep in the benches of their chamber overnight to meet the requirement.

Either house can introduce legislation, but most of the bills come from the cabinet members. If both houses agree on a bill, it becomes law. If Lords vetoes the bill, it is returned for consideration to Commons. Lords can only do this twice. If a bill passes three times through Commons at this period, it becomes law. Lords can also hold up budget funding for a period of time. This is rarely done.

The real power of government is in the cabinet. The prime minister leads a group of ministers (men with "portfolios"). The main functions of government are vested with these men: treasury functions are under the guide of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Home Office oversees domestic policy implementation, Foreign Office deals with international issues, the Colonial Office with Her Majesty's holdings around the world, and the War Office with matters of the army and Admiralty, the navy.

The business of government is conducted twice a year. Parliament is opened for its first session in May and remains open until July – exactly the length, conveniently, of the racing season. The second session begins in December and lasts until February, and coincides with the "season" in London, a time of extravagant parties. In the 1890s, the telephone makes its appearance in the Houses of Parliament. The exchange in London could connect an MP to their club, to the police, and if they were early adopters, even their homes.

MINISTRIES IN THE LATE VICTORIAN PERIOD

<u>Term</u>	<u>Majority Party</u>	<u>Prime Minister</u>
1880-1885:	Liberal	William Gladstone
1885-1886	Conservative	Lord Salisbury
1886	Liberal	Wm. Gladstone
1886-1892	Conservative	Lord Salisbury
1892-1895	Liberal	Wm. Gladstone
1895		Lord Rosebury
1895-1905	Conservative	Wm. Gladstone

As prime minister, Gladstone also held the position of Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1880 to 1882, and doubled as Privy Secretary in his 1886 tenure in office. Lord Salisbury always doubled as Foreign Secretary save for a few years here and there, and even then was *de facto* Foreign Minister.

THE METROPOLITAN POLICE FORCE

Created in 1829 by Sir Robert Peel to fight the Chartist threat, the Metropolitan Police are one of three police entities in London. There is also a police force specific to the City of London, as per concessions from the very beginning of London's existence. This force was officially formed in 1839, and has responsibility for the "Square Mile"—the part of old London that encompasses the area along the north shore of the Thames north, from Holborn and Fleet Street Aldgate. The bridges that emerge from the City are also their beat. The City of London Police protects the Old Bailey, the Bank of England, the Stock Exchange, and St. Paul's — most of the most important buildings in London. While they work with the Criminal Investigations Division of the Metropolitan Police, they are often prickly about jurisdiction and credit for solving crimes.

The Thames, or River, Police are even more likely to clash with the Dockyard Division of the Metropolitan Police. A jurisdictional power play is in effect throughout the 1880s and 1890s, with the two forces trying to play "one upmanship" against the other. The River Police were even sidereally involved in the Ripper murders, trying to nab a suspect in the Docks and Limehouse, before the Met could find their man.

There are about 15,000 officers in the Metropolitan Police, as compared to 890 in the City Of London Police. The service is under the command of a Commissioner. The public has nicknamed them "peelers" or, more commonly, "bobbies" after the man responsible for their creation. The force is divided into divisions, each under the supervision of a superintendent, with 12-16 inspectors, and 16 sergeants under his leadership. The Criminal Investigations Division (CID), also known as Scotland Yard, is responsible for investigations throughout the city and is only responsible to the chief superintendent in charge of detectives. There are 25 inspectors in the CID in the 1880s and that number will raise after the Jack the Ripper case in 1888 to thirty. Four chief inspectors rise to six about the same time. These men are addressed as detective and their rank (for instance, "detective inspector"). Over the course of the 1880s, Scotland Yard will gain more prestige and power, even to the point of being able to force the River Police to aid them, but take a hit after their failure to find the Ripper. By 1890, however, they are recovering their position.

Lastly, there is Special Branch. They are involved whenever matters of national import require attention. These detectives undertake counter-intelligence operations, handle royal protection, and track political dissidents and anarchists active in the country. The 1880s and 1890s are a period of increasing anarchist and political terror activity, and the Special Branch is quite active. Their techniques are noted for their heavy-handedness, particularly the group of Special Branch known as "sandbaggers" — usually military men who are used to stop a threat by violent means. (Think James Bond, as you're getting the picture.) There are also "lamplighters" — plainclothes policemen that follow suspects, acts as bodyguards for the royals and visiting dignitaries.

A police recruit must be at least 5'7" tall, literate, and of good character. They must be at least 18 years of age, but it is unusual for a man under twenty to be accepted. They are expected to serve for twenty years, at which point they will earn a pension from the government. After 1890, injuries in the line of duty serious enough to prevent continuing as a police officer will earn a reduced pension.

POLICE RANKS

The rank structure for the police forces in London is as follows. They are ultimately under the control of the Home Office.

Rank	Position
Commissioner	Head of a police force; answers to the Home Office.
Assistant Commissioner	Acts for the commissioner when needed. Usually pokes his nose in on important investigations.
Chief Superintendent	Handles internal investigations, and commands CID.
Superintendent	Division commander.
Chief Inspector	Each division has one as of 1885.
Inspector	Plain-clothes officer, not always a detective.
Sergeant	Heads a squad of 16 officers, lowest rank to be a detective
Constable	Police officer, uniformed

WHERE'S A COP WHEN YOU NEED ONE?

Police response time varied from neighborhood to neighborhood. In some areas of London, you couldn't count on anyone coming to your aid; the neighborhoods were simply too dangerous for even the average cop on the beat.

In general, a crime would bring a single "bobby," maybe two. Reinforcements might come when the officer blows his steel whistle, but more likely he would have to go to the nearest station house to gain aid. With the exception of St. Giles, Ten Bells, or any of the rookeries (where you will not get help) assume 1d20/5 police officers will respond to the report of a crime within 1d20/3 minutes of it being reported. In the event of a major crime or riot, you will get 16 officers, led by a sergeant (called a flying squad) within 1d20 minutes for most neighborhoods, (1d20/2) +5 minutes for swank neighborhoods like Whitehall, the banking districts, or the good sections of the West End. Feel free to adjust the response time where it seems applicable (i.e. if one is in Bayswater market, or in Whitehall, response time might be as low as (1d20/3)-2 minutes, with anything under one meaning a cop is within sight of the crime and is in pursuit the next round.)



MAYFAIR

Sandwiched between Whitehall and Marylebone is Mayfair. It is the heart of London's social life, a district of theatres and art galleries, high-priced shops and restaurants, and gentlemen's clubs. At lunchtime, the men who govern England can be found in the clubs and pubs, and in the evening, the rich and powerful parade through Mayfair in their fine carriages and their best attire, attending the theatrical offerings.

The Criterion, the Royalty, and the Palace Theatre all crowd the area around Piccadilly Street offering selections from opera to light musical, Shakespeare to the latest drivel, the stage is set and "bums are in seats." More fashionable is the St. James, on the road of the same name, or Her Majesty's on Haymarket at Pall Mall. On Leicester Square, there is the Alhambra, which offers vaudeville and musical entertainment into the early morning hours for a less discriminating audience.

The shops of Piccadilly Circus, Oxford and Regent Streets, and Tottenham Court Road are here, including the original department stores of the 1850s. It was in London that the first plate glass window fronts made their debut in the 1780s. This allowed customers to "window shop", by perusing what the merchant had available. Shops with names like Fortnum (dealing in household goods), Hugh Mason (grocer), and Hatchard's bookshop, as well as the clothiers of Burlington Arcade, draw thousands every day. The products vary in quality with the purveyor, but all are of good quality or higher. As William Whitely (owner of one of the trading emporiums here) says, "We can supply anything from a pin to an elephant."

In fact, these mammoth stores are drawing more and more business, forcing older shops in the City to

close down as people migrate from the centre into the southern and western neighborhoods. On the outskirts of Mayfair (technically on the Brompton side) is Harrods. Positioned near Queen's Gardens and Knightsbridge on Brompton Road, it was a small four story shop, with different goods grouped into departments to make shopping easier and faster. In the 1890s, a massive expansion project began, and Harrods built around the original store, expanding its shopping floor by an order of magnitude. As Harrods bought up more of the land around it, the store would continue to grow to fill most of the block it was on.

As if this wide selection of entertainments is not enough, there is also Green Park and St. James Park (with its Queen's Gardens) – less popular than Hyde Park but more exclusive.

CLUBLAND

The gentlemen's club is a mainstay of upper-class social life. By the 1880s, many clubs now will deign to take wealthy merchants and respectable professionals, not just the aristocracy. The point of the club is to provide a place not just for socialization, but for the deadly serious business of making political and economic contacts. They also were to provide a home away from home, where a man could eat, drink, smoke, and in some gamble. The club was a one-stop social scene, and many members spend their off-hours (if they work) here. The clubs provide meals and drinks at a much reduced rate as part of the membership, and this allows the sons of peers and the wealthy to indulge – even if they are not wealthy themselves – in a comfortable lifestyle.

The club buildings are designed to be spacious and as comfortable as possible. Salons for lounging, libraries with complementary stationary for writing and periodicals, dining rooms with menus available at all times...the club was a paradise away from the cares of the everyday. Many included bathing and barber facilities, and some had bedrooms set aside for men who were travelling to London for Parliament or other functions. Clubhouses were some of the first locations to get the telephone, and by the mid-1880s, nearly any politically-based club had not just telegraphic, but telephonic service.

To become a member of a club, an applicant must be nominated by two current members. A membership committee then researches the prospective candidate's background – evaluating their social standing and reputation, before voting on the membership. The voting is carried out with white and black billiard balls – white for yes, black for no (hence the term "blackballed".) Some clubs have a cap on the number of members they can have. Once offered membership, an annual fee would have to be paid. Usually, this is between £20-50, and if a member fails to pay for their membership, they often are dropped for being out of good standing...and have to go through the process of being re-nominated. If removed for an offense – breaking the club rules, not paying their tab for meals, bankruptcy or criminal involvement – the member cannot regain his club position, nor is he likely to be nominated for another club. Point of fact, he is likely to be ruined in good

Society.

A SELECTION OF GENTLEMENS CLUBS

Alpine Club 8 St. Martin's Place. Membership and subscription fee: £1 1s. Membership limited to those who have undertaken a mountaineering expedition and continue to practice the sport.

Army & Navy 36 Pall Mall. Membership fee: £30, annual fee: £6 11s. Membership limited to officers from regular army and navy service. Limit of 2500 members at a time.

Athenaeum 107 Pall Mall at Waterloo Place. Membership fee: £20, annual membership: £10 8s. Membership for men of note in scientific, artistic, or political endeavors. Membership limited to 1200. First club lit by electricity in 1886, phone service in 1888. Of note: the clock in the main stair has no "8" on the clock face. No one knows why. A statue of Athena is in the foyer.

Boodles Named for the original head waiter, Boodles is at 28 St. James Street. Members have included Adam Smith and Beau Brummel. Membership fee: £40, annual subscription: £12 11s. Second oldest club in London. Very exclusive.

Brooks St. James Road, right across from White's. Membership fee: £15, annual subscription: £15. Brooks is a Whig, later Liberal, and establishment and is infamous for gambling.

CarltonPall Mall Membership is mostly Conservative Party. Membership fee: £16, annual subscription: £10 11s.

Oriental 18 Hanover Square. Membership fee: £20, annual subscription: £8. Limited to aristocrats and gentlemen who have travelled in the Orient (Middle East, India, or other points in Asia).

Reform 104 Pall Mall. Membership fee: £40, annual subscription: £10 10s. Liberal Party members mostly. Famed for the kitchen's skills and the excellent wine cellar.

Royal Automobile Cub Forms in 1897 under order of the Prince of Wales. 89 Pall Mall. Becomes the governing body for motor sports in Britain in the 1900s. Membership and annual subscription: £1 6s.

Travellers Club 106 Pall Mall. Membership: £42, annual subscription: £10 10s. Limited to 725 members who had travelled at least 500 miles in a direct line from London. Visits by invitation only. Fantastic library (original home of the London Library) with frieze cast from marbles from Temple of Apollo at Bassae. Formal dress at all times.

White's 37/38 St. James Street. Membership and annual fee: £12 10s. Mostly Tory and Conservative politicians. Limited to 650 members. Well-known for high-stakes games of chance. They'll bet on anything, actually... The oldest club in London.

COMME IL FAUT (HOW IT'S DONE)

Now that we have explored the environs of the West End, how does one fit in with the finer set of people? London society may seem stuffy, governed by a set of rules, but there is purpose to this. These rules of conduct provide respect and respectability to the person, grease the cogs of civilization, and make life more palatable for all. They also cover all manner of sins. By being discreet and observing these guidelines, the upper class can engage in many of the same sins of the lower classes. Affairs are conducted out of sight and without damaging the families and reputations of the people involved. Rivalries that might have resulted in fisticuffs or pistols elsewhere are kept polite and sublimated into competition for political or social standing. The rich and aristocratic are doing all the same things that the poor folks are doing; they just do it with more class.

Being familiar with these rules will get one far in their dealings with the elite. Most important is the image you project. Accent is important. While the flat twang of an American accent is often greeted with some delight by the aristocracy, one can be forgiven for being a bit barbaric in speech if you come from the colonies – the lilt of a Scottish or Irish accent can doom one to middle-class existence. God forbid you sound Welsh. Many people will make a serious attempt to lose a northern accent in polite company. It makes you sound more educated, and education is key to being “part of the club.”

The other part is looking like you belong. A cheaper cut of clothing is instantly recognizable. Even a used suit or dress from a good tailor or dressmaker will aid in your acceptance into this world. If one must dress on the cheap, it is vitally important that good tailoring follow buying a suit “off the rack.”

Etiquette is absolutely essential to pass in this rarefied field of society. It provides a lubricant to social interaction, preventing personal and political rivalries from disrupting society, and most importantly, the family. Etiquette is especially important in matters of love and marriage, two things that are not necessarily compatible for the upper class.

LOVE AND MARRIAGE

Marriage, for the upper-class, is about furthering and improving the fortunes of dynastic lines. Good breeding, and the preservation of land and other financial holdings, is central to the rules of romance.

Firstly, the protection of unmarried girls is essential. Until their “coming out” at sixteen, the young aristocratic girl is completely off limits, and their reputations must be protected (so that they are “saleable” for marriage.) Their subsequent marriage may allow a family to marry up in wealth or social standing, or preserve a titled bloodline by providing heirs to inheritance.

To this end, there are rules to be observed in courtship and behavior toward the opposite sex. For the gentleman: A gentleman is always introduced to a lady, never the opposite. It is an honor for him to meet her. A social inferior must be introduced to his superiors. When meeting a lady you barely know, you must wait for her to acknowledge you, and then you may tip your hat to her. Do not speak to a lady unless she speaks to you first. If a woman of your acquaintance wishes to converse with you, you walk with her. You do not make a lady stand talking in the street.

When riding or walking along the street, the lady always has the wall (to protect her from the inevitable slush of animal filth from the horse-drawn vehicles.) When riding or walking with a lady who is not your spouse away from the street (such as on Rotten Row), the woman is instead placed to left; you spouse is to your right. In a carriage, the man takes the seat facing backward. He does not sit next to a lady if they are alone in a carriage unless she is a relation. He dismounts the vehicle first to aid her in exiting; he enters after to do the same.



At a public affair (such as the theatre), a gentlemen enters first to find his female companion a seat. Always doff your hat indoors at an affair. You precede lady up stairs. You follow her down. A gentleman never smokes in the presence of a lady, unless at a function with the Prince of Wales (who does not follow this rule) and he is called to smoke by the prince.

In matters of courtship, a gentleman must first obtain an introduction to the prospective paramour. Several "chance" encounters at a dance or a dinner must be contrived and at least one visit to her home arranged. Next, ask the parents' permission to court their daughter. At this point, chaperoned visits and outings will ensue, and the beau will be expected to give gifts over the course of the courtship. Finally, ask the girl to marry you.

For the ladies, the rules are perhaps a bit easier. She is the guardian of her reputation, and as such, is in a more passive, defensive position. If unmarried and under the age of thirty, a lady must never be alone with a man without a chaperone. She must not walk alone unless going to church. A lady does not call on a gentleman alone unless it is on professional business. Beyond that, most of the rules revolve around appearance and image-making. A lady does not "cut" someone – ignore their presence after meeting them – unless absolutely necessary. She should never dance more than three dances with the same partner, even if she is courting the man in question, or is married to him. An unwed lady wears pastels until the age of 25, and then may wear darker colors, as a married woman might. This is to let other know of her status, so that they will not sully her reputation (after 25, it is assumed they are a spinster and that romantic interests toward her are a favor to her). A lady does not wear pearls or diamonds in the morning. It is showy and suggests bad judgment.

Marriage is often a matter of dynastic matching, as mentioned before. Love matches occur, but it is expected that one will grow to love their partner. If that does not happen, however, trouble can crop up. Assignations and love affairs also have rules. After all, the point of marriage is family, and more specifically, children, legitimate children. One's social standing depends on the aristocracy appearing to be the model for British family life (funnily enough, this is a new idea. Prior to this, particularly during the Regency period, the aristocracy was viewed as a cut above an actor or actress, and only because of their money and influence.) To this end, there are some simple rules observed by the upper-class.

1. Never embarrass your spouse! When conducting a love affair, discretion is paramount. Do not travel with the person to events or to your meetings and certainly do not meet in public. Never propose your meetings aloud or in a manner that can provide discomfort (for instance, sending a note to your lover's club). Do not discuss your affair in public.
2. The Heir and the Spare. A married woman is off-limits until she has had at least one male heir for her husband, preferably two male children. This rule, it is rumored, was set down by the Prince of Wales himself.
3. Do not conduct your affairs in your own home. Friends in the know can arrange to allow you use of their flat. A hotel is a possibility, but dangerous. Best is to meet during parties at a country home, where there are enough goings-on to hide a disappearance for an hour or two. Outdoor "chance encounters," perhaps when hunting or on a ride at a country home, also provide a good place for a stolen moment.
4. Divorce does not happen! Legal separation is almost as bad. The best situation is to simply live separately and simply not address the situation. Divorce will ruin you in society, period.

Another part of etiquette is in understanding how to address people you meet. For the non-titled, this is easy – mister or master (for a boy), misses (or miss for a girl) always suffices...ever when you are married to the other person. Children refer to their parents as "mother" and "father" if male; daughters use "mama" and "papa." Always use the surname of the person in public. Personal names are only used in family circumstances, or with close friends not in public. For non-specific address, "sir" or "madam" is correct.



ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

Addressing your betters is more difficult. Their title is a rank, as with military service, and they are due the deference. Certain ranks are more important than others, and at public affairs, often people will be queued up according to rank.

RANK	SPOKEN ADDRESS	CORRESPONDENCE
Emperor, Empress	Your Imperial Majesty	His/Her Imperial Majesty
King, Queen	Your Majesty	His/Her Majesty
Royal Prince, Royal Princess (the heir or eldest child)	Your Royal Highness	His/Her Royal Highness
Prince, Princess	Your Highness	His/Her Highness
Archbishop	Your Grace	The Most Reverend
Duke, Duchess	Your Grace	His/Her Grace
Eldest child/heir of a duke (without title)	My Lord/Lady	Right Honorable Lord/Lady
Marquis, Countess	Your Grace	Most Noble
Younger children of a duke (without title)	My Lord	Honorable Lord/Lady
Earl, Countess	My Lord/Lady	Right Honorable Earl/Countess
Viscount, Countess	My Lord/Lady	Right Honorable Viscount/Countess
Untitled children of peer, eldest		Honorable
Bishops		Right Reverend
Barons/Baroness	My Lord/Lady	Honorable Baron/Baroness
Baronet, Knight or Dame of Bath or Thistle	My Lord/Lady	Honorable Sir/Lady
Knight/Dame of other order	Sir/Dame	Honorable Sir/Lady
Member of Parliament		Honorable Mr.
Deacon, or other clergy	Doctor or Reverend	Doctor or Reverend



CORRESPONDENCE

Often, people have a string of initials after their names in correspondence. Usually this is representative of some kind of knightly or professional honor. The most common are decoded below:

- Bart., Bt.** A baronet. This is a life peer – essentially a fancy knight.
- Esq.** Esquire. It is usually self-adopted by profession gentlemen seeking some level of respectability.
- B.A.** Bachelor of Arts. This signifies a holder of a college degree – a rarity in the late nineteenth century.
- D.D.** Doctor of Divinity. Often a clergyman.
- K.C.** King's Counsel. Given to senior barristers, the highest honor they can aspire to. During Victoria's reign, Q.C. is used instead.
- D.S.O.** Distinguished Service Order. A high military distinction.
- F.R.G.S.** Friend, Royal Geographical Society. Member of the same. Usually an explorer or scientist. Entry is much like that of a gentleman's club.
- F.R.S.** Friend, Royal Society. Like the RGS, the Royal Society is a scientific and medical society.
- C.B.** Companion, Order of the Bath. Lowest of three ranks in the order. It is given mostly to distinguished military service or to aristocrats.
- G.C.B.** Grand Commander, Order of the Bath. The highest rank in the order. Almost exclusively for the royal family.
- K.C.B.** King Commander, Order of the Bath. This is the middle rank and mostly issued to aristocracy for military service.
- Kt.** Knight.
- K.B.** Knight Bachelor. A member of the Court of the King's Bench.
- K.G.** Knight of the Garter. The highest order of knighthood. You will not get one unless you are a royal relative.
- M.P.** Member of Parliament.
- R.A.** Royal Academy. A member of the same.
- V.C.** Victoria Cross. The highest military award of the period. Most of them have been issued for the Defense of Roarke's Drift in 1879, or the Crimean War.

THE MARLBOROUGH HOUSE SET

The Marlborough House is the residence of the Prince of Wales in London. (His main country house is Sandringham). Prince Albert Edward, or "Bertie" to his friends and family, is the centre of the social scene for the aristocrats and wealthy of London, and his "set" are those people closest to him, who are frequently hosts to the prince and his entourage. If there are only 1500 families or so in London Society proper, there are only a 100 families that are part of the Marlborough House Set.

This group of aristocrats takes their parties *seriously*. During the season, they attend affairs nearly every night. While it might sound fun, there is a lot of business of the nation going on at these fetes. Gambling is also essential. The Prince of Wales has been known to play whist throughout the night. It is considered rude to let him lose, so often the other Heroes will drag out the games before making a fatal error and allowing him to win.

In addition to gambling and eating at their London establishments, weekend jaunts to go riding and hunting are standard, and the set will either flee London in their carriages or by train Friday night, returning late Sunday evening. Hunting season lasts from January to April, with weekenders for fox hunting or for bird taking place in England, deer hunting usually happening in Scotland. From May through July, much of life revolves around horse racing. The Derby Day race kicks this off, with races at Ascot and other hamlets near London putting on races for the sport of the society. Gambling on races can get quite expensive, but not as much as the peddling in horse flesh going on. Between the races, society figures buy and trade horses, and some of the aristocratic families main source of income is from these sales. The racing season comes to a close at Goodwood, the estates of the Duke of Richmond near Chichester in July. Later, automobile and motorcycle racing will take place on the estate (and will lead to the "Week of Speed").

Members of the Marlborough House Set

Once in "Society", the chances that you will encounter the prince's set are fairly high, especially if you are a beautiful woman, or a gambler of any stature. Central to the Set are a few key people:

Prince Albert Edward, Prince of Wales

Commonly thought of as a bit thick by the press, and a disappointment to his mother, "Bertie" is actually surprisingly sharp. While he does not like reading, and avoids serious mental exertion, he does keep up with the newspapers. His is an interesting personality: he is kind and generous to his friends and genuinely cares about them. He tends to give gifts frequently, and has been known to quietly see to the widow or children of a deceased friend. He is well-informed about the world and tends to favor personal diplomacy over threats and force; his reign as king saw this kind of subtle manipulation as his trademark in international relations.

But he is also self-centered, can be petulant over shocking small slights, and, one supposes as a future king should, deference from all around him. While he will joke and poke fun at his friends, they do not reciprocate. He is fond of gambling, smoking, and eating...not necessarily in that order. While smoking in front of ladies is frowned upon, the prince will do so, should the mood strike him. People accept this. He is a *buongustaio*, a connoisseur of food. Hostesses at parties he attends are usually nervous wrecks about the menu. While the prince will certainly not insult a hostess by criticizing the food, if he does not finish his meal, it will mean that he might not attend another party (a social disaster). If he does enjoy the meal, it can mean others of the Marlborough House Set may accept the hostess and her family into their circle of friends.

Princess Alexandra, Princess of Wales

She is Danish, the eldest daughter of King Christian IX. She is a light-hearted woman, a bit flirty and irreverent, as well as very attractive. She spent nearly all of her first decade of marriage pregnant and gave birth to five children. Always dressed fashionably, Alex is the woman all of the ladies of the Marlborough House Set try to emulate (her attempts to hide a scar on her neck set off a high-necked fashion craze). Like her husband, she is a gambler, but a very good one. Other members of the set do not feel the need to let her win, as they do with Bertie. Alex usually will do so without their help.

Louisa, Duchess of Manchester

The duchess is a bit plain of face, a little on the heavy side, and is considered a great beauty. This is more due to her ebullient and highly intelligent personality. She is well-read, has excellent taste, and a way with the men. She loves to gamble at cards and horses. Of all the set, she is the one to impress. Louisa may not actually control the Marlborough House Set, but she is its most influential member, perhaps more than the royals themselves.

She was born in Alten in Germany and her husband, William is a quiet and kindly man whom she has given five children. He is aware of her love affair with his friend, Lord Hartington, and he ignores their relationship since they are careful to keep up appearances. When he dies in 1890, she is devastated, but in 1892, marries her lover, becoming a duchess for the second time. She is afterward known as "the double duchess."

Spencer Cavendish, Marquis of Hartington

In his forties at the beginning of the 1880s, "Harty Tarty" as he was known to his friends in the set, is a tall, bearded, and quiet man. He can come off as absent-minded or a bit slow. This is not the case. He is frequently mulling over issues of policy or current events. He is very knowledgeable on nearly every subject one could bring up, and is a thoughtful, steady man not given to wild passions. He has been in the government in some cabinet post since the 1870s: Lord of the Admiralty, postmaster-general, Chief Secretary for Ireland, and leader of the Liberal opposition during Disraeli's period in office. He serves as Gladstone's Secretary of State for India from 1880-82, then as Secretary of State for War from 1882-85. Breaking with Gladstone over Irish Home Rule in 1885, he becomes the leader of the Liberal Unionists.

He is lover to Louisa, the Duchess of Manchester, but they are very discreet. After succeeding his father in 1892 to be the

7TH Duke of Devonshire, he marries Louisa.

Francis Knollys

He is the secretary to the Prince of Wales, and the main point of contact for business with His Royal Highness. He is a sharp man, witty but reserved, with a subtle sense of humor.

Christopher Sykes

One of Bertie's best friends, Sykes is always present at any affair the prince is at. He is the straight man for Bertie's jokes, always good-hearted and willing to be the figure of fun.

There are many others that are part of the prince's set of friends, far too many to mention here. For a revealing look inside the social circle of the Marlborough House, I suggest Anita Leslie (niece of Jennie Jerome, one of Bertie's lovers) book ***The Marlborough House Set***, published in 1973 by Doubleday.

THE CITY

"The City" refers to the portions of London that most think of as the original city. In actuality, the original Londinium sits under the "Square Mile" and parts of the East End of the metropolitan area. The City was the strip of land between the city and the royal boroughs to the west and was developed under the Tudor and Stewart reigns. It is now the part of the city associated with the day-to-day governance of London.

Here one finds the courts, the banks, and the newspapers. Businesses here are primarily professional: solicitor's offices, accounting firms, banks. Manufacturing has been migrating away from this region of the city, toward the districts south of the Thames, or into the far East End. This means the City is taking on a more service-oriented character, and a more middle-class flavor, but it is also leaving some areas without gainful employment. While the general wealth and welfare of the residents is improving, places like St. Giles draw most of the attention of the press and the reformers, who see this crushing poverty and despair and mistake it for characterizing the whole of the London experience.

CHARING CROSS

Located around Trafalgar Square, on the edge of Whitehall and Mayfair, is Charing Cross. Dedicated to Admiral Lord Nelson's victory over Napoleon's fleet in 1807, the centerpiece of the square is Nelson's Column, a 185 foot Corinthian-styled pillar with a 17 foot statue of Nelson atop. The column is guarded by four bronze lions made by Landseer, and flanking Nelson's memorial are statues of Charles I, and two of the heroes of the India Mutiny, Lord Napier and General Havelock. Two great fountains provide the finishing flourish and are used by people from the surrounding area to gather water, and at night, occasionally to bathe (if the police aren't in the area.)

Traffic around the square is heavy at nearly all hours. During the day, the carriages of politicians, lawyers, and other people involved in running the country are threading their way through the press of vehicles. Taxis and omnibuses ply their trade to and from the Charing Cross Station on the embankment. The square brings in tourists from overseas and the artistically-inclined. The National Gallery sits at the north end of Trafalgar, as does the National Portrait Gallery. The Grand Hotel, a popular site for the traveler, is on the south side of the square, just across Craven Street from the rail station. On the west side of Trafalgar is the end of Pall Mall, where one finds the College of Physicians, the Royal Society's club residence, and the Royal Geographical Society's building. Union Club House, a gentlemen's club for merchants and lawyers, is in the area, as well.

The district gives its name to Charing Cross Hospital, built earlier in the century and now one of the better teaching hospitals in the country. Charing Cross provides *pro bono* service for people with unidentified or bizarre diseases in the hope of better training new physicians. The primary customer of the hospital, however, is the middle-class, who can afford the price of care. The hospital is the recipient of a great many endowments, allowing them to provide their services at a cheaper rate than comparably staffed facilities.

The busy nature of the Charing Cross neighborhood means that petty crimes like pick pocketing and robberies are not uncommon. However, there is a sizeable contingent of policemen in the area, and a flying squad dedicated specifically to enforcement available within minutes from Scotland Yard. The proximity to the Yard also means that plainclothes detectives are often in the area, heading to and from the headquarters.

BLOOMSBURY

Owned mostly by the Duke of Bedford, this small strip of the city is sandwiched between Holborn and St. Pancras. The development of the area began almost a century ago as improvements to the duke's estate, Woburn. New gardens were added, roads improved (they are paved with tar macadam as of the 1880s), and terraces and homes were put in, all designed by Thomas Cubitt of Belgravia fame. The revenues from the leases are the main income for the Bedford fortunes. Once a wealthy region, most of the upper-class residents have moved on to Marylebone or Kensington's various neighborhoods, leaving the large homes to the wealthier middle-class and poorer gentry. The district is very quiet, especially at night, and crime is low, despite relatively low policing.

Bloomsbury is home to the National Hospital for the Paralyzed and Epileptic and the Italian Hospital, dedicated to the care of expatriate Italians and funded by the embassy. University College sits on Gower Street and is a favorite *alma mater* for the middle-class. It requires no entrance exams and costs only £60 per year. The college teaches most practical professions, such as the law, medicine, and engineering, and has the Slade School of the Arts, as well.

Last, there is Bedford Square, dedicated to the duke that created Bloomsbury. It is a pleasing spot for a quiet sit in the park. There is a stature of the duke in the square, hand on a plough and a stalk of corn in the other hand, an allusion to his being a 'man of the land' due to his position on the Board of Agriculture.

COVENT GARDENS

Packed between Longacre Road and the Embankment is Covent Gardens, so named for a convent that once stood here. The main businesses here are cheaper retail outlets and the theatre. The district is centered on Covent Gardens Market, a large square of street vendors, shops and department stores in a square between Carrick Street and Russell Street. The market is open for business about six in the morning, with the street vendors at work before the retail shops open at eight. Along the main road of Covent Gardens, the Strand, are some of the more famous stages in London. The Adelphi, the Gaiety, and Lyceum, the Vaudeville (which gives its name to the variety show format) and the Exeter Hall all crowd along the north side of the Strand. Excellent hotels like the Cecil Street and the Savoy are tucked between the Strand and the gardens running along the Embankment.

The famed Drury Theatre on Drury Lane is one of the largest of the establishments in the district. Along Drury Lane, there are many gentlemen's clubs, essentially brothels, where men "slumming" can bring actresses after their shows. The life of an actor or actress is not much different throughout time. Very few are successful enough to live well; not everyone can be a Sarah Bernhardt, a Henry Irving, or an Ellen Terry. Many supplement their income by escorting men after their shows, hoping to be taken on as a lover and kept in style (preferably with a house in St. Johns Wood).

As a result, another major "industry" here is law enforcement. The Police Courts are on Bow Street, along with the original station house for the Bow Street Runners, the precursor to the Metropolitan Police Force, and still a major station for the middle of London. Their main concern is robbery and assault. While there is a strong police presence in the area, there are a lot of small streets and alleyways in Covent Gardens, and adjacent to Covent Gardens is "the Rookery" (St. Giles), a neighborhood even flying squads will avoid, if at all possible. Keeping the riff-raff out of Covent Gardens and in St. Giles is a full time job.

ST. GILES

The term "rookery" applies to neighborhoods that are comprised of tight streets, substandard housing, and seriously poor residents. Crime is main pastime of a rookery, as these places are exceedingly dangerous for the police to enter in pursuit of their quarry. Charles Dickens dramatized, and romanticized rookeries in *Oliver Twist*, especially. If there is one rookery to end all others, it is St. Giles.

A triangular area crammed between Covent Gardens and Holborn, St. Giles has its boundaries at Charing Cross Road, Longacre and Great Queen, and New Oxford Street. It is a nest of small, winding streets and courts, often unlit at night. The housing is even worse. Most of the buildings are old, dangerously ill-maintained, and packed far beyond their capacity with the poor. Many tenants rent a space on a floor along with their families (or even strangers). Often the houses have bad ventilation and little or no lighting or furnishings. Small houses with a single room to them have entire families, ten to twelve at a pinch, living in tight quarters. Flats see people renting a spot on the floor in a small, dark room, with others packed in above them in naval-style hammocks. Some places rent spaces in pews or chairs, and tie the sleeper in, so that they do not fall over.

Drunkenness, violence, and debauchery are the result of such crushing poverty and hopelessness. Assault, robberies, prostitution, and murder are at epidemic levels, and at night rape and incest are commonplace. Illness is also rampant.

Packed into airless dark rooms like slaves in a ship, disease quickly moves through the population of St. Giles. Many do not wash, or do so sparingly at standpipes in the street, or at the public baths at Broad and Endall Streets. There is a workhouse here, but it is more of a prison, really. It is located on Endell near the baths, and across a small road from the hospital.

Inside St. Giles is a location called Seven Dials. This is the worst St. Giles has to offer. It is a square where St. Andrew Street crosses Earl Street, with three other small streets converging, as well. A column with six sundials (the column is the seventh) stands in the middle and gives the court its name. Filth covers the streets in which the ragged and indigent children play. The shops sell only the most distressed hand-me-downs, and it is not uncommon to see people nearly naked.

Across the rooftops, there is another set of streets. Wooden planks crisscross the roofs, and are used by the criminal element to move about the district quickly, do surveillance on marks or police raids, and stage attacks with speed and surprise. Up here also are "the pigeon men," bird aficionados who raise and keep pigeons, falcons, and songbirds in pens. Pigeon is a mainstay of the St. Giles' diet.

Gangs run these streets and often they specialize in their crimes. Small groups, from pairs to six or ten men, are usually involved in petty crimes, operating in Covent Gardens or Holborn, or, if truly ambitious, ranging as far out as Bayswater. Pick pocketing or shoplifting, snatch and grab, and blackjacking are often their specialties. The larger groups operating in St. Giles are often protection rackets for prostitution, or for larger-scale crimes like burglary. Behind these groups, there are a few big gangs, 25-50 strong, which handle fencing, organization of defenses against the police, or control of the most profitable of businesses in the rookery, booze.

HOLBORN

On the north side of Holborn Street is the eponymous district. Crossing into Holborn from New Oxford Street or High Holborn, the character of the place does not change drastically from that of Covent Garden. The first few small streets are primarily commercial in nature, but as one moves north from the boundary with Covent Garden and St. Giles, more residences are in evidence. Many of the homes here have been broken up into flats, and many of the small shops have apartments above the businesses. Despite the middle-class character of Holborn, sections of the district are extremely dangerous at night. The rookery of St. Giles lurks south of New Oxford Street and much of the police coverage disappears at night, leaving the area near the British Museum the heaviest patrolled portion of Holborn after dark. Conveniently, this is also close to the fancy neighborhoods of Bedford, Bloomsbury, and Russell Squares



Holborn is a miniature of the city, in many ways. It is dominated by middle-class families that work in the City, but toward St. Pancras, the houses and businesses become more respectable and expensive. Going east toward Farringdon Station, the opposite occurs; many of the buildings are new, but of middling quality and often older, poorer structures are crammed between them. The place is a patchwork; one street can be well-to-do, with middle-class families living in the flats and houses along the road, while the next street can see dilapidated slums, some still around from before the Great Fire of 1666. Many of these buildings have been deemed hazardous by the various Parliamentary studies that have been chartered to review poverty, but only a few have been removed at the beginning of 1880.

By the end of the century, most of these old buildings have been torn down to make way for government sponsored housing, or the Improved Industrial Dwellings Company. Otherwise known as 'Associated Dwellings,' these tenements were the first experiments in housing the poor in clean and healthy conditions. The buildings are apartment-styled, with shared sculleries and lavatories. The poor, of course, could not afford the buildings, so many of the tenants are skilled laborers and their families (but it makes for a very successful-looking effort, and hence the IIDC is still throwing up these buildings). Holborn is also home to a wealth of small factories, covering practically every kind of industry known.

Holborn was the area that saw the most social experimentation in the middle of the century, and many of these programs are still in effect. Some have been very successful, like the Associated Dwellings, others...not so much. There is a glut of hospitals in the region, including the Alexandria Hospital (named for the Princess of Wales), the Homeopathic, and the Children's Hospital, all crowding the blocks along Guilford Street. The massive Foundling Hospital tends to the children that are often left on the stoops of churches around London. There is a Working Man's College on Great Ormond Street where poor men are taught skilled labor at the expense of contributing businesses in the metropolitan area. If one is lucky enough, and is humble, eager, and has a good character, the college can give a man a second chance. The Holborn Union is a workhouse on Gray's Inn Road. One of the largest workhouses, it provides a place and a meal for its residents, in exchange for hard labor and harsh discipline. Compared to the Working Man's College, it is supremely unsuccessful and many would rather risk starvation than stay in the workhouse.

At the top of Gray's Inn Road is Kings Cross Station. It is in the final phases of construction in the 1880s, but by the 1890s is the main terminus of the Great Northern Railroad. Kings Cross is also just next to St. Pancras Station, another heavily trafficked rail station, and they are linked to the rest of the city by an underground station at Kings Cross and tramways that fan out across the main roads leading from the rail termini. By the 1890s, there is an effort to bring electric lighting to the rail station area.

BRITISH MUSEUM

Dominating an entire city block, the British Museum is on Great Russell Street. It is an imposing neo-Classical building that acts as national library, as well as museum. The displays are broken into different departments. It covers the prehistoric, with dinosaur displays, to the modern. Egyptian Antiquities and the Greek & Roman Antiquities displays are the most famous and the most visited. The Rosetta stone, which helped decode the mysteries of the Egyptian hieroglyphs, is in the Egyptian department, while the Elgin Marbles reside in the Greek & Roman. Romano-British and Medieval Antiquities follow the history of Britain. Oriental and West Asiatic Antiquities are also quite popular. Coins and Metals, Prints and Drawings are the categories that round out the displays, each housed in their massive halls.

The museum is open from eleven in the morning until five in the afternoon, although researchers can use the laboratories after the display halls close until eight in the evening. The laboratories and library are on the floors above the Public Floor, along with the museum offices, and are closed to the public save on invitation from the Museum Secretary. Members of the Royal Society and Royal Geographical Society have preference for time in the library and labs. On Sundays, from two until five in the afternoon, 'Workingman's Day' costs only a tuppence and draws a surprising number of patrons from the lower classes.

GRAND LODGE OF THE FREEMASONS

Built in 1768 by Thomas Sandby, the Grand Lodge is the premier Masonic lodge for the British Isles. It is classic Georgian period with lots of straight lines and a vaguely neo-Classical appearance. The lodge is three stories high, with the upper story acting as a gentleman's club; there is a library and offices for the brothers. Lunches are served to the brothers, but not dinners. It is rare that non-masons are allowed into the lodge, and never during 'communications', as the monthly meetings are called. The Freemasons Tavern is part of the building, and is open to the public and brethren alike. Often policemen from the nearby Bow Street station can be found here at lunchtime.

Communications occur on the first Monday of the month. The brothers will meet in the main hall to conduct rituals that are morality plays, mostly biblical in nature. The main floor is two-storied, with viewing galleries on the balcony. The floor of the hall has a checkerboard pattern in black and white and laid out on the cardinal points of the compass. The Grand Master or Worshipful Master conducts the communications from the East, bringing illumination to the brothers as the sun rises in the east. The secretary, treasurer, and chaplain of the lodge also occupy the east. In the West, the Senior Warden heralds the close of the meetings, just as the sun sets in the west. The north and south are where the brethren are seated for communications. The Senior Deacon is positioned in the centre seats to the north, the Junior Deacon and other officers in the south central seats.

Becoming a Freemason is much like joining any other gentleman's club. One must be nominated by a brother, and voted on by the membership of the lodge one is applying to. The applicant is investigated by a pair of brothers, who will ask family and friends about the man's character, and they will interview him about his beliefs, both spiritual and temporal. It is, contrary to conspiracy theorists' opinion, necessary for a prospective Mason to believe in (a) God. While most Masons are Christians, this is not a requirement. Jews and Hindus are be made Freemasons (the latter mostly in military 'travelling lodges.')

Membership fees and annual dues are £1 a year. Members in bad standing are not thrown out, as per the saying, once a Mason, always a Mason. Most of the well-connected in society are Masons, but in the Lodge all Freemasons are equal, brothers under the All-Seeing Eye of God. Here the Prince of Wales can be approached by a commoner as a friend and peer.

This aspect of Masonry has drawn the suspicions of those outside the lodge. It is said that a criminal, if he is a Mason, often can avoid arrest or trial if collared by a fellow brother. There have been incidents where just this sort of thing has happened, even though the Freemasons frown on it. It is not uncommon for the lodge to handle matters internally, if this sort of thing occurs; a secret trial and some form of punishment are rendered to those who break the law in such a way that Masonry is implicated. Above all, the secrecy of ritual, communication, and lodge activities are to be maintained. The up-side to Freemasonry – the member has a network of contacts for business dealings, investigations, or political favors. When using Masonic contacts to aid a character in activities, you gain a +2 to all tests to influence other Masons to aid you in your efforts. When in trouble, shouting "Will no one help the widow's son?" will often bring aid, should there be Mason's around.



MASONIC RANKS

There are several "lodges" in Masonry. The Blue Lodge is the basic membership, and consists of three ranks (or degrees) representing their 'education' in Masonic ritual. Many of the poorer members stop here, never rising above the third rank. Above this there are two lodges, two different tracks a member can take: York Rite and Scottish Rite. The Scottish Rite is the most common, and there are rankings going up to the 32 degree. The York Rite is a chaplain's route. Masonic burials and other religious services are conducted by members of the York Rite. Special ritual ceremonies and retreats are held to educate members in Masonic secrets (really just a sort of Bible camp for bettering oneself) as they rise through the degrees.

Lodge positions are hierarchical, and a member moves up through the ranks at a regular pace (if they apply to be 'promoted'). Their titles and duties are rendered below:

RANK	DUTIES
Tyler	Seated outside the doors during communications, he prevents outsiders from entering. He is armed with a sword. Usually, this is an older member.
Marshal	Prepares candidates for various rituals.
Junior Steward	Oversees refreshments after communications.
Senior Steward	In charge of rituals.
Junior Warden	Assists in keeping order.
Senior Warden	The Worshipful Master's assistant. He closes the communications.
Junior Deacon	Takes over from Senior Deacon if that officer is not available.
Senior Deacon	Serves on the various committees and hosts guests to the lodge.
Treasurer	Handles lodge finances.
Secretary	Records minutes of the communications.
Chaplin	Handles prayers during the meetings.
Worshipful Master	Lodge president. Oversees meetings and activities.

THE SQUARE MILE

This is the 'City of London,' the traditional London of the Tudor and Stewart period. It is one of the areas with the most modern amenities. The roads are tar macadam; a test of electric street lighting will go in along the Strand in the 1890s. Many of the businesses tied to banking have their own dedicated telegraph lines, and this allows the banks and businesses associated with finance (and by the mid 1890s, new publications) to switch over to telephonic communications.

Tied for the biggest "industry" in the Square Mile would be the law and the press. The Strand runs into Fleet Street where St. Clement's Cathedral stands, and on both these roads the grand printing houses reside. Newspapers thrive here, but publishers of cheap 'penny dreadfuls' and illustrated newspapers are also doing quite well. Social pages are printed here, and are read not just by Society, but by the middle-class who get a vicarious thrill from reading about their betters. The journalistic quality in Fleet Street runs the gambit from the worst yellow journalism tabloids to the finest in investigative tradition. Bookshops line the streets in Chancery Lane and Fleet Street.

The proximity of the press to the courts is not coincidence. Journalists are constantly seen scuttling about the Courts of Law, looking for scandal to draw readers with. Impartiality is not the watchword of the Victorian Press. There is no attempt to even hide that certain papers have certain viewpoints.

Between Ludgate Hill and Newgate Street is the Old Bailey. The street gives its name to the Central Criminal Court, the main Inn of Courts. The Old Bailey is dedicated to the trials revolving around common criminal cases. If one is nicked for a crime in the East End, this is the most likely place they will be brought for arraignment and trial. The Old Bailey is one of the first buildings to have telephones in them, with connections to the various newspapers by the early 1890s.

The telephone exchange is in place by the 1888 in the General Post Office on Newgate Street. It connects several hundred terminals when it is opened – nearly all of them connected to the business of government. By 1890, home telephone use

is already beginning to grow at an unbelievable rate, and the Exchange becomes a major hiring ground for young ladies of good character, but limited prospects. (The female voice is easier, they discovered early on, to hear over telephone and later radio channels).

Fleet Street continues east to Ludgate Circus, a square where Farringdon Street meets with Ludgate Hill. The circus sees the elevated rails that run between Holborn Viaduct Station and Ludgate Hill Station, and at the end of Ludgate Hill to the east is Sri Christopher Wren's spectacular St. Paul's Cathedral.

To the north of St. Paul's, there is St. Bartholomews Hospital and the attendant Christs Hospital between Newgate Street and the markets at Smithfield and Charterhouse Street. The hospital was originally several buildings, but they have grown together over time and remodeling in the 1870s was done to try and make the place easier to get about. St. Bart's, as it is known, is one of the largest hospitals in the city and specializes in cardiovascular diseases. Just north is Smithfield Market, a massive open air market that parallels Charterhouse Road from Farringdon Street almost to Aldersgate Station, where an elevated train from Farringdon Station and the underground from Holborn Viaduct meet then continue into the East End.

Smithfield Market is one of the main meat markets in the city and the stench is impressive. It is extremely busy; with butchers stalls along the length of the place and the accompanying animal pens make for a riot of noise and activity. The place is a haven for pickpockets, and with the heavy traffic from the East End, criminals do not tend to stand out. Not far away from the market is the last of the original city wall, alongside which the railway runs, stretching from Aldersgate to Moorgate in the East End.

Between the streets that give these stations their name is the district of Cheapside. The main industry here is banking, and in this region you will find the Guildhall on Gresham Street, a block north of Cheapside. The Guildhall is a gargantuan building built by Henry IV. The great hall is capable of holding thousands of people, and is about the third the size of a football field. Gothic windows on either side present the figures of the giants, Gog and Magog. Here State Banquets are sometimes held, but it is now primarily for the Lord Mayor's Feasts. Courts for the Lords and Commons, the Lord Mayor, and the Aldermen are in an attached building. The Guildhall has a monstrously large crypt and a superb library for use by government officials.

Not far away is Princes Street, where stands the Bank of England. Across Threadneedle Street from the Bank is the Royal Exchange, a Parthenon-like building sitting on a triangular plaza where Princes Street meets Cornhill and Cheapside. The Royal Exchange has an

COMMUNICATION IN LONDON

As most communications were made by post or telegraph, the modern gamer's perception of communication during the Imperial Age is that it is extremely slow. While this is understandable, as the modern American postal system typically takes 2-3 days for first class mail, it is far from the truth, especially if you are running a London-based campaign. It is quite possible (and affordable) to have something akin to a typical modern email exchange between busy executives in Victorian London.

During the Imperial Age, most of London proper had eleven delivery times during the day (twelve in the busiest district), starting just after 7am and finishing by 9pm. As each delivery was roughly an hour apart, it was possible to receive an answer to your letter within 3-4 hours of having sent it! Suburban districts had a still-impressive six delivery times. Persons with no permanent address in London (such as travelers) could have mail delivered to them "post restante," or held for them at the post office (similar to having a post office box today).

Outside of the city, the quickest way to contact someone was through the telegraph lines. Assuming that your contact was waiting at the telegraph station, you could have almost instant communication (although you also had at least two sets of eyes knowing your business—the telegraph operator on each end).

The telephone also increased in prominence in London throughout the Imperial Age. 1879 saw the first telephone exchange in London and by the turn of the century and thousands of telephone lines crisscrossed the city. Still, the telephone was a bit slow to catch on and most people preferred communication by post or telegram.





NEWSPAPERS OF LONDON

The average newspaper runs 3d, but the illustrated and Sunday editions run 5d.

Daily Chronicle	A Liberal newspaper.
Daily News	A radical paper, it is constantly on the verge of going under. In the past, it used to publish the tracts of Karl Marx.
Daily Telegraph	A Conservative newspaper.
The Examiner	Liberal newspaper with a particular concern for issues of poverty.
Illustrated London News	Sunday edition with a fantastic social page and commentary. Conservative in outlook and aimed at upper-class readers.
News of the World	Left-leaning, this is a scandal sheet that is popular with the poor.
Pall Mall Gazette	An evening edition, it is edited in this period by William Cust, a member of the Marlborough House Set. It is conservative in politics, and savages both Gladstone and his government, and the foibles of public figures.
The Times	The oldest of the dailies, the Times leans conservative in politics, but is fiercely independent when the government puts pressure on them. There is a Sunday edition, the <i>Sunday Times</i> .



open-air courtyard with a statue of the queen in the centre. The promenade around this courtyard has other busts of important financial figures from history, and the main purpose of the building is to provide rented space for merchants and traders. The upper floor has larger offices that house the Lloyd's Rooms.

Lloyd's of London is an umbrella group, representing various insurance companies that work together to minimize risk. The members of Lloyds and their subscribers are the only people let into the rooms. A records room holds transactions going back to the founding of the main underwriters in 1688. The main rooms are the underwriting offices themselves, where cargo and ships are insured against loss; and the merchant room, where shipping and commercial intelligence are collated and disseminated to the members and subscribers. A private luncheon room, the Captain's Room, often sees traffic from the masters of vessels up for auction. There is a telegraph and telephone room here as well, with a host of linguists working to collect information from around the world.

The Bank of England is the main repository for gold in the country, and is tasked by the Chancellor of the Exchequer with carrying out a centralized monetary policy and minting coin for the realm. Having lost the monopoly on direct stock banking, the B of E is now in hot competition with other banks, many of which rival the old institution for profits. The main rivals are Barclays, Midlands, and Barings (which will undergo a scandal in the late 1890s and require a bail out by the government), whose London offices ape the Bank of England's heavy, Italianate palazzo design (it is thought to provide the appropriate amount of *gravitas* for a financial institution). The public conducts business on the ground floor in a main atrium, the board rooms are on the first floor, rented offices on the second, and usually an attic for caretakers and night watchmen.

THE TOWER OF LONDON

Lastly, one of the most famous buildings in the City is the Tower of London. Finished in 1100, the Tower was home to the monarchs of England. A mint and menagerie were built by Henry III and Edward II respectively, and a wharf provides direct access to the Thames. It is infamous for its use as a prison, starting with Richard III's murder of Henry VI and the imprisonment and assassination of his sons. Other prisoners include two wives of Henry VIII, who also met their end here at the end of the executioner's axe, and that same king's daughter Elizabeth, later the queen. Charles used the tower as his headquarters for the English Civil War, and it is the repository of the Crown Jewels, which Queen Elizabeth open to viewing for the paying public. The Tower has been a tourist attraction for the last hundred years. The mint has been moved to the Bank of England, the menagerie to the zoo in Regent's Park, and the moat filled in for health and safety purposes.

The White Tower is the original piece of the fortress and houses the Royal Armoury, which consisted mostly of the weapons and armor of King Henry VII, as well as some clever medieval torture devices. Attached is the Medieval Palace, where Edward I and the subsequent kings used as their residence. The Tower Green and Scaffold is the site where prisoners were put to death. The Chapel of St. Peter and Vincula is on the Green and was where last rites were administered to the condemned, which included three queens. It is their final resting place, and their ghosts are rumored to wander the grounds on the anniversaries of their deaths. Most famous is the 'Bloody Tower,' where the Princes were kept by Richard III, and where Sir Walter Raleigh was jailed by James I for plotting against the Crown. Beauchamp Tower is notable for the inscriptions of the varied high-ranking prisoners left in their cells. The walls are considered 'historical documents' by the British Museum.

The Yeomanry of the Tower has stood guard since the time of Henry III. The Yeoman Warders, or 'Beefeaters', still wear the red and black uniforms from Elizabeth's time, complete with halberds for weaponry. These guardsmen protect the Crown Jewels, but also are an attraction for the public, who enjoy the ritual changing of the guard. The Crown Jewels are on display from nine in the morning until five in the afternoon, and include five royal crowns, tens of thousands of diamonds, the king of which is the allegedly-cursed Koh-I-Noor diamond, recovered from the Sikhs in 1848 and presented to the Queen by General Napier.

THE DOCKS & WAPPING

Another major industry of the City is transportation. Several bridges along the Thames connect the City with Southwark. Blackfriar's Bridge crosses from Bridge Street to Blackfriars Road in the south. It is girded by rail bridges taking traffic from St. Paul's and Ludgate Hill Stations over to the south bank. Southwark Bridge, London Bridge, and Tower Bridge (next to the Tower of London) provide foot and carriage traffic into the southern districts, Cannon Street Station a railway connection to the massive London Bridge Station. In addition to the bridges, docks run the length of Upper and Lower Thames Streets. St. Paul's Pier and Queenhithe Docks and Stairs are used mostly by locals delivering fish and other products of the metropolitan area to the markets along the Thames. Steam Packet Wharf next to London Bridge provides a landing point for postal packet boats

The markets and warehouses are busy along the Lower Thames Road. Next to London Bridge is the Fishmongers Hall, a meeting place for local fisherman, and a massive indoor fish market where market buyers come to purchase product in bulk. Smaller purchases can be made here as well, and the hall is always packed with business. It opens promptly at six in the morning and is often open until seven in the evening. Billingsgate Market is alongside the Customs House, and here there is a steady stream of goods from around London and abroad. It is primarily for wholesale shoppers, looking for a good deal. Across from Billingsgate is the Coal Tunstons Exchange. Stretching from the Customs House all the way to Fenchurch Road are the Communal Sales Rooms, a huge set of warehouse buildings that have grown together sometime in the past to create a Grand Seraglio-like shopping space. These warehouses store goods that have come through the Customs House. Here things are sold in bunk, primarily, to purchasing agents from the department stores and other shops around the city. It is constantly bustling with activity and is open from seven to seven.

The Customs House is west of the Tower of London, and has its own quay to handle shipping, but in the last century, the docks of London have expanded too much for all of the goods transiting the city to come through the building for inspection and taxation. (It should be noted the Internal Revenue Office is across Lower Thames Street from the Customs House.) Now customs inspectors, often working with the Thames Police, leave the Customs House to travel by skiff or river steamer to the various dockyards around Wapping and Southwark to inspect cargos and warehouses.

Wapping is on the east side of the Tower, and is a collection of docks and warehouses stretching from Tower Bridge to Limehouse in the east. It follows a curve in the Thames known as 'the Pool.' Several dock facilities are here; St. Katherine was the original dockyard of Wapping and was built around a basin on the north side of the Thames. Warehouses for St. Katherine's traffic are reached by railway and are a mile or so away along Bishopgate Road, just across from the very large and very busy Broad Street Station.

The London Docks lie east of St. Katherine, and connect the Hermitage and Wapping basins. The area is broken into the West, East, and Tobacco Docks, and the area is busy all day and night but most especially when the tides are coming in and out. At these times, steam tug boats are leading the ships in and out of the docks and onto the Thames, where the river pilots, employed by the various dockyards, navigate the ships out to sea and bring them into harbor safely. East of Wapping is Shadwell, with entrances into the Eastern Dock. Massive warehouses, five to six stories high create canyons through which the streets of the dock wind. Cargos are constantly being hauled into higher warehousing bays by crane and pulley, and the work can run all night. The London Docks primarily handle trade from Europe and the Mediterranean, roughly 10% of the London sea trade. Increasingly the docks in Limehouse and Southwark are handling the bulk of the trade coming into the city.



THE HILLS

Along the north side of London is a low ridge that outlines the Thames alluvial plain from the land to the north. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, much of this area was farmland. Small towns girded London, but were not part of the city. Carriage travel was difficult to impossible in inclement weather due to the steepness of the hills. As the century wound on, London grew out into the hills, incorporating formerly rural towns into the metropolitan area. While still primarily agrarian in character, new roads and houses are crowding out the old farms, just as they have in Kensal Green and Fulham.

HAMPSTEAD

Hampstead is prosperous and solidly middle-class. In the past, it was the rural home of the poet John Keats, but now most of the residents are shop and small factory owners with the means to live outside of London. Those families that have lived here since before the spurt of growth are farmers, by and large, and while they appreciate the increase in business that the new suburban growth has cause, there is a definite split between the old Hampsteaders and the new immigrants. There are no factories and large stores in the town, although there are plenty of small shops that sell dairy and other farm products, and a few of the newcomers have opened groceries and clothiers in the town proper. There is very little aristocratic presence here; this is a community looking to remain distinctly small in character.

Much of the area around Hampstead remains untouched. Hampstead Heath is a massive area of farmland and lightly forested fields surrounding the Jack Straus Castle. The fields around Hampstead Ponds and Highgate Ponds are owned by Parliament and are set aside in the 1880s for recreation.

Getting to Hampstead, which is north of Regent's Park, is not difficult. Several large arteries run out of London in the town (for they still think of themselves as a separate entity from London), Edgware Road out of St. Johns Wood becomes Kilburn High Road, which climbs Shoot Up Hill. Finchley Road runs along Regent's Park and into the town, as does Haverstock Hill (named for another of Hampstead's features), which runs into Camden Town.

Additionally, by the 1890, rail and tram stations run out to Hampstead, terminating at a series of stations along Finchley Road, at Hampstead Heath, and the Haverstock Hill line joins with the Midland Railway, which runs through Hampstead by underground.

HIGHGATE

To the southeast of Hampstead is Highgate. Positioned on the steep Highgate Hill, this was once on the boundary of London; now, it is the outmost district of the city, lying alongside St. Pancras. From the hill, one can get a good view of the whole of London, and this is attracting wealthier middle-class home buyers, who want a picturesque place to live, while still being in easy reach of their work. As the development of this area proceeded apace in the late part of the century, its character changed drastically from rural to suburban.

Several railway lines carve their way through Highgate on their way to Euston, St. Pancras, or Kings Road Stations. Through Camden Town, the Regent's Canal runs around the north end of what used to be the boundary of London.

There are a few different neighborhoods here, all with much the same character. The houses are small and new, the streets are being paved in tar macadam in many places due to the new construction. Camden Town, which the Highgate's border with St. Pancras has larger, more varied homes, and the region was part of the development of St. Pancras in the middle of the century. The middle-class and gentry live here. Kentish Town is poorer middle-class, mundane, with small planned houses for the glut of middle-class moving into the area. The agriculture that used to characterize Highgate in the middle of the century is all but gone. The last vestige is the Cattle Market on Metropolitan, near Camden Road, where farmers still drive their animals to at various times of the year, clogging the roads of Highgate and Holloway with the cattle drives.



ISLINGTON

While middle-class, like much of the Hills region, Islington was built in a sudden burst of activity in the middle of the century. The houses and streets are cheaper imitations of Marylebone and St. Pancras, complete with the distinctive squares and crescents of the better-off districts. Despite its proximity to poorer parts of Holborn, Islington is quiet, with a low crime rate and a neighboring population of hard-working, penny-scrimping families.

HOLLOWAY

Holloway is north of Islington, and is divided into Lower and Upper Holloway, the latter in the hills above London. The quaint rural feeling, with low stone walls separating plots, and muddy dirt roads have been removed by the steamroller and construction van. Now Lower Holloway is much like Kentish Town or Islington; the burgeoning middle-class has moved out to the 'country,' and turned it into the city.

Lower Holloway is poor to middling in wealth, but the majority of residents are skilled laborers from St. Pancras and Holborn. Crime is low, as is police coverage. Upper Holloway may have paved streets and a constant din of building, but there are still larger plots of land, with quaint cottages sitting behind stone walls and underneath trees. Save for the area around the New City Prison, and the City of London Workhouse (the former in Lower Holloway, the latter in Upper), crime is fairly low. Most crimes here are drunkenness and vagrancy; violent crime is virtually unheard of.

HIGHBURY

As with Islington and Highgate, Highbury is a collection of different neighborhoods. Highbury is east of Islington and near Hoxton, part of the East End, and is mostly inhabited by farmers and skilled laborers. Some small, family owned factories produce finished goods like furniture, leather goods, and the like. North of St. Paul's Road the housing begins to get less crowded, and like portions of Upper Holloway, we see cottages with yards surrounded by wrought iron fences or low stone walls. The Highbury Fields provide playing space for the residents, and in the north Highbury Vale is more solidly middle-class and purposely rural in character, an oasis from London in London.

FORMER VILLAGES

Keeping in the flavor of other regions in the hills, there are a series of villages that London has grown to engulf in the East End. They are bounded by Hackney Marsh in the East and farmlands in the north. These include places like Stoke Newington, Shacklewell, Hackney, and Clapton. They are all north of the Regent's Canal, and their development has been haphazard. Some areas further out were built up before others; Clapton is further out than Hackney, but saw construction and an influx of the poor before the latter. The character of the area is constantly changing, but it is steadily showing improvements in income and living quality.

These are working-class and middle-class neighborhoods. Building styles are patchwork here. There are small houses that are vestiges of the farm buildings that had been here before London expanded into the area, newer small homes, row houses, and new tenements. The district might decide what type of housing is in the majority, but there is a little of everything, depending on the street you are in. Stoke Newington is more developed with the row homes of recent style, and is more well-to-do than Clapton, which has a number of workhouses and Unions and is crushingly poor. Hackney, deeper into the East End, still has a number of open parks and spaces, such as London Fields, Hackney Park, Victoria Park, and while the residents are poor, they are still better off and more orderly than in Clapton to the northwest.



THE EAST END

This is the London of the crime sheet and progressive reformer. Newspapers report on the animal-like inhabitants' crimes and rail against the immorality of drug use and drunkenness, prostitution and petty theft, murder, and rape. Others decry the causes of these activities, citing the national failure to provide for those mired in crushing poverty, hopelessness, and a cycle of violence.

This is the London of Chinese opium dens, the child gangs of Charles Dickens novels, and the horror of Jack the Ripper. Where the West End shows the progress, both technological and economic of Victorian Britain, the East End is the example of what happens to those who will not or cannot adapt to rapidly shifting economies that require skills and education; it is the London of those who have fallen between the cracks and are left behind by modernity.

WHITECHAPEL

Moving past Bishopgate, north of Commercial Road, is the district of Whitechapel. Its poverty is featured prominently in the scandal sheets and Parliamentary reports. The working class is the dominant class in the area, but middle class homes and shops line the main thoroughfares of Whitechapel and Commercial Roads. Much of the population is Irish, Germanic Jews, and poor Italians. As with St. Giles, most of them are transient and drunken, renting a bed or bench as they have the money. The public fountains and standpipes draw a constant stream of residents, who have to bathe in the open. People are sleeping in gutters, publicly relieving themselves, or even have sex in the alleys. The hotels and flop houses are frequently rented out by sailors in town for a few days and looking for the cheap thrills of the district.

These pleasures are mostly set out on Whitechapel's eponymous road: music-halls, theatres, and large public houses which feature a singer or small band, darts competitions, and other cheap entertainments. The more respectable of the theatres is the Pavilion, although the quality of the bill is questionable. There is the famed Ten Bells Pub on Commercial Street and Fournier, which offers excellent beer brewed on the premises since 1666. The food is good enough to draw workers from the nearby banking centers. Britannia Pub (Commercial and Dorset) gains a certain notoriety after 1888, during the Ripper murders; one of his victims, Mary Jane Kelly, was a frequent customer.





The streets of the area are packed with sales carts offering every kind of inexpensive goods from food products to furniture, books to boots, to second-hand clothes. By day, the district is clogged with food and vehicle traffic, and animals are much more common to see than in the West End or the City. The rats in this area of town are bold and can be seen scuttling around the walls of the buildings. Dogs, cats, and the occasional farm animal roam the alleys.

The other pleasures of Whitechapel are well-known and are frequently written about with concern by the newspapers and charitable societies. Prostitution, gambling dens, dog and rat fighting establishments, gin shops, and opium dens draw fire from do-gooders in the city. These dark entertainments draw all levels of society, from the most base to the aristocracy. These illicit activities feed one of the most profitable of business sectors: crime. Organized gangs run certain areas of Whitechapel, specializing in various 'services'. Robbery teams run the streets, especially at night, preying on the gentlemen slumming in the East End. They know that

the embarrassment of even being in Whitechapel will keep their marks quiet; a gentleman in Whitechapel at night would be well advised to carry a sword cane or revolver. Protection is the most lucrative, the shaking down prostitutes and businesses, punishing people who 'blow the gab' to the peelers, or warning of the occasional police raid. Some of the larger gangs are even rumored to have 'rum' judges on their payrolls. Frequently, these gangs aren't just based on geographic position, such as a specific block of the district, but also along family and ethnic lines. Irish tend to run with Irish, Jewish with the Jewish, Italians with Italians.

Rookeries dot the landscape in Whitechapel, ranging from lone buildings to entire blocks of tenements. These rookeries are sanctuaries for criminals and gangs protect them fiercely. Police avoid these havens unless a raid is conducted in force. Even the low streets and alleys are considered dangerous for the copper who is not on the payroll of that particular gang, or has a reputation fearsome enough to stave off attack.

Unlike the larger or more prosperous industry of the rest of the city, the factories and shops here tend to work their employees longer, harder, and dismiss them for any reason. Chemical works like matchmakers, drug manufacturers, and dye-makers are common throughout the district and give the place its characteristic sulfurous scent. Cheap weaving and dressmaking, tinker, tailors hire many from the area. Hanbury's Brewery is on Brick Lane and is a major employer in the area.

Whitechapel Road is also home to London Hospital, a large facility that caters to the poor and which receives much of its operations funds from charitable donations. The hospital is constantly on the edge of insolvency at this time and has to charge its patients a nominal fee for services. Most of their clientele cannot afford this. London Hospital also has questionable quality of care, more due to the lack of funding with which to draw better physicians. Across from the hospital are the twin stations of Whitechapel and Whitechapel Mile End Stations. The first handles train and tram traffic, the second is the final terminal for the Whitechapel line of trams. Further east, just past Cambridge Road is the Trinity Alms House, where the poor are provided a place to stay for the night and a simple meal.

Also dedicated to the aiding the poor is the Baker's Row Workhouse, an imposing five story red brick slab with a series of arch-topped windows regularly running about all of the floors. Located across from Coverly Fields, with its crowded burial ground (which goes out of use in the early 1890s), and the Union Infirmary. The workhouse is segregated by sex, with men in the west wing, women in the east. The ground floor contains the offices for the porters and overseer, the second and third floors are reserved for the living quarters of the inmates, and the uppermost floor is set aside for children under the age of fourteen. The living quarters are an open bay, the better to protect the occupants from their own natures and allow the staff to monitor their behavior. Kitchen and canteen occupy the crossbar of the H shape that the building takes when viewed from above. These rooms are used for Sunday services, as well.

LIFE IN THE WORKHOUSE

The workhouse is a feature of just about every town of respectable size in the country. London is filled with the places. They are the outcome of an 1834 'Poor Law' which sought to aid the sick and poor, but avoid the abuse of the system that had preceded this act.

Eligibility to enter the workhouse is limited to those 'independent labourer[s] of the lowest class.' The workhouse provides work and a place to live, and is supposed to foster thrift and good citizenship. Conditions inside, however, are frequently antithetical to those goals. Workhouse masters are infamous for their cruelty. The cramped conditions lead to immoral conduct, made worse by the inmates being housed by gender (married couples are not allowed to cohabit, but are housed in the men and women's wings, respectively). Corruption is endemic in the system. The Board of the Poor Laws oversees the operation of these facilities and paid the owners of the workhouses a stipend for their operations and upkeep. The owner also gains the profit from the labors of the tenants.

Most families or persons can be directed to the workhouse by a landlord, neighbor, or court order that finds the person unable to care for himself. An Officer of the Poor, or Poor Ward, then evaluates the claims (except by court order). Rumors of Poor Wards who will take money to not send a person or family to the workhouse abound. The prospective, voluntary tenement meets with the Relieving Officer who decides if the candidate is eligible for aid. Until the Board of Guardians can meet to accept or reject the person, they are housed in the probationary ward. There he or she is stripped, washed, and a health inspection given, then a uniform is issued. This usually consists of a jacket over striped shirt, trousers, shoes, and a hat. Women get a light dress, striped, with stockings, knit shoes and a cap.

Once inside, the inmates are segregated into seven classes: the aged and infirm men, able bodied men over 13 years of age, boys under 13; aged and infirm women, able-bodied women over the age of 16, girls under 16, and children under the age of seven. All of these groups are housed separately; even families are required to follow these rules. The tenant is given a work number, which is stitched on every bit of clothing they have, and, as in prison, this become the person's identity.

The facilities are usually designed with two wings, one for the women, and one for the men. The ground floor houses the offices of the facility, the kitchen and bakery, the gardens and workrooms. Meals are cooked according to dietary charts published by the Board of the Poor Law. Most have some form of meat, turnips or onions, and boiled potatoes. Bread is usually served at every meal, and breakfast is simple oat gruel. Tea and milk are usually all there is to drink. Meals are taken in silence.

The daily routine is regimented, and activity changes signaled by a bell. Much of the time is spent working, cleaning the facilities or toiling at whatever contracted labor the house has. Often this is spinning, weaving, tailoring, laundry, and other light industry for the women. Men can expect to do similar work, or other heavier labor, such as breaking rocks for gravel, creating fertilizer, or grinding corn.

Beds are small and framed with wood or iron, with straw-filled mattresses. At the very least, a sheet is provided, but most will also issue a blanket for the inmate. Bed sharing is common as the workhouses fill up, and instances of 'unnatural acts' are severely punished. Toilets are 'earth closets' – a privy with dirt inside that can be used as fertilizer. The toilets are segregated by sex, as are the weekly baths.

Creating a moral citizen is part of the mission of the workhouse. Lying, stealing, and swearing are prohibited, and other behaviors can be added to this, according to the proclivities of the house master or mistress. Most are Evangelicals and take blasphemy seriously. Infractions can lead to a reduction in food issue, or a simplified menu (potatoes only, for example), revocation of luxuries, or corporal punishment. Solitary confinement could be issued for more serious breaches, like assault or insubordination.

Leaving the workhouse is much more difficult than getting in. Proof of employment is necessary, and while the residents are allowed to write letters to apply for jobs, employers are skittish about hiring workhouse inmates without recommendations from the house master. Often, the workhouses will not do this if there has been any kind of infraction (or they need laborers). If the man of a family group is allowed to leave, the entire family must vacate with him. Most people, however, leave feet first. Deaths in a workhouse require the facility to try and find the next of kin. If the bodies are not claimed, the deceased are either interred in a public graveyard or sold for medical experiments.

LIMEHOUSE & THE ISLE OF DOGS

Limehouse takes its name from the lime pits in the area of the Limehouse basin and reach on the Thames. Frequently, this area is called the 'Chinese District' due to the number of Orientals that inhabit the area. Although the Chinese make up the majority of the immigrant population, there are sizable numbers of Indians, Burmese, Malay, Japanese, Arabs, and Africans that live here.

The housing here is cheap and mean; mainly flop houses for the sailors coming through London. Public houses are jammed between these hotels and the warehouses that fill the area. Shops abound and have signage in various Oriental languages, and the facades of some of the buildings have been altered to present a more Chinese appearance. These shops sell the usual selection of cheap food and booze, but also have more exotic fare from their homelands. The smell of spices mixes with the stench of the river and the reek of coal-fired boilers, and the sound of the neighborhood is fanciful, with dozens of languages being spoken or shouted during the day. It doesn't get much quieter at night. Like Wapping, the character of the area is shaped by the docks and the river. This is a commercial area, with shipping and warehousing, ceramics and mortuary services being the major occupation of the workers seen here. Much of the district is inhabited by the West India Docks in the Isle of Dogs in the southern portion of Limehouse.

Work on the docks slows at night, but there are usually sailors wandering the streets looking for entertainment, stevedores working the night shift under gas lamps, and trains moving goods from the docks to their destinations via the Blackwall Railway.

The crime rate is very high in Limehouse, partly because the victims tend to be passing through the city and either need to leave too quickly to pursue legal options, are embarrassed by their business in the area, or simply will not be missed. The foreign populations in Limehouse tend to be insular. Instead of cooperating with police, when there is a matter that needs to be handled, it is handled through the various beneficent societies in the Chinese community. These *tongs* are both organized crime gangs and quasi-legitimate civic governments for the Orientals. On the legitimate side, these *tongs* also provide loans and aid to people in their community that are in need, so while the Chinese look to be dirty and destitute, few are truly down and out in the way that, for example, the Irish in Whitechapel are. They help bring in the opium (legal into the twentieth century), tea, spices, and other exotic goods into London. Many of the well-connected Chinamen have married Englishwomen, to better legitimize themselves, and this is true for nearly every *tong* boss.

The *tongs* also control the organized crime in Limehouse. Petty crimes like robbery and burglary, rape or murder, are not their concerns, so long as the victims are not Chinese (and sometimes, not even then). The real income for the *tongs* is in the drug trade. Opium dens are concealed behind the curtained windows of otherwise respectable shops, and the clientele is primarily Chinese, despite the hysterical news reports to the contrary. Internal disputes are handled by the bosses of the *tongs*, and trouble with outside gangs is dealt with swiftly and violently. One of the benefits of Limehouse is, of course, the lime pits. These can be used to discreetly dispose of bodies that might cause the *tongs* discomfort with the authorities.

Limehouse has a Chinese mission house run by the Rev. George Piercey near the West India Docks, and this is the best insertion point into the Chinese neighborhood. Piercey is trusted, as much as any *gwao lo* can be, and can be a remarkable aid in any business conducted in the district. This mission house is along Limehouse Cut, a canal that links the Thames with the River Lea and Regent's Canal in Mile End, and along the Emmett Street are the Chinese shops for the Londoner. Here one can purchase most any Oriental delicacy or object. On India Dock Street, shops hawking Indian curries and spices, food and beer, furniture and art objects do quite well with those who have been out to the subcontinent. Limehouse is a place where one can find a Japanese tattoo artist, carpet purveyors from Syria and Turkey, Egyptian cosmetics dealers – half of whom have no shop, but do their deals in warehouses or out of street carts.

The Isle of Dogs, while considered a different neighborhood, is not different enough from Limehouse to justify much ink. The majority of the area is taken up with warehouses and the massive dockyards that have been carved out of this spit of land that curls south from Limehouse Cut to around to Blackwall Reach. The docks from north to south are the collective the West India Docks; the import dock is most northerly, the export dock next, and the South dock is below that. These docks are joined to the river through locks out of Blackwall and Limehouse Reaches. Below Glengall Road is Millwall Dock. This is a privately owned dockyard that handles overflow traffic from the other yards in the city, but mainly handles vessels being floated by the Thames Iron Ship Building Company, which occupies most of the south most area of the Isle.

MILE END & STEPNEY

Centered on Mile End Road, this district is indistinguishable from Whitechapel. It is a poor, high-crime area with only adequate police coverage, and that is dedicated to protecting the legitimate businesses and middle class homes along the high streets. These houses are mostly new and have some of the modern amenities, like heated water, steam heating, and indoor plumbing.

This is an immigrant neighborhood, with various populations living in tenements built either a few decades ago and quickly gone to seed, or ancient old houses that have stayed up more as an act of insolent will than decent engineering. These rookeries are often specific to nationality or race. Mile End is heavily populated with poor Irish and Italians, Polish and Hungarians. Each group has their own gangs and neighborhoods.

Industry is heavy here, much of it crowded out to the edges of London in the last few decades to try and clean up the city environment. Along the River Lea, there are heavy industries: mass production of chemical products, as represented by the largest employer Gas Light & Coke Company, and the Imperial Gas Works. The Three Mills distillery is tucked on the other side of the river on Three Mills Road and is always hiring (and firing). The turnover rate at these 'dark, satanic mills' is high, and former employees are frequently rehired for a period when need for labor spikes.

The City Union Workhouse is positioned on Mile End Road, and provides the truly destitute employment and a place to live (see the workhouse sidebar in Whitechapel entry. Across from the Workhouse is the City of London Cemetery, which has taken over from graveyards in Whitechapel and other East End neighborhoods. A Jewish Burial yard is alongside the Regent's Canal on Mile End Road, next to the People's Palace.

The People's Palace is first dedicated in 1886 by the Princess of Wales. It takes a year to construct, and after that, it presents concerts and more edifying entertainment than the usual tripe of the East End. In the afternoon and evenings, classes are given to the poor; reading and writing, arithmetic, and the basic skills necessary to find and keep a job in the city. Most of the students are adults, although some enterprising teens can be found here. The People's Palace represents a middle and upper-class interest in the late Victorian period in improving the lot of the poor.

The Eastern Railway comes through the district, linking with rails from the Isle of Dogs and Limehouse at the Bow Station on Bow Road. Along with Bromley Station near the Gas Works, these stations represent the end of the line, as far as London goes. Further travel takes one out of the city and into the eastern country of the Thames Valley.

Stepney is a neighborhood that is tucked between Mile End and Limehouse. As a result, it is a mixture of the two; a high-crime, low-income region with a smattering of middle-class streets, but predominantly industrial, with rookeries abounding.

SOUTHWARK

Southwark refers to the metropolitan area on the south bank of the Thames. It is considered to encompass the districts of Lambeth, Bermondsey, and Rotherhithe; although in this chapter we will also include the neighborhoods that surround Southwark proper.

The southern bank of London had been, until the nineteenth century, mostly comprised of housing developments for the poor or country areas for the middle-class and wealthy to escape the city. Most of the development had been in Rotherhithe and had revolved around the construction of docks to handle the steadily increasing trade from the empire and the world at large. By the middle of the 1800s, the growth of Southwark was explosive. There were still neighborhoods that had kept their rural, or at the very least, suburban character, by the end of the century, but by 1870 most of these neighborhoods had been swept away in a building craze that lasted into the twentieth century. Even the hamlets of Greenwich, Peckham, and Putney are part and parcel of London's metropolitan area by the 1880s. Outlying towns like Ascot, Windsor, and Richmond are a short train trip away.

PUTNEY

Across the river from Fulham is Putney. It is a suburban district, comprised of artisans and middle-class laborers, and older 'country' homes of the wealthy. The area had been brought into the metropolitan area in the 1870s, but has managed to keep a small village feel until the end of the century. The railway that runs west out of Putney Station leads to Richmond, as does Upper Richmond Road, which parallels the line. The streets are wide and are paved in the late 1880s in piecemeal fashion. The houses are large and often have small yards around them. These units house single families, and many have built or retrofitted with interior plumbing and water heaters in the 1880s.

The country feel of the place is complemented by the nearby Barn Elms Park, where picnics and evening extravaganzas create a community feeling. Sculling and other boating sports are practiced here, and other athletic fields are in frequent use by school children throughout the year. Crime is low, as is police coverage. Putney is a place where very little exciting happens, and the residents are grateful for it.

Putney Bridge and the rail bridge next to it provide access to Fulham, where many of the Putney residents work. To the east, along the stretch of Thames that loops around Fulham and Chelsea, there is a mile or so of open fields, factories, and the rails leading into Battersea. Along with this bulwark against the main suburban area of London south of the river is the moat of the Wandle River, which separates Putney from the rest of the southern districts.

BATTERSEA & CLAPHAM

This is still a new district and considered quite flash by the working class. The area is poor, but the quality of the place has been improving as wages increase throughout the end of the century and more middle-class families move in to find cheaper housing. Nearly all the homes are less than fifty years old by the period covered in this book. They are built to 'row home' style, with long rows of townhouses connected one after the other down the roads.

The main feature of the area is the massive Battersea Park, near a mile long on each side, with a large pond for boating. There are small islands in the water that are home to ducks and other water fowl that inhabit the park. The Battersea Park Pier allows for transport along the Thames to tie up and deliver passengers, but also provides a landing point for scullers and other pleasure boaters to tie up. There are other piers on the Chelsea side of the river, particularly along Cheyne Walk, and small boats frequently travel back and forth from Chelsea and Battersea for pleasure or to transport workers who have missed the bus or train into the city.

There is a winding drive that circles the park and acts as a middle-class version of Hyde Park's Rotten Row. Here wealthier middle-class women and men ride in carriages or on horse, and ape the actions of their betters. South Drive, a portion of this circle, provides a view of Albert Palace, which is on the boundary of the park between the busy Battersea Park Road and Prince of Wales Road. The palace is an exposition hall where theatrical engagements are run, but also where educational displays like the Buffalo Bill Cody Western Revues, and Farini's Earthmen (or Pigmies) can be seen between two and night in the evening for a small price. Albert Bridge and the Chelsea Bridge connect the park to Chelsea at Cheyne Walk and Grosvenor Road.

On the east side of Victoria Road, which bounds the park, the railroads cross the Thames to Victoria Station. There is also the reservoir for Battersea and Lambeth. This storage is to handle the sudden rise in interior plumbing that has accompanied the expansion of the city, and is frequently touted as a marvel of city engineering. Next to the reservoir is the Vauxhall Southwark Waterworks, where the water is directed through underground pipes to the homes in the southern reaches of the metropolitan area, and the waste from the burgeoning number of water closets in homes is received to be treated before being returned to the Thames. (This treatment mostly involves bleaching the water and dropping the stinking mess into the Thames so it can float toward Whitehall).

As with other poorer neighborhoods, the high roads see more middle-class housing and business fronts. Lavender Hill Road and Battersea Park Road are busy thoroughfares with department stores, restaurants and public houses, and other shops. Lavender Hill Road near the Clapham Junction is the site of the Freemasons Female School, a public school that accepts daughters of poor freemasons for education. It is one of the better schools for girls in the city.

The very poor are crammed into the rookeries and tenements of the district, and most of these are situated near the bevy of railway lines that wind through Battersea and eventually come together at Battersea Station, just a quarter mile down Gwyne Road from the Thames and the rail bridge into Fulham. The worst of the area is between Battersea Road and the tangle of street-level and elevated train lines that string between Clapham Junction, where the rails run south out of the city, or west into Putney, and Queens' Station, a massive terminal just a few blocks south of Albert Palace. On Home Road, one finds the public baths, which are in frequent use (even though it is normal for most people to bathe once or twice a week).

On the southern side of Lavender Hill Road is Clapham. Here the townhouses line long, arrow-straight streets like The Chase, Cedars Road, or create arcing canyons in quasi-circles like Lavender Sweep. The neighborhood is almost exclusively middle-class government workers who commute by rail out of Wandsworth Station or by buses. The crime here is mostly burglary or petty crimes, and police coverage is low.

LAMBETH

The London and Southern Railway comes through Lambeth into Vauxhall Station and onto Waterloo Station, a cavernous terminal that serves Lambeth, and is a junction point to Charing Cross across the river, and London Bridge Station in Southwark. Lambeth is a poor, working class neighborhood that is joined to Whitehall by the heavy stone Westminster Bridge. This plain crossing has been reviled by Charles Dickens, but its openness makes it an excellent artery for vehicular and foot traffic from Lambeth into the city. Lambeth is a crossroads for southern London. Several high roads, packed heavily with traffic of all manner come together at St. George's Circle. Westminster Bridge Road winds in from the west,

meeting Waterloo Road and Blackfriar's Road, both bringing trade and people across the Thames from the City, and these northern bank arteries spill vans, buses, trams, and other traffic into Borough Road, which joins Lambeth to the heavy industries of Southwark, and Lambeth Road, which routes the flow into Lambeth and its neighborhoods of Kennington, Camberwell, and Walworth.

Alongside the Westminster Bridge is St. Thomas Hospital, an interesting building for its long central corridor that parallels the river, and the seven patients' wings that leave the central spine of the hospital, ending at the bank of the river. A newer addition has been added on the south end of the hospital for new surgical suites and administrative offices that are lit by electric light in the 1890s. On the other side of Lambeth Palace Road are the palace grounds and the building that gives the road its name.

St. Thomas is not the most famous of Lambeth's hospitals, however. That dubious honor must go to the ugly Bethlehem Asylum, or Bedlam, as it is known, which occupies the corner of Lambeth, St. Georges, and Kennington Roads. The asylum is known for its psychiatric 'care', which consists mostly of stuffing the insane into cages or padded rooms. The attendants in Bedlam are known for being a bit batty themselves, after a few months of exposure, and their cruelty to the patients is legendary. Hosing down troublemakers is common, and many of the inmates are constrained in strait jackets. Bethlehem, however, is on the forefront of psychiatric research, despite its vile reputation.

Near Bethlehem is the Blind School, which is on the southern side of St. Georges Circle. South of Bethlehem, along Brook Street, is the Lambeth Workhouse, the largest in all of London. As with Battersea, the main streets of Lambeth are busy, commercial, and wealthy. Off of the high streets, however, the townhouses of the middle century have decayed steadily into rookeries, illegal gin shops, and brothels. The poor here are as desperate as their northern cousins in Whitechapel and St. Giles, but Lambeth is far away from the reporters of the Strand and Fleet Street...or at least an annoying ride on the train across the river into an unfamiliar neighborhood. Crime in these streets and allies is as diverse, cruel, and unforgiving as in Whitechapel; it just doesn't get the press that the other district does. Police coverage is high, and arrests are frequent, but there are always more poor and desperate to replace those going to Millbank Prison over in Pimlico.

The Kennington neighborhood of Lambeth, just over Vauxhall Bridge from Belgravia, is solidly middle-class. The homes, while as old as the rest of Lambeth, and of similar design in the low streets, are better cared for, and the residents are more watchful for their criminal brothers in the or Newington. The crime rates are dramatically lower in Kennington and other than con games and burglary, this area is fairly safe. South Lambeth, which joins Battersea to Kennington, and Camberwell in the south, is dominated by middle-class by this time, as well, although the neighborhood is a bit dodgy at night.

BERMONDSEY

Part of Southwark proper, Bermondsey is the district east of Lambeth and centered on the gargantuan London Bridge Station and the bridges into the City. Southwark, London, and Tower bridges feed travelers back and forth. London Bridge Station joins the metropolitan area to the southern coast via the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway, which cuts straight through Bermondsey. The area is generally poor and working-class, but shops, public houses, and wealthier establishments line High Street Borough, Great Dover Street, and the ring road that connects St. Georges Circle in Lambeth via New Kent Road to Bermondsey North Road to Bermondsey Street with London Bridge Station.



Like Lambeth or Whitechapel, much of the area is impoverished, with old houses; some of the oldest buildings in the city once crowded here in the middle of the century, but by 1880, they are swept away in favor of the townhouse and tenement. The people living and working in Bermondsey are often too poor to reside on their own, so many of these tenements would have multiple families living in a tenement house to save money.

Transportation is a major source of employment here; the railways, the trams and buses, and cartage all run through Bermondsey, bringing goods from the docks in Rotherhithe to the London markets. The river is also a major source of transport, and barges, punt, and various steamers pack the small piers that line the Thames on the Bermondsey and City sides of the water.

Transportation is not the only industry, of course. On Tanner Street, there is the leather market, a giant roofed building where leather goods are sold to businesses. Here the tanners work with hides, thinning, curing, and cutting them for sale. The place reeks of blood, rotting fat, and the chemicals used to tan the hides (often involving urea). It's a quiet place and the people here have back-breaking jobs that make them sickly. There is a workhouse not far away where the inmates are involved in piecework contracted by local businesses. These contracts are with the house, not the people, so to gain the work one must be an inmate and remain one. Over on Tolley Street, near the train station, is St. Olaves Union, another charitable house that attempts to find work, and provides a cheap meal, for the workers in the area. Much of Bermondsey has grown up in the last couple of decades, filling in the space between Southwark Park and Old Kent Road, south of Jamaica and Spa Road.

This region is filled with row homes, tenement buildings, and sloppily constructed stores and warehouses. The streets are small, busy, and like Whitechapel, very poor. The workers here live in squalor, tucking in a warren of tight low streets that fill the countryside between Walworth in and the river.

PECKHAM

South of this area, the former town of Peckham has been consolidated into London's sprawl. Like Battersea and Putney, this is a middle-class area, inhabited by skilled labor and office workers that can afford to buy a home on the outskirts and take the train or omnibus into town. The area is dominated, once again, by canyons of townhouses, all joined together, or surrounded by small gardens with hedge works to separate the homes. The place is especially busy in the early morning (usually around dawn) and the evening (usually around eight o'clock) when the men are trekking into or out of the city and their workplaces. Unlike Bermondsey, which is almost exclusively poor, with a high crime rate and a low police presence away from the rail station and high streets, Peckham has low policing and generally low crime. Although the neighborhood is mostly respectable and quiet, there are pockets throughout Peckham and Peckham New Town where the building owners are either absentee landlords, or simply do not care. In these areas of Peckham, tenements and single family homes are turned into poor-packed slums, with the attendant high crime and violence.

ROTHERHITHE

Rotherhithe is the area along the river from the Pool snaking around Southwark Park down to the end of Limehouse Reach. The Pool is where the river widens and slows near London Bridge. East of this point the curve in the river as it rounds the Isle of Dogs and the tidal flow pressure from downstream cause the river to rise and fall with the tides. The water level can rise and fall as much as twenty-three feet, and the City has flooded several times across the course of history. This tidal change can happen very quickly, and it is not unknown for smaller boats to be swamped by a sudden breaking wave, or rolled by a sudden undertow. Those under human power can find themselves pushed or pulled with the sudden ebb or flow, their trip lengthened as they fight the currents here.

This is an almost exclusively industrial area, with very little housing. Until the 1870s, much of Rotherhithe was dominated by a swamp. This was drained in the 1870s and by the 1880s; the area is dominated by the Surrey Commercial Docks. The area accesses the City and Wapping through the Thames Tunnel, a marvel of the 1850s that was constructed by the famed Mr. Brunel. The tunnel is paved with tarmac, and has lanes for traffic in and out of Wapping. There are sidewalks for pedestrians, but the tunnel is an area where foot travelers had best beware. There are many dark areas in the tunnel where miscreants can lie in wait for the unsuspecting. There is a regular police patrol through the tunnel, but muggings and murders still take place. There is now an underground rail that runs through the tunnel, these tracks separated from the roadbed by a series of columns that aid in supporting the tunnel roof.

When construction on the dockyards on the northern bank was nearing completion, it was already obvious that the Surrey docks were going to have to be expanded to handle the influx of trade that the imperial enterprise was bringing to the city. Starting with Lavender Pond, and the Commercial docks that paralleled the Surrey Canal, the yards were expanded over the space of ten years to include a series of new facilities like Canada and Albino Docks, which were connected to

Quebec Pond, and through that to the canal. Greenland and East Country Docks completed this patchwork of harbors, and warehouses surround the waters. This area of the city is, like the Isle of Dogs, constantly busy and occupied. Police presence here is high, as are private guards, who patrol the region to stop the theft and vandalism that the workers and passers-through wreak on the buildings.

DEPTFORD & GREENWICH

Once towns in their own right, Deptford and Greenwich are now part of the easternmost edge of the metropolitan area on the southern side of the Thames. Deptford is dominated by shipping and train transportation. Several rail lines come together at New Cross Station, on the western edge of Deptford. Deptford is a working and middle-class neighborhood. Instead of being commuters into London, many of the workers here have jobs in Rotherhithe, in Deptford, or in Greenwich.

There is a large contingent of workers who are employed by the military in Deptford. At the southernmost end of the dockyards and on the edge of Deptford, is the Royal Victualing Yard. Here naval vessels are supplied with coal, cannon, and ammunition from the nearby Woolwich Armoury and Proving Grounds, and there is a wealth of work for manual labor. There are some soldiers that live in the cheap tenements here when they aren't assigned to barracks at Woolwich, home of the Royal Engineers and the Artillery Corps' training grounds. Sailors and officer trainees sometimes like in Deptford, in addition to the Victualing Yards, Greenwich hosts the Royal Naval School and the massive Greenwich Hospital, which specializes in care of soldiers and sailors. There is a wealth of work for groundskeepers at the Greenwich Park a massive public park attached to the Naval School, and location for the Greenwich Observatory – where the prime meridian runs through, splitting east from west.

ROYAL GREENWICH OBSERVATORY

Commissioned in 1675 by Charles II, the observatory's original mission was to observe the heavens "so as to find out the so much desired longitude of places for the perfecting of the art of navigation." The main building is Flamsteed House, a building designed by Christopher Wren (John Flamsteed was the name of the first Royal Astronomer at the observatory). The red brick building is elegant, and the windows and trim are whitewashed brick. Various domes give the place an almost gingerbread house feel. It was constructed from the remnants of Duke Humphrey's town, and is in actuality thirteen degrees off alignment with true north. In the Octagon Room, two clocks built by Thomas Tompion keep the time with an accuracy of seven seconds a day!

The observatory was concerned early on with discovering how to measure longitude. In 1884, an international conference makes Greenwich Observatory the prime meridian for longitude (until this point, there was some disagreement on zero degree. This meant some maps published in America or France were not consistent with those of the Admiralty and created navigational problems). A long brass strip in the park, the Airy transit circle, marks zero longitude. Her Majesty's Nautical Almanac Office is here, and keeps track of official naval time.

AROUND THE EDGES

The Thames River valley has seen a sharp change in character in the last forty years or so. London has metastasized and burst from its traditional boundaries, engulfing small towns on its periphery. Other towns, once a few days' travel by foot or carriage are now minutes away by rail. Even carriage travel on the roads is faster. Main thoroughfares into Windsor, Reading, Ascot, Richmond, and other outlying 'racing' towns are paved with tar macadam, or graded regularly, leaving these places a matter of hours away from the capital by wheel. On foot, a traveler can expect to go twenty miles in a day, and by carriage, this is more like 40 miles. Train travel can cross the length of the island in the space of a day; the *Flying Scotsman* connecting London with Edinburgh takes a single evening.

River travel is still common and quick. The Thames rolls across the valley to Oxford, and then becomes one of four headwaters, the Isis, Churn, Con, and Leach. There are tributaries all along its length, allow small craft to navigate from the North Sea to the Cotswold Hill in Gloucester. For steamers the river is navigable up to Lechlade. Barges, punts, and steamers ply the water every day, from the North Sea to deep into the English countryside. Many of these craft are moving people or goods from the countryside to London.

PLAYING VICTORIAN LONDON

Victorian London is an excellent setting for nearly every type of campaign. The city may look different from the London of today, but there are striking similarities in the lifestyles of the people then and now. When presenting London, Narrators should remember that creating this world in the minds of their Heroes requires three things: description, description, description...

A good way to introduce this world is to run the Heroes through an ordinary day (at least before the action begins!)

IT'S JUST ANOTHER DAY..

The average day of working class of the late Victorian period is much the same as today: wake up, grab a bite, and get to work. The difference is that the working Joe or Jane of London is poor, staggeringly so by today's standards, but actually better off than their parents and grandparents. The lowest of the low will most likely be wakened up by the blast of the local factory whistle or the landlord. He will either untie you from sitting up in a pew in a room (you can pack more in sitting up and the rope keeps you from falling over); or perhaps his banging on the walls will wake up in the dank, hot, and dark interior of a flophouse, crowded together with other tenants. If they're lucky, they have one of the hammocks over the floor; there's less chance of bug bites (or if a woman, worse, sexual assault). You climb out of this collection of bodies, tripping on some, stepping on others, and make your way down the rickety stairs to the main room. The landlord will usually hit you up for the next night's rent at this point. Otherwise, he might not be able to guarantee you a place to sleep. Commerce, you see...

A squat in the street and a wash-up at the local standpipe or fountain should wake you up. Breakfast is bought from one of the early stalls on the street, or a pub. In neighborhoods like Battersea or near the markets in the City, delicatessens – the wonder of the Continent – may have a sandwich with egg and bacon. By this time, adulteration laws mean the food is likely to be safe, if not precisely healthy. Delis have the best quality of food for the poor. More likely, you'll stop at one of the pubs that does breakfast, the precursors of diners, may do a cheap meat (read, gristle) pie and a pint of beer. Yes, beer. You can't afford coffee and the beer is filling and a great pick-me-up.

Then it's shuffle to the factory, market, or warehouse. You most likely live as close to work as you can, and hope that you will one day be able to afford the associated dwellings that the companies are subsidizing to improve the health of their employees...if you work for one of those factories that care. This is unlikely, judging from this description of your life.

Twelve hours in the factory of mind-numbing or back breaking work. You might get a lunch break. Most likely, you will be paid by the day. This level of poverty described probably puts you in the day laborer category. Women will operate machines doing weaving or pin-making, or match painting. For men at this level, best paying jobs will be digging trenches for plumbing projects, shoveling tar and gravel for new roads, or hauling loads at the warehouse. The worst will be piecework at a workhouse or fishing on the Thames. Crime is more lucrative, and you work shorter hours. No one in your class is going to begrudge you this, so long as you aren't filching from them, but those flash toffs what come down to the market to shop. For women, prostitution is always an option for added income.

Dinner is had at a pub, most often. A small dab of bread, potato, and



meat, or a small meat pie of some kind is served up with a pint of beer or a glass of gin or whiskey. Then it's time to find a place to sleep for the night. If you've been lucky in finding steady employment, you might even have paid for your digs a week in advance.

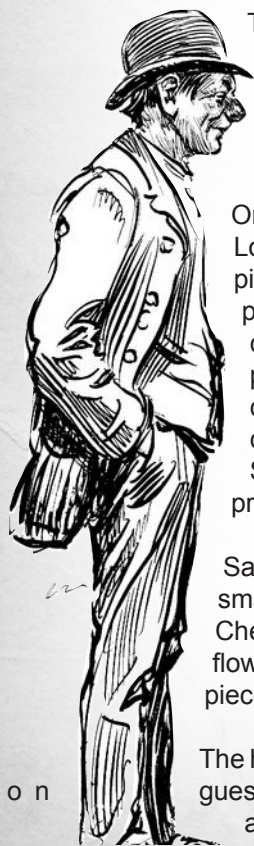
Skilled labor is unlikely to have this Dickensian kind of poverty. They often live in flats with their family in a single room and wake to the factory whistle. The new buildings have windows and ventilation, making them healthier environments. They may even have a small house, if they have been diligent in their savings and live in a better neighborhood for the working class, like St. Pancras, Battersea, Lambeth, or the various villages that have been incorporated into the metropolitan area in the northeast. There is probably a shared toilet facility indoors in the flats (but not in your house), and running cold water if it's a new place. You will most likely eat just like your poorer peers, at a street stall or a pub. If you work in the Bayswater area, you will most likely buy your meal from a deli.

Getting to work may involve taking the underground train or the tram, or perhaps the omnibus. This is cheap transport and the network is extensive enough by the 1880s to get you nearly anywhere in the city. Because of this, people of your class have been migrating out to the row houses in the south of the city, or pushing out into the cheaper communities in the hills to the north of the city.

Men will probably work in construction, skilled manufacture like carpentry or upholstery, or perhaps in more complicated manufactures like gunsmithing, carriage or bicycle making. Women are most likely working as seamstresses, maids, or cooks. Recent progressive policies at factories will most likely have you working a ten...or even an eight hour day for a full day's pay! The average shift starts at seven or eight in the morning and continues to six or seven at night, but these progressive factories will often give an hour's lunch time in the middle of the day.

Coming home at night, you most likely eat in a pub, as well, unless you are lucky enough to have a house. Then you might cook, after having bought your food in a market on the way home. It is probable that you pay your rent monthly, so the chances of being turned out on the street are fairly low. Just don't lose that job!

Working in the factory is not the only option, of course. While many toiled making the everyday items people needed – from pins and matches, to tools or other finished goods, there were plenty of jobs that didn't involve factories. Another major option was brewing and distilling. Prior to a Parliamentary Act to control the production of alcohol and its dissemination in the early 1870s, just about every pub was brewing or distilling its own spirits. By the period covered in this work, breweries and distilleries are larger affairs, pumping out thousands of gallons of their product at the very least. Due to regulations enacted these establishments were either dedicated to beer or hard liquor...never both.



The docks were another large sector of employment. From stevedores, who oversaw the loading and unloading of cargo – and who were unionized by the end of the century – to the cart men who moved product throughout the city (also unionized), the docks had plenty of positions. There were night watchmen, harbor pilots, warehousemen, coal whippers (who loaded and unloaded coal from ships), and a host of other shipping-related jobs.

Once away from the docks, much of the work was in the form of manual labor or sales of some fashion. London is undergoing near constant construction at this time. There are always positions for diggers, pipe-layers, men to shovel tar for new roads. There are carpentry and masonry jobs for construction projects. There are line-stringers for telegraph and telephone lines, as well as electrification. Dustmen collect the ashes and other refuse from houses and resell it for fertilizer and other purposes. Coal porters run fuel to the houses. Omnibuses require drivers, as do cabs. Other essential services are rat catchers – often young boys who use ferrets, arsenic, and traps to catch or kill the vermin. Alive, rats can be sold to ratting dens for sport, and if not poisoned, dead they can be sold as cheap fresh meat. Small men and children can also find work as chimney sweeps, cleaning out chimneys of London to prevent fires.

Salesmen like costermongers (fruit and vegetable sellers), fishmongers (fish seller), pie-men, and other small-time purveyors of goods operate out of small carts they set up in the markets around the city. Cheap-jacks sell cheap knives, chains and other items to cover up their con-games and pilfering. The flower girl – the most unfortunate of street urchins – sell flowers, fruit, or other items for ha'pennies a piece.

The household of a wealthy Victorian family required an amazing amount of labor. Cleaning, cooking, waiting guests, carriage care and operation – all were done by servants. By the end of the nineteenth century, about 2 out of every ten people were in this part of the service industry. The maid or servant was often

a hard job, but not always, depending on the employer. Often the most difficult part of the profession was making certain that they remained out of notice. A servant was to be neither seen nor heard, out of the way, yet there when needed.

In a small middle-class house with pretensions there will be at least a maid-of-all-work, who for a few shillings a week will do the cooking, cleaning, and sometimes watch children while the home owners are away; larger middle-class houses may add a cook or a governess. They make up the majority of maids in the country, and many women in service hope for a small middle-class home to avoid the hassles of rank in a larger house. The danger is that middle-class families often expect much, much more from their employees, and depending on the family, the maid could find herself working reasonable hours – say six to six – or six in the morning until midnight! They will sleep on the premises in a small attic room, and normally have a half day on Sunday and an evening for themselves.

Even a middle-class bachelor is likely to have a manservant who handles cleaning, errands, and other odd jobs. Often the manservant is also a secretary, handling correspondence and other more 'professional' matters. The manservant is a well-respected position, and is one of the best professions for a Hero from the lower class; if his master is a traveler, spy, or some other adventurer, it is likely that the manservant will find himself sharing the fun.



A large house, however, can have a veritable army of servants, and like any other large organization, there is a pecking order to the positions and their jobs. The head servant is the butler or housemaid (if there are both positions, the butler is in charge.) Referred to as Mr. (Surname), he is a respected figure in the house. The housemaid is likewise referred to as Mrs. (Surname) regardless of marital status, although most are either married or widowed. The butler is in charge of the footmen, if the house has them, as well as the silverware, plates, wine cellar, and in some cases other valuables. For this reason he is vetted through agencies that specialize in finding reliable, discrete men of good character. Often the butler is a man who has been raised in service – his father a butler – or they are former military non-commissioned officers with spotless records. He oversees the operations of the servants and reports to the head of the household. He introduces guests, manages transportation for the same, if necessary, and handles security when need be. He is nearly always quartered on site, with rooms near the kitchen and valuables. Often, a safe would be positioned near his rooms, and it was not uncommon for the butler to have a firearm in his quarters.

The housemaid was in direct charge of the maids, answering to the butler or the lady of the house. She is the keeper of the keys, her badge of office. If married (this is the only maid position where one would find a married woman), the housemaid might live out of the house and arrive for work about five in the morning, leaving just before dinner. Otherwise, she lived on site and would room separate from the other maids, but usually in the garret, as well. As with the butler, a housemaid's position of trust required good references and a long time of service. They are rarely under the age of forty. Both the housemaid and the butler carried a sort of rank amongst other servants of Society. A master's rank often created an order of precedence for the servants – a duke's manservant was of high social status, for instances, than that of a baron.

Next in line are the footmen. These servants do the heavy lifting, carting coal, lighting lamps, doing cleaning coaches, livery stables, or the outside of the buildings, and other errands like running calling cards or carrying messages around town. On special occasions, they might wear the livery of the early century, but most often they are dressed in a proper suit of clothes. Generally, they are referred to as 'Thomas' – a habit from earlier in the century. More progressive households may call them by their given names, but never the surname. Footmen include the coachman – who maintains the carriage and drives the rig for the family – and the groom, who manages the horses. In London, few people have grooms in the last few decades of the century. Due to the rapid growth of the town, most stable their horses with a stable in the neighborhood. Often it is no more than a few blocks to the stables, and they are open around the clock in the better districts. In the country, there is almost always a groundkeeper and gamekeeper (sometimes the same man.) The Groundskeeper looks to the gardens and general health of the grounds. The gamekeeper manages the fauna on the estate – buying stock for hunting, if need be, supplying fish for ponds, and leading hunts on the grounds. Gamekeepers are particularly well-regarded, if they are good at what they do.

The girls under the command of the housekeeper are legion in larger houses. There are housekeepers, who handle the day-to-day cleaning and supplying of the rooms with the necessities. They empty chamber pots in houses without water closets and keep the fires. There is a subtle hierarchy among the girls. Upper housemaids usually do less strenuous work, like arranging the decorations, while lower housemaids do the back-breaking work of cleaning, polishing, carrying hot water, carrying wood or coal and lighting the fires. If the place is large enough, they may be assigned specific rooms.

Kitchen maids are the next rank down. They aid in meal preparation and clean the kitchen after the cooking is complete. They are promoted from the lowest in the maid ranks, the scullery maid. These are normally young girls who wash dishes and utensils, clean the pantries and pack any ice chests that might be about (the footmen run out to collect the ice, however.) They have no respect from the other servants.

The royalty of the servant class is the ladies' maid. These women do not answer to the housemaid, but are governed by the lady of the house. They aid the mistress or her daughter (most only serve a single woman) by assisting her in dressing and undressing, doing her hair, repairing the clothing, and simply keeping her company. As a result, this is more of a skilled labor job – with the maids often being better educated, and sometimes of middle-class families. They must be pretty, friendly, young, and have some social grace. French maids are preferable, but an English one will do; Irish or Welsh are completely beyond the Pale. Some of the benefits of the job include getting the cast-off clothing of the mistress. They are allowed to keep a bag of old linen they can sell or use. They are less likely to be dismissed without cause, are better paid, and are held in great respect.

Similarly, the governess was a position not under the command of the housemaid. She is tutor to the children until they are sent off to school or a professional tutor is required. This is an occupation middle-class girls that have to make their own wage can gain without stigma. They must have good bearing, some level of education. They are often mistrusted by their fellow servants, and lead lonely lives that are centered on the children of the house. The pay is terrible for the skill level, but it is a profession that makes the young woman suitable for marriage, should she find someone.

The romantic life of the lower class had few restrictions. Even a 'fallen woman' or a man of limited means could find a common-law spouse (if they had the money, they might even make it official!) Affairs were conducted with varying degrees of discretion, and an illicit lover could find his or herself on the wrong end of the violence that so often rocked the rookeries and poorer districts of the city. Still, the lower class had the least expectations of propriety, and least desire to follow the artificial rules of convention.

THOSE FAT PEOPLE IN THE MIDDLE

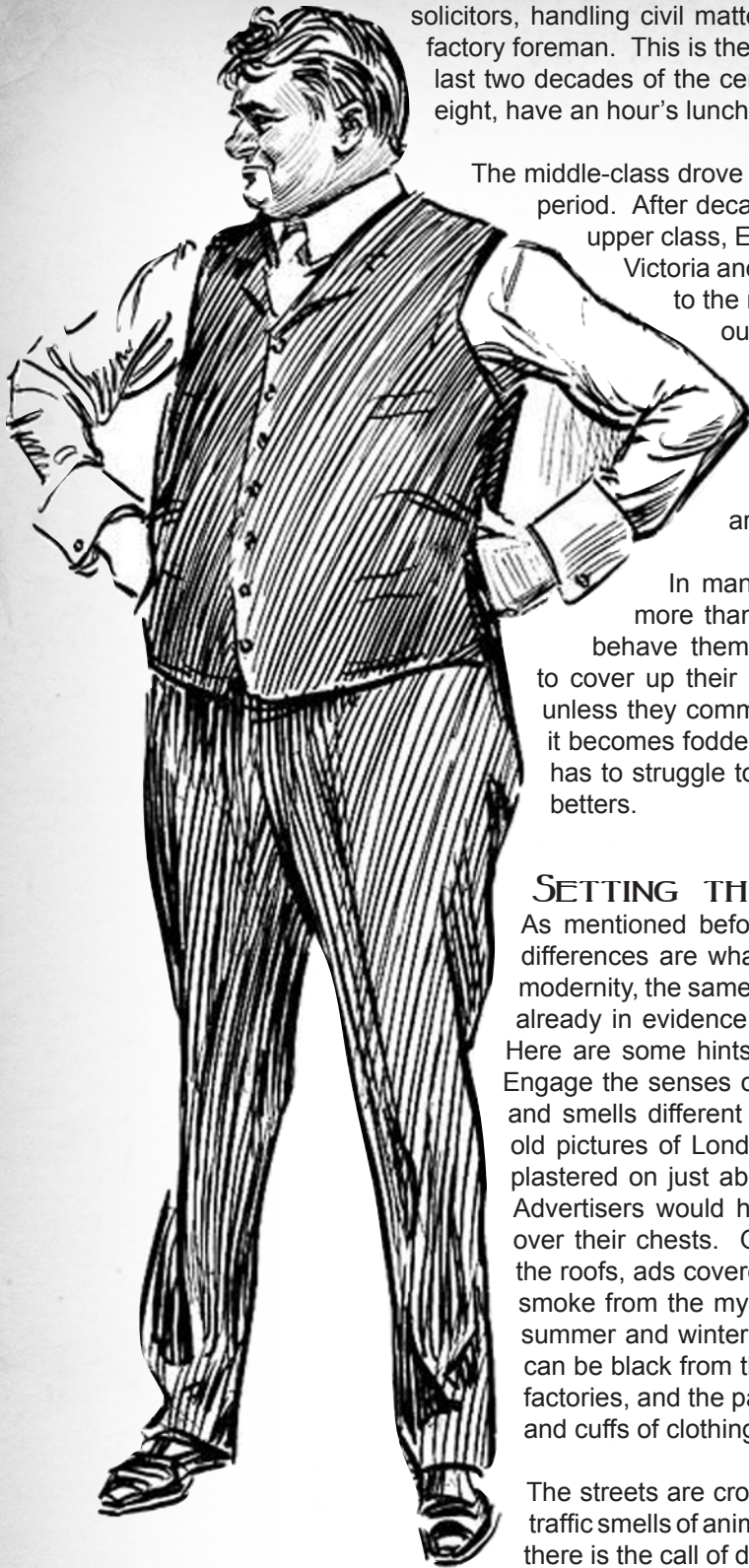
There is a real break in living style when one is middle class or better. Contrary to contemporary accounts by newspapers and socialist groups, the Victorian period saw a wide expansion of wealth and upper mobility in skilled labor. The middle-class included shop owners, clerks and factory foremen, artisans and other skilled labor, teachers and governesses, and small factory owners. This was a period of rapid wealth creation, and income for this class rose steadily over the latter nineteenth century.

With it came a certain loosening of credit, which allowed for entrepreneurial activity in the middle-class. One could gain credit from reputable banks, but this was often difficult, but the interest rate would be considered today to be excellent – often no more than 15% per annum. Money-lenders were also an option for the budding entrepreneur. Often, however, these sharks would levy usurious rates on the customer – as high as 100% on the money lent. They tend to be inflexible in their payment schedule and will take a customer to court in an instant to gain access to their collateral – be it a business, or in the case of down in the heel gentry, whatever property they might have access to.

The middle-class man, if single, will usually room in a flat – mostly likely in one of the better neighborhoods of the West End. These flats will have a sitting room and bedroom, perhaps two if sharing the flat with a mate. Dinners are usually provided by the landlord/lady and there is often a water closet in the house that the tenants share. By the end of the century, there is mostly likely a toilet and running water in the better establishments. Single women will almost always room with a friend in similar settings.

A middle-class family will probably rent or own a house in the outer districts of the north, or on the south bank. These may be small townhouses, or row homes, in places like Lambeth or Battersea, but could be small homes anywhere in London. Home ownership is rare, and having a house is a sure bit of capital in a pinch, since London house prices are on a continuous rise, just as they are today.

Work for the middle-class is usually in retail, accounting, or law. Many are clerks in the department stores, or articled clerks apprenticing for five years with solicitors. At the end of this, and with the payment of a fee, they are licensed



solicitors, handling civil matters. Accountancy is a major source of employment, as is factory foreman. This is the class where the eight-hour work week comes from. By the last two decades of the century, it was normal for a professional man to start work at eight, have an hour's lunch break, and knock off at about six or seven.

The middle-class drove much of the social mores and societal rules of the Victorian period. After decades of debauchery and embarrassment at the antics of the upper class, England of the Regency period was ripe for rebellion. Queen Victoria and her consort, Albert, brought a new, bourgeois respectability to the royal house, and the aristocrats soon fell in line. As pointed out in the section on society, the rules governing ladies and gentlemen were to protect family life, and create a more stable and esteemed kind of civilization. Ideals of thrift, propriety, hard work, and respect came not from the top, but from those people in the middle who had worked hard to gain wealth, position, and influence against the aristocracy.

In many ways, the middle-class has to watch their step socially more than any other. No one expects the workers and the poor to behave themselves properly. The rich and powerful have the means to cover up their indiscretions, and are unlikely to look their social position unless they commit an act so egregious – murder, larceny, or divorce – that it becomes fodder for the social pages of the newspapers. The middle-class has to struggle to maintain their respectability *vis-a-vis* their peers and their betters.

SETTING THE STAGE

As mentioned before, London has many similarities to modern day, but the differences are what make this period interesting. The tantalizing glimpse of modernity, the same issues that face the modern Londoner, all these things were already in evidence in the *fin de siècle*, as the end of the century was called. Here are some hints for how to set the stage when using London in a game: Engage the senses of the characters. London looks different, sounds different, and smells different from today. The most noticeable element of street life in old pictures of London is the presence of paste bills, massive advertisements plastered on just about every surface: walls, fences, light posts...even people. Advertisers would hire the poor to walk the streets with signboards strapped over their chests. Omnibuses had adverts on them. From the street level to the roofs, ads covered buildings. There is a thick layer of fog, actually soot and smoke from the myriad industries around the city, that lies over the city in the summer and winter months. Depending on where you are in London, the fog can be black from the coal and wood fires, yellow-white and sulfurous from the factories, and the particulates settle on everything, blackening buildings, collars and cuffs of clothing. It smells bad, but creates beautiful sunsets.

the clatter of wooden wheels

buses and delivery carts, carriages and some people on horseback. There are pedestrians, and unless you are in Whitehall, there is no real traffic management. Traffic snarls happen at each intersection as vehicles struggle to navigate around each other. The rule of staying to the left is already in effect, so there is some order on straight ways. Pedestrians should beware; however, the traffic is most likely not going to stop for you. Worse, nearly all of the vehicles you will see are animal-powered. The stink of working creatures is intense, and they all do what animals do. The streets are caked with smashed fecal matter and when it rains, this becomes a nasty slush of dirt (hence why men always walk to the outside of a sidewalk; the lady is to be protected from the splash). Occasionally, horses or mules pulling vehicles are worked to death. Often, they choose an intersection to die, tangling traffic until a butcher can be called out to unyoke the deceased and dismember them so they can be cleared from the road.

TRAVELLING LONDON

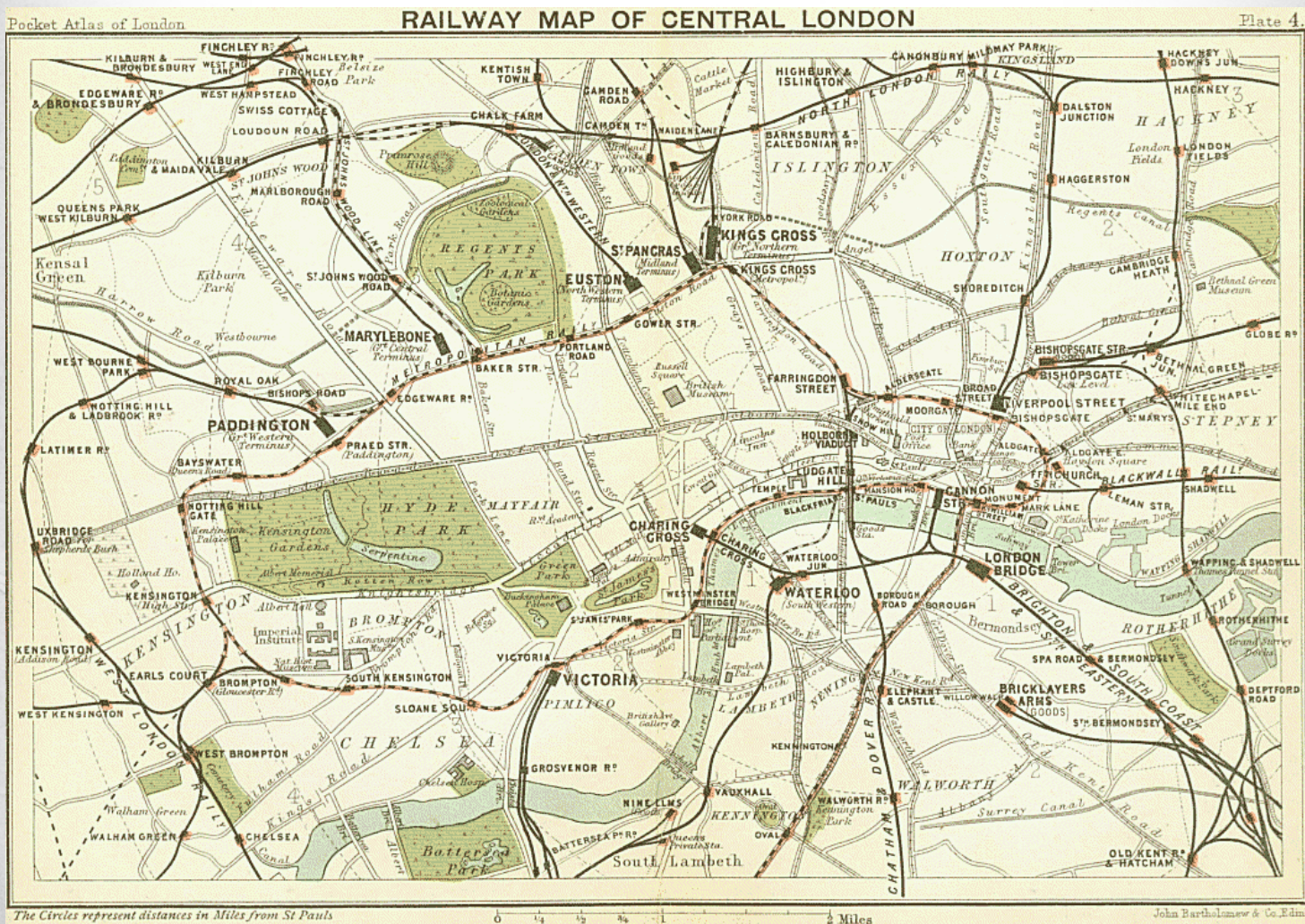
A carriage ride is the fastest way to get around London, but not the cheapest. Hansom cabs, a two-wheeled variety, are the most common, and were usually hired by distance. This costs 1s for the first two miles (the cabs operate out of cabmen's shelters, and are only required to take passengers up to four miles from that spot), and 6d for every mile after that. Beyond their four mile range, cabbies can charge 1s a mile for the entire trip.

Four-wheeled carriages, or growlers, are hired by time. They are not required to take fares for longer than an hour, but many will. 2s/hour is the standard rate for an hour inside the four mile range of the cab. Every additional time is 6d, and outside of the range limit, 2/6 for the first hour and 8d for the next hour is authorized.

Extra passengers cost 6s, children 3d. Luggage costs another 2d and is always stowed outside the riding area on the back of the cab. Luggage left with the cab is turned into the Lost and Found Office at Scotland Yard (usually) and can be recovered for 2% of the value. If not claimed within 24 hours, the luggage reverts to the cabbie. These prices are set by the Police Commissioner to ensure fairness to the customers, and passengers should take note of the cab number should they have complaints.

Omnibuses run on most high streets, and service runs from about six in the morning until six at night. Trips cost between 1d for a short hop, to 6d for multiple transfers that would take one across the city.

Trams and the Underground have revolutionized urban transport, and have expanded service rapidly throughout the 1870s and 1880s. On the north side of the Thames, getting around London quickly by train is easy, with service coming through major stations every fifteen minutes or so. The cost is comparable to the buses.



Not all vehicles are animal-drawn. The bicycle is becoming popular in the 1880s, not just as entertainment or exercise, but as transportation. A major manufacturer of these vehicles is Triumph, started by a German immigrant to England. More celebrated is the creation of the internal combustion engine, which unlike horses, mules, or the 'road-steamers' (steam-driven automotives) experimented with in the middle of the century, the horseless carriage of the 1890s is considered a clean alternative to power vehicles. Most of the engines are notoriously loud, however, due to a lack of sound muffling, and this sound conjured up both delight for the drivers and derision for the passerby. By 1894, a very few of the motorcycles of Hildebrand & Wolfmüller, and Daimler's 'Reitwagen' could be found in the streets of London, but they were not a commercial success. Mr. Benz's 'Motorwagen' and the Benz Victoria are the most successful of the horseless carriages in the closing years of the century, but the final years of the 1890s saw an explosion of small car manufacturers. Most of the automobiles of this period were retrofitted or modified horse carriages.

Other technological innovations came about in the final two decades of the century. Electric light started on a few blocks in the Marylebone as an experiment by an aristocratic inventor in the 1840s. There were other attempts of electric light at the National Gallery and the Royal Academy, but all were considered failures. By the end of the 1880s, various corporations had been set up to generate electricity, mostly for street lighting. The London Electric Supply Company started around 1887, and even Hampstead had its own supply company starting in 1898. The groups supplying power were either owned by 'local authority undertakings,' district-owned companies like the St. Pancras Borough Council, or private companies like Charing Cross Company, Chelsea Electricity Supply Company (founded in 1886), or the City of London Electric Lighting Company. Mayfair was lit with electricity by 1890, as were many of the theatres in the district; electric light was installed along the Strand and Fleet Street in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Interior electrification was still rare, but not unheard of in the homes of early adopters. The big problem with electric light was reliability. Often in the past, the lights would come on and blaze brightly for a few minutes or hours, then the bulbs would burn out or burst. By 1890, however, most of the bulbs were of the Edison or Swan variety (the incandescent design still used today) and the reliability was much improved.

The sound of London was not just created by traffic, but the rumble of the underground and the rail lines that came into town. There were tramways clattering about on elevated or street level rails. There were the whistles of the factory and the river boat at various times during the day. Street vendors shouted their wares at the tops of their lungs. Near factories, the river, and in the central and eastern districts, London is constantly noisy. In the West End, at night, the neighborhoods quiet down save for the main thoroughfares and the theatre streets.

This is the spring of the age of consumption. Despite the poverty and destitution that can be found in the poor neighborhoods of London, for the wealthy and middle-class, this is a time of increasing prosperity (especially for the working and middle classes). For the first time in history, the poor had time to go to school or a museum. The middle class could take a few days at the seaside as a vacation, or travel to the Continent if they scrimped and saved. The diets of people improved, and they bought things: homes, furnishings, knick-knacks. The average Victorian home is crammed with stuff such as commemorative plates on mantles, overstuffed furnishings in chintz and paisley (colors are bright, when they can be), fancy candlesticks or lamps, china and plate ware for the dinner table, rugs and carpets from overseas, dolls and toys, pictures on the walls, and if they could afford it, a piano. As today, the Victorian spends money like it's going out of style, mostly because they didn't know any better. Poverty has been the norm in the past, now comfort, if not prosperity, was becoming common in every sense of the word.

Interior plumbing is the other major improvement of these decades, and was considered essential to eliminating disease. Running water was common in the houses built in the last decade of the century, and retrofitting older houses for water was a booming business. Hot water was still a luxury, usually gotten by boiling water prior to use, but coal or wood-fired water heaters and steam heating (often if you had steam heat, you had hot water) were still new and often broke down. Interior toilets were becoming the rage in this period and considered near miraculous for those who use them the first few times.

The telephone was invented in 1876 and quickly caught on. By the end of the century most wealthy families had a telephone, as did the police stations and government offices. This means that police response is much swifter in the last years of the nineteenth century. A telephone call is cause for excitement in this period; there are only a few thousand terminals throughout the city and most of these are in the hands of newspapers, government offices, or the wealthy.

CAMPAIGN SUGGESTIONS

The Victorian period was an exciting time, historically. The setting can be used for a number of roleplaying scenarios. The most obvious is the historically-accurate campaigns.

HISTORICAL

The most obvious historical campaign is a 'cops and robbers' setting. Mysteries were already popular in the Victorian period as the success of Sherlock Holmes stories can attest. It might be noted that a lot of mysteries are still set in the Victorian period, from Caleb Carr's phenomenal *The Alienist* (set in Victorian New York) to the wonderful Anne Perry. With this kind of setting, the Heroes take up the role of policemen or detectives chasing down criminals, or, vice-versa, playing the part of those criminals, plotting their schemes and dodging the peelers. The scale can range from low-level street hoods, trying to make a living, to serial killers, to a great criminal network dedicated to world domination (*a la* Fu Manchu, or other masterminds.) Excellent sources for ideas would be the Sherlock Holmes of Arthur Conan Doyle, the mysteries of Anne Perry, or Sax Romer's Fu Manchu stories.

Spy campaigns are equally plausible, where the characters operate mainly in London. England was a haven for immigration in the Victorian period, and political asylum was extremely easy to gain. As a result, many nationalists, anarchists, socialists, and other violent groups were active in London. Their schemes might not be aimed at Britain, but their actions could have wide-ranging implications, requiring the intervention of the characters. This is a good setting for secret clubs, private detectives, or groups working with Special Branch. For examples of what kind of adventures could be had here, take a look through Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*. Novels like *The Moonstone*, by Wilkie Collins, can give a sense of the sort of action stories that were popular with the Victorian audience (both can be found open source online at various websites like *Project Gutenberg*).

War-based campaigns are even possible. The Victorian period was a time when the politics of Napoleonic Europe was giving way to the tenuous balance of power that preceded World War One. Characters actions might set off the Great War early, or perhaps squabbling over colonial spoils or the Balkans might lead the empire into war.



833 CRYSTAL PALACE.

A different approach could revolve around the social machinations of men and women in Society at large, or the Marlborough House Set. This is a particular, but fun type of campaign in that it forces the characters to interact (read "roleplay") heavily. This is a tougher style of adventure for the Narrator since it is heavier on character interaction and requires more Narrator characters for the Heroes to interact with. These are often have to be the most ad-libbed of campaigns, but require a lot of preparation prior to the action. Female Heroes often find this kind of game appealing, and even adding elements of this as a subplot can really liven up a campaign. Obviously, the most likely social class of the characters would be upper-class, or servants of the same, but a lot of middle-class social climbers were struggling to get into society, or were aping them with their own clubs, parties, and affairs.

If the Narrator is truly ambitious, you can try and plug the characters into historical events, allowing them to influence or be influenced by, famous or important incidents. Allowing the characters to alter these happenings – in small or main part – makes them feel more engaged and important, and means the Narrator can play 'what if?' scenarios. An obvious choice might be to allow the Heroes to find and stop Jack the Ripper, or perhaps stop or foment a rebellion or war. This 'what if?' style of campaign leads into the next category – which launched the Victorian period as setting into the minds of roleplaying gamers.

SPECULATIVE HISTORICAL

This is the science-fiction of the period, or *steampunk*, as many call it today. These kinds of stories draw from the speculative fiction of Jules Verne, HG Wells, or Arthur Conan Doyle. In them, evil geniuses create new forms of technology, submersibles, airships, or even spacecraft, and use them to terrorize nations (the usual Vernean approach), or to better mankind (Wells). These usually include the 'lost world' scenarios, where intrepid explorers find dinosaurs in remote plateaus or islands. More recently, the inventive *Space: 1889* setting carried on this tradition, but added the element of Burroughs-esque civilizations on Mars and Venus.

London is the seat of international commerce and diplomacy. A criminal mastermind or a scientific terrorist would see the city as a target, ripe for assault. Perhaps they need to rob the Bank of England to finance the building and operation of their impossibly effective submarine (which could easily navigate the Thames underwater), airship (Wormwood Scrubs, in Kensal Green, was used as an aerodrome in the teens), or mole drill (look out for those collapsing catacombs from the Roman era!).

Maybe Martians are invading, as in *War of the Worlds*, or are simply visiting our planet after the British Empire has begun colonization of their world. Maybe the characters have somehow time travelled back to the 1880s from modern day, or the future, and have to survive in this world. Either way, London can be tweaked to provide an appropriate setting for these kinds of adventures.

Another variant of this is the mystical historical, where the fairies, monsters, and gods of old have returned. High-born elves might consort openly with the aristocrats of the human world, while dwarves built industry based on science and magic. Trolls and other creatures might be enforcers for the gangs in Whitechapel. Or perhaps, as in Kim Newman's *Anno Dracula*, that eponymous vampire wins the fight, unleashing the undead on the city. A Victorian setting, with its shadowy streets lit by gas lamps and the popularity of Spiritualism that was gaining in the late century, combines well with Lovecraft's Cthulhu milieu.

However you decide to use the city, London is a setting of incredible possibility.

CHAPTER FOUR: HERO CREATION

While it is entirely possible to run an *Imperial Age* campaign using only the hero creation rules found in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*, the additions in this chapter will help you shape and immerse your character into the Victorian world. This chapter provides guidance on determining your hero's social class and your occupation prior to the start of the campaign.

Your Narrator may allow you other options as given in the genre chapters that follow. Be sure to consult with your Narrator on what is or isn't allowed in her campaign and to be certain that you are aware of all the options available to you.

Before going further, it is important to note that the rules in this chapter, while evocative, are modular. Using these rules will not make your character more powerful than one made strictly using the rules as presented in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*, it will simply make her more distinctive.

BACKGROUNDS

Unless the Narrator is running a truly fantastic campaign, most heroes in *Imperial Age* campaigns will be human. All *Imperial Age* heroes must determine their social class and occupation. These will help shape the hero in determining his initial role.

Note: Humans in *The Imperial Age* do not get the benefit of the Human Background.

VICTORIAN ELVES AND OTHER FANTASY RACES

Some Narrators may wish to run a fantastical *Imperial Age* campaign with the fantasy races found in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*. This poses a problem, as choosing a race background and an occupation will lead to "doubling up" on bonus skills and feats.

If you are using the racial backgrounds from *True20*, then a hero of a race other than human must choose a racial background and an occupation. The hero gets the ability adjustments, bonus skills and feats of his race. She does not receive the bonus skills and feats of her occupation, but must acquire them normally at first level.

For example, Lady Amelia Harcourt is an upper class elf expert with the Socialite occupation. She receives all of the features of the elf background. Of the four feats she gets at first level, she must take High Born (for her social class) as well as Connected and Knowledge (Diplomacy and Gather Information) due to being a Socialite.

The Narrator could either choose whether the hero gets the favored feats of her racial background or occupation or leave the decision up to the player. Human heroes should be able to choose whether to use their occupation's favored feats or choose any feat as a favored feat at first level (as in the Human background).



SOCIAL CLASS

Technically, Great Britain recognizes only two social classes, noble and commoner. Nobles are granted property by the Crown and receive certain rights, such as a seat in the House of Lords and immunity from the general legal system (nobles are tried by their peers). Commoners are everyone else.

Of course, the actual social hierarchy is a bit more complex. Commoners have broadly divided into a lower and middle class, while the middle class itself has spawned the gentry. The upper class consists not only of nobles but also their families who, while commoners in the eyes of the law, are set apart from the rest of Her Majesty's subjects.

The three major social classes and their common subdivisions are outlined below. Most starting heroes are considered at least middle class, as it allows them the freedom to leave their occupations for the occasional adventure.

LOWER CLASS

The lower class is the largest segment of society. Primarily an unskilled labor force, lower class subjects find work as laborers, servants, soldiers, or sailors. The lower class is also home to the criminal elements, as prostitutes, pick-pockets, and confidence artists do their best to separate a man from his wealth.

Country Folk: A subset of the lower class, country folk tend not to see themselves as such. Complex class distinctions have little relevance in the villages and countryside surrounding London. Country folk tend to retain the old commoner/noble distinction, elevating wealthy landowners to the quasi-noble status of "country squire."

MIDDLE CLASS

As modern society increasingly needed a professional workforce and industry created new opportunities for wealth, a middle class emerged. While legally equal to the lower class, the middle class was wealthier and could aspire to enjoy some of the comforts of the upper class, although they would never be accepted as such.

Gentry: At the upper end of the middle class are the gentry. The gentry are distinct from the rest of the middle class in that they are either independently wealthy and have no need to soil their hands with manual labor, or they have received a non-Peer title. Most non-titled gentry have large estates outside the city and serve as justices of the peace for nearby towns and villages.

The two titles of the gentry are knight and baronet. Knight is the lower of the two and is a non-hereditary title granted to an individual for service performed for the crown. Baronet, on the other hand, is an inheritable title. In both cases they are addressed as "Sir" or "Lady."

UPPER CLASS

The upper class is made up of the titled nobility and their families. In a peculiarity of the British system, only Peers (the ultimate landowners) were nobles; their families were merely privileged commoners. Still, local authorities tread carefully when dealing with the upper class and generally won't accuse an upper class subject of anything without ironclad proof.

Peer: Upper class subjects with titles are part of the Peerage. They sit in the House of Lords and are not expected to work or be paid for any work they do or advice they give. Peers are also granted certain privileges; they have the right to be tried by other peers instead of the common courts, they are exempt from arrest in civil cases, and they have access to the Queen.

CIRCUMSTANCE MODIFIERS AND SOCIAL CLASS

There may be circumstances in which the Narrator may wish to apply a modifier based on social class. For example, a lower class servant might receive a negative modifier for attempting to give an upper class master unwanted advice (i.e. the servant has "forgotten her place") or she may get a positive modifier for attempting to remain unseen in the presence of her master (i.e. the upper class are conditioned not to notice servants). As another example, a well-dressed barrister walking into a lower class pub may find his Gather Information checks less effective than if he'd employed a lower class person to do it for him.

While circumstance modifiers are generally +/-2, a Narrator could increase it to +/-4 if there are two steps between social classes (such as upper vs. lower). Also, a Narrator could draw a distinction between the middle class and the gentry; lower and middle class characters might treat a gentleman as if he were upper class, while an upper class character would treat that same gentleman as if he were middle class.

DETERMINING SOCIAL CLASS

A hero's social class is determined by three factors: breeding, title, and wealth. Wealth is what separates the lower from the middle class and a hero can shift between the two based on his current Wealth score. This does not apply where the upper class is concerned; one must generally be born into the upper class; this is represented by the High Born feat. No matter how poor an upper class hero becomes, he will always be considered upper class amongst his peers.

Title is represented with the Benefits feat. A lower or middle class hero can become a gentleman (and thus always considered "upper middle class") if bestowed a title such as knight, baronet, or country squire. Only baronets are inherited, a hero may be knighted for merit or become a country squire simply by purchasing a large estate near a village. A title also separates a high born hero from the rest of the upper class; he enjoys certain legal immunities and is granted a seat in the House of Lords.

There are exceptions to every rule (the Queen, for example, can grant a title or a commoner might marry into a title), but such instances are rare. The Narrator is also given leeway in determining specifics. All high born heroes are considered to be part of a baron's family unless the Narrator decrees otherwise (you can't "stack" high born feats to start play with a higher title). Being knighted in play is typically a reward (and thus a "bonus feat" gained in play), while taking the Benefit feat to become a Country Squire may actually require purchasing the land.

OCCUPATIONS

All heroes start with an occupation, an activity that occupies most of their time. For most, this is a job, a way to make money. For the privileged few it is a calling, a passion to pursue rather than remain in their drawing rooms or gardens all day. Occupations are synonymous with Backgrounds as far as the mechanics of hero creation is concerned.

The occupations listed below are only examples. If the Player has an idea for an occupation not on this list, then she and the Narrator should determine the bonus skills and feats as well as favored feats.

Gender Considerations

With few exceptions, the occupations presented here are gender-neutral. Not all *Imperial Age* campaigns take place on a strictly historical Earth and in such cases there may be more cross-pollination of genders within an occupation. Even in a historical world, a man or woman may have to perform work traditionally expected of the other due to necessity.

A Note on Favored Feats

Whenever possible, favored feats were chosen from a role list other than the one expected for that particular role. This was done to make favored feats more attractive for that occupation. For example, it is likely that a hero taking the Pugilist occupation will choose the Warrior role. Giving him favored feats from the Warrior role would be redundant. By selecting two from the Expert list, the favored feats now provide a real benefit.

STARTING FROM THE BOTTOM

While the rules assume that the heroes are middle class, you may wish to lower the bar for a "gritty" campaign. In this case, heroes start with a Wealth score of $1 + \text{Charisma} + 4 \text{ per Wealthy feat}$. Heroes that wish to aspire to the middle class will have to take at least one Wealthy feat.

In a standard campaign, a Narrator may wish to allow a hero to choose to be lower class by granting an extra level of Wealthy as a virtual feat. Heroes are presumed to have this virtual feat (which is why their Wealth score has a base of 5), but may opt out (giving them a base of 1, as above), in return for a bonus feat. Narrators should take care when allowing this option, as it opens up the possibility of abuse.

LOWER CLASS OCCUPATIONS

The following is a sample list of lower class occupations. As the chief difference between the lower and middle class is wealth, most of the occupations listed below are also suitable for middle class heroes.

Agrarian worker

Even an urban, civilized society needs to eat. These are the farmers and ranchers of the surrounding countryside. While considered lower class, many "gentlemen farmers" of the middle class may also take this occupation, especially if they work their own land.

Bonus Feats: Animal Empathy, Talented (Handle Animal and Survival)

Bonus Skills: Handle Animal, Survival

Favored Feats: Jack-of-All Trades, Tough

Artist

An artist practices his craft in relative privacy for others to enjoy later. Artists include authors, painters, playwrights, and sculptors. Some artisans congregate and form communities, the one in Chelsea being the best known London example. Poor artists hope to attract patrons or dilettantes to support them.

Bonus Feats: Skill Focus (chose Craft Skill), Talented (Skill Focus skill and notice)

Bonus Skills: Craft (choose one), Notice

Favored Feats: Artisan, Improvised Tools

Beggar

Unfortunately, there are those whose lot in life is reduced to begging; injured veterans, sick or disease-ridden subjects, or children with no other means to make a living except through the charity of others.

Bonus Feats: Light Sleeper, Talented (Bluff and Diplomacy)

Bonus Skills: Bluff, Sense Motive

Favored Feats: Defensive Roll, Fascinate

Burglar

The burglar is a criminal that specializes in breaking and entering into a building to steal items of value.

Bonus Feats: Talented (Acrobatics and Disable Device), Talented (Notice and Search)

Bonus Skills: Acrobatics, Disable Device

Favored Feats: Improvised Tools, Master Plan

Circus Performer

Circuses are still a very popular form of entertainment. This occupation focuses on the acrobat and juggler; the Narrator may wish to develop other backgrounds for animal trainers, knife-throwers, etc.

Bonus Feats: Improved Defense, Talented (Acrobatics, Jump)

Bonus Skills: Acrobatics, Jump

Favored Feats: Defensive Roll, Slow Fall

Confidence Artist

The confidence artist is adept at convincing people to part with valuables at little cost to him. He may use parlor tricks (such as the old shell game), convince people that they are purchasing something that he can't sell, or simply run off with something dropped in his hand.

Bonus Feats: Connected, Talented (Bluff and Sense Motive)

Bonus Skills: Bluff, Sense Motive

Favored Feats: Fascinate, Suggestion

Costermonger

Costermongers hawk their wares from carts. Traditionally sellers of fruits and vegetables, some costermongers sell other wares such as flowers, fish, and poultry.

Costermongers rarely stay in one spot, roaming the well-travelled streets of a particular neighborhood with their carts.

Bonus Feats: Talented (Bluff and Diplomacy), Tireless

Bonus Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy

Favored Feats: Evasion, Improved Evasion

Drifter

Drifters travel from town to town, looking for work. While largely an unskilled laborer, the drifter is often a font of knowledge and source of news from many locations.

Bonus Feats: Night Vision, Tireless

Bonus Skills (choose any two): Knowledge (any), Survival

Favored Feats: Jack-of-All-Trades, Well-Informed

Driver

Drivers are the lifeblood of travel. From public hansoms to private coaches, a good driver can get you where you need to be before you need to be there. Drivers also have an excellent working knowledge of their surroundings.

Bonus Feats: Skill Focus (Handle Animal), Vehicular Combat

Bonus Skills: Handle Animal, Knowledge (popular culture)

Favored Feats: Spirited Charge, Well-Informed

WHY DOESN'T THE DRIVER DRIVE?

At first glance it may seem odd that the driver occupation lacks the Drive skill. This is because horse-drawn carts and carriages were the primary means of transport throughout the Imperial Age, and guiding horses is the province of the Handle Animal skill. "Horseless carriages" are a rich man's toy and are often driven by their owners rather than the owner's servants.

Emergency Worker

Fire fighters, nurses, and operators of charitable institutions (such as soup kitchens) have learned skills to protect others from injury and mishap.

Bonus Feats: Second Chance, Skill Focus (Medicine)

Bonus Skills: Concentration, Medicine

Favored Feats: Improvised Tools, Mind Over Body

Factory Worker

The Industrial Revolution has created a new class of worker that works in factories and sweatshops to mass-produce goods. Factory workers also learn a great deal about the city through their interactions with coworkers.

Bonus Feats: Skill Focus (Craft bonus skill), Tireless

Bonus Skills: Concentration, Craft (choose one)

Favored Feats: Tough, Well-Informed

Governess

Almost exclusively a female occupation, the governess is hired by middle or upper class households to educate girls and very young boys (older boys would go to school or receive a private tutor). A typical governess generally doesn't have Knowledge skills, as she teaches very basic skills.

Bonus Feats: Attractive, Talented (Diplomacy and Perform (oratory))

Bonus Skills: Language (French), Perform (oratory)

Favored Feats: Fascinate, Inspire

Guide

Guides are very knowledgeable about a particular place. Many offer their services to newcomers coming off the trains and ships stopping in the city.

Bonus Feats: Connected, Contacts

Bonus Skills: Gather Information, Knowledge (Popular Culture)

Favored Feats: Fascinate, Well-Informed

Hunter

Not all of the food that finds its way to the dinner table comes from ranches. Game meats are still popular and many people make a good living hunting and selling such animals.

Bonus Feats: Track, Trailblazer

Bonus Skills (choose any two): Notice, Survival

Favored Feats: Deadly Aim, Favored Opponent (animal)

Laborer

From dockers to navvies, there is no shortage of work for a manual laborer in the growing Empire. Laborers make their living from their hands and strong backs and are an essential component of any building or shipping project.

Bonus Feats: Great Fortitude, Improved Grab, Tireless

Favored Feats: Diehard, Tough

Performance Artist

Performance artists hone their craft in front of live audiences. While there are a few celebrated performance artists, most are struggling theatre actors or street performers.

Bonus Feats: Dodge, Skill Focus (Perform (any))

Bonus Skills: Perform (any), Sense Motive

Favored Feats: Fascinate, Inspire

Pickpocket

The pickpocket excels at stealing items off a victim's person without his knowledge.

Bonus Feats: Skill Focus (sleight of Hand), Talented (Sleight of Hand and Stealth)

Bonus Skills: Sleight of Hand, Stealth

Favored Feats: Defensive Roll, Master Plan

Police Officer

Often called "bobbies," "coppers" or "peelers" in the city and "constables" in the country, police officers are responsible for maintaining order. London police officers generally don't carry firearms unless on protection duty or on night patrol (after the murder of two police officers in 1884, officers on night patrol had the option of carrying a revolver).

Bonus Feats: Contacts, Improved Disarm

Bonus Skills: Knowledge (civics), Notice

Favored Feats: Defensive Roll, Tough

Prostitute

Prostitutes walk the streets at night, offering sexual favors in return for money. Some prostitutes are also thieves, knowing that most of their clients would rather part with something than explain how it was lost.

Bonus Feats: Attractive, Skill Focus (Bluff)

Bonus Skills (choose any two): Bluff, Knowledge (streetwise)

Favored Feats: Fascinate, Suggestion

Pugilist

The pugilist makes his living with his fists. Some make their living as "professional" boxers either under the Marquess of Queensberry rules or illegal (after 1882) bare-knuckle boxing, while others are simply criminal enforcers or pub bouncers.

Bonus Feats: Attack Focus (unarmed), Dodge Focus, Improved Critical (unarmed)

Favored Feats: Defensive Roll, Stunning Attack

Robber

A robber is a criminal that specializes in seizing a pedestrian's property through threat of force or actual force.

Bonus Feats: Improved Grab, Quick Draw

Bonus Skills: Intimidate, Stealth

Favored Feats: Crippling Strike, Sneak Attack

Sailor

Sailors travel the high seas, either as part of the Navy or on merchant vessels.

Bonus Feats: Endurance, Talented (Swim and Survival)

Bonus Skills: Swim, Survival

Favored Feats: Acrobatic Bluff, Skill Mastery

Scavenger

Wherever there is rubbish there will be people looking for discarded treasures. Toshers generally search through the sewers of London, while Mudlarks comb the mud in the Thames and other well-travelled rivers.

Bonus Feats: Great Fortitude, Scrounger

Bonus Skills: Search, Swim

Favored Feats: Favored Opponent (Animals), Tough

Servant

Servants are the lifeblood of any upper or middle class household. In a middle class household, a servant performs many different tasks, while in an upper class household the servant will specialize in a particular set of skills.

Bonus Feats: Nondescript, Tireless

Bonus Skills: Notice, Sense Motive

Favored Feats: Defensive Roll, Skill Mastery

Shopkeeper

Shopkeepers own and operate a small shop. It could be a general store or specialize in particular items. Shopkeepers are often very knowledgeable about their particular neighborhood and have good business sense. A criminal shopkeeper is the fence, who purchases stolen goods and sells them at a profit.

Bonus Feats: Merchant's Eye, Master Haggler

Bonus Skills (choose two): Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information

Favored Feats: Fascinate, Well-Informed

Soldier

Soldiers are the backbone of any military force. While soldiers come from all walks of life, heroes with this background have focused on their military career.

Bonus Feats: Attack Focus, Firearms Training

Bonus Skills: Notice, Survival

Favored Feats: Defensive Roll, Diehard



MIDDLE CLASS OCCUPATIONS

The following is a sample list of middle class occupations. As the chief difference between the lower and middle class is wealth, most lower class occupations are also suitable for middle class heroes. That said a middle class gentleman would never select a lower class occupation unless it is considered a hobby (such as an artist). Middle class occupations particularly appropriate for the Gentry are noted with an asterisk (*).

*Academician**

Academicians value knowledge above all and have dedicated their lives to the pursuit of it. They are antiquarians, archaeologists, librarians, professors and students.

Bonus Feats: Authority, Talented (bonus skills)

Bonus Skills (choose any two): Knowledge (any), Language, Research

Favored Feats: Skill Mastery, Well-Informed

Alienist

Psychiatry is still in its infancy in the Imperial Age, as science turns from believing the insane to be possessed to simply having mental disorders. The alienist is a type of mental investigator, solving problems through probing thoughts and feelings.

Bonus Feats: Second Chance (Knowledge (behavioral sciences)), Skill Focus (Knowledge (behavioral sciences))

Bonus Skills: Knowledge (behavioral sciences), Sense Motive

Favored Feats: Fascinate, Suggestion

Artisan

An artisan is a skilled manual laborer who crafts decorative and functional items. Artisans include a wide range of trades, such as brewers, cabinetmakers, chandlers, chefs, coopers, cobblers, jewelers, tailors, weavers, and woodworkers. While some artisans are being pushed out of business by factories, others still make a decent living.

Bonus Feats: Skill Focus (Craft), Talented (Craft and Knowledge (Business))

Bonus Skills: Craft (select one), Knowledge (Business)

Favored Feats: Artisan, Craftsmen's Eye

Chemist

A chemist (not to be confused with the scientific chemist) prepares and provides pharmaceutical drugs to the public. He fills prescriptions prescribed by physicians. While a middle class occupation, there are "lower class" chemists, especially in immigrant communities. Such chemists are often unlicensed and employ traditional herbal remedies.

Bonus Feats: Second Chance (Craft (Pharmaceutical)), Skill Focus (Craft (pharmaceutical))

Bonus Skills: Craft (pharmaceutical), Knowledge (life sciences)

Favored Feats: Artisan, Improvised Tools

Clerk

Clerks occupy administrative and clerical positions. Some work for private businesses, while others work for the government. Both types lead similar lives, chained to their desks for most of the workday. This occupation is also useful for business leaders that specialize in paperwork, such as accountants, agents, or trade.

Bonus Feats: Connected, Contacts

Bonus Skills: Diplomacy, Knowledge (business or civics)

Favored Feats: Inspire, Well-Informed

*Clergy**

Clergy are a varied lot in the Imperial Age. In addition to spiritual leaders and support staff, this occupation covers missionaries and anyone else that has dedicated their lives to a particular faith.

Bonus Feats: Connected, Dedicated

Bonus Skills: Diplomacy, Knowledge (Theology & Philosophy)

Favored Feats: Fascinate, Suggestion

*Detective**

The *Imperial Age* saw the rise of the detective, using new scientific techniques to solve crimes and problems. This occupation covers both police detectives and private detectives.

Bonus Feats: Connected, Contacts

Bonus Skills (choose any two): Gather Information, Search

Favored Feats: Jack-of-All-Trades, Well-Informed

*Dilettante**

A dilettante is independently wealthy, although not necessarily upper class. With no job or responsibilities, a dilettante often indulges in a particular passion or vice. Some dilettantes become patrons for aspiring artists.

Bonus Feats: Connected, Wealth

Bonus Skills: Diplomacy, Knowledge (any)

Favored Feats: Jack-of-All-Trades, Skill Mastery

Engineer

Engineering is a growing occupation in the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution. Some engineers specialize in civil construction, while others design and build mechanical marvels.

Bonus Feats: Contacts, Talented (choose two bonus skills)

Bonus Skills (choose any two): Craft (demolitions, electrical, mechanics, or structural), Disable Device

Favored Feats: Improvised Tools, Jack-of-All-Trades

*Gambler**

A gambler is a person that makes money at games of chance. While a gambler may come from all social classes, successful gamblers can maintain a middle class lifestyle until their luck runs out.

Bonus Feats: Skill Focus (Gamble), Talented (Bluff and Gamble)

Bonus Skills: Bluff, Gamble

Favored Feats: Master Plan, Skill Mastery

Journalist

Everyone craves news and it is the journalist's job to supply it. Journalists in the *Imperial Age* are overwhelmingly newspaper correspondents, generating eye-catching headlines for their employers.

Bonus Feats: Connected, Contacts

Bonus Skills: Craft (writing), Gather Information

Favored Feats: Fascinate, Well-Informed

*Legal Practitioner**

Every civilized society needs a judicial system and that system will need lawyers and judges. In Great Britain, lawyers are divided into two types. Solicitors deal with clients directly, while a barrister argues cases in court (so a client will hire the solicitor and the solicitor will employ a barrister if necessary).

Bonus Feats: Connected, Talented (Diplomacy and Knowledge (civics))

Bonus Skills: Diplomacy, Knowledge (civics)

Favored Feats: Fascinate, Master Plan

Medical Practitioner

So long as people are injured or sick, they will need people to help them get well. In the Imperial Age, medical practitioners are divided into surgeons (who heal physical injuries) and physicians (who treat illness and disease).

Bonus Feats: Second Chance (Medicine), Skill Focus (Medicine)

Bonus Skills: Knowledge (life sciences), Medicine

Favored Feats: Master Plan, Skill Mastery

*Military Officer**

Upper middle class students tend to receive better educations and those entering military service usually do so as officers. Officer commissions have been merit-based since the early 1870s, but older military officers may have purchased their commissions outright.

Bonus Feats: Assessment, Vehicular Combat

Bonus Skills: Knowledge (Tactics), Ride

Favored Feats: Master Plan, Spirited Charge

Scientist

In the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution it seemed that there was nothing man could not discover or invent. Scientists work hard in their laboratories to find new ways to advance progress.

Bonus Feats: Second Chance (Craft), Talented (choose two bonus skills)

Bonus Skills (choose any two): Craft (chemical, demolitions, pharmaceutical), Knowledge (earth sciences, life sciences)

Favored Feats: Artisan, Improvised Tools

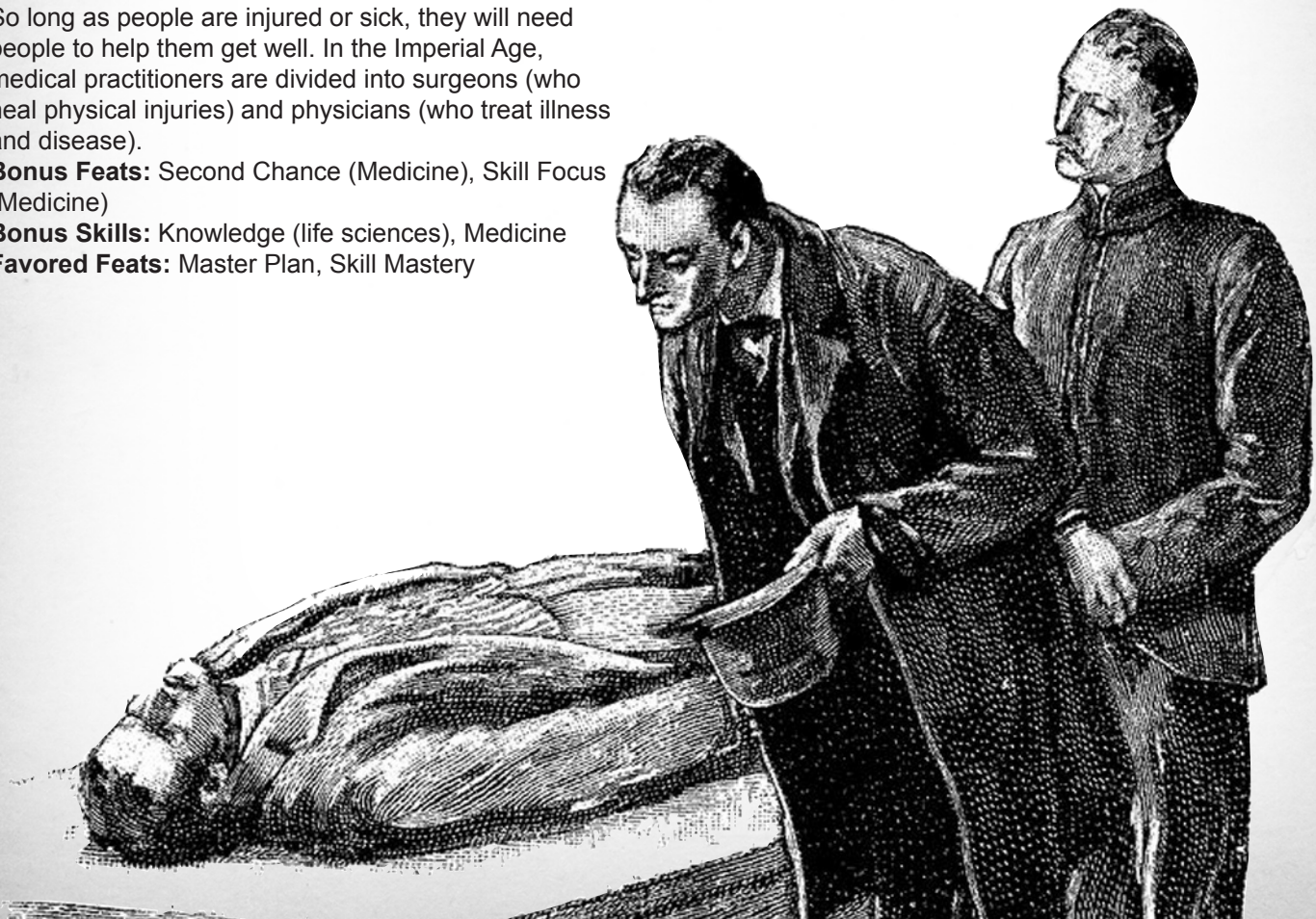
*Socialite**

Middle class women and gentlemen weren't expected to work. As such, many occupy their time attending parties and making social calls. Socialites are founts of information, especially regarding gossip and scandal.

Bonus Feats: Connected, Talented (Diplomacy and Gather Information)

Bonus Skills: Gather Information, Knowledge (Current Events)

Favored Feats: Fascinate, Well-Informed



UPPER CLASS OCCUPATIONS

The following is a sample list of upper class occupations. Gentlemen occupations are also available to the upper class without creating undue scandal.

Athlete

While it is no longer fashionable to carry a sword, some aristocrats continue to fence (or participate in other martial arts) as a hobby.

Bonus Feats: Assessment, Lightning Reflexes

Bonus Skills: Acrobatics, Intimidate

Favored Feats: Defensive Roll, Tough

Bishop

Anglican bishops and archbishops were considered upper class positions. A highly ranked official within another sect is also considered "upper class" within the sect, but whether such ranking is afforded to him in secular realm depends on the company he keeps.

Bonus Feats: Dedicated, Skill Focus (Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy))

Bonus Skills: Diplomacy, Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy)

Favored Feats: Fascinate, Inspire

Demimonde

A demimonde is a woman that maintains a comfortable lifestyle through her associations with wealthy lovers. Often the mistress of a married man (or several men), the demimonde is often tolerated so long as liaisons are discreet. Demimonde is roughly synonymous with "courtesan," but while the terms were used interchangeably courtesan also referred to a profession. A courtesan sells her favors more directly. This background can be used for both demimondes and courtesans.

Bonus Feats: Attractive, Skill Focus (Bluff)

Bonus Skills (choose any two): Bluff, Diplomacy

Favored Feats: Bewitching, Fascinate

Diplomat

In the Imperial Age, diplomats are usually appointed from the upper class, especially peers. While usually chosen for their skill at negotiation, some peers are appointed to far off posts simply to get them out of London. Diplomat is also useful for Peers that spend much of their time in the House of Lords.

Bonus Feats: Connected, Contacts

Bonus Skills: Diplomacy, Knowledge (Civics)

Favored Feats: Fascinate, Well-Informed

Industrialist

The industrialist acquires wealth through investment in industry. Industrialists from foreign egalitarian societies (such as America or France) can often hob-knob with the upper class due to their wealth and influence.

Bonus Feats: Master Haggler, Skill Focus (Knowledge (business))

Bonus Skills: Diplomacy, Knowledge (business)

Favored Feats: Fascinate, Well-Informed

Rake

The rake indulges in immoral conduct, often drinking, gambling, and partying to excess. Many rakes are wealthy "second sons" that have no title to inherit and thus spend money on their passions. Rakes tend to be "black sheep" of their respective families and spend most of their time in the guest rooms of others.

Bonus Feats: Attractive, Contacts

Bonus Skills: Diplomacy, Gather Information

Favored Feats: Fascinate, Suggestion



DRAWBACKS

Heroes are often defined by their faults as much as their abilities. Drawbacks put a little humility into a hero, reminding her that she is still, with all of her special talents and skills, an imperfect being. A good drawback adds distinction to the hero and adds to the roleplaying experience.

In addition to the penalties, players may use their drawbacks to help roleplay their heroes. For example, a hero with an addiction to gambling may seek out card games during the session, or a hero with the age drawback may continually comment about how he's not as fit as he used to be.

Each Drawback grants the hero an additional skill at first level. While a hero could theoretically have many drawbacks, the Narrator should probably limit heroes to a maximum of two or three.

REMOVING AND RECEIVING DRAWBACKS

Most drawbacks stay with a hero throughout his life. There are, however, situations in which a drawback may be removed or mitigated. For example, if a hero with a missing arm gets a steam-driven clockwork substitute that negates the disadvantage of missing an arm, then the Narrator can remove the drawback. Similarly, if a hero with an intolerance of a certain group changes his beliefs after interacting with a member of that group, then the drawback may be removed.

Removing a drawback is simple. Once the drawback no longer applies, the drawback is removed and the hero no longer suffers the penalties. In addition, the hero loses the feat she would have gotten upon reaching her next level. In some cases, selecting a feat will effectively negate a drawback (e.g. taking Tough when you have Frail). In such cases no further feat loss should be applied.

Sometimes it's possible to gain a drawback. A military hero, for example, may fight a particularly ruthless army and acquire an intolerance of anyone of that nationality. A thief may discover that the punishment for his crime involves losing a hand. When the Narrator rules that a hero has acquired a drawback, then he immediately takes the penalties and gets four skill points to spend when he attains the next level.

LIST OF DRAWBACKS

The following is a list of drawbacks available in most *Imperial Age* campaigns. Drawbacks marked with an asterisk (*) are Reputation-based drawbacks and should only be allowed in campaigns that allow Reputation qualities.

CREATING NEW DRAWBACKS

After looking through the list, you may decide to add new drawbacks. You also may have noticed that the drawbacks provided here are primarily conditional and mechanical in nature. This is by design; we did not want to create "roleplaying drawbacks" that could be easily trumped by crafty players or easily forgotten by the Narrator. When creating new drawbacks, try to make them apply to every situation in which a particular skill, bonus, or ability is used. This will help ensure that the effects of a drawback are felt on a regular basis.

BONUS FEATS

Some drawbacks have penalties equivalent to bonuses granted by a feat. This naturally brings up the possibility of using drawbacks to grant bonus feats rather than an additional skill. Bonus feats, however, have a tendency to increase the overall capability of heroes. Too often drawbacks are easily worked around to have a lesser effect on the hero than the feat she gained for it. Granting an extra skill rather than a feat helps to balance the "overall effectiveness" gap.

That said *The Imperial Age* is your game. If you wish to allow swapping drawbacks for bonus feats then by all means do so. Just ensure that the drawback chosen is worth the feat granted. If the hero ever loses a drawback, then he also loses the first feat he receives when advancing a level.

ABRASIVE ATTITUDE

You have a way of rubbing people the wrong way when you speak. This could be due to your natural belligerence, boastfulness, uncouthness, or other personality flaw.

Detriment: When using Diplomacy to change attitudes, you must add an extra 5 to the Difficulty.

ADDICTION

Your vice has a detrimental effect on your wallet. Sample vices include absinthe, beer, brandy, cocaine, gambling, opium, or scotch. You automatically lose 2 points from your Wealth score at the beginning of each adventure (this will affect your starting cash). This loss is permanent, although it may be mitigated if you go gambling or otherwise increase your Wealth score.

If an adventure takes place over a long period of time then the hero's addiction will have more of an effect. The Narrator may require an additional loss of 2 points to a hero's Wealth score for every in-game week within an adventure.

ALBINISM

You lack pigmentation in your skin, giving you a distinctively pale appearance. Your skin is very sensitive to sunlight. Whenever your skin is exposed to direct sunlight you must treat it as if being exposed to very hot conditions.

BAD LUCK

Whenever you need luck most, you can count on it not being there. Once per session, the Narrator can negate any success, even if it was a critical hit. This will usually be when you desperately need to succeed.

BAD SHOT

You are unpracticed or inept at making ranged attacks. You take a -2 penalty on all ranged attacks.

BLEEDER

Your body has trouble stabilizing. When dying, you continue to bleed until you are dead. While a Constitution check may keep you alive for another round, it will never raise your condition to Disabled and Unconscious.

BUTTERFINGERS

You tend to fumble when stressed. Withdrawing or stowing a carried item or weapon, such as a pistol, requires a full-round action. In addition, you suffer a -1 circumstance penalty to Sleight of Hand checks.

CLUMSY

You are exceptionally uncoordinated and tend to slip at the most inopportune times. You suffer a -1 penalty on Dodge checks. This penalty does not apply if you are denied your Dexterity bonus.

COWARDICE

You are a coward. You usually choose the safest position in a marching order and rely on others to protect you. Cowards never initiate combat, even when it is to their advantage. You will always maintain a defensive position until attacked. If you defeat your foe, you will attempt to hide or flee rather than engage another foe.

Heroes that have the Sneak Attack talent or similar abilities should carefully consider this drawback before selecting it, as they will never make a first strike against a flat-footed foe.

DEAF

Prerequisite: Hard of Hearing

You can't hear at all. You automatically fail Notice (hearing) checks. While you may learn languages, you may only read or write them.

EASILY READ

You wear your heart on your sleeve. Others can almost read your thoughts. Your opponents get a +4 to their Sense Motive checks when using it against you.

FRAIL

You are weaker than normal, either due to illness or genetics. You take a -1 penalty on Toughness saves. You may take this drawback multiple times.

HARD BARGAINER*

You have a reputation for being particularly ruthless at the negotiating table. On a successful Reputation check, you subtract half of your Reputation bonus to Diplomacy skill checks.

HARD OF HEARING

You have lost part of your hearing, making it difficult for you to be aware of all sounds surrounding you. You also have a problem being stealthy. You take a -2 penalty on Notice (hearing) and Stealth checks.

IMPATIENT

You are notoriously incapable of focusing your attention long and hard enough to accomplish tasks requiring great dedication. Whenever you attempt a task without making a roll, your effective roll is 5 less than normal. For example, if you "took 20," then you'd calculate your result as if you'd rolled a 15.

ILLITERACY

You have not learned to read and write. Any language you know is spoken only. In addition, you take a -2 circumstance penalty in any situation where literacy would be valuable (negotiating a contract, impressing a noble, etc).

INTOLERANCE

You have a particular hatred for a certain class, race, or culture. You always take a -3 penalty on interaction skills when making skill checks against the object of your hate. In addition, your reputation bonus always works negatively in such situations.

The Narrator has the final say on what groups are appropriate to select based on the frequency of contact with that group. If the category is sufficiently broad (for example, you are playing a devout Roman Catholic with an intolerance of Anglicans in a London-based campaign), then the Narrator may award you a second or even third extra skill, since your Intolerance would be a major hindrance. You may take this drawback multiple times. You choose a new group each time.

LAME

Whether a birth defect, injury, or disease, you have a bad leg. You move at three quarters your normal speed when using a cane or other walking aid and half when without one. You also take a -1 penalty on any skill check that assumes full use of both legs (Narrator's discretion).

MISSING ARM

Prerequisite: Missing Hand

You are missing all or part of your arm, rendering it useless. You may not use two weapons at once or any weapon that requires two hands to use.

MISSING EYE

You have lost the use of an eye. This hinders your depth perception as well as hinders your ability to engage foes on your blind side. You take an extra -1 penalty per range increment when using a ranged weapon.

MISSING HAND

You are missing a hand. You may not use a two-handed weapon. You may engage in two-weapon combat if a weapon (such as a hook) is affixed to your stump. You may still use a shield. You also take a -2 penalty on all Climb checks and any other skill checks that normally require two hands to use (Narrator's discretion).

MISSING LEG

Prerequisite: Lame

You are missing a leg. You move at half your normal speed when using walking aids. Without such aids, you're effectively immobile. In addition, whenever you Dodge, you must make a Difficulty 10 Dexterity check or fall prone (even if you have a walking aid). You also take a -2 penalty on any skill check that assumes full use of both legs (Narrator's discretion).

MUTE

You cannot speak. You take a -4 penalty on any skill checks that would normally require you to speak. While you may continue to learn new languages, you may only understand them, not speak them.

OBLIVIOUS

Your mind wanders so much that you fail to take note of what's going on around you. You are always considered surprised if an opponent attempts to gain a surprise attack. You may never take the Uncanny Dodge feat.

SCANDALIZED*

You are the victim of a scandal and your social circle has shut you out as a result. On a successful Reputation check, you subtract half of your Reputation bonus to Gather Information skill checks.

SLOW HEALER

It takes you longer than normal to heal. Your Difficulty is 15 when making recovery checks against damage conditions.

SLOW REFLEXES

You have slower than normal reflexes. You take a -2 penalty on all Reflex saving throws.

SLOW TO ACT

You are slow to respond to attacks. You take a -4 penalty to initiative checks.

SOCIAL STIGMA

You are or appear to be a member of a group that the majority of those around you finds "inferior" or "intolerable." You always take a -2 circumstance modifier with interaction skill checks and may find some doors closed to you. A Disguise check may waive this modifier, but the opponent always gets a Notice check to see through the Disguise and reapply the effects of the social stigma.

Narrators should be careful in allowing and applying this drawback. A social stigma is only worth its weight as a drawback if it puts the hero at a true disadvantage for a majority of the campaign. Being a Roman Catholic Englishman in London is not nearly the social stigma that being Jewish would be. On the other hand, being a Jewish member of a British expedition in Africa, where most interaction is with non-Europeans, probably isn't worth a drawback.

SPINELESS

You have a weaker will than normal. You take a -2 penalty on all Will saving throws.

UNAPPEALING

You are particularly unattractive to most people, due to your physical appearance, manner, style, personality, or other factors. You take a -3 to any Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate checks against someone normally attracted to your gender.

UNTHREATENING*

You have a reputation of not following through with your threats. On a successful reputation check, you subtract half of your Reputation bonus to Intimidate skill checks.

WEAK FORTITUDE

You are weaker than normal. You take a -2 penalty on all Fortitude saving throws.

WEASEL*

You've attempted to bluff too many people and now have a reputation for it. On a successful Reputation check, you subtract half your Reputation bonus to Bluff skill checks.

SKILLS

The following are new skills and new uses for existing skills in the Imperial Age. Additional uses of skills are offered in the genre-specific chapters of this book.

BLUFF

This skill aids in winning games of chance where some skill is involved.

Bluffing: If you've made a poor Gamble check you can immediately replace it with a Bluff check in any game of chance that involves at least one other person (you can't bluff the house). Make an opposed Bluff check against your opponent's Sense Motive check. If you beat your opponent's Sense Motive check, then you win. If you fail, then you lose the game and you incur a -1 penalty to further Bluff checks against that opponent. Future failures against that opponent incur cumulative penalties (he's learning your "tells"). If tied, you are bound to your initial Gamble check but incur no penalties.

Special: You can't take 5, 10, or 20 on Bluff checks when bluffing in a game of chance.

DIPLOMACY

This skill allows you to introduce people, compliment another, mediate disputes, and even bribe officials.

Acquaint Person: You can use your Diplomacy skill to introduce others and help them make a good impression. Instead of making a Diplomacy check to improve someone's attitude in regards to yourself, you can do so on behalf of another. The target must have a starting attitude towards the other person that is equal to or less than their attitude towards you. Instead of using the target's starting attitude towards you, you use his attitude towards the other. For each level of influence you have with the target above the other, you gain a +5 bonus to your Diplomacy check. For example, if you are friends with the king and want to acquaint him with a certain knight to whom he is indifferent, then you would make a Diplomacy check to influence the king's attitude towards the knight using the indifferent starting attitude, but with a +5 bonus (for being one influence higher).

Compliment: With a successful Diplomacy check, you can temporarily improve a Narrator character's attitude toward you by two categories rather than one. If you choose this option, the Narrator character's attitude jumps up two categories for one minute as you speak glowingly about him, his plans, or some other thing that is important to him. After that time, he returns to the state he held before you made your Diplomacy check, unless something has happened in the intervening time to improve or worsen his attitude towards you. If you use a normal Diplomacy check while a character feels complimented, you still use his original attitude, not his modified attitude. Compliments can only buy you time, never make you permanent friends. In addition, you can only compliment a person so much before they start to figure out what is going on. The Difficulty of making a compliment increases by one for each previous compliment paid to the character by you during this encounter.

Attitude	Difficulty
Hostile	20
Unfriendly	20
Indifferent	15
Friendly	15

Challenges: You can take the following challenges with Diplomacy:

Acquaint Group: By increasing the Difficulty by 5, you can introduce a group of individuals to a particular character. Alternatively, you can attempt to introduce two groups to each other by taking a -10 penalty to your Diplomacy check. Narrators may increase these penalties depending upon the size of the groups being introduced.

Endearing Compliment: In return for a -5 penalty, you can have your compliment last for an additional minute. If you increase the penalty to -10, you can have your compliment last for 5 minutes.

Midnight Hour Mediation: By increasing the Difficulty by 10, you can attempt to mediate a dispute in one hour.

Action: Acquainting others usually takes a minute or more. Complimenting others usually takes a full-round or longer. Mediating takes eight hours per session.

Special: Offering money or another form of favor can, in the right situation, improve your chances with a Diplomacy skill check. Bribery allows you to circumvent various official obstacles when a person in a position of trust or authority is willing to accept such an offering.

An illegal act, bribery requires two willing participants, one to offer a bribe and the other to accept it. When a character requires a bribe to render services, then your Diplomacy check automatically fails if a bribe isn't attached to it. If a bribe isn't required, you can add a bribe to get a bonus on your skill check. This can backfire, as some characters will be insulted by a bribe offer (their attitude changes one step for the worse), and others will report you to the proper authorities.

To bribe a character, make a Wealth check. Typical Difficulties for especially corrupt characters are shown on the **Bribery Table**, but the Narrator may modify the Difficulty as he sees fit. If you succeed on the Wealth check, you gain a +2 bonus on the Diplomacy check. If you want a higher bonus to your Diplomacy check, then for every point by which you increase the Wealth Difficulty, you increase the possible bonus by +1 (to a total maximum bonus of +10).

Bribe Target	Difficulty*
Bouncer	5
Bureaucrat	10
Clerk	5
Diplomat	15
Laborer	5
Police Officer	10
Soldier	10

* This Difficulty assumes that these figures are completely corrupt, utterly disgruntled, financially desperate, or otherwise more than willing to betray their duties for monetary reward. For characters that are less corrupt, increase the Difficulty by 5 or more.

GAMBLE

Wisdom

Gambling is a popular vice in *The Imperial Age* amongst the idle rich and the desperate. Whist and other card games are played in parlors, clubs, and dens. Betting on the horse races is so popular that every city has betting services.

While anyone can gamble, a character with the Gamble skill is particularly skilled at minimizing risk. The Gamble skill may only be used in cases where some skill comes into play. The Gamble skill cannot be used to influence pure games of chance, such as dice games.

Check: To join or start a game, a character must first pay a stake. The character sets the purchase difficulty of the stake if he or she starts the game, or the Narrator sets it if the character joins a game. Stakes run from penny-ante (purchase difficulty 4) to astronomical (purchase difficulty 24). A character cannot take 20 when purchasing a stake.

If the stake is within the character's means (it is equal to or less than his or her Wealth score), the character stands no chance of winning any significant amount. The character might come out ahead, but the amount is not enough to affect his or her Wealth score. Since paying the stake didn't cost any points of Wealth, the character doesn't lose anything either.

If the stake is higher than the character's Wealth score (before applying any reductions from purchasing the stake), the character gets a +1 bonus on his or her Gamble check for every point the purchase difficulty is above the character's Wealth score.

The character's Gamble check is opposed by the Gamble checks of all other participants in the game. (If playing at a casino, assume the house has a Gamble skill modifier equal to the stake purchase difficulty. Regardless of the stake purchase difficulty, the house does not get a bonus on its Gamble check for the purchase difficulty). If there are many

USING CASH WHEN GAMBLING

The Gamble skill assumes that the Narrator is using the Wealth system in her campaign. If she has opted to use cash then the Gamble skill becomes easier to use. The stake becomes actual money and, if the character wins the Gamble skill check, he gets the winnings (this would be a pot in a card game or the odds in a house game) as cash.

characters participating, the Narrator can opt to make a single roll for all of them, using the highest Gamble skill modifier among them and adding a +2 bonus to the check.

If the character beats all other participants, he or she wins and gains an increase to his or her Wealth score. The amount of the increase depends on the difference between the character's check result and the next highest result among the other participants.

Check Result Difference	Wealth Score Increase
1-9	+1
10-19	+2
20-29	+3
30-39	+4
40 or more	+5

Try Again?: No, unless the character wants to put up another stake.

Special: A character can't take 10 or take 20 when making a Gamble check.

Time: A Gamble check requires 1 hour.

GATHER INFORMATION

The Narrator should assign circumstance modifiers to Gather Information checks if the character needs to investigate in social classes other than his own. Also, Gather Information checks can be made to add to the gossip.

Plant Rumors: You spread stories throughout town, helping to sow false rumors or send your rivals on a wild goose chase. Make a Gather Information check with a -10 modifier. Those who attempt to use Gather Information in this area and fail to beat a Difficulty equal to the result of your check learn the information you planted in place of the news they seek. If the Gather Information check succeeds, your opponents learn that you spread the story.

KNOWLEDGE

With a few exceptions given in other chapters, *The Imperial Age* uses the same Knowledge specialties as found in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*. That said there are some specialties that need clarification when using them in an Imperial Age campaign, as well as a new specialty, Linguistics.

Art: Society places a great emphasis on being fashionable, and a character that can display intimate knowledge of such things can find many doors opening in social circles. This specialty allows a character to keep up with fashion trends around the world.

Civics: While government and the aristocracy are slowly starting to separate, the two are still intertwined. Thus this specialty can be used for knowledge relating the aristocracy as well as the government.

Current Events: This specialty includes rumors, especially those about the upper class (and middle upper class). This includes public scandals and associations (digging for or adding to such information is the province of the Gather Information skill).

Linguistics: You have a good understanding of the way languages work. This also includes deciphering old scripts, creating and deciphering coded messages, and understanding the basic gist of a conversation, even if you don't understand the words (a Knowledge (Linguistics) check can be substituted in place of Sense Motive for purposes of understanding, in the most general of terms, what someone is conveying in an unknown speech).

Popular Culture: This specialty includes basic geographic knowledge if the campaign primarily takes place in an urban locale such as London. You may use this skill to find the quickest way to a particular street or neighborhood and you have a general knowledge of where to find good restaurants, gentlemen's clubs, and theatres.

The Knowledge skill can also be used to appraise items.

Appraise: You can appraise common or well-known objects associated with one of your Knowledge specialties with a

Knowledge check (Difficulty 10). Failure by 4 or less means that you estimate the value of the item at one more or less than its normal purchase difficulty. Failure by 5 or more means you estimate the value at two more or less than its normal purchase difficulty.

Appraising a rare or exotic item associated with one of your Knowledge specialties requires a successful check against Difficulty 15, 20, or higher. If the check succeeds, you estimate the purchase difficulty correctly; failure means you can't estimate the item's value.

LANGUAGE

Trained Only; Requires Specialization

Language is an unusual skill. Each rank in this skill gives you the ability to read, write and speak another language at its basic level.

Basic Level: Taking a language once grants you literacy and fluency in a language. You have a regional accent as well. This is the level that all characters speak their Native tongue at, unless they elect to take another level of proficiency.

A character can recognize the regional accents of his native language at the basic level. He can also attempt to fake a different regional accent, but a successful Sense Motive check at a Difficulty of 15 will reveal that he is faking it (if the character making the check is from that region, then he automatically succeeds). This is because it is easier to fake the accent than it is to know and incorporate other aspects of the regional speech.

Expert Level: Taking two ranks in the same language grants the character complete and utter fluidity. You can identify regional accents of the language. The character copies slang, local dialects and cultural body language with ease. (A character with English at this level may emulate regional American accents, as well as British, Cockney, Irish and other English accents, for example.)

Dead or Exotic Languages: These languages require the assignment of two skill ranks to have at the basic level and three skill ranks to have at expert level.

Dead Languages: Dead languages are languages that are no longer used, such as Aramaic, ancient Greek or ancient Egyptian. In some cases, such as Egyptian hieroglyphics, the dead language can only be read, not spoken.

Exotic Languages: Exotic languages are languages that are still in use but unusual for the hero to have. For example, a French hero that never left the Continent could easily study English or German, but probably wouldn't have been exposed to Navajo. For him, Navajo is an exotic language. By contrast, a hero raised in the American Southwest could select Navajo or German as normal languages, but would have to take Swahili as an exotic language.

In an occult campaign, magical and secret languages are always considered exotic languages.

KNOWLEDGE FAMILIARITY

The pub owner in Holborn may know his neighborhood pretty well, but he rarely ventures into Southwark. The coachman of a wealthy family may know the Mayfair district like the back of his hand, but has little knowledge of the East End. An upper class socialite may be very familiar with the families attached to her social circle, but knows little about the middle class.

One easy way to modify Knowledge checks is to use the Familiarity modifiers in the Powers chapter of *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*. For example, if a London detective heads out to a small Cornish village, he may be unable to make a Knowledge (current events) check until he's spent some time there (and the penalty starts to decrease). This adds a little complexity to the game but will result in a more realistic approach to Knowledge skills.

THE RAIN IN SPAIN STAYS MAINLY IN THE PLAIN

An accent can tell a lot about a person, especially in Victorian London. An American, a Londoner, and a Scotsman may all speak English, but it is easy to tell who is from where. An accent can convey a character's nationality, region, and even social class. At the Narrator's discretion, a particular accent may grant a hero a circumstance modifier, positive or negative, when dealing with a Narrator character.

Also, the Languages skill as presented here is very liberal with regional accent knowledge, to keep things simple and imply a certain amount of worldliness. Realistically, a hero from Philadelphia probably wouldn't know the distinctions between Cockney, Northern, or Scouse accents. At the Narrator's discretion, a hero may only recognize an accent as "unknown" until she gains more familiarity with it.

RESEARCH

Even if you don't know something off the top of your head, a good researcher can often turn up answers. Given enough time (usually a few hours) and proper information sources like libraries, newspaper morgues, and academic journals, you get a general idea about a given topic. The Difficulty of a Research check is 10 for basic knowledge, 15 for more obscure data, and 20 to 30 for very obscure bits of lore. This assumes that no obvious reasons exist why such information would be unavailable, and that you have a way to acquire restricted or protected information. The Narrator determines how obscure a particular topic is (the more obscure, the higher the Difficulty) and what kind of information might be available depending on where you are conducting your research.



Topic	Difficulty	Example Source
General	10	Textbooks
Specific	15	Accounting files
Obscure	20	Newspaper morgues
Disorganized	+5	Scattered notes
Restricted	+5	Scotland Yard files
Protected	+10	Government documents

Challenges: You can accept the following challenge when making a Research check:

Scanning the Headlines: You may add +5 or +10 to the Difficulty to reduce Research time by half or one quarter respectively.

Time: A Research check normally takes an hour.

SLEIGHT OF HAND

You can use Sleight of Hand to cheat at gambling.

Cheating: You can use a Sleight of Hand check to enhance your Gamble check when deliberately tricking your opponent (e.g. palming an item in a shell game, pulling a card from your sleeve). Make an opposed Sleight of Hand Check against your opponent's Notice check. If you succeed, you get a +2 plus an additional +1 for every 5 points you make over the Difficulty. If you fail, then you've been caught cheating.

Whenever you cheat in a game of chance, there's always a chance that you'll get caught anyway. The chance is equal to the bonus to your Gamble check on a d20 roll. For example, if you receive a +3 bonus on your Gamble check due to Sleight of Hand, then you'll get caught on a roll of 18 or better on a d20.

FEATS

A number of new feats are necessary to fully use the backgrounds and fighting styles given in this chapter. Most of these are collected from other *True20* products and included here for your convenience.

ARTISAN (Expert)

Choose a Craft skill. Whenever you spend a Conviction point to re-roll a die roll directly concerning your chosen Craft skill, the roll is treated as a 20 (but not a natural 20).

In addition, your long apprenticeship and many hours at work have taught you efficiency. When you take 10 on a skill check, you reduce the time needed to complete the Craft check by 25 percent.

AUTHORITY (Expert)

You are considered an authority in a particular area of study that crosses several skills. Whenever you spend a Conviction point to re-roll a die roll directly concerning your area of study, the roll is treated as a 20 (but not a natural 20).

Sample areas of study are provided below. The Narrator should feel free to create new areas of study, being careful not to make the topics overbroad (see sidebar).

Egyptology: You are an expert in all things ancient Egyptian, from art and architecture to history to death rituals. You can also interpret ancient hieroglyphics with astounding accuracy.

Arabia: You are an expert in Arabian history and culture, including Islamic studies.

Far East: You are an expert in East Asian cultures, such as China, Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia.

Indian: You are an expert in the Indian subcontinent. You can determine the area of India that an artifact or person originated. You are also an expert in Hinduism as well as the effects of other religions as they pertain to the Indian subcontinent.

Society: You are obsessed with social rituals and can easily work your way through any social scene. You understand the proper methods of calling, what's in fashion at the moment, and the latest dances.

Thanatology: You are fascinated with death and death rituals from every culture.

BENEFIT (General)

The following are additional benefits available to heroes in an *Imperial Age* campaign.

Gentleman's Title: You are a knight or baronet. This benefit is generally only available to 1st level heroes; the Narrator will decide when this benefit is available later in the campaign (knighthoods are awarded for service; baronetcies are inherited when your title-holding parent dies).

Peerage: You are a titled noble and enjoy certain privileges. This benefit is generally only available to 1st level heroes with the High Born feat. This benefit is generally only available later in the campaign to a high born hero if the title-holding parent dies. Unless the Narrator decrees otherwise, you are a Baron.

ORIENTALISM AND OTHER OVERBROAD TOPICS

Victorians cast a wide net when it came to "Orientalism" or "Oriental Studies." Originally limited to Asia Minor (part of the Ottoman Empire), the term came to encompass most of Asia by the Imperial Age. Obviously, this is far too wide a net for the Authority feat. Or is it?

As Narrator, you are the best determiner of what constitutes "too broad." If your campaign is primarily set in South Africa and you only bring in the occasional Egyptian or Chinese influence, then being an authority on "the Orient" is not over-powered. If, however, you are running an occult detective campaign that frequently deals with Asian subjects, then allowing your antiquarian hero to choose "Orientalism" would be way too broad. Better to slice it up into smaller topics.

Similarly, some seemingly proper areas of study may be too broad. The Society area of study works well in campaigns where rubbing elbows with the upper classes is an occasional occurrence, but may be overpowered in campaigns that revolve around the social scene.

BEWITCHING (Expert)

Prerequisite: Fascinate (For the Same Skill)

You have an extraordinary ability to manipulate the attitudes of others. You can use an interaction skill to change the attitude of a subject you have fascinated (using the Fascinate feat). This works like a use of the Heart Shaping (friendship) power, except you must interact with the target. The Difficulty of the target's Will save is 10 + half your expert level + your Charisma.

During this time, the subject will act in accord with his new attitude, but will not perform any actions that go against his personality in some way. Afterward, the subject's attitude returns to the state it held before you bewitched him, unless something was done in his presence that would change his attitude towards you for the better or worse.

As long as you did nothing to cause a decrease in a subject's attitude, you gain a +2 bonus to your next social interaction skill check (Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, or Perform) regarding a subject you have already bewitched. This bonus is lost after one day (24 hours).

CRAFTSMAN'S EYE (Expert)

Prerequisite: Craft Skill

You know enough about your trade to find bargains and interested buyers with equal efficiency.

Choose a Craft skill. You gain a +2 bonus to Craft and Knowledge checks to appraise objects that you can make with your chosen Craft skill. In addition, you gain a +2 bonus to Bluff and Sense Motive checks to haggle the purchase difficulty of raw materials and goods associated with your chosen Craft skill.

You can take this feat multiple times. Each time you do, it applies to a different Craft skill.

DEADLY AIM (Expert or Warrior)

You may add half your Dexterity score (rounded up) to the damage you inflict with all crossbows and guns.

GIFTED SKILL (Expert)

Prerequisites: 1st Level Only, Skill Focus, Talented, Still Rank 4

You are extremely gifted in a particular skill. Choose a skill you have 4 ranks in and that is associated with the Skill Focus and Talented feats. This skill increases its maximum ranks by 2 (character level +5) and automatically gains 2 ranks. In addition, it is easier for you to perform challenges with this skill. Each challenge with this skill imposes either a +4 modifier to a check's Difficulty or a -4 penalty to the check result.

You may take this feat multiple times, but only at 1st-level. Each times you do so, choose a different skill.

HIGH BORN

Prerequisite: 1st Level Only

You were born into a prominent family and enjoy certain perks. In Victorian Britain, this means that you are a member of the upper class and carry a courtesy title (although you are still considered a commoner).

You gain a +2 bonus on all Bluff and diplomacy checks when dealing with other celebrities, nobility, and officials. You also start with one of the following benefits.

Celebrity: You gain a +1 bonus to your Reputation bonus.

Education: You gain 2 additional skill ranks. You may apply these ranks in any manner that you wish, although they do not allow any of your skills to exceed the maximum rank for your level.

Heirloom: You gain an item with a cost between 15 and 20, without having to make a Wealth check.

Stipend: You gain a +2 bonus to your Wealth bonus.

BEING HIGH BORN IN OTHER CULTURES

The British are unique in that they treat untitled upper class subjects as commoners. In most aristocracies, the entire upper class gains "titled" benefits. In countries without aristocracies, being high born is generally achieved through wealth. Narrators may wish to impose conditions for being high born in such societies.

If the hero comes from a nation that ennobles entire families, the Narrator may require that the Benefit (Peerage) feat is also selected. If the hero comes from an egalitarian nation, then the Narrator may require that a certain Wealth level or the purchase of one or more Wealthy feats be achieved before the hero may take the High Born feat (the 1st level requirement should be waived in such cases).

MASTER HAGGLER (General)

You have a knack at haggling prices. You gain a +5 bonus to Bluff or Sense Motive checks when haggling.

MERCHANT'S EYE (General)

You have an almost uncanny ability to spot valuable items and deals. You gain a +2 bonus to Craft and Knowledge checks to appraise objects. In addition, you gain a +2 bonus to Bluff and Sense Motive checks when haggling.

NONDESCRIPT (General)

You are utterly ordinary in every way, lacking any defining characteristics that would make you easy to pick out in a social situation.

During any non-combat situation, you can make a Stealth check at a -5 penalty to fade into the background, even without a distraction (essentially, non-combat situations are considered distractions for the purposes of this feat). Make a Stealth check, while everyone present attempts a Notice check to oppose it. Those who succeed note your presence and act accordingly.

Those who fail simply do not notice you. They are too absorbed in other things. Unless you take some noteworthy action or someone seeks you out, those nearby fail to note your presence unless they must physically interact with you. Should you move within 5 feet of someone, your presence immediately becomes apparent, unless you remain physically hidden or out of sight.

Otherwise, people in the area act as if you are not there. They might speak freely about secret topics or fail to notice as you draw a dagger and move to attack. Anyone in the area who specifically wants privacy may make a Notice check each round to notice you as a free action. For each consecutive round a character attempts the check, he gains a cumulative +2 bonus. On the first round, the bonus is +0; on the second round, it is +2; third round, +4; and so forth. You do not gain the benefits of this trait if anyone actively seeks you out or is on watch for intruders. For example, you could not use this ability to walk past a pair of guards. You could use it to blend into a crowd at a tavern and spy on someone, however.

ORGANIZED (General)

You perform tasks quickly. You may make a Wisdom check (Difficulty 15) to organize a task requiring a skill check and taking more than one round. This task may be performed by you or another character under your guidance. If you succeed at the check, the task is completed in half the usual time.



SCROUNGER (General)

You can make Survival checks in the city with a +2 bonus, even if you lack any ranks in that skill. You can use Survival to track down any specific dealers and informants. When searching for a specific item, you can make a Survival or Knowledge (streetwise) check (Difficulty equal to the Wealth cost of the item you seek) to uncover a dealer who offers it.

STYLISH (General)

You may spend a Conviction point to apply half the purchase Difficulty of your clothing (round down) as a bonus to one Bluff, Diplomacy, or Gather Information check.

EQUIPMENT

The following lists of equipment are in addition to those in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*. Also included is an optional system for using hard currency instead of wealth costs.

CASH PURCHASES

Cash purchases are a more realistic way to handle commerce, but it increases bookkeeping for the player. Under this system, a character's wealth score merely determines the amount of cash that he has available at the beginning of an adventure. He may spend this cash just as he would real money, and when he runs out, he can't purchase anything else.

Any cash that the character does not spend may be held over for future adventures (representing savings). A character's profession check still adds to his abstract Wealth score.

Before you're ready to take your character on a shopping spree, you should know a little bit about Victorian currency.

BRITISH CURRENCY

The imperial monetary system was often confusing to foreigners. Evolved throughout time, English money had a dizzying array of coins and paper notes, each with official terms and slang terms. Most simply, there were pence, twelve of which make a shilling, twenty of which make a pound. A pound in the 1880s and 1890s was one of the most stable currencies, and was worth approximately five American dollars or French francs in this period.

In price notations, something marked £ 1 5/6 costs a pound five shillings, and sixpence. 5/6 would indicate five shillings and sixpence. 5s is five shillings on its own, 6d sixpence.

Here are the most common coins and notes used in London:

Value	Coin	Note	Slang
1/8 pence	half farthing		
1/4 pence	farthing		
1/2 pence	halfpenny		ha'pence, ha'penny
1 pence	penny		copper
2 pence	twopence		tuppence
3 pence	threepence		thruppence
4 pence	groat		
6 pence	sixpence		tanner, bender
12 pence	shilling		bob, hog
2 shillings	florin		
2 1/2 shillings	half crown	half a crown	
5 shillings	crown		bull
10 shillings	half sovereign	1/2 pound note	
20 shillings	sovereign	1 pound note	quid
21 shillings	guinea		
5 pounds		5 pound note	fiver
10 pounds		10 pound note	tenner

AVERAGE YEARLY INCOME

The following chart lists the hero's average yearly income. This is intended to give you an idea of your hero's worth, as much of the income will be use for rents, taxes, and other costs of living.

Wealth Score	Yearly Income	Wealth Score	Yearly Income
+0	£60	+11	£490
+1	£90	+12	£540
+2	£135	+13	£580
+3	£180	+14	£625
+4	£225	+15	£700
+5	£270	+16	£900
+6	£300	+17	£1100
+7	£340	+18	£1350
+8	£375	+19	£1600
+9	£410	+20	£1800
+10	£450	>+20	See Below

For Wealth scores above +20, double the figure two levels lower. For Instance, characters with a +21 Wealth score have an average yearly income of £3200, or twice that of a character with a Wealth score of +19 has.

CASH ON HAND

To determine what is in a character's pockets at the start of an adventure, reference the character's wealth score on the Cash on Hand table. The Cash on Hand column shows how much money the character has.

Wealth Score	Cash on Hand	Wealth Score	Cash on Hand
+0	£2	+11	£8
+1	£2.5	+12	£9
+2	£2.10	+13	£11
+3	£3	+14	£13
+4	£3.5	+15	£16
+5	£3.10	+16	£19
+6	£4	+17	£23
+7	£4/10	+18	£28
+8	£5	+19	£34
+9	£6	+20	£43
+10	£7	>+20	See Below

To determine Cash on Hand for Wealth scores greater than 20, double the amount of cash on hand two levels lower. For example, a +21 Wealth score would grant £68, or twice the amount for a +19 Wealth score.

If the adventure takes place over the course of weeks, then you can allow the characters to refresh their pockets at a rate of 25% (this can increase their total over their original cash on hand if they've been frugal). This represents the character's usual income after bills and debts are settled.

INCREASING WEALTH SCORE

Whenever a character accrues enough money to attain a higher wealth score, he may immediately spend that amount of cash for that wealth score in order to attain it. This represents the character making sound economic decisions and paying off old debts (although this will not release the character from his obligations to a loan made using the above rules).

A character may not jump Wealth scores. He must pay the full cost for each level in order to attain the next level.

Purchasing a Higher Wealth score

Wealth score	Cost	Wealth score	Cost
+0	Free	+11	£135
+1	£1.16	+12	£180
+2	£4.10	+13	£250
+3	£10	+14	£310
+4	£18	+15	£450
+5	£27	+16	£580
+6	£36	+17	£800
+7	£49	+18	£1000
+8	£63	+19	£1300
+9	£80	+20	£1800
+10	£100	>+20	See Below

For Wealth scores of +21 or more, double the amount of the Wealth score 2 levels lower.

A character may use a loan (as above) to attain a higher wealth score, but he is now living beyond his means (a sad fact for many an impoverished aristocrat). If his Wealth score falls below the new, purchased level before he pays off the loan, or if he ever fails to pay his loan payments, he immediately loses 1d8 points of Wealth score.

GENERATING AND AMENDING PRICES

The equipment charts in *The Imperial Age* use wealth costs rather than actual prices for a variety of reasons. First, it makes it easier to incorporate items from other *True20* products. Second, prices in the Imperial Age are fluid. Finally, *The Imperial Age* covers a twenty year span. 1880 prices will not be the same as 1895 prices.

If you desire to use actual prices, the table below can be used to generate "hard cash" for a particular wealth cost. In addition to using the chart, you can also add a random shilling or penny amount to larger purchases as well. Simply roll a d20 (treat a 20 as 0) for shillings and a d12 (treat a 12 as 0) for pence.

Cash Prices for Items

Cost	Avg Price	Random Price	Cost	Avg Price	Random Price
1	3d	1d6d	26	£100	£50 + (£1d10x10)
2	6d	1d12d	27	£130	£70 + (£2d6x10)
3	2s	1d4s	28	£180	£100 + (£2d6x10)
4	3/6	3s + 1d12d	29	£250	£200 + (£1d10x10)
5	4/8	4s + 2d6d	30	£310	£240 + (£2d6x10)
6	8s	2d6s	31	£450	£350 + (£2d10x10)
7	10s	5s + 1d10s	32	£580	£480 + (£2d10x10)
8	12s	7s + 1d10s	33	£800	£700 + (£2d10x10)
9	16s	10s + 2d6s	34	£1000	£500 + (£1d10x100)
10	£1	10s + 3d6s	35	£1300	£700 + (£2d6x100)
11	£1.6	£1 + 2d6s	36	£1800	£1000 + (£2d6x100)
12	£1.16	£1.10 + 2d6s	37	£2500	£2000 + (£1d10x100)
13	£2.10	£2.5 + 1d10s	38	£3100	£2400 + (£2d6x100)
14	£3.2	£3 + 1d4s	39	£4500	£3500 + (£2d10x100)
15	£4.10	£4/5 + 1d10s	40	£5800	£4800 + (£2d10x100)
16	£5.16	£5.10 + 2d6s	41	£8000	£7000 + (£2d10x100)
17	£8	£2d6	42	£10,000	£5000 + (£1d10x1000)
18	£10	£5 + £1d10	43	£13,000	£7000 + (£2d6x1000)
19	£13	£7 + £2d6	44	£18,000	£10000 + (£2d6x1000)
20	£18	£10 + £2d6	45	£25,000	£20000 + (£1d10x1000)
21	£25	£20 + £1d10	46	£31,000	£24000 + (£2d6x1000)
22	£31	£24 + £2d6	47	£45,000	£35000 + (£2d10x1000)
23	£45	£35 + £2d10	48	£58,000	£48000 + (£2d10x1000)
24	£58	£48 + £2d10	49	£80,000	£70000 + (£2d10x1000)
25	£80	£2d6x10	50	£100,000	£50000 + (£1d10x10000)

WEAPONS

Firearms	Dmg	Crit	Type	Range	Size	Weight	Cost
Remington Double-Derringer	+4	20/+3	Ballistic	10 ft	Tiny	0.5 lbs.	14
Sharps Pepperbox	+3	20/+3	Ballistic	10 ft	Tiny	1.5 lbs.	13
British Service Revolver	+4	20/+3	Ballistic	30 ft	Small	2 lbs.	15
Colt Peacemaker	+4	20/+3	Ballistic	30 ft	Medium	3 lbs.	14
S&W Schofield	+4	20/+3	Ballistic	40 ft	Medium	2.5 lbs	16
Martini-Henry Carbine	+5	20/+3	Ballistic	60 ft	Large	7.5 lbs	14
Spencer Carbine	+5	20/+3	Ballistic	70 ft	Large	8.5 lbs	16
Martini-Henry Rifle	+5	20/+3	Ballistic	80 ft	Large	8.5 lbs	15
Winchester Rifle	+5	20/+3	Ballistic	70 ft	Large	10 lbs	16
Remington Double Barrel Shotgun	+5	20/+3	Ballistic	30 ft	Large	10 lbs	16
Winchester Lever-Action Shotgun	+5	20/+3	Ballistic	30 ft	Large	9 lbs	17
Gardner Machine Gun	+5	20/+3	Ballistic, Autofire	80 ft	Huge	80 lbs	33
Gatling Machine Gun	+5	20/+3	Ballistic, Autofire	70 ft	Huge	90 lbs	32
Maxim Machine Gun	+5	20/+3	Ballistic, Autofire	100 ft	Huge	80 lbs	35

Flintlock Firearms

Musket	+5	20/+4	Ballistic	60 ft	Large	25 lb	12
Pistol	+4	20/+4	Ballistic	10 ft	Small	5 lb	13
Pistol, Double-barrel	+4/+6	20/+4	Ballistic	5 ft	Small	10 lb	14
Rifle	+5	20/+4	Ballistic	80 ft	Large	25 lb	13

Other

Cloak	--	--	---	10 ft	Med	3 lb	11
-------	----	----	-----	-------	-----	------	----

FIREARMS

British Service Revolver: This is the standard sidearm of the British military. There were three official pistols in the Imperial Age: the Adams .450 (until 1880), the Enfield Mark 1 (until 1888) and the Webley revolver. All three have identical game statistics.

The service revolver can fire 6 times before it needs to be reloaded. Reloading a service revolver requires one move action per chamber.

Colt Peacemaker: Introduced in 1873, this weapon quickly became an American cowboy favorite. It replaced the navy revolver as the weapon of choice in the U.S. Cavalry.

The Colt Peacemaker can fire 6 times before it needs to be reloaded. Reloading a Colt Peacemaker requires one move action per chamber.

Gardner Machine Gun: Developed in 1874, the Gardner Gun was tested by the U.S. Army and, despite performing well, was not adopted. The Gardner Gun found a home instead with the British Navy in 1881. Ultimately it would be adopted by most European nations. The Gardner Gun has one or two barrels and ammo is fed through a vertical feed. A hand crank discharged the bullets.

The Gardner Machine Gun can make 10 autofire attacks before it needs to be reloaded. Reloading a Gardner Machine Gun with another cart requires one move action.

Gatling Machine Gun: The earliest machine gun, the Gatling Gun required a hand crank to feed the multiple barrels. There were multiple methods of reloading Gatling Guns as new models were produced. The method given here is one example.

The Gatling Machine Gun can make 20 autofire attacks before it needs to be reloaded. Some Gatling Guns hold two boxes, allowing one to be reloaded while the other fires. Reloading a Gatling Machine Gun with another box requires one move action.

Martini-Henry Carbine: This is the slimmed-down cavalry version of the Martini-Henry rifle.

The Martini-Henry Carbine can fire once before it needs to be reloaded. Reloading a Martini-Henry Carbine requires one move action.

Martini-Henry Rifle: Introduced in 1871, this is the standard British breech-loading rifle of the Imperial Age. It replaced



the Snyder-Enfield rifle, although many are still in circulation (use the same statistics). Bayonets are a standard accoutrement.

The Martini-Henry Rifle can fire once before it needs to be reloaded. Reloading a Martini-Henry Rifle requires one move action.

Maxim Machine Gun: First developed in 1883, this machine gun used the recoil force of the bullet to eject and insert cartridges.

The Maxim Machine Gun can make 25 autofire attacks before it needs to be reloaded. Reloading a Maxim Machine Gun with another belt requires one move action.

Remington Double Barrel Shotgun: This shotgun is representative of all double barrel shotguns of the period. It has two triggers, one for each barrel, and can only be fired twice. As a breechloader, it cannot be fired while reloading.

The Remington Double Barrel Shotgun can make 2 attacks before it needs to be reloaded. Reloading a Remington Double Barrel Shotgun requires one move action per shell.

Remington Double-Derringer: This popular variation on the pocket pistol allowed for two bullets to be loaded and ready to fire. Ladies and men that wanted to be discreet about being armed used this weapon.

The Remington Double-Derringer can make 2 attacks before it needs to be reloaded. Reloading a Remington Double-Derringer requires one move action per bullet.

Sharps Pepperbox: This pocket pistol had four barrels and a rotating pin.

The Sharps Pepperbox can make 4 attacks before it needs to be reloaded. Reloading a Sharps Pepperbox requires one move action per bullet.

Smith & Wesson Schofield: The original version of this pistol was abandoned by the U.S. Army in favor of the Colt. The New Model 3 was the most accurate revolver of its time.

The Smith & Wesson Schofield can make 6 attacks before it needs to be reloaded. Reloading a Smith & Wesson Schofield requires one move action per bullet.

Spencer Carbine: This light rifle saw action in the early part of the Imperial Age, notably the Franco-Prussian War. The rifle version was bought and superseded by Winchester.

The Spencer Carbine can make 7 attacks before it needs to be reloaded. Reloading a Spencer Carbine requires one move action.

Winchester Lever-Action Shotgun: The Winchester shotgun was one of the first "repeating" shotguns; that is, it carried more than one or two bullets.

The Winchester Lever-Action Shotgun can make 5 attacks before it needs to be reloaded. Reloading a Winchester Lever-Action Shotgun requires one move action per bullet.





Winchester Rifle: Like the Colt Peacemaker, the Winchester Rifle is a symbol of the American West. Here it represents all Imperial Age repeating rifles (which is not off the mark, as most repeating rifles of the era were either Winchesters or knock-offs).

The Winchester Rifle can make 17 attacks before it needs to be reloaded. Reloading a Winchester Rifle requires one move action per bullet.

FLINTLOCK FIREARMS

While out of date, flintlock firearms can still be found in country homes and as family heirlooms. For ease of play, presume that it takes two rounds to load a flintlock firearm (so it can be fired every three rounds). It takes four rounds to fully load a double pistol.

All flintlock firearms misfire if a natural one is rolled. It takes an extra round to clear the bullet before the weapon may be reloaded. This also goes for double-barrel pistols, as it is extremely rare that both bullets would misfire.

Musket: A smoothbore, black powder weapon, the musket was the standard long arm of the early to mid 19th century.

Pistol: This single-shot handgun is immortalized as a dueling pistol.

Pistol, Double-Barrel: This handgun had two triggers; the shooter could choose whether to shoot one bullet or both at the same time.

Rifle: Technically a "rifled musket," the smaller rifle was more accurate than its smoothbore counterpart. These rifles saw a lot of use in the Crimean War.

CLOAK

The cloak (or cape or shawl) is used in a similar way to a net. It requires an Exotic Weapon Training to use (although one feat covers all similar weapons, such as overcoats, short blankets, etc.). If you successfully hit your opponent then he gains the entangled condition. It takes a full-round action to remove this condition, so two-weapon users will often combine this with a quick follow-up attack.

Melee Weapon	Dmg	Crit	Type	Range	Size	Weight	Cost
Simple							
Bowie Knife	+2	20/+3	Slashing	---	Tiny	2 lb	9
Brass Knuckles	+1	20/+3	Bludgeon	---	Tiny	1 lb.	5
Cleaver	+2	19-20/+3	Slashing	---	Small	2 lb	5
Club (walking stick)	+2	20/+3	Bludgeon	---	Medium	3 lb	4
Knife	+1	19-20/+3	Piercing	10 ft	Tiny	1 lb	7
Pistol Whip	+1	20/+3	Bludgeon	---	Small	var.	---
Pitchfork	+2	20/+4	Piercing	10 ft	Large	6 lb	4
Rifle Butt	+2	20/+3	Bludgeon	---	Large	var.	---
Sap	+2	20/+3	Bludgeon	---	Small	3 lb	2
Sledgehammer	+3	20/+3	Bludgeon	---	Large	8 lb	7
Staff	+2	20/+3	Bludgeon	---	Large	4 lb	4

Martial

Bayonet (fixed)	+2	19-20/+4	Piercing	---	Tiny	1 lb	7
Claymore	+3	19-20/+4	Slashing	---	Large	6 lb	12
Handaxe	+1	20/+4	Slashing	---	Medium	3 lb	4
Longsword	+3	19-20/+3	Slashing	---	Medium	4 lb	10
Machete	+3	19-20/+3	Slashing	---	Small	2 lb	5
Pickaxe	+3	20/+4	Piercing	---	Medium	6 lb	7
Rapier	+2	18-20/+3	Piercing	---	Medium	3 lb	10
Saber	+2	19-20/+4	Piercing	---	Medium	3 lb	10
Scimitar	+2	18-20/+3	Piercing	---	Medium	3 lb	10
Short sword	+2	19-20/+2	Piercing	---	Small	3 lb	10
Stabbing Spear	+3	20/+4	Piercing	20 ft	Large	8 lb	5
Straight Razor	+1	19-20/+3	Slashing	---	Tiny	0.5 lb	4
Sword Cane	+2	18-20/+3	Piercing	---	Medium	3 lb	9
Tomahawk	+1	20/+3	Slashing	15 ft	Small	3 lb	4
Wakizashi	+2	19-20/+3	Slashing	---	Small	3 lb	11

Exotic

Bastard Sword	+4	19-20/+3	Slashing	---	Medium	10 lb	15
Garrote	+1	20/+4	Slashing	---	Tiny	5 lb	1
Katana	+4	19-20/+3	Slashing	---	Medium	6 lb	14
Katar	+1	20/+4	Piercing	---	Small	1 lb	8
Khopesh	+3	20/+3	Slashing	---	Medium	12 lb	10
Kris	+1	19-20/+4	Piercing/Slashing	---	Tiny	1 lb.	9

MELEE WEAPONS

Bayonet (fixed): This weapon is attached to a rifle to turn it into a thrusting spear. While more common before multiple-round firearms became readily available, it is still in use. A rifle with a fixed bayonet can be used as a double weapon, using both the rifle butt and the bayonet at the same time. Use the rules for fighting with two weapons, incurring penalties for a one-handed weapon (rifle-butt) and a light weapon (bayonet).

Bowie Knife: This large knife is designed for hunting and fighting.

Brass Knuckles: These pieces of folded metal fit over the outside of the fingers and allow an unarmed strike to deal lethal damage. A strike with brass knuckles is otherwise an unarmed attack. Damage is increased by +1 if the user has the Brawl feat.

Claymore: This Scottish weapon can be wielded with one hand if the character has the Exotic Weapon Proficiency feat. Without the feat, the claymore must be wielded with two hands and the standard -4 non-proficiency penalty applies.

Cleaver: This entry represents any heavy kitchen knife.

Club: This entry is for any blunt object that can be used as a weapon, from a pipe to a walking stick.

Handaxe: Used for chopping wood, the handaxe can be a dangerous weapon.

Katar: The katar is a "punching dagger." The handle is perpendicular to the blade, allowing the user to put more force behind the blow.

Knife: This category includes most hunting knives and unfixed bayonets.

Kris: Functionally identical to a dagger (but too unbalanced to throw), the kris is an Indonesian weapon with a curvy blade that gives it an exotic appearance.



Longsword: This is the classic long blade. Most carried longswords in the Western world are ceremonial, but it is still a weapon of choice in many parts of the world.

Pistol Whip: Using a pistol as a melee weapon can deal greater damage than attacking unarmed. Weight and price depends on the weapon.

Pickaxe: This miner's tool can be pressed into service at a moment's notice.

Pitchfork: A farmer's tool that makes an effective weapon.

Rapier: This lightweight fencing weapon largely replaced the longsword as the one-handed melee weapon of choice, although it too is fading away.

Rifle Butt: The butt of a rifle works as a club. Weight and price depends on the weapon.

Saber, Cavalry: Cavalry Sabers are longer than their infantry counterparts and designed for piercing.

Sap: This small club deals nonlethal damage.

Scimitar: A scimitar a Middle Eastern slashing and piercing weapon. It is a long, curved sword. The European infantry saber is based on the scimitar and has identical game statistics.

Sledgehammer: This tool makes an effective melee weapon.

Stabbing Spear: This short, heavy spear was designed by Shaka Zulu to replace the lighter javelin.

Staff: This walking stick also made a good weapon. Many monks and travelers make use of the staff.

Straight Razor: This shaving implement can also be used as a weapon.

Swordcane: This lightweight sword is concealed in a walking stick or umbrella. When sheathed, it can only be identified as weapon with a Spot check (DC 18).

Tomahawk: This Native American-inspired weapon is a more balanced hatchet. These statistics can be used for any small axe/hatchet.

Wakizashi: This Japanese shortsword is a traditional samurai weapon.

GENERAL EQUIPMENT

CLOTHING

Clothing	Size	Cost	Weight
Worker	Medium	8	2 lb
Business	Medium	11	3 lb
Fine	Medium	12	3 lb
Formal	Medium	15	3 lb

Outerwear

Cap	Small	7	0.5 lb
Cape	Medium	4	1.5 lb
Cloak	Medium	11	3 lb
Fan	Small	3	--
Gloves, Dress	Tiny	3	--
Gloves, Lamb	Tiny	6	--
Hat, Bowler	Small	7	0.5 lb
Hat, Ladies	Small	9	0.5 lb
Hat, Top	Small	8	0.5 lb
Overcoat, Cloth	Medium	9	3 lb
Overcoat, Fur	Medium	15	9 lb
Raincoat	Medium	8	4.5 lb
Smoking Jacket	Medium	10	2 lb
Wrapper	Small	6	1 lb

Worker: This is a simple outfit for the working and poor classes; a shirt and pants for men and a plain dress for women. While denim is available, many workers still wear used cloth clothes.

Business: The uniform of the middle class, this suit is generally worn during business hours. It consists of a coat, waistcoat (vest), shirt, and pants. For women, this is a woolen dress.

Fine: This is "casual" for the gentleman and the aristocrat. For women, this includes carriage dress, tea gowns, and dinner dress. For men, this includes the morning suit (often worn with a stroller) and the "black tie" evening suit.

Formal: Also known as "fancy dress" or "white tie," these outfits are for special occasions, such as weddings, balls, or the opera.

BEING FASHIONABLE
Society places a great emphasis on being fashionable and aware of the latest trends. By adding 2 to the cost of clothing (not outerwear), the hero is considered "fashionable."

LODGING

Domicile	Cost
Flat, Cheap	20
Flat	25
Townhouse	28
Townhouse, Fashionable	32
Country Home	34

Use the prices in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* for temporary lodgings. This list is for long-term rentals or outright ownership.

Flat: What Americans would consider an apartment, a flat is a part of a townhouse that has been divided up amongst a number of boarders. A cheap flat would be found in the rookeries.

Townhouse: Londoners simply called these urban row homes "houses." Fashionable townhouses would be found in upscale neighborhoods like Belgravia or Mayfair.

Country Home: Sometimes called a “cottage,” this is where the aristocrats stay once the Season is over. The cost is for a modest (by country home standards) country house; increase the cost for a more lavish country estate.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation	Cost
Fare, Hansom	3
Fare, Ship	5
Fare, Ship (first class)	6
Fare, Train	4
Fare, Train (first class)	5
Fare, Underground	1

The costs here are self-explanatory. Increase the cost by +1 for every 10 miles traveled beyond the first (or every 5 for a ship voyage).

COMMUNICATION

Communication	Cost
Courier	3
Postal Mail	1
Telegram (20 words)	2
Per extra 5 words	1

Courier: A courier or messenger is someone who physically takes your package to another location. Even with the efficient postal service, there are times when the sender needs a quick delivery.

Postal Mail: This is the most common form of communication. Don't let your modern knowledge fool you; mail is delivered eleven times a day in late Victorian London!

Telegram: While the telephone is slowly entering the public consciousness, the telegram is still the most common way to communicate with out-of-towners.

ENTERTAINMENT

Entertainment	Cost
Club Membership	18 per month
Music Hall	8
Newspaper	1
Novel	7
Opera, ticket	15
Opera, box	23 per season
Opium Den	4
Penny Dreadful	1
Prostitute, street	4
Prostitute, discreet	8
Theatre Ticket	12

Most of the entertainments are self-explanatory. All costs may vary based on exclusivity, popularity, or other factors.

The Importance of Names

While clearly metagaming, most players will attach an importance (or lack thereof) on a Narrator character based on whether you bothered to name him or her. While this may not be the case (as an example, you might not have bothered to name all of the members of a gentlemen's club, even though any of them could grant the heroes access to an area of the club normally barred to non-members), your inevitable failure to name every important character that the heroes stumble across could lead the players to dismiss a potential lead.

Similarly, you may not be good at names or tend to think up unoriginal names when pressed. If all of your characters are named Jon, Tom, or Jane and all have a surname ending in -son, then it could destroy the suspension of disbelief at your table.

The following are three lists of common English names. When naming a Narrator character, simply choose a given name from the gender-appropriate list and couple it with a surname. You may wish to copy these lists and keep them handy for the next time the heroes chat up a costermonger and you need a quick name!

Male Names

Albert, Alfred, Andrew, Arthur, Benjamin, Cecil, Charles, Christopher, Clarence, Colin, Cyril, David, Donald, Edward, Ernest, Eugene, Frederick, Geoffrey, George, Henry, Herbert, Herman, Howard, Jacob, James, Jon, Joseph, Lawrence, Leonard, Louis, Matthew, Michael, Nathaniel, Oscar, Patrick, Paul, Peter, Raymond, Richard, Robert, Roy, Samuel, Stephen, Sylvester, Thomas, Victor, William

Female Names

Adelaide, Agnes, Alice, Alexandra, Anna, Augusta, Beatrice, Catherine, Charlotte, Clara, Daisy, Dora, Doris, Dorothy, Edith, Eliza, Elizabeth, Ellen, Elsie, Emily, Emma, Ernestine, Ethel, Flora, Florence, Frances, Gladys, Hazel, Helen, Ida, Irene, Ivy, Jane, Jesse, Julia, Katherine, Louise, Lillian, Lily, Mabel, Marion, Margaret, Maude, Mary, May, Mildred, Nora, Olive, Rose, Ruth, Sarah, Victoria, Violet

Surnames

Abbott, Ainsworth, Albertson, Baker, Bishop, Blackwood, Blake, Chambers, Chandler, Chesterton, Cooper, Davison, Dawkins, Denham, Duke, Edwards, Farrington, Fellows, Fitzhugh, Gibson, Gilbert, Grainger, Greenwood, Hallows, Hawkins, Hodgson, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, Keaton, Kent, Knight, Lawrence, Lincoln, Mallory, Mather, Morris, Myers, Nelson, Norton, Osborn, Parker, Peterson, Phillipps, Pike, Porter, Reynolds, Robinson, Sampson, Sexton, Simpson, Smith, Stevenson, Talbot, Thompson, Truman, Tyndall, Walker, Ward, Watson, Wheatley, Wheeler, White, Wilkinson, Wright, Wylde



CHAPTER FIVE: FISTICUFFS, SWORDPLAY, AND CHASES

Abigail Henderson pulled her shawl more tightly around her shoulders as she hurried down a back aisle of the rookery, trying to make it to Shaftsbury Avenue. St. Giles was one of the worst areas in the City and it was no place for an unescorted woman at night, especially with Scarlet John prowling around. Thankfully, the sporadic drizzle had cleared the usual fog and as it was between showers Abigail used her closed umbrella as a walking stick.

She'd stepped out onto one of the small streets crisscrossing the rookery, intending to cross it and continue through another alley on the other side. Abigail had taken this route for the better part of a week and knew that she was only a block away from the safety of well-travelled Shaftsbury Avenue. While of upper middle class, Abigail wore a simple dress that would not mark her as a lady. This was beneficial, as it kept most of the robbers away, but it was well-documented that Scarlet John preferred to accost working women.

As she stepped into the middle of the street, she noticed a hansom parked in the centre of it. While not entirely unusual, most cab drivers would not dally in St. Giles for long. Abigail saw no evidence of the driver and after a moment she understood why. A smartly dressed man stepped out of the alley in front of her with a walking stick in one hand and a revolver pointing at her in the other. Even more telling was the red scarf he had covering his mouth. It was Scarlet John!

'Good evening, my dear,' Scarlet John greeted in a calm but menacing tone. 'If you cooperate, things will go much better for both of us. I do not intend to harm you.'

No matter what definition he was using, he intended to harm her, she thought. She kept her opinion to herself however, merely gasping and putting a gloved hand to her face. 'Oh my!' she exclaimed. 'It...It's you!'

'Indeed,' Scarlet John said as he approached her.

She saw the joy in his eyes beneath the brim of his bowler. 'My reputation precedes me, so you know what will happen if you do not cooperate.'

And what will happen to me if I do, Abigail thought. She said nothing, though; instead, she stumbled backwards as if she were going to faint. As she did so, she noticed the open sewer nearby, collecting the rainwater that was slowly flowing across the cobblestones.

Scarlet John closed to catch her and Abigail moved. She quickly braced her legs and swung the umbrella up against the attacker's forearm. Scarlet John howled as he released his grip and the revolver fell onto the street and created quick sparks as it skipped over the stones. With a quick second strike, she took a leg out from under him and sent him crashing on his posterior. Scarlet John howled again and cursed as Abigail ran down the street, pausing to bat the revolver into the sewer before turning down an alley.

Scarlet John chuckled as he got back to his feet and started after her. He obviously knew these streets better than she did as she had run down a blind alley to a dead end. Gripping his cane, he rushed down the alley after her. He stopped dead in his tracks as he noticed something on the ground near the dead end. It was a woman's skirt coat and shawl; the same items that his prey was wearing. His eyes darted around and up, but there was nowhere to go.

'Confused?'

It was a woman's voice. Scarlet John turned to see Abigail step out of the shadows behind some crates. She still wore her blouse, but she had a pair of men's riding trousers on in place of her skirt. She also wore high boots; both must have been concealed by her dress. She still clutched her umbrella in both hands.

'You've got spirit, woman, I'll give you that,' Scarlet John said as he unsheathed his sword from his walking stick and discarded the cane, 'But you've made a grave mistake by not fleeing when you had the chance. What sort of woman are you anyway?' He cocked an eyebrow at her dress. 'Are you even a woman at all?'

'You can't accept a woman that says "no?'" Abigail smiled grimly. 'Your reign of terror is over, Scarlet John. You'll have to face me before you can get your bloody hands on another victim.'

Scarlet John cautiously stepped forward. He would not be fooled by her umbrella tricks a second time. He held up his sword. 'I fail to see how you'll stop me. An umbrella is no match for a gentleman's sword.'

Abigail calmly turned the handle of her umbrella and unsheathed her own sword. Scarlet John's jaw dropped. 'Fortunately, I see no gentleman,' she said as she dropped into her defensive fencing stance. 'You, however, are facing the daughter of a master fencer, as well as his best student. Tell me, Scarlet John, how does it feel when the hunter becomes the hunted?'

Scarlet John was shocked and embarrassed. He'd fallen for her trap hook, line and sinker and while proficient with a sword cane, he was by no means an expert. Still, she was only a mere woman. He bellowed in rage and charged her with his sword drawn back.

It would be the last sound he'd ever utter.

Whether it is back alley brawling, fencing challenges, or kickboxing tournaments, close combat martial arts were alive and well in the Victorian age. While the term "martial arts" conjures images of East Asian karate, kung fu, and related arts, the term itself means any form of combat. While historical versions of these styles did find their way west during the Imperial Age, especially in growing "Chinatowns" and similar communities, European close combat styles had been developing for centuries. Many of these, including boxing, fencing, and savate, were organized into official schools and tournaments. Toward the end of the Imperial Age these techniques were blended with East Asian styles to form hybrid styles such as Bartitsu.

This section allows you to model a particular fighting style. Fighting styles are generally a collection of feats, although some styles offer training in a particular skill. A hero must purchase all feats and skills normally. A warrior may choose one fighting style for free; any role can choose a fighting style by spending a feat. Once you have chosen a fighting style, all feats under that style are considered favored feats.

Some fighting styles list weapon elements. Once you've chosen a fighting style, you are automatically trained with its weapon elements. You do not, however, gain the feat that would normally grant you that training. For example, the Fencing style gives you proficiency with one-handed swords. Normally, this is covered by the Weapon Training feat. If you lack that feat then you are still untrained with other weapons covered by Weapon Training. If you already have Weapon Training, then you don't gain any extra benefit from the weapon element.

FIGHTING STYLES

The following is are a few fighting styles, both real and fictitious, suitable for heroes in most *Imperial Age* campaigns.

BARITSU

In 1893, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle penned the death of his famous consulting detective Sherlock Holmes in "The Adventure of the Final Problem," plunging over the Reichenbach Falls locked in combat with his nemesis, criminal mastermind Professor Moriarty. Popular demand eventually persuaded Doyle to "resurrect" the famous detective a decade later in "The Adventure of the Empty House." Holmes explains to his friend Dr. Watson that he faked his own death, overpowering Professor Moriarty with his skill in the art of "baritsu."

It is generally agreed that Doyle meant "bartitsu," a popular martial art in England at the time he wrote the sequel (1903) and some editions of his story have corrected the spelling to reflect this. Bartitsu was developed by Edward William Barton-Wright, an Anglo-Indian who had extensively traveled the globe. Bartitsu combined many martial arts into a fighting style designed for practical self-



defense rather than competition (modern examples include Jeet Kune Do, Krav Maga, and military/police self-defense courses). Unfortunately, Doyle created an anachronism. While written in 1893, "The Adventure of the Final Problem" was set in 1891. Mr. Barton-Wright had not unveiled bartitsu (a combination of his last name and jujitsu) until 1898.

While technically Victorian, Bartitsu would be inappropriate for any campaign set before 1898. This creates an issue, as *the Imperial Age* covers 1880-1900, which means that baritsu would be unavailable in most campaigns. In order to make the fighting style available throughout the campaign, *The Imperial Age* employs the conceit that Doyle's "baritsu" is a fictional martial art primarily taught to Victorian gentlemen and the aristocracy from 1880 forward.

Under this conceit, baritsu was introduced in London by William Edward Barton, an Anglo-Indian world traveler. Baritsu is a gentleman's martial art that concentrates on cloak and stick techniques. The baritsu practitioner uses a walking stick (or sheathed sword cane) in his primary hand and his cloak in his secondary hand. Removing one's cloak is generally a move action; baritsu practitioners often wear their cloaks like capes so that they may remove them as free actions.

The cloak is a versatile weapon in the hands of a baritsu practitioner. It can be thrown to entangle an opponent, but more often the baritsu practitioner will use his cloak for defense, disarm, and trip attacks.

Prerequisite: Weapon Training

Weapon Elements: Cloak.

Skills: Acrobatics, Bluff, Sleight of Hand

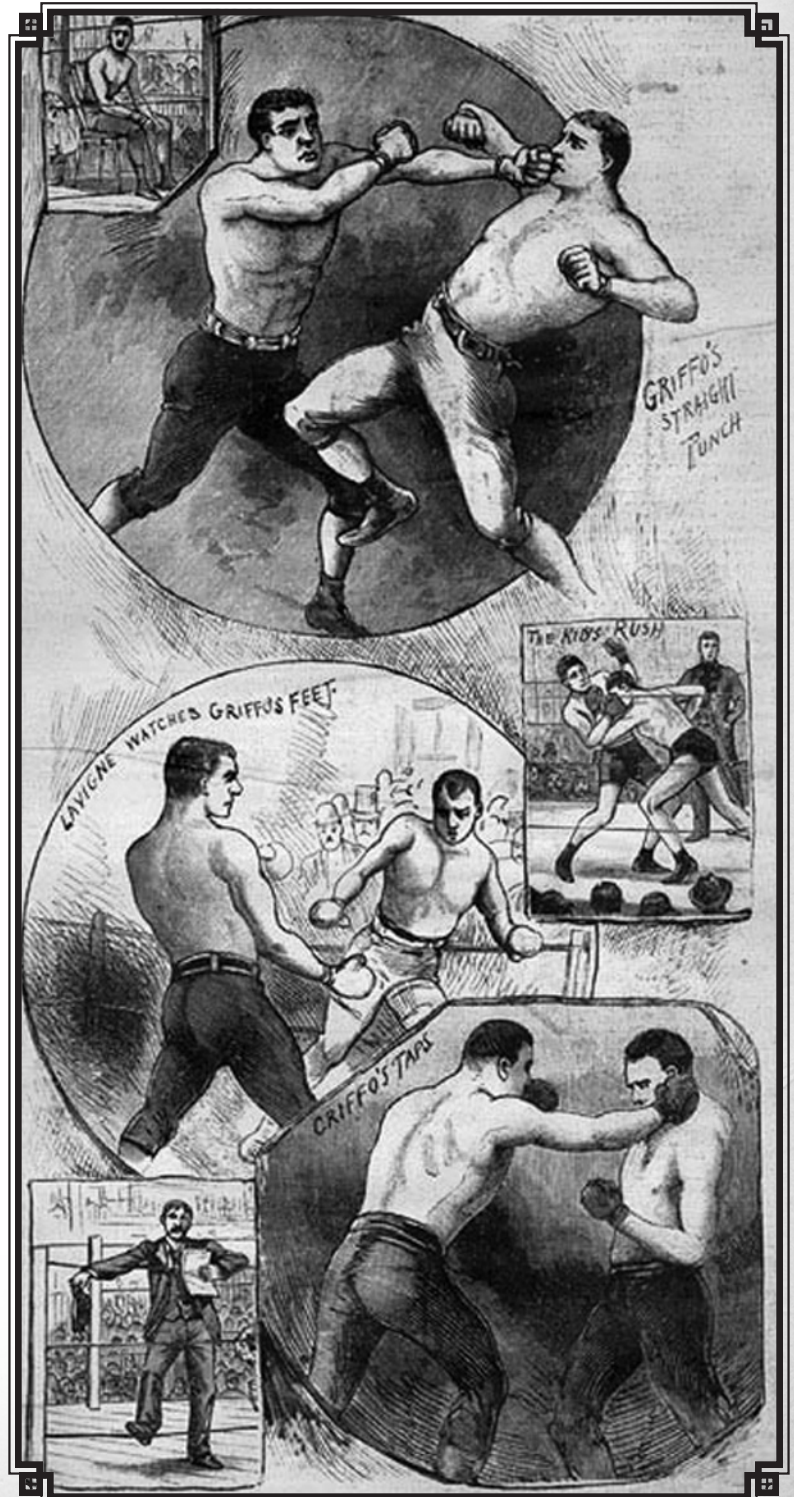
Feats: Attack Focus (walking stick), Attack Focus (cloak), Attack Specialization (walking stick), Canny Dodge, Cloak Defense, Defensive Attack, Defensive Throw, Dodge Focus, Improved Defense, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Parry Focus, Two Weapon Fighting

BOXING

Boxing has had a long tradition in Western civilization, at least as far back as ancient Greece. These first boxing matches had no rounds and lasted until one contestant surrendered or was unable to continue fighting. They were also held outdoors, allowing the weather (which could get quite hot) to play a role in the matches. Interestingly, while the conditions of a boxing match could be rather brutal, the contestants were largely drawn from the aristocracy. At some point, boxers began to wear leather straps around their knuckles, and by the time of the Roman Empire these had developed into gloves (which were sometimes reinforced with metal bands or spikes).

Modern British boxers trace their roots to the late 17th century. These early fights had little in the way of rules; boxers fought with bare knuckles (no straps or gloves on their hands) and there were usually rounds, although a match generally only ended when one boxer could not continue. These early fights, which allowed grappling, often better resembled 20th – 21st century professional wrestling matches, with fighters throwing their opponents to the ground and leaping onto them.

Boxer Jack Broughton crafted the first set of boxing



rules in 1751 and gained the label of "Father of Boxing" as a result. Broughton's rules were later revised and codified as the "London Prize Ring Rules," which dominated the boxing industry until the Queensberry Rules. Under the London Rules, holds and throws were still allowed and fighting took place in a square "ring." A round lasted until one contestant was knocked down. A 30 second period of rest followed, and the felled boxer then had 8 minutes to return to the scratch line, which was in the center of the ring. If he made it, the next round would start. If he was unable to make it to the scratch line, the match was over and his opponent won.

While the London Rules continued to be used well into the Imperial Age, they'd largely been replaced by the Marquess of Queensberry Rules. These rules, published by John Graham Chambers in 1867 (and sponsored by Lord John Sholto Douglas, the 9th Marquess of Queensberry), established the modern sport of boxing. While retaining much of the London Rules, the Queensberry rules eliminated wrestling moves, forced the contestants to wear gloves, established three-minute rounds, and instituted the 10 second knockout.

Prerequisite: Improved Strike

Skills: Bluff, Sense Motive

Feats: All-out Attack, Attack Focus (unarmed), Attack Specialization (unarmed), Brute Force, Canny Dodge, Cleave, Defensive Attack, Dodge Focus, Elusive Target, Great Cleave, Improved Strike, Knockout Punch, Parry Focus.

FAIR DEFENSE

While a martial art for women is generally frowned upon in polite society (shouldn't a lady always have a gentleman chaperone to protect her?), there are a growing number of women interested in protecting themselves without resorting to gunfire. As most martial academies are closed to women, some have turned to Ashleigh Wright for training. Mrs. Wright is William Barton's married daughter. She is also a Eurasian woman and this foreign heritage gives her a certain amount of insulation in polite society for her strange thoughts and techniques.

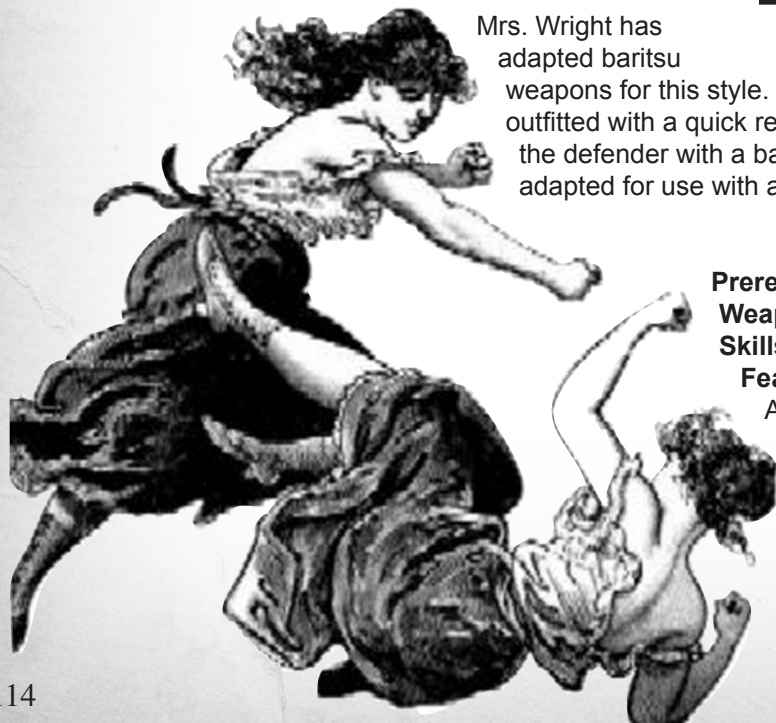
Like baritsu, fair defense or self-defense for ladies is a fictional martial art, one that lacks a proper name (Mrs. Wright considers it part of baritsu). Its emphasis is on catching an opponent off-guard and startling him enough for the lady to make a quick escape. As such, the fair defender (as a practitioner calls herself) can practice this art while properly attired for an evening stroll or a night at the opera.

SEXISM IN THE IMPERIAL AGE

The Fair Defender flavor text implies a certain level of sexism that may not be suitable in all Imperial Age campaigns. Even in purely historical campaigns, female heroes are exceptional characters and may have a background that allows them access to other martial classes. Some Imperial Age campaigns may even allow for women to participate in proper martial academies.

In such cases, self-defense for ladies may still be a popular option for spies and other characters that wish to catch an opponent off-guard. A character that takes levels in this advanced class as well as other martial arts can become a surprising and deadly opponent.

Mrs. Wright has adapted baritsu weapons for this style. The walking stick has become an umbrella (often outfitted with a quick release so that the open canopy can be discarded, leaving the defender with a baton). The baritsu cloak techniques have also been adapted for use with a shawl or wrap.



Prerequisite: Trained in Bluff

Weapon Elements: Shawl, Umbrella

Skills: Acrobatics, Bluff, Sleight of Hand

Feats: Attack Focus (umbrella), Attack Focus (shawl), Attack Specialization (umbrella), Cloak Defense, Distract, Dodge Focus, Improved Defense, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Parry Focus, Sneak Attack, Stunning Attack, Taunt, Two Weapon Fighting

FENCING

Fencing, or the art of sword-fighting, has an ancient pedigree. The ancient Egyptians, Babylonians, Greeks and Romans all cultivated the use of the sword in sport and combat. Unfortunately, the creation of heavier armors dulled the skill of fencing, which had almost disappeared during the medieval period as the sword was more regarded as a tool to bash armor than as an elegant weapon.

Ironically, it took the invention of gunpowder to reignite fencing. With armor unable to stop bullets, warriors quickly discarded the bulk and turned their attention towards active defense (i.e. not getting hit). Heavy swords were replaced with lighter, balanced weapons, and by the Renaissance there were many different types of fencing schools.

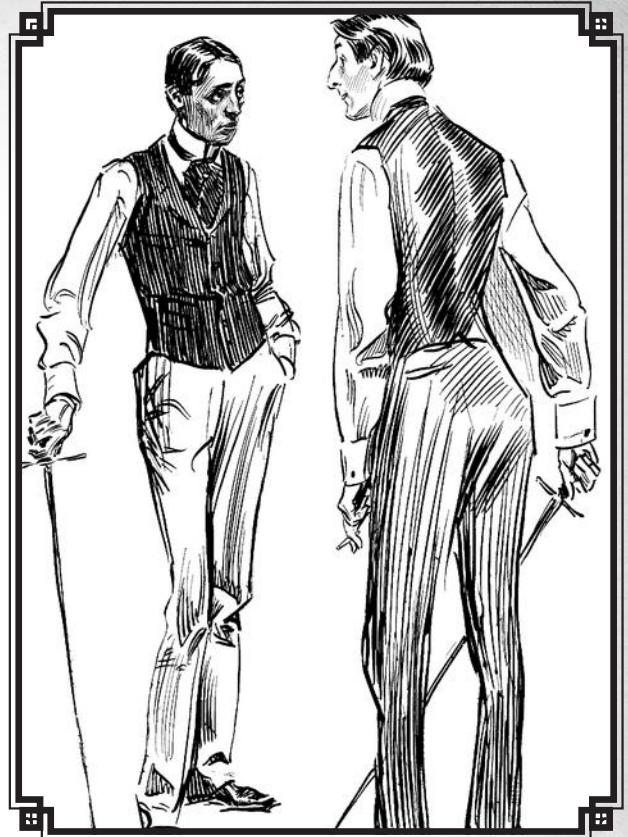
By the Imperial Age, fencing had become more of a sport than an actual form of self-defense, as most gentlemen and aristocrats had replaced their swords with walking sticks. Still, with the proper blade a fencer can still be a formidable opponent. Throughout the Imperial Age, fencing sport rules were codified, primarily by fencing master Camille Prevost, and a number of fencing associations and clubs were developed.

Prerequisites: Weapon Training

Weapon Elements: One-handed swords

Skills: Acrobatics, Bluff, Sleight of Hand

Feats: Accurate Attack, Attack Focus (sword), Attack Specialization (sword), Defensive Attack, Dodge Focus, Improved Defense, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Light Armor Training, Parry Focus, Taunt, Weapon Training



SAVATE

Of all the martial styles in this product, savate will seem the most familiar to the modern reader, as it relies heavily on kicks (although traditional boxing and stick-fighting moves are incorporated as well). It is for this reason that savate has not gained popularity in Victorian English society, as the use of the foot in combat is seen as unsportsmanlike. Still, savate and its variants have spread into Italy and Spain.

Savate is actually a rebirth of an old style. Prior to the Imperial Age, savate was a French unarmed combat style practiced by the lower class. While no one knows for sure how it was created, one popular myth was that savate (which means "old shoe" in French) was developed by sailors that needed to use their arms for balance. Another popular myth was that it was a crime in France to strike someone with a fist, so open hand and kicking techniques were developed.

Charles Lecour renewed interest in savate by mixing in British boxing techniques in the mid-19th century. Use of the walking stick or cane was also later incorporated into the style. Although savate, like boxing, is becoming more of a sport than a self-defense technique, it is still a potent martial art.

The savateur is a powerful fighter and more than the equal of his boxing counterpart. He is particularly deadly when wielding a weapon as savate does not require empty hands. The advanced class presented concentrates on the kicking aspects of the art; well-rounded savateurs will probably have a few class levels in the baritsu master and boxer advanced classes.

Prerequisite: Improved Strike

Feats: All-Out Attack, Attack Focus (unarmed), Attack Specialization (unarmed), Cleave, Defensive Strike, Dodge Focus, Flurry of Blows (unarmed), Improved Critical, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Iron Fisted, Overwhelming Charge, Stunning Attack

SCRAPPER

While most Victorians can handle themselves in the occasional pub altercation, there are some thuggish individuals that taking scrapping to new heights. The scrapper makes his living with his hands, or more accurately, his knuckles. While some scrappers do engage in boxing matches, they rarely rise above amateur level as they lack the discipline necessary for a fair fight.

Scrappers are brutal fighters commonly found in seedy public houses, back alleys, or employed in the Victorian underworld. They have honed their abilities through numerous drunken brawls, muggings, and gang fights. They are unscrupulous warriors; taking any advantage they can to defeat their opponents.

Prerequisites: Improved Strike

Weapon Elements: Improvised weapons

Feats: Adrenaline Rush, All-out Attack, Cleave, Diehard, Dirty Fighting, Fearsome Presence, Great Cleave, Improved Critical, Improved Grab, Improved Strike, Improvised Weapons Training, Iron Fisted, Overwhelming Charge, Tough, Tough as Nails



FEATS

The following feats are appropriate for heroes using the fighting styles above.

ADRENALINE RUSH (WARRIOR)

Prerequisite: Tough

Your character gains a boost of adrenaline when heavily injured. When you become wounded, you gain a temporary +1 bonus to Strength, until you receive healing of any form or the combat ends.

BRUTE FORCE (GENERAL)

Prerequisites: Strength +1, Combat Bonus +1

Your fighting style takes advantage of your impressive strength, relying on punishing blows rather than finesse. With an appropriate melee weapon or your bare fists, you may add your Strength instead of your Dexterity to attack rolls.

You cannot make a finesse attack while using the Brute Force feat.

CLOAK DEFENSE (WARRIOR)

You add a +1 to your defense (both dodge and parry) against melee attacks when holding a cape or cloak in one hand. The cape or cloak must be held, not worn.

DEFENSIVE THROW (GENERAL)

If an opponent attacks you in melee combat and misses, you can make an immediate trip attack against them as a free action at your full attack bonus. This counts as your free attack for that round.

DIRTY FIGHTING (EXPERT OR WARRIOR)

As a standard action, you can use Bluff to perform a dirty trick to gain a +2 bonus on your next attack roll. If your opponent has reason to expect you to fight honorably (a foolhardy expectation) then the bonus increases to +5. You may also spend a Conviction point to gain a +5 bonus on your next attack.

DISTRACT (GENERAL)

You can make a Bluff or Intimidate check (choose one when you acquire the feat) to cause an opponent to hesitate in combat. Take a standard action and make a skill check against your target's opposing check (the same skill, Sense Motive, or Will save, whichever has the highest bonus). If you succeed, your target is dazed for one round (defending normally, but taking no action). Targets gain a +1 bonus on checks to resist Distract per attempt against them in the same encounter. You can take this feat twice (gaining the ability to use it with either Bluff or Intimidate).

FEARSOME PRESENCE (WARRIOR)

Prerequisite: Trained in Intimidate

You can inspire fear in others. Take a standard action to strike a suitably fearsome pose or utter an intimidating threat. Anyone within (Intimidate rank \times 5) feet able to interact with you must make a Will save (Difficulty 10 + 1/2 your Intimidate skill rank) or become shaken. If the save fails by five or more, the subject flees from you.

If the save fails by ten or more, the subject panics, dropping any held items and fleeing from you as quickly as possible.

FLURRY OF BLOWS (GENERAL)

Prerequisite: Attack Specialization or Improved Strike

You may make many swift attacks with your fists or a single melee weapon with which you are specialized (choose which when you take this feat). You may make autofire attacks with this melee attack.

IMPROVISED WEAPONS TRAINING (GENERAL)

You can use an improvised weapon (an ordinary object reasonably sized and shaped for use as a weapon) without penalty. Characters without this feat take a -4 non-proficient penalty on attack rolls made with improvised weapons.

IRON FISTED (WARRIOR)

Prerequisites: Dex +1, Str +1, Improved Critical (Unarmed), Improved Strike

You increase the critical threat range of your unarmed attacks by one. The benefits of this feat stack with the benefits of Improved Critical (unarmed).

KNOCKOUT PUNCH (WARRIOR)

Prerequisite: Improved Strike

When making the character's first unarmed attack against a flat-footed opponent, treat a successful attack as a critical hit. This damage is nonlethal damage.

Special: Even if the character has the ability to treat unarmed damage as lethal damage, the damage from a knockout punch is always nonlethal.

OVERWHELMING CHARGE (WARRIOR)

Prerequisite: Str +2

When using a charge action, you can spend a Conviction point to hurtle into the fray with little concern for your safety or defenses. You literally throw yourself into your opponent. In addition to the standard benefits of a charge, you may make a free trip attack before or after your strike, even if you normally cannot trip a foe with your weapon. If your attempt fails, your foe can try to trip you as normal. Apply the benefits of a charge to this attack.

PARRY FOCUS (GENERAL)

Your Parry bonus increases by +1. You can acquire this feat multiple times, and its benefits stack.

TOUGH AS NAILS (GENERAL)

Prerequisites: Con +2, Tough

You gain a +1 bonus to all Constitution checks and Fortitude saves.



PURSUIT

Many opportunities for pursuit can occur in an *Imperial Age* adventure. A hero may try to chase down a hansom on a busy London street. A soldier may attempt to chase down an enemy scout. A hero on horseback may attempt to chase down a runaway carriage. A thief may flee from bobbies down the alleyways of the rookeries. A particularly ambitious bobby may chase a burglar across the rooftops. A hero may have to chase a bomb-throwing anarchist through a rapidly dispersing crowd.

Pursuits should be exciting, adrenaline-fueled affairs. As such, the pursuit rules given here are abstract, making it easier to run without a map, counters, and similar tools. They're intended to provide quick and simple results.

STARTING PURSUIT

During a pursuit, one party—the pursuer—is assumed to be trying to catch the other—the target. The distance between the two is called the *lead*, and it is measured in *lengths*, abstract units adjustable to the situation. A length may only be a matter of feet in a pursuit on foot, yards in horseless carriages, or even greater lengths for truly fantastical engines.

A pursuit starts out with a lead of eight lengths, although the Narrator can adjust this as desired to fit the conditions. The lead may never be less than zero or greater than thirty. If any maneuver puts the lead beyond those bounds, adjust the lead to the closest number.

The pursuer wants to decrease the lead enough to perform a finishing maneuver and catch the target, while the target wants to increase the lead enough to perform a finishing maneuver and escape. Pursuit continues until a successful finishing maneuver, a crash, or the pursuers choose to break off pursuit.

PURSUIT STEPS

Follow these steps during a pursuit:

1. CHOOSE MANEUVERS

Each character or vehicle involved in the pursuit chooses a maneuver from those available.

2. MANEUVER CHECKS

The participants reveal their maneuvers. Each then makes a maneuver check using the appropriate trait, including any modifiers. This is an opposed check between the pursuer and the target. If one check succeeds, apply the effects of the maneuver. If neither succeeds, or their check results are tied, the chase continues. If both succeed, apply the maneuver effect with the higher check result.

The trait used for a maneuver check depends on the conditions of the pursuit. For characters operating horse-drawn carriages the maneuver check is usually a Handle Animal check. Mounted characters usually use Ride. Characters in self-propelled vehicles usually use a Drive or Pilot skill check. For individuals, it's usually an Acrobatics skill check. The Narrator may call for different skill checks for maneuvers, as suits the situation and the particular pursuit.

Three or more participants are handled in one big chase. For example, there are three mounted riders chasing a carriage. Each participant gets to try one maneuver per round, much like combat. The pursued can take one maneuver per round, and each of the riders has to make their own checks to try and keep up/not crash. Meanwhile, each of the riders can make their own maneuver check to try to catch their quarry. They may each choose different maneuvers, or several of them can try the same maneuver, but each participant makes their own maneuver checks, etc.

3. RESOLVE MANEUVERS

Apply the winner's maneuver to the pursuit, and adjust the lengths between the pursuer and the target, as necessary.

4. OBSTACLES

Obstacles may crop up during a pursuit. They provide flavor during the pursuit, with their frequency dependent on the terrain. The Narrator should feel free to add obstacles to help liven up otherwise uninteresting pursuits. The actual type of obstacle is up to the Narrator to describe, based on the circumstances of the chase.

VEHICLES AND ENGINES

"Engines" is used as a general term for vehicles in the Steam Stories chapter, as vehicles created in that chapter tend to be fantastical machines. Engines, of course, can use the Pursuit rules. Simply substitute "engine" wherever you see "vehicle."

Similarly, vehicles can use the Engine Combat rules in Steam Stories, especially if your campaign is set late enough in the Imperial Age to use horseless carriages (private automobile races were a pastime of the wealthy towards the end of the Imperial Age). In that case, substitute "vehicle" for "engine."

When an obstacle occurs, first the target, and then the pursuer, makes an obstacle check. This may be a Reflex save or a skill check, as appropriate, against the obstacle's Difficulty. The Narrator may further apply a +2 or -2 modifier for circumstances. On a failed obstacle check, make a crash check.

5. OTHER ACTIONS

Whether pursuit has ended due to a finishing maneuver or not, those involved now perform any actions open to them.

6. DAMAGE AND CRASH CHECKS

Apply any damage inflicted against participants in the pursuit (from attacks and so forth), and see if any participants must make a crash check. The **Obstacles** section in describes some situations requiring crash checks, or certain maneuvers may require them.

TERRAIN

Terrain falls into three categories for pursuits: open, close, and tight. Each applies certain conditions to the pursuit, including how often obstacles crop up and the Difficulty of checks to avoid them.

OPEN TERRAIN

Open terrain is easy to traverse, with few obstacles. Examples include open road and salt flats on the ground, open and calm water, and clear skies.

Speed: Pursuit in open terrain begins at three-quarters maximum speed. The fastest participant receives a +2 bonus on maneuver checks. If only one participant is in open terrain, then that participant receives the +2 bonus. If there are 3+ participants, and several are tied for top speed, they all get the +2 bonus.

Obstacle Chance: 18 or better on d20

Obstacle Difficulty: 12

CLOSE TERRAIN

Close terrain is generally narrow and filled with things to run into, sideswipe, or burst through. Examples include city streets, winding dirt roads, narrow rivers, and busy docks.

Speed: Pursuit in close terrain begins at half maximum speed (accelerated speed).

Obstacle Chance: 17 or better on d20

Obstacle Difficulty: 18

TIGHT TERRAIN

The most dangerous terrain type is tight terrain, filled with obstacles and conditions that change from moment to moment. Examples include busy highways, steep inclines, rapids, and crowded train stations.

Speed: Pursuit in tight terrain begins at one-quarter maximum speed (normal speed).

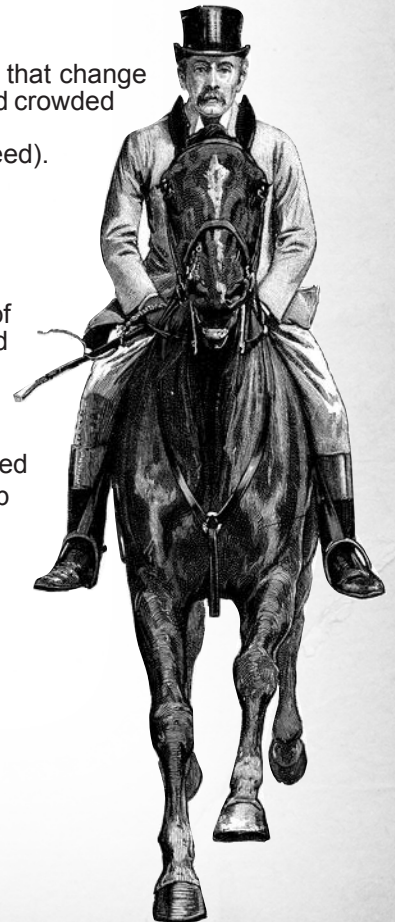
Obstacle Chance: 16 or better on d20

Obstacle Difficulty: 24

SPEED

Obviously, faster characters and vehicles have an advantage in a pursuit. The type of terrain determines the starting speed, based on the speed of the fastest participant. Speed changes during the pursuit, according to the various maneuvers selected.

Whenever pursuit speed exceeds a participant's all-out speed or a vehicle's listed speed, that participant suffers a level of fatigue. Vehicles suffer a 50% reduction in all speed classes, including their maximum speed for each level of "fatigue" they gain, and they stop working altogether if they go past exhausted. Participants can choose to avoid this by voluntarily decreasing speed, but this imposes a -2 maneuver check modifier per 50% decrease from the pursuit speed, to reflect the tricky maneuvering needed to make up for the lost speed. Conviction points can eliminate this fatigue or stress, as usual.



MANEUVERS

Since pursuit is left abstract, the distance covered and specific locations of each participant are left to your imagination. What's really important is the lead—the distance between the pursuer and the target at any given time. Many maneuvers require a certain lead, so make sure to update the lead at the start of each round.

MANEUVER DESCRIPTIONS

Maneuvers are split into pursuer and target categories. Each maneuver has a general description that you can modify to suit the particular conditions of a pursuit. Maneuvers include the following information:

Finishing: A finishing maneuver has prerequisites that must be met before it can be attempted, but it ends the pursuit if performed successfully.

Lead: Many maneuvers require a minimum or maximum lead to perform them.

Speed: Some maneuvers modify current pursuit speed. If both pursuer and target choose maneuvers that alter speed, only the highest modifier (positive or negative) applies.

Success: This is the maneuver's effect if the character wins the opposed maneuver check for the round.

Special: This contains any additional information about the maneuver.

PURSUER MANEUVERS

Pursuer maneuvers aim to slow down and catch the target

BOX-IN (FINISHING)

It takes skill to trap an opponent without any damage, but sometimes it's essential to do so.

Lead: Five lengths or less.

Success: The pursuer wins the chase, forcing the target to stop, by maneuvering them into a corner or otherwise trapping them.

CROWD (FINISHING)

The pursuer comes up behind the target and forces him into a crash.

Lead: Two lengths or less

Success: The pursuer wins the chase. If the pursuer's maneuver check result exceeds the target's by five or more, the target collides with an obstacle. The target is assumed to have failed a crash check, and the pursuer comes to a safe stop.

CUT OFF

The pursuer surges forward and cuts in front of the target, forcing him to stop.

Lead: Zero lengths

Speed: The pursuer wins the chase, cutting off the target. If the target fails his maneuver check, he collides with the pursuer. The pursuer may make a Reflex save (Difficulty 15) to avoid the collision. If this is a vehicular pursuit, the pursuer ejects or leaps clear as the target collides with the pursuer's (now vacant) vehicle.

HERD

By keeping the pressure on and cutting off the target's options, the pursuer drives the target into difficult terrain.

Lead: Ten lengths or less

Success: Reduce the lead by one length. Each participant must make a crash check, but increase the target's Difficulty by the difference between the maneuver check results.

Special: If the pursuer's maneuver check result exceeds the target's by five or more, the pursuer may shift the terrain by one step at the end of the round (open or tight becomes close, or vice versa); this also reduces or increases the crash check Difficulty by 5.

INTERCEPT

Coming at the target from another angle can be a useful shortcut, but it often involves losing line of sight and running into unforeseen obstacles.

Lead: Any

Success: Reduce the lead by a number of lengths equal to twice the difference between the maneuver check results. The pursuer must make a crash check.

MATCH

The pursuer matches the target's speed and movement, forcing the relative speeds down to almost nothing and stabilizing pursuit, enabling others to attack.

Lead: Ten lengths or less

Success: Reduce the lead by one length. The pursuer (and any passengers) gains the benefit of an aid action (+2 bonus) for the round when making attacks against the target.

RAM (FINISHING)

The pursuer speeds up and rams into the target.

Lead: Five lengths or less

Success: The pursuer wins the chase, colliding with the target.

SURGE

The pursuer puts on a burst of speed to catch up to the target.

Lead: Any

Speed: Increase pursuit speed by one-quarter (round down).

Success: Reduce the lead by a number of lengths equal to the difference between the maneuver check results.

Special: If the pursuer chooses to use extra effort with a surge maneuver, then increase pursuit speed by one-third and reduce the lead by twice the difference between the maneuver check results. However, the pursuer (or his vehicle) suffers the effects of the extra effort.

TARGET MANEUVERS

Target maneuvers aim toward escaping the pursuer.

LURE

The target controls the direction of pursuit, leading the pursuer into all kinds of trouble.

Lead: Any

Success: Increase lead by one length. Each participant must make a crash check, but the pursuer's Difficulty increases by the difference between the maneuver check results.

Special: If the target's maneuver check result exceeds the pursuer's by four or more, the target can become the pursuer until the end of this round (letting the target use forward-mounted weapons on the pursuer, for example). If the target's maneuver check result exceeds the pursuer's by five or more, the target can shift the terrain by one step at the end of the round (open or tight becomes close, and vice versa); this also reduces or increases the Difficulty of each participant's crash check by five.

OBSTACLE COURSE (FINISHING)

The target barrels through a cluttered area to evade pursuit.

Lead: 25 lengths or more

Success: The target wins the chase. Both participants must make crash checks.

PULL AHEAD

In this straightforward maneuver, the target puts on as much speed as possible, to widen the distance.

Lead: Any

Speed: Increase pursuit speed by one-quarter (round down).

Success: Increase the lead by a number of lengths equal to the difference between maneuver check results.

SET UP

Instead of running, the target leads the pursuer on a merry chase, usually right into an ambush.

Lead: Ten lengths or less

Success: Increase the lead by one length. The target and all passengers gain the benefit of aid (+2 bonus) for any attacks against the pursuer this round.

Special: If the target's maneuver check exceeds the pursuer's by four or more, the target may become the pursuer for this round (letting the target use forward-mounted weapons on the pursuer, for example).

STUNT (FINISHING)

The target pulls off a daring stunt, hoping the pursuer can't match it.

Lead: 20 lengths or more

Success: The target wins the chase. If the target's maneuver check result exceeds the pursuer's by five or more, the pursuer must make a crash check.

TIGHT TURN (FINISHING)

The target leads the pursuer into a tight turn at high speed, until one falls out of the pursuit.

Lead: 20 lengths or more

Speed: Reduce pursuit speed by one-third (round down).

Success: The target wins the chase, taking one or more turns the pursuer can't match. Both participants make crash checks.

VANISH (FINISHING)

The target disappears in a burst of speed, leaving all pursuers eating dust.

Lead: 30 lengths

Speed: Increase pursuit speed by one-third (round down).

Success: The target wins the chase, getting away.

ZIGZAG

The target clips obstacles, terrain, or even other vehicles to send them into the pursuer's path. Naturally, some suitable obstacles must be present for this maneuver to even be possible, and the target might have to elude pursuit long enough to reach the right area to pull this off.

Lead: Any

Success: Increase lead by a number of lengths equal to twice the difference between the maneuver check results.

The target must also make a crash check.



CHAPTER SIX: ADVENTURE STORIES

I watched the campfire burn as most of our small expedition settled in for the night, our riverboat safely secured nearby. Edward Cutler, an explorer of dubious credentials, sat with his back to a tree as he helped himself to some of my brandy. I'd preferred someone with a little more experience in the African interior, but the Museum cited the Great Depression and hired someone cheap. As I glanced around the unfamiliar jungle, with alien sounds coming from every dark corner, I prayed that their thriftiness would not cause me my life.

"Are you certain this is safe?" I asked Mr. Cutler. "Perhaps we should have slept in shifts on the boat."

"Relax, Bobby," he said, taking another swig. "As I told you repeatedly, the river isn't safe to navigate at night. Besides, there are only three tribes in this area and all are friendly to the Empire."

I hated that he called me "Bobby." My name is Dr. Robert Forrester and, if I did allow someone to use my nickname, it would be Robbie. I also doubted his judgment. Our native escorts, while lying down to sleep, were keeping their rifles close at hand.

"But to which Empire?" I asked. We were dangerously close to German territory and the local tribes often failed to observe the boundary set between Britain and Germany.

Cutler chuckled. "I was through here three months ago. According to the agreement, no rifles were to be sold to the tribes. Besides, who would they fight? One sign of trouble and the garrison would wipe them out. The chieftains know it. They practically treated me like a king the last time I entered their village.

"I wish I had your confidence," I said, looking back into the fire.

"Don't worry, Bobby. Get a good night's sleep. By noon tomorrow, you'll see your church."

I hoped so. Two years ago, Sir Geoffrey Baines claimed to discover the remains of a medieval church in the heart of Africa. Unfortunately, he died of fever before he could get back to England. The Museum had acquired his journal and I, along with Mr. Cutler, was to retrace his steps. This church, if it existed, might prove the existence of Prester John or, failing that, evidence that Christianity had spread this far south much earlier than thought.

Unfortunately, I was wrenched from my musing by one of the natives jumping up and excitedly whispering to Cutler in his native tongue. Cutler nodded as he corked the brandy; I could read concern in his face as he said something back and the natives sprang to their feet, holding their rifles.

"What is it?" I asked.

"Nothing to concern yourself over, Bobby," Cutler said as he pulled out his revolver. "N'Gabe said he heard something; probably a hunting party. All we need to do is put on a little show to scare them off."

Cutler was partially correct. I heard shouts; war cries judging by their intensity. It was obviously one of the native tribes. Cutler stamped out the fire as he shouted more orders. The native men took aim to fire.

I heard one gunshot, then another. Unfortunately, none of our men had fired and one of them dropped to one knee, clutching a bleeding arm. Ducking for cover, I glared at Cutler.

"I thought you said the tribes didn't have guns!"

Cutler shrugged as a couple more shots rang out. "Welcome to Africa," he said as he pointed his pistol into the darkness and fired.

Not all *Imperial Age* adventures take place in London or even the British Isles. There's an entire world to in which to set campaigns, and much of it is still unexplored from a Western point of view. Adventure stories take the heroes to exotic locations to explore unknown territory, uncover ancient ruins, interact with native cultures, and get involved in military conflicts.

Sir H. Rider Haggard's works are archetypal; *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), *Allan Quatermain* (1887), and *She* (1887) include familiar adventure story tropes; travel through exotic lands, lost civilizations, big game hunting, and imperialistic themes.

Broadly speaking, adventure stories cover three major themes; exploration, competition, and military. Exploration adventures are mainly about seeking fame or fortune by traveling into unexplored lands or guiding someone else through wild territory. Competition adventures include negotiating with native tribes and foreign neighbors while building and maintaining a colony, overseeing a protectorate, or protecting trade relations. Military adventures see the heroes as soldiers or officers fighting for their nation's interests. The Narrator may choose to focus on one of these themes for her campaign or she may drift between them as the situation changes.

CRAFTING AN ADVENTURE STORY

Each of the three broad types of adventure stories is further described below. In addition a fourth type, the travel story, is also presented. Travel stories frequently overlay the other three, and can also provide a backdrop for other types of *Imperial Age* campaigns.

TRAVEL STORIES

Travel stories were the documentaries of the pre-video age. Victorian readers lived vicariously through the senses of the story narrator, who would describe the sights, sounds, and tastes of a particular locale. While a travel story in and of itself would hardly make a good adventure, the Narrator should keep the lessons of the travel story in mind when conveying an exotic locale to her Players. Like the Victorian reader, the Players are sitting comfortably at home, relying on the Narrator to take them to an exotic land. What makes the markets of Calcutta or Zanzibar different from the markets in London? How does the Gold Coast or the Deccan Plateau differ from the English countryside? What alien scents and smells will assault them when they step off the boat and into an African or Asian city for the first time?

Travel stories are also a great way to blend genres. Solving a murder mystery in Bayswater is one thing; sticking the detective hero into a murder mystery in Zanzibar that involves British and German interests in East Africa is quite another. Similarly, having the heroes hunt down a werewolf in the Burmese jungle should feel quite different than the Scottish Highlands. Even the Martian invasion would feel different if the heroes are running from the tripods in South Africa or Bangkok.

EXPLORATION

Much of the world is still unseen by European eyes. At the dawn of the Imperial Age most of Africa's interior is still unknown and unclaimed (hence the term "Darkest Africa"). The depths of the Amazon and the mountains and steppes of Central Asia still hold mysteries. Antarctica is practically virgin territory. The Narrator could certainly create fictitious societies that have yet to be tainted by Western culture.

The Narrator could let her imagination run wild with these lost lands. Perhaps a female-dominated Amazon society does exist in a remote region of Africa or South America. Perhaps a culture thought long dead, such as the Aztec or ancient Egyptian, still lives on in a secluded plateau or hidden valley.

FICTIONAL LOCALES

Just because you are running a campaign set in the late 19th century does not mean that you can't use fictional places. Creating fictional lands is a common literary trope; Sir H. Rider Haggard created fictional African locations in *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) and its sequels/prequels, Anthony Hope created the fictional central European nation of Ruritania in *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1898), and, in perhaps the most extreme example, L. Frank Baum created Oz in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) at the very end of the Imperial Age.

A fictional location allows the Narrator to introduce uncertainty for the heroes without disrupting the normal flow of history. For example, the heroes may be assigned to a British garrison in a fictional Southeast African location, vying for influence with fictional native tribes while France and Germany both attempt to claim parts of it for themselves. The Narrator is free "to let the chips fall where they may" in such a scenario as the heroes' actions, while important, won't change the course of history. This does not mean that history won't affect them, however. Continuing the example, Germany may cease to be a concern as Britain and Germany hammer out their East African borders, leaving France to be the major competitor in the region for the remainder of the campaign.

Some Victorian literature combined the theme of exploration with the scientific romance, most notably the hollow earth subgenre. Jules Verne's *A Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1864) posited giant subterranean caverns lit by luminous gas floating along the ceiling. *The Coming Race* (1871) by Edward Bulwer-Lytton introduced a subterranean race capable of manipulating a powerful energy force called Vril, which had the power to heal and destroy. Perhaps the definitive treatment of a hollow earth would come fifteen years after the Imperial Age with Edgar Rice Burroughs' Pellucidar, first presented in *At the Earth's Core* (1914). A Narrator could easily adapt Pellucidar for **Imperial Age** heroes.

LOST CIVILIZATIONS/RUINS

For centuries man has imagined mythical civilizations that exist or used to exist in unexplored parts of the world. Colonies of Atlantis, the Amazons, the Lost Tribes of Israel, the Kingdom of Prester John, the Seven Cities of Gold, and others were all thought to have existed at some point in history. Occasionally, explorers did stumble upon great ruins that hinted at a greater civilization than what currently existed in the region. When they did, they often projected their own fanciful notions of what the earlier civilization was like.

Great Zimbabwe is a classic example. Ruins of a city in Southern Africa, Great Zimbabwe was built during the 11th-15th centuries and then abandoned. Portuguese traders discovered the ruins in the 16th century and it was rediscovered in 1867. Unable to conceive of a native origin, European archaeologists and explorers believed Great Zimbabwe to have been of Arabian or Mediterranean origin. It would not be until decades after the Imperial Age that scholars will determine the site to be of Sub-Saharan African origin.

Still, the notion of lost civilizations or far-flung colonies provides great material for adventure stories. Some aren't even that far-fetched; Viking colonies in North America, pottery from the Roman Empire was discovered in the French colony of Pondicherry on the Indian subcontinent, some Jewish cultures thrived in Central Asia, and an Italian community existed in East China during the 14th century. The Aztec's description of Quetzalcoatl suggests that European explorers may have visited Mexico before the Spanish explorations.

Narrators can also use misconceptions of the time. At the beginning of the Imperial Age, Africa was truly a "dark continent" to most Europeans, as its interior was virtually unknown. It would be easy to justify throwing in a lost kingdom or two inside Africa. Similarly, remote islands in the Indian or Pacific Oceans, lost valleys within the Andes or Himalayas, or deep in the Amazon jungle all provide great locations for the ruins of lost civilizations, each holding treasures waiting to be plundered (and perhaps release a curse or two). Haggard's *Allan Quatermain* actually includes a native white East African tribe.

COMPETITION

Just because two or more European powers are vying for the same thing does not mean that it will provoke a military confrontation. For example, if a European power could prove that it had gotten to a piece of land first and was granted legitimacy by the local authorities then other European powers would acknowledge the claim. This can lead to many interesting adventures abroad.

The heroes may be part of an exploratory group looking for the source of a river, negotiating alliances with local tribal leaders while a competing group is doing the same. The heroes may have to deal with sabotage from their competition and perhaps do a little sabotage themselves. Depending on the type of campaign the Narrator wishes to run, the heroes could have a civil rivalry with their competitors or it could be open season whenever one of them inadvertently walks into the crosshairs of the other.

Competition adventures can and often do involve martial conflict, but it is often on a small scale; more skirmish than battle. A show of superior firepower is usually enough to cool hostilities unless the natives can muster an overwhelming response. Depending on the remoteness of a location, strong firepower may be difficult to come by and one machine gun could make the difference.

Competition also ramps up the arms race. Natives that have never met Europeans may be armed with spears and swords at first, but they'll hunger for firearms. If the heroes don't sell them, then perhaps their competitors will.

MILITARY CONFLICT

Europe was relatively secure during the Imperial Age; while secret alliances and anarchist bullets threatened order, there were no major wars on the continent after 1871. The same could not be said for the rest of the world. At the dawn of the Imperial Age, Britain had just fought the Zulu War and was currently embroiled in three others (see sidebar). Britain and France would enter other wars in Africa and Asia throughout the Imperial Age. America would finish the Indian Wars in the early part of the Imperial Age and win territories from Spain toward the end of the age.

Military conflicts offer more structure for the Narrator. The heroes are generally part of an organized military organization (generally the British Army) and given missions to complete. There are real consequences for failure in attempting to complete those missions, not to mention the consequences for ignoring them.

The Narrator should keep in mind that, although the outcomes of Imperial Age wars are well-documented, specifics are often less clear. Even if the Narrator wishes to keep history intact, who's to say that the heroes' actions don't determine whether a hundred people live or die? Perhaps the British are destined to lose ground in a particular region, but it is up to the heroes whether a local mission is evacuated in time. Perhaps their scouting mission determines whether a British encampment loses 100 soldiers or 400 soldiers, depending on whether they were expecting trouble.

Of course, the Narrator is also free to change history (or use a fictional locale, see sidebar). Imagine the Players' surprise when Britain and Germany go to war over East Africa in the mid-1880s when history recorded otherwise. The hero's actions may tip the balance between keeping the conflict local or spilling over into other colonies or even in Europe (this campaign could be the catalyst for an invasion story, with the heroes being pulled from Africa to fight in Europe).

BRITISH MILITARY RANKS

The following are a list of British army and navy ranks. British cavalry uses different designations for the lower ranks; these are named in parentheses. The break in the listing separates commissioned officers from the lower ranks.

Other militaries use a similar ranking system, often with slightly different titles. For convenience, you can use the British ranks for French, German and other powers. Simply consider the British rank title the "English translation" of the proper foreign rank.

Army (Cavalry)

Field Marshal
General
Lieutenant-General
Major-General
Brigadier-General
Colonel
Lieutenant-Colonel
Major
Captain
Lieutenant
Second Lieutenant

Color/Staff Sergeant (Staff Corporal)
Sergeant (Corporal of Horse)
Corporal (Lance Corporal of Horse)
Private (Lance Corporal)

Navy

Admiral of the Fleet
Admiral
Vice-Admiral
Rear Admiral
Commodore
Captain
Commander
Lieutenant-Commander
Lieutenant
Second Lieutenant
Midshipman

Chief Petty Officer
Petty Officer
Leading Hand
Ordinary Seaman

THE INVASION STORY

In 1870 Prussia shocked the Western World by defeating the largest army in Europe within two months. While Prussia's conquest of France was short-lived and there'd be no major conflict in Western Europe until World War I, the ease in which France had been defeated and the chaos it caused frightened the British. It seemed only a matter of time before some European power (the usual suspects were France or the German Empire) would land troops on British soil.

It didn't take long before Victorian authors penned imaginary invasion tales that captivated and frightened their audiences. The first such tale was "The Battle of Dorking," (1871), in which an overconfident and underprepared Britain is defeated by Germany and is stripped of its great overseas empire. *The Great War in England in 1897* (1894) posits a happier ending and a change of sides for the German Empire, with France and Russia invading

Britain but ultimately defeated thanks to aid from Germany.

Perhaps the best known literary invasion is *The War of the Worlds* (1898), in which seemingly unstoppable Martians lay waste to London. While the Martians are eventually defeated it has nothing to do with a patriotic rally; Britain and the rest of the world are saved only by a deus ex machina.

The invasion story offers a few twists to the typical foreign military conflict adventure. The heroes may not be professional soldiers at all, but were pressed into service to defend against the invasion. Rather than trekking through the jungles of Africa or the hills of Afghanistan to fight the enemy in remote villages, the heroes will have to travel through the English countryside and meet the enemy in English towns.



THE BASE UNDER SIEGE

A popular adventure scenario is the base under siege, an isolated, remote location that is under attack by hostile forces. The heroes must hold out until reinforcements can arrive, the enemy withdraws, or they can slip out and escape. Motion pictures that highlight the base under siege are *The Alamo* (several films, most recently 2004), *Khartoum* (1966), *Zulu* (1964), and *Zulu Dawn* (1979).

Base under siege adventures are often more about endurance than winning. The heroes must struggle against the possibility that they are only delaying the inevitable as they hold back a larger enemy force. The adventure is rarely about winning; the heroes are usually buying time until help arrives or they can safely withdraw with their lives.

IMPERIAL AGE WARS

Below is a list of wars that took place during the Imperial Age. In most cases, the Victorian contemporary rather than the present name is used for the war (e.g. Second Afghan War rather than Second Anglo-Afghan War). Victors are listed first. In cases where there is no clear victor, the party that benefited most at the end of the war is listed. Note that, in many cases, fighting was not continuous throughout the given period.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Apache Wars (1871-1886) | USA vs. Apache and Navajo |
| Aceh War (1873-1903) | Netherlands vs. Aceh |
| Conquest of the Desert (1875-1884) | Argentina vs. Patagonia rebels |
| Second Afghan War (1878-1880) | Britain vs. Afghanistan (with Russian aid) |
| Saltpeter War (1879-1884) | Chile vs. Bolivia and Peru |
| Ute War (1879-1880) | USA vs. Ute |
| Gun War (1880-1881) | Basotho vs. Britain |
| Transvaal War (1880-1881) | Boers vs. Britain |
| Sino-French War (1881-1884) | France vs. China |
| Madagascar War (1883-1885) | France vs. Madagascar |
| Mahdist War (1884-1899) | Britain vs. Sudan |
| North-West Rebellion (1885) | Canada vs. Metis |
| War of Unification (1885) | Bulgaria vs. Serbia |
| Third Burmese War (1885-1887) | Britain vs. Burma |
| Pine Ridge Campaign (1890-1891) | USA vs. Sioux |
| First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) | Japan vs. China |
| First Italo-Ethiopian War (1895-1896) | Ethiopia vs. Italy |
| Zanzibar War (1896) | Britain vs. Zanzibar |
| Philippine Revolution (1896-1898) | Spain vs. Philippines |
| Thirty Days War (1897) | Ottoman Empire vs. Greece |
| Boxer Rebellion (1897-1900) | Imperial Chinese vs. Chinese rebels |
| Spanish-American War (1898) | USA vs. Spain |
| South African War (1899-1902) | Britain vs. Boers |
| Thousand Days War (1899-1902) | Colombia vs. Colombia (ended by Americans) |
| Philippine-American War (1899-1902) | USA vs. Philippines |

A VIEW FROM THE OTHER SIDE

As presented above, the Invasion Story tapped into Victorian fears of a foreign power invading their homeland. Typically the foreign invader is stronger than expected, takes the homeland (usually England) by surprise, and crushes the ill-prepared resistance. The English way of life is shattered in the process. In this sense the Invasion Story is more of a horror story than an adventure story. What may be lost on Victorian readers, of course, is that this is exactly how most adventure stories are perceived from the native people's point of view.

In many cases the arrival of the Europeans in a foreign country is an alien invasion. Invaders with strange skin tones and even stranger clothes wielding powerful weapons arrive and inflict their will on local societies. The locals have a choice; give in to the aliens' demands and be rewarded for their loyalty (the rewards, of course, never outweigh what was taken) or resist and be crushed or marginalized.

NOT SO ALIEN

One Victorian perception of exotic lands, especially Africa, is that they are filled with peoples that have never been exposed to Western ways or the world at large. While there were some extremely insular societies where this was true, most cultures have had at least some contacts with the rest of the world.

By the time the first European ship sailed around Africa, African and Asian cultures had been in contact for centuries. South Asia played a crucial role in connecting East African and Chinese markets, possibly as early as the tenth century. Nor was Arabian influence limited to North Africa; Islamic religion and culture had spread to West Africa by the thirteenth century and Arab slave traders operated in Central and East Africa. European influence spread throughout Africa prior to the Imperial Age as well, primarily for trade and, up until the early Nineteenth Century, slaves.

As a result, most African societies, especially coastal societies, have been exposed to foreign cultures. What many African leaders (or would-be leaders) hoped for was that their new allies would help them defeat their enemies, expand their territories, and acquire new technologies and treasures, especially guns. Thus, most African leaders welcomed European envoys with open arms.

JUST A PIECE OF PAPER

What most non-European cultures soon learn, of course, is that the treaties they signed (often in languages they don't understand) are worth whatever the associated European powers needed them to be. In most cases, a treaty between a European power and a non-European one held value only in the sense that other European powers would acknowledge the European power's claim to a particular territory. The European power was often in a position to change treaty terms at a whim, either through direct force of arms or, more often, the replacement of a now-unfriendly regime with one more favorable to the European power.

OUR WAR IS NOW YOUR WAR

Imperial powers cannot rely on their home militaries to protect their gains; the new territories are just too large and remote. Instead, small groups of European officers organize large groups of local soldiers into fighting forces while garrisons of European soldiers protect key areas (and remind local leaders who's really in charge). Thus, when there is a territorial dispute in Africa over British or French territory and it comes to blows, it is native African forces on both sides that do the bulk of the fighting.



CRAFTING HEROES FOR ADVENTURE STORIES

Adventure stories generally involve heroes that exist outside of London. While there is the occasional “gentleman adventurer,” most heroes will be soldiers or explorers living in frontier conditions. Some heroes may even be from an indigenous culture from just beyond Imperial influence.

This section provides new options for heroes. Check with your Narrator to see which options she is allowing in her campaign.

BACKGROUND

At first glance, the occupations offered in the Hero Creation chapter don't seem to fit heroes in adventure stories. Nothing could be further from the truth. While “Cavalry Officer” and “Soldier” are occupations, there's nothing to prevent soldiers from coming from a different occupation (especially a criminal one). Colonists or settlers can use the “Agrarian Worker” occupation, and most of the urban occupations are appropriate whether your hero hails from London, Paris, Calcutta, or Johannesburg.

Similarly, non-Western heroes can also use many of the occupations in the Hero Creation chapter. A shopkeeper in Zanzibar will have the same set of skills as one in Boston. Still, there may be heroes from local nomadic peoples or other tribal cultures that don't really fit in with the occupational backgrounds provided. For them, the Tribal Background is offered here.

Tribal

The tribal background is for any hero that grew up in a primitive (by European standards) lifestyle. There are many indigenous peoples across the world in which this background would fit in the Imperial Age.

Bonus Feats: Tough, Track, Trailblazer

Bonus Skills: Handle Animal, Survival

Favored Feats: Defensive Roll, Sneak Attack

ADEPT

Even in campaigns that include them, adepts are more often Narrator characters than heroes. African shamans, Tibetan mystics, Mandarin sorcerers, and Shaolin monks are more appropriate as adversaries or enigmatic allies than adventure heroes, especially in pulp-inspired campaigns.

MERLIN

Technically a military wizard, merlins get their nickname from the legendary advisor to King Arthur. Merlins are battle wizards, engaging the enemy as magical artillery.

Key Ability: Intelligence

Starting Skills: Concentration, Knowledge (supernatural), Knowledge (tactics), Notice

Starting Feats: Elemental Blast (fire), Fire Shaping, Mind Touch, Sleep

SHAMAN

These spiritual adepts learn their techniques from spiritual guides. Known as “medicine men” or “witch doctors” by Europeans, shamans minister the native peoples struggling against colonialism and imperialism. Shamans provide a supportive role in tribal defense; locating the enemy and enhancing their own warriors.

Key Abilities: Wisdom, Charisma

Starting Skills: Concentration, Knowledge (supernatural), Knowledge (theology and philosophy), Medicine

Starting Feats: Beast Link, Cure, Enhance Other, Sense Minds

EXPERT

Experts are essential on the frontier for survival. Explorers need skills to survive long treks through treacherous, unknown territory, while guides and traders offer knowledge of passable routes, interesting sites, and the keys to successful negotiations with native leaders. Colonists need a wide range of skills to build a life on the frontier. Experts are also crucial to the military. Scouts collect valuable intelligence and army surgeons make do with what's available to save lives.

ARMY SURGEON

An army surgeon is a medical doctor trained in field medicine. He can use his skills even in the heat of battle and is an integral part of any patrol or combat unit.

Key Ability: Wisdom

Starting Skills: Concentration, Craft (pharmaceutical), Diplomacy, Knowledge (life sciences), Medicine, Notice, Sense Motive, Survival

Starting Feats: Firearms Training, Improvised Tools, Second Chance (medicine), Skill Training (medicine)

EXPLORER

Explorers go to areas of the world unknown by their native culture. In the Imperial Age, many explorers are hired by Great Powers to explore parts of Africa and negotiate treaties with native leaders so that the Great Power can stake a claim to the region.

Key Ability: Dexterity, Intelligence

Starting Skills: Handle Animal, Knowledge (earth sciences), Knowledge (life sciences), Language, Notice, Ride, Search, Survival

Starting Feats: Evasion, Firearms Training, Trailblazer, Weapon Training

FRONTIERSMAN

A frontiersman (or woman) is a member of Western civilization that has chosen to live on the frontier. Some, like the Boers, are colonists, moving into areas on the fringe of Great Power control and creating a new society; others live in low populated areas within well-established borders (such as the American West or the Australian Outback). Frontiersmen are generally self-sufficient and prefer to be left alone.

Key Ability: Wisdom

Starting Skills: Diplomacy, Handle Animal, Knowledge (earth sciences), Knowledge (life sciences), Notice, Ride, Sense Motive, Survival

Starting Feats: Firearms Training, Jack-of-All-Trades, Tireless, Weapon Training

GUIDE

Guides are local experts hired by foreigners to aid them in getting where they want to go. Some guides specialize in wilderness travel, while others work the big cities such as Calcutta or Shanghai. In either case, if you need something, the guide knows where to get it.

Key Ability: Wisdom, Charisma

Starting Skills: Diplomacy, Gather Information, Handle Animal, Knowledge (popular culture), Knowledge (streetwise), Language, Notice, Ride, Survival

Starting Feats: Endurance, Firearms Training, Track, Weapon Training

TRADER

Traders are merchants that act as middlemen between civilizations. Traders often build relationships with societies in a particular area, bringing Western goods to them in return for native resources. Some traders still ply the slave trade, although this is a rapidly dwindling enterprise in the Imperial Age.

Key Ability: Intelligence, Charisma

Starting Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Handle Animal, Knowledge (art), Knowledge (business), Language, Ride, Survival

Starting Feats: Contacts, Firearms Training, Master Hagglor, Merchant's Eye

WARRIOR

Warriors are essential to adventure tales, especially military forces. Most European expeditions and new settlements are protected by force of arms, which becomes essential once the natives get their hands on modern weapons. Warriors are also needed for battle in the hotspots around the world, protecting their nation's interests. Outside the military, warriors still fulfill an important role. Big game hunters track down wild fauna, while explorers often hire mercenaries to protect their expeditions.

BIG GAME HUNTER/MERCENARY

Big game hunters hunt large wild animals for sport and profit. Elephants were prized for their ivory and, toward the end of the Imperial Age, wealthy Americans and Europeans would hire big game hunters to take them on safaris in East Africa. While this heroic path was designed with the European hunter in mind, it can also be used for indigenous big game hunters.

The big game hunter can be re-flavored to represent a mercenary. These ex-soldiers, some deserters, are hardened warriors that put their skills to use for profit. Explorers often hire mercenaries as extra muscle.

Key Abilities: Dexterity, Wisdom

Starting Skills: Notice, Stealth, Survival, Swim

Starting Feats: Attack Focus (ranged), Firearms Training, Track, Trailblazer, Weapon Training

CAVALRYMAN

Cavalrymen are trained to attack from horseback. While the recent innovations in warfare are chipping away at the effectiveness of cavalry on the battlefield, cavalry units have found success in Imperial warfare, where the enemy is more primitively armed. Even this advantage is slowly disappearing as indigenous forces gain accurate firearms.

Key Abilities: Strength, Dexterity

Starting Skills: Handle Animal, Notice, Ride, Survival

Starting Feats: Firearms Training, Spirited Charge, Vehicular Combat, Weapon Training

INFANTRYMAN

The strength of any military force in the Imperial Age rests with the common foot soldier. A well-disciplined unit can rout a much larger, unorganized one. That said the life of an infantryman is a dangerous one.

Key Abilities: Strength, Dexterity

Starting Skills: Intimidate, Notice, Search, Survival

Starting Feats: Attack Focus, Firearms Training, Tireless, Weapon Training

OFFICER

Officers are the leaders of military forces. Since 1871, officers have had to achieve their rank by merit, but some officers still lack the practical experience of those serving under them.

Key Abilities: Intelligence, Charisma

Starting Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Knowledge (tactics)

Starting Feats: Benefit (Commission), Firearms Training, Vehicular Combat, Weapon Training

SCOUT

Scouts are the advance eyes and ears of a military force. Many scouts are actually foreigners, employed for their knowledge of the region and their ability to negotiate with local leaders.

Key Ability: Dexterity

Starting Skills: Notice, Ride, Stealth, Survival

Starting Feats: Assessment, Firearms Training, Track, Weapon Training

TRIBAL WARRIOR/GUERRILLA FIGHTER

Tribal warriors are generally worse equipped than Western soldiers, but they make up for it with tenacity and intimate knowledge of their surroundings. A tribal warrior is often fighting on his home turf and understands that he cannot face superior weapons unless he is part of an overwhelming force. Thus, he uses surprise to his greatest advantage.

Guerrilla fighters have a similar skill set as tribal warriors but usually have access to better weapons and are often members of the Imperialist power they are fighting. As a result, guerrilla fighters often receive firearms training in place of weapon training.

Key Abilities: Strength, Wisdom

Starting Skills: Intimidate, Notice, Stealth, Survival

Starting Feats: Dodge, Sneak Attack, Trackless, Weapon Training or Firearms Training

SKILLS

The following are new uses for skills appropriate for adventure stories.

STEALTH

Sniping: When firing upon an enemy from hiding, you can try to remain hidden after firing a ranged weapon, but you must make another Stealth check after each shot fired, with a cumulative -10 penalty. This penalty decreases to -5 if you are using a gun with a silencer, but it is still cumulative. The accumulated penalties reset if you successfully use Stealth to move to a new hiding spot while remaining undetected.

SURVIVAL

Blend into Surroundings: While outdoors in an undeveloped setting, a Difficulty 10 Survival check allows you to camouflage yourself sufficiently to provide you with a +1 bonus to subsequent Stealth checks in the same terrain type. You gain an additional +1 bonus for every 5 points by which you beat the Difficulty

Navigate: You can use this skill to find your way to a distant location without directions or other specific guidance. Generally, you do not need to make a check to find a local street or other common urban site, or to follow an accurate map. However, you might make a check to wend your way through a dense forest or a labyrinth of underground storm drains.

For movement over a great distance, make a Survival check. The Difficulty depends on the length of the trip and the intervening infrastructure, terrain, and the weather. If you succeed, you move via the best reasonable course toward your goal. If you fail by 4 or less, you still reach your goal, but it takes you twice as long (you lose time backtracking and correcting your path). If you fail by 5 or more, you travel the expected time, but stop at the most difficult point along the path to your destination, becoming lost. You may make a second Survival check (Difficulty 15 + the current infrastructure, terrain, and weather modifiers) to regain your path. If you succeed, you continue on to your destination; the total time for the trip is twice the normal time. If you fail, you lose half a day before you can try again. You may keep trying until you succeed, losing half a day for each failure.

Length of Trip	Difficulty
Short (less than 10 miles)	15
Moderate (11–50 miles)	20
Long (51–200 miles)	25
Extreme (more than 200 miles)	30

Conditions*	
<i>Infrastructure</i>	
Roads	-10
Trails	-5
None	+0
<i>Terrain</i>	
Simple (calm water, hewn underground)	+0
Moderate (hills, light forests, natural underground, rough water)	+5
Complex (dense forest, desert, mountains, Labyrinthine passages, steep slopes, stormy water)	+10
<i>Weather</i>	
Clear (clear skies, no to moderate wind)	+0
Poor (light rain, strong wind)	+5
Bad (heavy rain, poor visibility, mud, light snow)	+10
Very Bad (deep snow, severe weather, ice)	+15

* Choose the highest applicable modifier for infrastructure, terrain, and weather.

When faced with multiple choices, such as at a branch in a tunnel, you can make a Survival check (Difficulty 20) to intuit the choice that takes you toward a known destination. If you fail, you choose the wrong path, but at the next juncture, with a successful check, you realize your mistake.

You cannot use this function of Survival to find a path to a site if you have no idea where the site is located. The Narrator may choose to make the Survival check for you in secret, so you don't know from the result whether you are following the right or wrong path.

FEATS

The following new feats are appropriate for adventure stories.

RANK AND RESPONSIBILITY

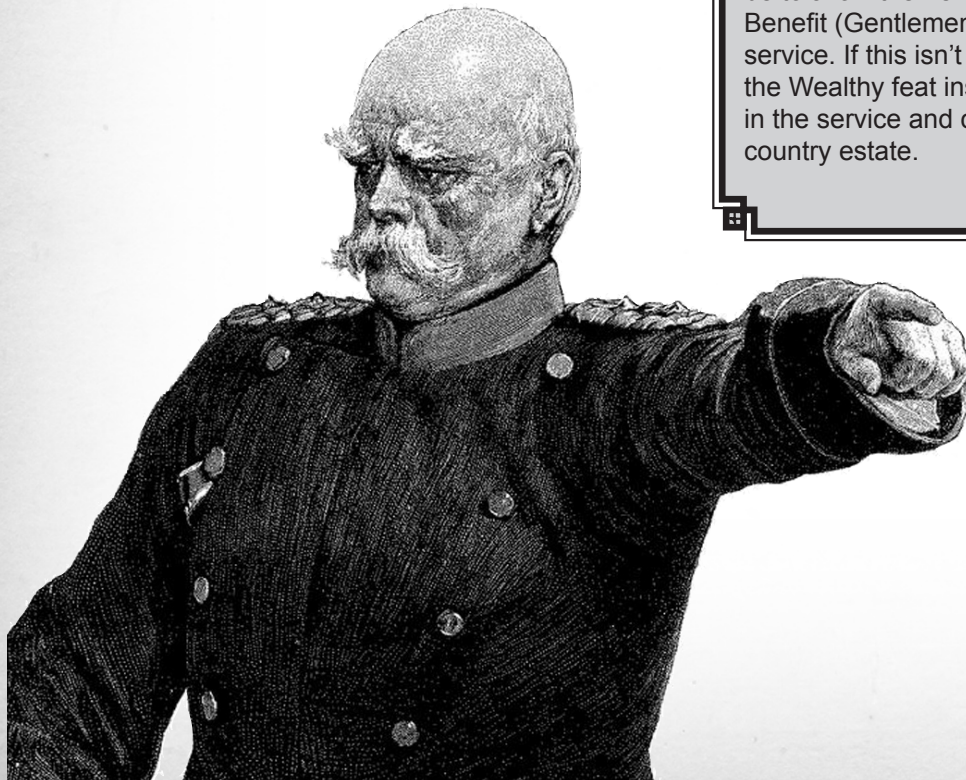
With the exception of Benefit (commission), there are no rules for determining rank. Where the heroes rank is really the province of the Narrator and may change any time. As promotions are merit-based, it is the hero's actions that determine his rank, not feat selections. Tying rank to feats results in the interesting paradox of higher-ranked soldiers being less capable than their subordinates.

That said Players may be upset if one hero is placed above the others without a balancing factor. Don't worry, there is one: responsibility. While the lower-ranked heroes may answer to another, that hero will be responsible to his superior for the entire group. A hero that abuses his position won't stay there for long (or shouldn't, if the Narrator is doing her job).

SWIFT TRACK

Prerequisite: Track

You are a superior tracker. You move at your normal speed while tracking without taking a penalty. If you move at twice your normal speed, then the penalty is only -10.



BENEFIT

The following benefit is available to heroes currently serving in a military.

Commission: You are an officer. Your exact rank is determined by the Narrator, but you enjoy the status and special perks of your rank.

CAMOUFLAGE

You have learned to use your surroundings to greater effect for concealment. You gain an extra 10% on your miss chance when concealed (Partial grants a miss chance on a 15 or higher, while Total grants a miss chance of 9 or higher).

SPOT PREY

By spending a conviction point, you can ignore or reduce the miss chance granted by concealment. You ignore partial concealment for one round. If an opponent has total concealment, then you treat it as partial concealment.

SWAPPING BENEFITS

The benefit of a military commission only applies while the hero is in the service. A hero playing a retired military officer need not take this feat. That said if the campaign starts with the hero in the service and he leaves it, then he's wasted a feat pick for the rest of the campaign.

There are two thematic ways to handle this. One would be to allow the hero to swap Benefit (Commission) for Benefit (Gentlemen's Title); he's been knighted for his service. If this isn't feasible, then allow the hero to take the Wealthy feat instead; he's saved some money while in the service and can now afford to retire in a nice country estate.

ADDITIONAL COMBAT RULES

Here are a few additional rules for running adventure stories.

MOUNTED COMBAT

Your mount acts on your initiative count as you direct. You move at the mount's speed, but the mount uses its action to move.

With a Difficulty 5 Ride check, you can guide your mount with your knees and use both hands to attack or defend yourself. This is a free action.

You can "ride defensively" while mounted. You can take a standard action for "evasive maneuvers" during a round. If so, substitute the result of the character's Ride check, modified by the mount's size, for the mount's normal Defense that round.

You can also "fight defensively" while riding a mount, which grants a +2 dodge bonus to the mount's Defense and applies a -4 penalty on attack rolls made by you or anyone else riding the mount.

When you attack a creature that is smaller than your mount and on foot, you get the +1 bonus on melee attacks for being on higher ground. Even at your mount's full speed, you don't take any penalty on melee attacks while mounted.

If your mount charges, you take the Defense penalty associated with the charge as well. If you make an attack at the end of the charge, you receive the bonus gained from the charge.

You can use ranged weapons while your mount is taking a double move but at a -4 penalty on the attack roll. You can use ranged weapons while your mount is moving all-out at a -8 penalty. In either case, you make the attack roll when your mount has completed half its movement.

You can take move actions (such as drawing a weapon or using a skill) normally while your mount is moving.

If your mount falls, you have to make a Difficulty 15 Ride check to make a soft fall and take no damage. If the check fails, you take +1 falling damage when you hit the ground (more if your mount is higher off the ground).

If knocked unconscious while riding, you have a 50% chance to stay in the saddle. Otherwise, you fall and take +1 falling damage (more if your mount is higher off the ground). Without you to guide it, a mount generally avoids combat.

MASS COMBAT

When running adventure stories, there will be times when the heroes face a large number of enemies. Whether defending a mission or garrison or trying to punch a hole through an enemy line to get supplies through, the standard *True20* combat system can get quite unwieldy, especially if the heroes are part of a larger military unit. The mass combat rules here can help speed things up. More detailed rules are available in the *True20 Warrior's Handbook*.

Mass combat groups combatants into combat units. A combat unit is a group of similar individuals that move and attack together as if they were a single creature. In order to be part of a combat unit, a creature must have an Intelligence of -4 or greater, and be Small size or larger. Creatures with no Intelligence or with an Intelligence of -5 cannot be trained to work together as a unit. Tiny or smaller creatures that band together use the rules for swarms instead of the combat unit rules presented here.

It is not necessary or desirable to group each side into the largest template, especially if you want to add simulate battlefield tactics. Simply group each side into units of manageable size for playing out different areas of the battle.

Combat Unit (Template)

Size and Type: Same as the component creature. The combat unit also gains a "unit size classification" based on the number of individuals in the combat unit. See Unit Size table. For larger groups of creatures use the following classifications: a "Brigade" is 2 or more regiments. A "Division" consists of 2 or more brigades.

Space/Reach: A combat unit's reach remains the same as the component creature, but its space is determined based on the size and number of its component creatures as shown in the table below.

Speed: Same as component creature, or as their mounts if the entire unit is mounted.

Abilities: Same as component creature.

Skills: A combat unit is considered to possess any skills that at least half of its component creatures have.

Feats: A combat unit is considered to have any feats that at least half of its component creatures have.

Traits: A combat unit has no discernable anatomy, so it is not subject to critical hits. Combat units cannot be tripped, grappled, or grapple another. A combat unit is immune to nonlethal damage.

Commander Effect: A unit may have a commander (who is not counted when determining the size of the unit). A unit gains combat and Will save bonuses depending on the level of the unit's commander.

Commander Effect	
Commander Level	Bonus*
1-2	+0
3-5	+1
6-10	+2
11-15	+3
16+	+4

* = The Leadership feat increases this bonus by +1

The commander retains his individual statistics and is always among the survivors. There are several exceptions to this rule.

A commander may leave his combat unit to fight on his own, possibly to take on another commander or other powerful creature in single combat. When the commander leaves a unit, they no longer gain any benefit from their commander bonus, and the commander may be killed while off on his own.

The second exception occurs when a combat unit reaches "disabled" or a worse condition on the damage track.

The third exception is when the commander moves to the front lines to fight in person. While fighting in the front lines, a commander makes his own attack and Toughness rolls, independent of the combat unit. While the commander is fighting in the front lines, they may be targeted by the attacks of another creature or unit.

Finally, a commander may be targeted by ranged attacks, but they are considered to have cover while they are amidst their troops.

Damage Reduction: A combat unit of 3-20 creatures (a company, squad or band) gains damage reduction 2/area attacks. A combat unit of 21 or more creatures gains damage reduction 4/area attacks. This damage reduction stacks with the damage reduction of the component creatures, if any.

Immunity to Targeted Effects: A combat unit cannot be targeted by non-damaging supernatural powers or effects that only target a single individual such as the Suggestion or Domination supernatural powers. They can be targeted by the Mass Suggestion feat however.

Pike Hedge: If every creature in a combat unit is armed with a weapon that provides additional reach, the unit may form a pike hedge as a free action. While in pike hedge formation a unit can only move at a speed of 5 ft., but gains a +1 bonus to damage, and deals double damage against charging creatures.

Shield Wall: If every creature in a combat unit is armed with a medium or larger shield, it can form a shield wall as a free action. While in shield wall formation, the combat unit can only move at half speed, but gains an additional +2 bonus to defense. Movement through terrain that prevents the soldiers from standing shoulder to shoulder at all times (such as moving through a forest) prevents the use of a shield wall for the rest of that round.

Vulnerable to Flanking: When in melee combat range of a total number of creatures equal to or greater than twice the number of creatures in the combat unit, the outnumbered combat unit suffers a -4 penalty to its defense.

Combat: As component creature, modified by bonuses from commander effects and unit size.

Saving Throws: A combat unit has Fortitude, Reflex and Will saves equal to the average of its component creatures. Its Toughness save is modified by the unit's size.

COMBAT UNITS AND THE DAMAGE TRACK

A combat unit responds differently to the damage track than a single creature. A combat unit ignores any damage that results in a "hurt" condition on the damage track. Individuals in the unit may be injured, but the unit as a whole is unaffected. A unit that has become "wounded" has lost 10% casualties. A unit that becomes "disabled" has lost 25% casualties. A unit that is marked off as "dying" has 50% casualties and loses one unit size (So a battalion that suffers 50% casualties becomes a platoon), and a unit that is marked off as "dead" has 90% casualties and automatically disbands. Round all fractions up. A unit does not "heal" from these conditions unless it somehow picks up enough

additional component creatures to replace the ones that have been lost (no recovery check necessary). Note that a "casualty" is not necessarily a death; a casualty counts as any individual too injured or too demoralized to continue combat.

Each time a combat unit gains one of the above mentioned conditions on the damage track, it must succeed on a Will save with a Difficulty equal to the recovery check difficulty for that condition in order to avoid becoming disbanded. All members of a disbanded unit flee all combat situations, and leave the area as soon as possible, by any means available.

# of creatures	Unit Size					
	Company	Squad	Band	Platoon	Battalion	Regiment
In unit	3-5	6-10	11-20	21-40	41-80	81-160
Attack Roll Bonus	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6
Damage Bonus	+2	+4	+6	+8	+10	+12
Damage Reduction	2/area	2/area	2/area	4/area	4/area	4/area
Toughness Bonus	+0	+2	+4	+4	+6	+8

Approximate Combat Unit Space Based on the Size and Number of its Component Creatures.

	Company of 3-5	Squad of 6-10	Band of 11-20	Platoon of 21-40	Battalion of 41-80	Regiment of 81-160
Small	10 ft. x 10 ft.	15 ft. x 15 ft.	20 ft. x 20 ft.	30 ft. x 30 ft.	40 ft. x 40 ft.	60 ft. x 60 ft.
Medium	10 ft. x 10 ft.	15 ft. x 15 ft.	20 ft. x 20 ft.	30 ft. x 30 ft.	40 ft. x 40 ft.	60 ft. x 60 ft.
Large	20 ft. x 20 ft.	30 ft. x 30 ft.	40 ft. x 40 ft.	60 ft. x 60 ft.	80 ft. x 80 ft.	120 ft. x 120 ft.
Huge	30 ft. x 30 ft.	45 ft. x 45 ft.	60 ft. x 60 ft.	90 ft. x 90 ft.	120 ft. x 120 ft.	180 ft. x 180 ft.
Garg.	40 ft. x 40 ft.	60 ft. x 60 ft.	80 ft. x 80 ft.	120 ft. x 120 ft.	160 ft. x 160 ft.	240 ft. x 240 ft.
Colossal	50 ft. x 50 ft.	75 ft. x 75 ft.	100 ft. x 100 ft.	150 ft. x 150 ft.	200 ft. x 200 ft.	300 ft. x 300 ft.



TRAPS

Traps are part and parcel of an explorer's life. In addition to ancient traps left in ruins, travelers in the wilderness also have to worry about more mundane hunting traps built by natives to hunt big game or keep out trespassers.

A trap can be either mechanical or supernatural in nature. Mechanical traps include pits, arrow traps, falling blocks, water-filled rooms, whirling blades, and anything else that depends on a mechanism to operate. A mechanical trap can be constructed through successful use of the Craft (trapmaking) skill (see Elements of a Trap, and the Craft (trapmaking) skill description).

Fantastical traps initiate the effects of a fantastical power (whether scientific or magical) when activated. Creating a fantastical trap requires the Imbue Item feat.

MECHANICAL TRAPS

Ancient ruins are frequently equipped with deadly mechanical traps. A trap is defined by its location and triggering conditions, how hard it is to spot before it goes off, how much damage it deals, and whether or not the heroes receive a saving throw to mitigate its effects. Traps that attack with arrows, sweeping blades, and other types of weaponry make normal attack rolls, with a specific combat bonus dictated by the trap's level.

Success on a Search check can detect a mechanical trap before it is triggered. Complex traps are denoted by their triggering mechanisms and involve pressure plates, mechanisms linked to doors, changes in weight, disturbances in the air, vibrations, and other sorts of unusual triggers.

FANTASTICAL TRAPS

Many fantastical powers can be used to create traps. Unless the power description states otherwise, assume the following:

A successful Search check (Difficulty 25 + 1/2 casting adept's level) or a successful use of the Second Sight power detects a fantastical trap before it goes off.

Fantastical traps permit a saving throw to avoid the effect (Difficulty 10 + 1/2 casting adept's level + key ability)

Fantastical traps may be disarmed by a Disable Device check or the Severance power (Difficulty 25 + 1/2 casting adept's level). The Severance power must be able to affect the particular type of fantastical trap (if the trap is the product of science, a psychical Severance power won't disable it).

Fantastical traps are otherwise the same as single-use supernatural items (see Supernatural Items) or single-use scientific wonders.

ELEMENTS OF A TRAP

All traps—mechanical or fantastical—have the following elements: trigger, reset, Search Difficulty, Disable Device Difficulty, combat bonus (or saving throw or onset delay), damage/effect, and Level. Some traps may also include optional elements, such as poison or a bypass. The following descriptions provide the details of these individual elements.

TRIGGER

A trap's trigger determines how it is sprung.

Location

A location trigger springs a trap when someone stands in a particular spot (such as in front of a chest).

Proximity

This trigger activates the trap when a creature approaches within a certain distance. A proximity trigger differs from a location trigger in that creatures flying over or hovering just above the trigger can spring a trap with a proximity trigger but not one with a location trigger. Mechanical proximity triggers are extremely sensitive to the slightest change in the air. This makes them useful only in places such as crypts, where the air is unusually still.

Some fantastical traps have special proximity triggers that activate only when certain types of creatures approach. For example, a Heart Reading effect can be added to a fantastical trap to serve as a proximity trigger on an evil

altar, springing the attached trap only when someone who does not have evil intent in their heart and is not acting in accordance with their Vice nature approaches.

Sound

This trigger springs a fantastical trap when it detects any sound. A sound trigger functions like an ear and has a bonus on Notice checks equal to the trap's level +5. A successful Stealth check and other effects that negate hearing can defeat it.

Visual

This trigger for fantastical traps works like an actual eye, springing the trap whenever it "sees" something. It has a bonus on Notice checks equal to the trap's level +5. Such a visual trigger has Night Vision and Darkvision out to 60 ft. Invisibility, disguises, or illusions can sometimes fool this kind of trigger.

Touch

A touch trigger, which springs the trap when touched, is one of the simplest types of triggers to construct. This trigger may be physically attached to the part of the mechanism that deals the damage, or it may not.

Timed

This trigger periodically springs the trap after a pre-determined amount of time has passed.

RESET

A reset element is the set of conditions under which a trap becomes ready to trigger again.

No Reset

Short of completely rebuilding the trap, there is no way to trigger it more than once.

Repair

To get the trap functioning again, you must repair it.

Manual

Resetting the trap requires someone to move the parts back into place. This is the kind of reset element that most mechanical traps have.

Automatic

The trap resets itself, either immediately or after a timed interval.

REPAIRING AND RESETTING MECHANICAL TRAPS

Repairing a mechanical trap requires a Craft (mechanical or trapmaking) check against a Difficulty equal to the one for building it. The cost for raw materials is half of the trap's original purchase Difficulty. To calculate how long it takes to fix a trap, use the same calculations you would for building it, but use the cost of the raw materials required for repair in place of the market price.

Resetting a trap usually takes only a minute or so. For a trap with a more difficult reset method, you should set the time and labor required.

Traps by Level					
Trap Level	Save Difficulty*	Combat Bonus	Damage**	Skill Difficulty***	Cost
0	15	+5	+2	20	24
1	16	+6	+3	21	26
2	17	+7	+4	22	28
3	18	+8	+5	23	30
4	19	+9	+6	24	32
5	20	+10	+7	25	34
6	21	+11	+8	26	36
7	22	+12	+9	27	38
8	23	+13	+10	28	40
9	24	+14	+11	29	42
10	25	+15	+12	30	44

*The Save Difficulty and combat bonus for a Supernatural trap is determined by the casting adept.

**The damage for a pit trap is +2 per 10ft. fallen. The damage or effect of a supernatural trap is determined by the supernatural power in question.

***This is the Difficulty for Search and Disable Device checks.

COMBAT BONUS/SAVING THROW DIFFICULTY

A trap usually either makes an attack roll or forces a saving throw to avoid it. Occasionally a trap uses both of these options, or neither (see Never Miss).

Pits

These are holes (covered or not) that characters can fall into and take damage. A pit needs no attack roll, but a successful Reflex save avoids it. Other save-dependent mechanical traps also fall into this category.

Pits in ruins come in three basic varieties: uncovered, covered, and chasms. Pits and chasms can be defeated by judicious application of the Climb or Jump skills or various supernatural means.

Uncovered pits normally require no Search check to locate and serve mainly to discourage intruders from going a certain way, although they cause much grief to characters who stumble into them in the dark, and they can greatly complicate a melee taking place nearby.

Covered pits are much more dangerous. They require a successful Search check to be noticed, but a check is only allowed if the character is taking the time to carefully examine the area before walking across it. A character who fails to detect a covered pit is still entitled to a Reflex save to avoid falling into it. However, if he was running or moving recklessly at the time, he gets no saving throw and falls automatically.

Trap coverings can be as simple as piled refuse (straw, leaves, sticks, or garbage), a large rug, or an actual trapdoor concealed to appear as a normal part of the floor. Such a trapdoor usually swings open when enough weight (usually about 50 to 80 pounds) is placed upon it. Devious trap builders sometimes design trapdoors so they spring back shut after they open. The trapdoor might lock once it is back in place, leaving the stranded character well and truly trapped. Opening such a trapdoor is just as difficult as opening a regular door (assuming the trapped character can reach it), and a Difficulty 13 Strength check is needed to keep a spring-loaded door open.

Pit traps often have something nastier than just a hard floor at the bottom. A trap designer may put spikes, monsters, or a pool of acid, lava, or even water at the bottom. Spikes at the bottom of a pit deal damage as daggers with a +10 combat bonus and a +1 bonus on damage for every 10 feet of the fall (to a maximum bonus on damage of +5). This damage is in addition to any damage from the fall itself.

Creatures sometimes live in pits. Any creature that can fit into the pit might have been placed there by the ruin's designer or might simply have fallen in and not been able to climb back out.

A secondary trap, mechanical or magical, at the bottom of a pit can be particularly deadly. Activated by a falling victim, the secondary trap attacks the already injured victim.

Ranged Attack Traps

These traps fling darts, arrows, spears, or the like at whoever activated the trap. The trap's level sets the combat bonus.

Melee Attack Traps

These traps feature such obstacles as sharp blades emerging from walls and stone blocks that fall from ceilings. Once again, the trap's level sets the combat bonus.

DAMAGE/EFFECT

The effect of a trap is what happens to those who spring it. Usually, this takes the form of either damage or a supernatural power, but some traps have special effects.

Pits

Falling into a pit deals +2 falling damage per 10 feet of depth.

Ranged Attack Traps

These traps deal the listed amount of damage according to their level. Whatever damage is not attributed to the missile being launched is accounted for by the trap's virtual Strength bonus or, possibly, magical enhancement.

Melee Attack Traps

These traps deal the listed amount of damage according to their level. Whatever damage is not attributed to the missile being launched is accounted for by the trap's virtual Strength bonus or, possibly, fantastical enhancement. In the case

of a falling stone block, the block's weight corresponds to the damage dealt, but remember that whoever resets the trap has to lift that stone back into place.

Fantastical Power Traps

Fantastical Power traps produce the power's effect. Like all powers, a power trap that allows a saving throw has a save Difficulty of $10 + \frac{1}{2}$ adept's level + adept's key ability score.

Special

Some traps have miscellaneous features that produce special effects, such as drowning for a water trap or ability damage for poison. Saving throws and damage depend on the poison or are set by the trap's level, as appropriate.

BYPASS (OPTIONAL ELEMENT)

If the builder of a trap wants to be able to move past the trap after it is created or placed, it is a good idea to build in a bypass mechanism—something that temporarily disarms the trap. Bypass elements are typically used only with mechanical traps; spell traps usually have built-in allowances for the caster to bypass them.

Lock

A lock bypass requires a Difficulty 30 Disable Device check to open.

Hidden Switch

A hidden switch requires a Difficulty 25 Search check to locate.

Hidden Lock

A hidden lock combines the preceding features, requiring a Difficulty 25 Search check to locate and a Difficulty 30 Disable Device check to open.

MISCELLANEOUS TRAP FEATURES

Some traps include optional features that can make them considerably more deadly. Here we provide descriptions of the most common such features.

Gas

With a gas trap, the danger is an inhaled poison. Traps employing gas usually have the never miss and onset delay features.

Liquid

Any trap involving a danger of drowning is in this category. Traps employing liquid usually have the never miss and onset delay features.

Multiple Targets

Traps with this feature can affect more than one character.

Never Miss

When the entire dungeon wall moves to crush you, your quick reflexes won't help, since the wall can't miss. A trap with this feature has neither a combat bonus nor a saving throw to avoid, but it does have an onset delay. Most traps involving liquid or gas are of the never miss variety.

Onset Delay

An onset delay is the amount of time between when the trap is sprung and when it deals damage. A never miss trap always has an onset delay. The onset delay is usually six rounds minus half the trap's level (round up).

Poison

Traps employing poison are deadlier than their nonpoisonous counterparts, so they are considered the equivalent of a trap one level higher. Only injury, contact, and inhaled poisons are suitable for traps; ingested types are not. Some traps simply deal the poison's damage. Others deal damage with ranged or melee attacks as well.

Pit Spikes

Treat spikes at the bottom of a pit as daggers (+1 damage) with a +10 combat bonus. The damage bonus for the spikes increases by +1 per 10 feet of pit depth (to a maximum of +5).

Pit Bottom

If something other than spikes waits at the bottom of a pit, it is best to treat it as a separate trap with a location trigger that activates on any significant impact, such as a falling character.

SAMPLE MECHANICAL TRAPS

BASIC ARROW TRAP

Level 1; mechanical; proximity trigger; manual reset; Combat Bonus +6 ranged, Damage +3 20/+4 (arrow), Search & Disable Device Difficulty 21

POISON NEEDLE TRAP

Level 1; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; Combat Bonus +8, Damage +0 plus poison (poison needle) Poison: Fort Difficulty 16 Primary and Secondary Damage 1 Con, Search & Disable Device Difficulty 21

BASIC SPEAR TRAP

Level 2; mechanical; proximity trigger; manual reset; Combat Bonus +7 ranged, Damage +4 19-20/+4 (spear) , Search & Disable Device Difficulty 22

CAMOUFLAGED PIT TRAP

Level 2; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Difficulty 17 Reflex save avoids; 20 ft. deep (+4 falling damage), Search & Disable Device Difficulty 22

CAMOUFLAGED SPIKED PIT TRAP

Level 3; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Difficulty 18 Reflex save avoids; 20 ft. deep (+4 falling damage); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares); pit spikes (Combat Bonus +10, Damage +3); Search & Disable Device Difficulty 23

WALL SCYTHE TRAP

Level 4; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Combat Bonus +9 melee, Damage +6 20/+5 (scything blade); Search & Disable Device Difficulty 24

FALLING BLOCK TRAP

Level 5; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Combat Bonus +10 melee, Damage +7 (falling stone block); multiple targets (can strike all characters in a specified 10ft./10ft. area); Search & Disable Device Difficulty 25

COMPACTING ROOM

Level 6; mechanical; timed trigger; automatic reset; hidden switch bypass (Search Difficulty 25); walls move together (+8 crushing damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-by- 10-ft. room); never miss; onset delay (3 rounds); Search & Disable Device Difficulty 26

WATER-FILLED ROOM

Level 7; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. room); never miss; onset delay (3 rounds); water (See rules for Drowning and Suffocation in **True20 Adventure Roleplaying**, page 112); Search & Disable Device Difficulty 27

WELL-CAMOUFLAGED PIT TRAP

Level 8; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; Difficulty 23 Reflex save avoids; 80 ft. deep (+16 falling damage); Search & Disable Device Difficulty 28

DROPPING CEILING

Level 9; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; ceiling moves down (+14 crushing damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. room); never miss; onset delay (2 rounds); Search & Disable Device Difficulty 29

CRUSHING ROOM

Level 10; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; walls move together (+15 crushing damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. room); never miss; onset delay (1 round); Search & Disable Device Difficulty 30

CHAPTER SEVEN: DETECTIVE STORIES

Nigel Litton crouched down to examine the body of Nellie Parsons, a servant girl formerly in the employ of the Grainger family. Another servant taking a shortcut from the village discovered her body in the woods behind the estate. Nigel Litton took particular interest in the gash across her neck and her state of undress. Sir Roger Grainger stood nearby, leaning on his walking stick.

"Poor girl. She suffered a fate worse than death and death!" Sir Roger frowned. "Quite horrible!"

"That's what it looks like," Litton nodded. "Or at least, that is what it's supposed to look like."

"Supposed?" Sir Roger was mortified. "What do you mean?"

"There are no marks on her body, and much of it is exposed," Sir Roger explained. "Surely if she were assaulted there would be bruises?"

"Perhaps," Sir Roger, offered, shuddering at his own thought, "the murderer violated her after she was dead?"

"No, I'd thought of that," Litton said clinically. "But the ground is soft here and there are no telltale marks in the ground. More importantly, there is no blood. Miss Parsons could not have had her throat slit here. More importantly, there is not enough blood on her clothes to suggest a slit throat as the cause of death."

Litton gently turned the corpse's head to the side as Sir Roger turned away due to his uneasy stomach. After a few more minutes of contemplation, he nodded and straightened himself, returning to the baronet's side.

"Just as I suspected. Nellie Parsons died from a blow to the back of her head that fractured her skull. Whoever did this killed her and then dumped her here to make it look like the act of a perverse highwayman."

"Why would someone do that?" Sir Roger asked, shaking.

"I was hoping you could tell me," Litton said as his eyes fell to Sir Roger's cane. "Your coachman had mentioned something earlier to me about blackmail?"

One of the iconic images of Victorian fiction is a particular consulting detective with a deerstalker cap. For many, Sherlock Holmes embodies the Imperial Age, and his first case, *A Study in Scarlet*, is set at the dawn of the Imperial Age. Holmes was the forerunner of the modern detective, using deductive reasoning, disguise, and chemistry to solve his cases.

The detective story, of course, predates Sherlock Holmes. Doyle, like other detective authors, was influenced by Edgar Allen Poe's C. Auguste Dupin, a detective that appeared in three stories in the 1840s. While Dupin was not the first literary detective, many of the common detective tropes were



THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS

The London Metropolitan Police ascribed eleven unsolved murders of prostitutes in the East End from 1888 through 1891 to a single killer. This killer, dubbed “Jack the Ripper” due to signatures on a purported letter and postcard to the police, was never caught or revealed. Most modern scholars believe that Jack was only responsible for five murders, all of which occurred between August and November of 1888. All of these victims had their throats slashed and, in four cases, some internal organs removed. Several other murders during this period were also attributed to Jack by various scholars.

The Whitechapel Murders are fertile ground for a Narrator to use. As Jack’s identity remains unknown to this day, the Narrator is free to create one of her own. Tracking down one of the first serial murders would make a compelling adventure or even the focus of an entire campaign, perhaps weaving the individual murders between separate cases until the campaign culminates with a showdown against the Ripper (and, as the case of Elizabeth Stride intimates that the Ripper was disturbed before he could remove any organs, you could give the heroes a ‘close call’ to catch the Ripper).

Even if you don’t want to use the actual Whitechapel Murders (especially if your campaign doesn’t take place in 1888) you can still use these murders as a model for serial murders of your own design.

established by Poe: the thoughtful detective, the locked room mystery, the least likely suspect being the criminal, clues hidden in plain sight, and the less-gifted confidante. Old Sleuth, created by Harlan P. Halsey in 1872, is a New York City detective that gave his nickname to private detectives in general. Other writers, including Charles Dickens and T.S. Eliot, would also contribute to the detective story.

CRAFTING A DETECTIVE STORY

As a Narrator, crafting a good detective story can be a challenging and rewarding experience. There is nothing like setting up a mystery and watching your Players collect facts and evidence until they ultimately piece the puzzle together and figure out the solution. On the flip side, the Narrator must ensure that her mystery is cleverly plotted and feel challenging but solvable by the Players.

As a Player, the detective story offers a different emphasis to traditional roleplaying adventures. Traditional adventures tend to be reactive, with heroes having to overcome the obstacles thrown in their way until they get to the final scene. A mystery requires a more proactive approach. The Players must discover where the obstacles lie before they can overcome them. That can make the end scene all the more satisfying.

Most detective stories involve six simple elements: a victim, a culprit, a motive, an opportunity, a means, and an alibi. Let’s look at each in detail, after which we’ll look at some common Imperial Age tropes followed by things to look out for when crafting a detective story.

VICTIM

The victim is the person wronged. In extreme cases this is a murder victim, although the victim may simply been the target of a robbery, blackmail attempt, or strange circumstance. In either case, the victim provides the initial clues for the detective story. A murder victim provides a “scene of the crime” in which initial clues are found, while in other cases the victim may have sought out the heroes and provides the first clues in her client interview.

CULPRIT

In any detective story, there should always be a culprit that can be fingered in the end. While there are exceptions to this (the victim as culprit, an accident, random circumstance), the Players may feel cheated if the detective story doesn’t “play by the rules” and allow them to pin the solution on an individual. The culprit need not be human; “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” (1841) by Edgar Allen Poe (and often considered the first detective story) involved an orangutan murderer.

MOTIVE

The culprit should always have a motive that fits the crime. This motive should seem obvious to the Players once they

stumble across it. There can, of course, be multiple motives, although only one should be connected to the solution.

OPPORTUNITY

While this may seem obvious, the culprit needs an opportunity to harm the victim. In fact, this is often the element that gets overlooked when constructing a mystery. If not addressed, the Narrator could end up with a murderer that moves preternaturally fast or a schedule that doesn't make sense.

MEANS

The culprit must have the means to harm the victim. This need not be owned by the culprit; perhaps a handy candlestick or fire poker is the means, or perhaps an "obvious means" is covering up another means. That said fingerprinting is a new science in the Imperial Age, so it's better to plant the means on the individual or make circumstantial evidence clearly connect the means with the culprit.

ALIBI

There's no mystery if the culprit is known. The culprit must attempt to cover her tracks in some way, whether she prepared an alibi prior to harming the victim or constructed one after the (usually spontaneous) murder took place.

WHODUNIT

The "whodunit" is the classic detective story in which a crime is committed and only a few suspects could have done it. The crime is usually committed in an isolated setting, such as a country home, train car, or ship. The heroes usually get involved by circumstance (they happen to be in the vicinity and get caught up in events) or summoned, usually by someone affected by the crime or the police after the crime scene had been secured.

Whodunits usually have a small cast of characters, many (if not all) of whom have motivations for committing the crime and alibis that seem to absolve them of it. Suspects that lack motivation may be coy or secretive for other reasons (for example, a suspect's only alibi is that he was having an adulterous tryst during the time of a murder and he prefers to keep silent on his whereabouts or offers a sloppy alibi).

Whodunits tend to be talky affairs and thus make great adventures for players that enjoy interacting with and interviewing suspects. There is generally little combat, although heroes getting too close to the truth may find themselves assaulted in the middle of the night or have the perpetrator draw a weapon and attack after he's been fingered.

LOCKED ROOM MYSTERY

The locked room mystery is another classic trope. A crime has been committed when it should have been impossible for one to occur (a necklace is removed from a guarded safe; a country squire is murdered in his locked study). The heroes must discover how the crime occurred and this will usually lead them to the culprit.

Often, a locked room mystery hinges on an overlooked fact; for example, the house staff was not warned of an intruder because the intruder was familiar to the guard dogs or a "corpse" in the morgue wasn't quite dead. Sometimes the obfuscation occurs because the heroes expect a human culprit, when in fact it was an animal or mechanical killer.

While similar to a whodunit, the locked room mystery relies more on a hero's observational skills and knowledge than his ability to interrogate suspects. Players that enjoy puzzle-solving will get the most out of locked room mysteries.

PERSONAL ISSUE

While often connected to other types of mystery, the personal issue is the classic "client walks into the detective's office with a problem" mystery. A spouse may suspect an affair and want the detective to confirm it. Most of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes mysteries are of this type.

Personal issues usually involve some bizarre behavior by someone close to the client. This bizarre behavior can be rationally explained. The client often unwittingly provides the solution, or at least a strong lead, while explaining his predicament, having failed to connect the dots on his own. The heroes must then collect the rest of the clues to solve the mystery.

Personal issue mysteries offer a great opportunity for all kinds of adventures, as the bizarre, unexplained behavior can

lead the heroes down interesting paths. They work best in a private setting, with the heroes counting at least one consulting detective amongst them.

POLICE PROCEDURAL

The police procedural (generally Scotland Yard) involves the heroes investigating a crime. The heroes inspect the crime scene, gather initial clues and evidence, and spend the rest of the adventure following the clues until they uncover the culprit.

A subset of the police procedure is the serial criminal. Jack the Ripper arrived in the middle of the Imperial Age and nothing motivates heroes more than the possibility of more victims should they fail. Similarly, an anarchist may be planting bombs around the city and must be stopped before she seriously injures or kills people. In a more light-hearted vein, the serial criminal may be a burglar, taunting the heroes and defying them to stop him.

Police procedural mysteries are similar to personal issue mysteries in that they generally revolve around a single police detective and his associates. Given the nature of most crimes (usually murder), there is often ample opportunity for conflict.

WEIRD HAPPENINGS

Weird happenings are events that seem preternatural, but actually have mundane explanations. Generally, weird happenings are designed to prey upon people's fears and superstitions in order to cover an otherwise mundane crime. It is up to the detective heroes to uncover the truth.

Perhaps ironically, weird happenings work best in campaigns where the supernatural exists. In such campaigns, players are more likely to believe in the truth of a weird happening and are therefore surprised when the cause turns out to be mundane. A weird happenings adventure can be a fun change of pace in an otherwise preternatural campaign.

Obviously, weird happenings mysteries are tailor-made for the occult detective, although any detective hero is equipped to uncover mundane truths (and, in fact, are less likely to fall for the ruse than the occult detective).

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

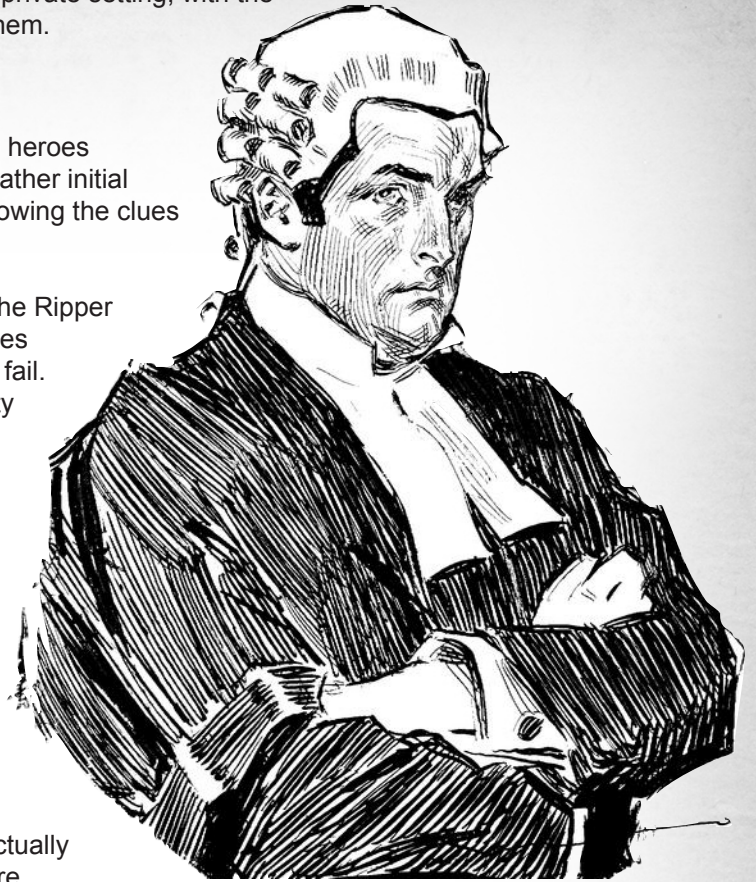
Designing a mystery adventure can be a rewarding experience, but there are a number of things that could drag down the adventure in play. This section contains a few potential pitfalls of mystery adventure design.

BAD DIE ROLLS

Nothing stops a mystery cold like a bad die roll. Sure, the Narrator set the Difficulty low, but there's always a chance that the Player will roll badly and miss a vital clue. The best problem-solving Players in the world won't stand a chance in solving the puzzle if they lack too many pieces.

A good general rule of thumb is to always provide the Player what they need to solve a mystery but allow die rolls to set the pace. For example, when the consulting detective arrives at a crime scene, he automatically gets all of the clues he needs to follow leads. A Search check, however, may reveal a piece of evidence that allows him to skip over an avenue of investigation. Similarly, if a detective hero is researching crucial information in a library, then a failed check simply means she burns all day in the library, rather than the two hours she thought it would take.

Also, be aware of the resources that Players have. Some core abilities may allow heroes to revisit a failed check or make an intuitive leap. Set Difficulties so that the hero will make his checks if he takes 10, 15, or even 20. Have back-up clues ready to feed heroes later if the first clues are missed.



A word of caution: Players like to be challenged and want to feel that they've accomplished something. While ensuring that they have the tools they need to solve a mystery, a Narrator may fall into the trap of leading the Players to the solution by the nose. Players will stop trying if they think that, whatever they do, the Narrator will lead them to the final scene.

INTRODUCE THE CULPRIT EARLY

When solving a mystery, Players should feel as if they had a chance to uncover it all along. The best way to do that is to introduce the culprit as early as possible. This makes the mystery feel like a cohesive whole, rather than a slog through red herrings until they meet the true villain by chance.

Some mysteries make this easier than others. In a whodunit or locked room mystery, the culprit is always among the group of suspects. Police procedurals and weird happenings tend to fall on the other end, where it's easy for a Narrator to get wrapped up in the particulars of the crime yet fail to showcase the culprit until late in the adventure. Personal issues mysteries tend to fall somewhere in between, based on the nature of the personal issue.

The culprit need not be physically introduced to the heroes as soon as the mystery adventure begins. It's enough that her presence is felt, perhaps through dialogue with a client, ownership of property related to the crime, or a "calling card" at the scenes of multiple crimes.

THE NEON SIGN

Another common pitfall of mystery design is the neon sign. This is very easy to slip into when narrating an adventure, as the flow of information is often telling. Failing to give the servants names in a whodunit immediately eliminates them from suspicion. Failing to adequately describe a room when you just offered three paragraphs of detail for a previous room also tells the Players that this room is not important.

On the flip side, if you mention something that you normally wouldn't mention then you'll tip off the Players. Many rooms have wastebaskets, but if you only bother to mention a wastebasket and take it one step further by mentioning crumpled paper, then you can believe that the heroes will rifle through it.

Neon signs aren't always a bad thing; Narrators do, after all, want to ensure that heroes get the clues. Sometimes, however, an ill-placed neon sign can quickly short-circuit a detective story. Avoid this when you can.

THE OBSCURE CLUE

The cleverer the Narrator tries to make his clues, the less likely that the Players will understand them. While it is a mark of Holmesian detective stories that the hero will leap to a wild conclusion with the most frivolous clue, it is important to remember that the hero and the clue were written by the author.

Clues should provide Players with a logical conclusion (even if it's a red herring). Even if it is a difficult clue, the heroes should be able to figure it out with other clues collected in the future. Remember that, in a roleplaying game, simply finding clues and gathering information are satisfying challenges. Don't ruin that by straining credulity or causing Players to spin their wheels.

SENSE OF URGENCY

Detective stories require focused heroes. Too many subplots or meandering investigations can not only derail the adventure, but limit the Players' ability to remember key facts and make connections. There are a number of ways to maintain a sense of urgency in a mystery adventure.

First, keep subplots to a minimum. Perhaps a hero takes a fancy to a Narrator character, but the investigation should not be put on hold while the hero conducts an elaborate courtship. If the heroes have a nemesis, don't have that villain come knocking unless he is related to the mystery at hand.



Second, put a time limit on the investigation. This need not be real-time (and, given the usual ratio of real-time to in-game-time, probably shouldn't), but the heroes should feel that the clock is working against them and they need to solve this case now. Perhaps a "Saturday" serial killer needs to be found before the next weekend, a prized race horse needs to be found before the next derby, or the true murderer must be found before an innocent man hangs.

Third, make it personal. Players are more likely to focus on the adventure if they are emotionally-invested in the outcome. A recurring villain or family member in jeopardy can do wonders for motivating a group of heroes.

Finally, keep it short. Assuming a four-six hour game session, a good, tight detective story should only take one session to finish. Once the mystery spills into multiple sessions, it will be more difficult for Players to remain focused and recall key information.

RED HERRINGS

The red herring, or false lead, is a detective story staple. Red herrings help obfuscate the true culprit by offering possible alternatives and leads. Used sparingly, red herrings can add a lot of color to a mystery adventure.

Unfortunately, too many red herrings can frustrate the Players. It can be difficult to maintain interest in what could have been a straightforward investigation when you spent three sessions pursuing false leads (especially if some of those red herrings seemed more likely than the actual culprit).

Also, red herrings should not take a long time to identify. While three sessions pursuing false leads is bad enough, three sessions pursuing a single lead is even worse. When you add red herrings make sure that they can be identified as such after a quick investigation.

STRAINING CREDULITY

Sometimes when plotting mysteries, a Narrator can go overboard trying to eliminate seemingly obvious motives. In such cases the solution ends up being so elaborate and over the top that it strains the Players' credulity. For example, the murderer and the victim get into an argument in a pub. Within the span of three hours, the murderer has hatched a scheme to poison the victim in his study with the unwitting aid of six people and a series of fortuitous circumstances. Add an exotic poison that required three components taken at different times and the fact that it took the murder two hours by train to get to the country estate and you can understand the Players' frustration, especially if they'd come up with two or three far more reasonable scenarios during the course of their investigation.

When plotting a mystery, try to keep things simple. For a crime, all a culprit needs is a good motivation, access to the victim, and the tools. Often, a mystery that strains credibility lacks one of those three elements while over-indulging in the others. If you focus on those three things with a couple of red herrings then you'll have the perfect recipe for a detective story.

SPINNING WHEELS

Conducting an investigation involves a lot of discussion between Players over what clues mean or what should be the next course of action. It can be difficult sometimes for a Narrator to discern the line between clue analysis and discussion versus Player frustration as they go over the same clues again and again with no clear course of action.

Signs to look out for are the Players going over and over the same three courses of action or constructing outlandish theories based on a gross misinterpretation of a clue. While a Narrator should allow the Players to determine their own destinies whenever possible, reminding them of what resources they have on their character sheets (conviction, core abilities, feats, powers, etc.) and gently reminding them of things they may have dismissed are good ways to get the detective story back on track.

A word of caution; sometimes Players are spinning their wheels due to a mistake on the Narrator's part. Listen carefully to what the Players are discussing and you may find that you inadvertently led them astray by leaving out a key description or failure to have a Narrator character act appropriately. In such cases the Narrator should correct the mistake as quickly as possible. While this may shine a spotlight on the solution, it is better to cut a mystery short by pointing out something that should have been obvious than to let the heroes flounder and the mystery drag on due to your mistake.

FANTASTICAL DETECTIVE STORIES

Up to this point, the advice given for detective stories presumes a logical, mundane world. Of course, a simple perusal of the rest of this book will suggest that many *Imperial Age* campaigns will take place in a setting with occult magick or fantastic science. Such things will definitely affect a detective story.

Presuming that you wish to run detective stories in a fantastic setting then you'll have to consider a few things. The most common considerations are described below.

FANTASTICAL LOGIC

It's unfair to have the solution to a locked room mystery that the murderer phased through the wall if the heroes don't realize that such a power exists in their world. In a good preternatural detective story, the Players should be aware of fantastic possibilities, even if they don't possess the means of looking for them themselves.

Like regular means, fantastic means should always leave clues that can be followed. Perhaps the murderer left a magical signature in the wall as he phased through it, or the wall is so clean of signatures (even those of incidental contact) that it leads the heroes to conclude that such signatures were erased.

As in mundane life, magical or scientific experts can be called in to aid in a case. Don't rely on them too much, however, as it may appear that it is the Narrator character, not the Players, that are actually solving the case. If the heroes are going to be confronting fantastic means on a regular basis, then they should be equipped to investigate them.

POWER ACCESS

So the lord of a country manor is found dead during a snowstorm and the only suspects are the family, servants, and a couple of overnight guests. Guess how long it will take a hero with Mind Probe to discover the murderer?

If your fantastic campaign will focus on detective stories then you may need to limit heroes from taking particular powers, especially those that can read minds or probe for information. If not, then you'll need to take precautions. Perhaps everyone has a psychic shield (either through a level of adept or a device) or there are privacy laws in place that protect individuals from being scanned without proper authority (and you can use the Sense of Urgency to keep heroes from readily accessing such authority).

The Victorian setting can help here. A middle class psychic detective must ask permission from a lord to read his mind. Since such a request carries an implication, that detective better have compelling evidence to back up why he's asking or he'll soon be out of work.

It's also possible to put a different spin on a fantastic detective story. Perhaps the heroes can easily identify a culprit (perhaps through mind reading or having the spirit of the victim finger him), but as using powers will not hold up in court they must find compelling mundane evidence against the culprit, while the culprit does his best to frustrate him (sort of a psychic *Columbo*, a television series in which the viewer knew the culprit up front and watched as the detective collected evidence against him).

BLURRING LINES

When crafting a fantastic detective story, it's easy to blur the line between "mystery story" and "occult adventure." If the heroes are spending more time confronting and defeating culprits than actual investigation, then it really isn't a detective story. While occult adventures are great fun in their own right, a detective hero can get left out if his spotlight time dwindles to a single scene.

CRAFTING HEROES FOR DETECTIVE STORIES

A good detective story needs a good hero or band of heroes. Victorian detective stories frequently revolve around a single detective and her associates. If your *Imperial Age* campaign involves a mix of story types then it's okay to have a single hero take the spotlight; if, however, your entire campaign is a series of detective stories then the heroes will want to share the spotlight. Perhaps the group is a partnership of many detectives, or perhaps each hero specializes in a particular area of expertise.

This section includes a new role, the scientific detective, which is designed as a focal character for detective stories. This is not the only option; competent detectives may be made using the three core roles and in some cases may be preferable to the scientific detective role given here.

ADEPT

Adepts are very useful in fantastic campaigns. They may be "magical experts" for the detective hero or they may be detectives themselves, relying more on their powers than their skills when investigating. Narrators should consider the impact of fantastical powers in his campaign before allowing adept heroes.

MAGICAL DETECTIVE

The magical detective relies on his magical knowledge to solve mysteries. Magical detectives are often called into situations where elements of the crime involve magic.

Key Ability: Intelligence

Starting Skills: Concentration, Knowledge (supernatural), Research, Search

Starting Feats: Bibliomancy, Empower, Object Reading, Second Sight

PSYCHIC DETECTIVE

The psychic detective probes the thoughts and emotions of others in order to discover the truth. As their other investigative skills are lacking, psychic detectives usually partner with someone more skilled in mundane legwork. Many psychic detectives are also alienists.

Key Ability: Charisma

Starting Skills: Concentration, Knowledge (behavioral sciences), Notice, Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Heart Reading, Mind Reading, Mind Touch, Psychic Shield

EXPERT

While the scientific detective role is more suited to the Holmesian style, very competent detectives can be crafted using only the expert role. Such detectives lack the "powers" of their Holmesian counterparts, but they'll generally have more feats and higher skill ranks. At the Narrator's discretion, an Expert could swap her core ability with Intuitive leap.

Experts also make great supporting characters. Even with his large number of skill points, it will be tough for a detective hero to adequately cover all of his bases. Having experts on hand in particular fields is always helpful. Antiquarians, burglars, knowledge experts, medical doctors, and socialites all make great supporting heroes in a detective story.

OCCULT DETECTIVE

A competent investigator in any situation, the occult detective specializes in cases that involve preternatural means or motivations. In a mundane setting, occult detectives are generally respected in terms of determining a criminal's motivation but are laughed at if they suggest that magick is real. In a fantastic setting, all scientific detectives are likely to be occult detectives.

Key Abilities: Intelligence, Wisdom

Starting Skills: Concentration, Knowledge (linguistics), Knowledge (supernatural), Medicine, Notice, Research,



Search, Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Awareness, Contacts, Suggestion, Weapon Training

POLICE DETECTIVE

The police detective works for Scotland Yard or a similar authority. Country police detectives, some fondly known by the obsolete term "constable," tend to deal with "whodunits" and privileged suspects, while urban police detectives tend to investigate violent crimes and the seamy underside of society. Police Detectives often rely on gathering evidence and collecting testimony, using experts when specialized information is needed.

Key Abilities: Wisdom, Charisma

Starting Skills: Diplomacy, Gather Information, Intimidate, Knowledge (behavioral sciences), Knowledge (streetwise), Notice, Search, Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Connected, Contacts, Firearms Training, Reflective

PRIVATE DETECTIVE

The private detective is a businessman, offering his services to clients with problems. While lacking the authority of Scotland Yard, private detectives usually get access through other means. Some private detectives are bored nobles, treating their profession as an interesting diversion.

Key Abilities: Intelligence, Wisdom

Starting Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge (behavioral sciences), Knowledge (streetwise), Notice, Search, Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Connected, Firearms Training, Jack-of-All-Trades, Well-Informed

WARRIOR

Warriors make great supporting heroes, especially if the investigation could lead to fisticuffs or firefights. A warrior might be a fellow police officer that is more physical than cerebral or a detective hero's valet that doubles as a bodyguard. In an exotic locale, a soldier might be assigned to protect the detective hero and act as a guide in hostile surroundings.

BOBBY

The bobby (or peeler) is a uniformed police officer that walks a beat. As the first responder to a crime scene, some bobbies have learned to look for certain clues that could either lead them to the suspect immediately or enable them to help a detective get a good start in his investigation.

Key Abilities: Wisdom, Charisma

Starting Skills: Diplomacy, Intimidate, Search, Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Endurance, Firearms Training, Startle, Tough

VALET

A valet is the personal servant of an investigator. He is often called on to perform bodyguard duties in addition to seeing to his master's needs.

Key Abilities: Strength, Dexterity

Starting Skills: Handle Animal, Knowledge (popular culture), Notice, Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Improved Initiative, Improved Strike, Firearms Training, Nondescript

SIMPLE WEAPON TRAINING AS A VIRTUAL FEAT

Detective stories are generally less combat-intensive than other types of adventures. It's entirely possible to run a detective-focused campaign where combat doesn't feature at all or is limited to very few incidents. Thus, a capable detective hero need not be proficient in combat at all, especially if there are other heroes to fill that niche.

The rules, however, presume that all heroes are proficient in the use of simple weapons (in essence, all heroes have the Simple Weapon Training feat). Thus, even the most bookish professor is comfortable wielding brass knuckles or a knife. This is hardly realistic, especially in a campaign where the hero is not expected to face much combat. The detective hero may wish to swap this ability for something more useful.

When running detective stories, the Narrator may wish to allow heroes to treat Simple Weapon Training as a virtual feat that they may swap for an additional feat. The hero now has a -4 penalty when using simple weapons. The hero may choose to select the Simple Weapon Training feat later. Simple Weapon Training is a prerequisite for Weapon Training.

ALTERNATE ROLE: THE SCIENTIFIC DETECTIVE

The Scientific Detective is the embodiment of rational thought in the Imperial Age. Unlike previous investigators that relied on testimony, superstition, the seriousness of the charge, and quick, convenient conclusions, the Scientific Detective relies on cold, hard facts and observation. What matters most to the Scientific Detective is the truth, no matter how improbable or inconvenient it may seem. When the Scientific Detective does reach a conclusion it is difficult to refute, as the Scientific Detective has acquired a great deal of evidence to reach it.

The classic Scientific Detective is the private investigator or “consulting detective,” but many Scientific Detectives are police investigators. Scientific Detectives of the Imperial Age include Sergeant Cribb, Lord Darcy, William Monk, Thomas and Charlotte Pitt, and, of course, Sherlock Holmes. Lord Darcy warrants particular attention as a Scientific Detective in a Victorian-esque setting where magic is real.

ABILITIES

Scientific Detectives focus on the mental abilities over physical abilities. They are particularly known for their high Wisdom and Intelligence scores, given their emphasis on willpower and scholarship. Scientific Detectives use Intelligence as the key ability of their powers.

INTUITIVE LEAP (CORE ABILITY)

You can spend a Conviction point to add a piece to the puzzle in your investigation. This could take many forms; identifying a red herring, figuring out where the next clue lies, or connecting the dots between evidence and another character. Information gained is usually cryptic in nature (e.g. you understand that following leads regarding a particular Narrator character is a red herring but you don't understand why) but always useful in leading you toward solving the case.

POWERS

You may choose a detective power instead of a feat, but you may only choose powers from the narrow list on the **Detective Powers List**. Rather than being true paranormal powers, these abilities represent your extraordinary talent for deduction, understanding of human nature, and logic.

Note: in a fantastic campaign detective powers may truly be paranormal in origin. In addition, a Narrator may wish to grant the scientific detective a different set of powers more suited to the types of investigation that he is expected to solve or the types of threats he may face.

SKILLS

Choose 8 + Intelligence score starting skills (minimum of 1). Scientific detectives gain 8 + Int skill ranks per additional level (minimum of 1).

Scientific detectives usually find the

DETECTIVE POWERS LIST

Bibliomancy	Danger Sense
Enhance Ability	Enhance Senses
Heart Reading	Heart Shaping
Nature Reading	Suggestion
True Vision	Truth-Reading

DESCRIBING DETECTIVE POWERS

The powers of the detective are not actually supernatural. Rather, they are observational abilities gained through deductive reasoning and keen insight. Players and Narrators can use the explanations below to describe a detective's powers or invent their own.

Bibliomancy: You can quickly glean even the most esoteric information by consulting adequate sources such as a library or a personal catalogue.

Danger Sense: Your senses are so finely tuned that you can sense when something is not right, even when stepping into a new location for the first time.

Enhance Ability: You have an innate understanding of the principles of applied force and leverage, which manifests itself as a temporary boost in Strength or Dexterity.

Enhance Senses, True Vision: Your skill with deductive reasoning naturally augments your Notice skill and makes you difficult to Bluff.

Heart Reading, Truth-Reading: You have the ability to detect the emotions of others through the interpretation of subtle body language and micro-expressions.

Heart Shaping, Suggestion: Your detailed understanding of human nature enables you to subtly manipulate the emotions of others.

Nature Reading: Your understanding of the natural world allows you to make educated guesses about your environment.

following skills most useful: Concentration, Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, Knowledge (any), Language, Medicine, Notice, Research, Search, Sense Motive.

FEATS

Choose 4 starting feats from the Expert or General categories. A scientific detective can also choose a detective power in place of a feat.

Level	Combat	The Scientific Detective			Reputation
		Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	+1
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	+1
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	+1
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	+2
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	+2
6	+3	+2	+2	+5	+2
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	+2
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	+3
9	+4	+3	+3	+6	+3
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	+3
11	+5	+3	+3	+7	+3
12	+6	+4	+4	+8	+4
13	+6	+4	+4	+8	+4
14	+7	+4	+4	+9	+4
15	+7	+5	+5	+9	+4
16	+8	+5	+5	+10	+5
17	+8	+5	+5	+10	+5
18	+9	+6	+6	+11	+5
19	+9	+6	+6	+11	+5
20	+10	+6	+6	+12	+6

SCIENTIFIC DETECTIVE PATHS

The following sets of starting skills and feats show some of the more common paths taken by scientific detectives.

AMATEUR SLEUTH

The amateur sleuth is someone that has a related profession but often finds himself solving mysteries. He has a keen eye for detail and is an excellent judge of character. The amateur sleuth offered here is a medical doctor; other types may be created simply by replacing skills.

Key Ability: Intelligence

Starting Skills: Concentration, Diplomacy, Knowledge (behavioral sciences), Medicine, Notice, Research, Search, Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Firearms Training, Skill Focus (Medicine), True Vision, Truth Reading

CONSULTING DETECTIVE

The consulting detective is an "armchair" or "parlor" detective. Rather than going out and gathering evidence, the consulting detective takes evidence from someone else and deduces the truth from them. While some consulting detectives take regular clients, others only act when consulted by another detective.

Key Abilities: Intelligence, Wisdom

Starting Skills: Concentration, Diplomacy, Knowledge (behavioral sciences), Knowledge (linguistics), Medicine, Notice, Research, Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Bibliomancy, Eidetic Memory, Truth Reading, Well-Informed

SKILLS

The following skills have additional uses in a detective story. These uses may also be allowed in other campaigns, subject to Narrator approval.

KNOWLEDGE (LINGUISTICS)

The Knowledge (linguistics) skill allows you to decipher conversations and scripts and even encode messages.

Check: The following are uses for the Knowledge (linguistics) skill.

Decipher Script: You can decipher writing in an unfamiliar language or a message written in an incomplete or archaic form. Make a check with Difficulty 20 for the simplest messages, Difficulty 25 for standard texts, and Difficulty 30 or higher for intricate, exotic, or very old writing.

If the check succeeds, you understand the general content of a piece of writing about one page long (or the equivalent). If you fail the check, you do not understand the text. If you failed by 5 or more, you draw an incorrect conclusion about the text.

The Knowledge (linguistics) check is made secretly by the Narrator, so you can't tell whether your conclusions are true or false.

Encoding a Message: You can create a simple cipher to hide a message's true meaning. Anyone reading the message must make a Knowledge (linguistics) attempt to understand it. Anyone who knows the cipher can read it automatically, even without the Knowledge (linguistics) skill.

Challenges: You can take the following challenge with Knowledge (linguistics):

Decipher Conversation: In return for a -5 penalty to your check, you can attempt to decipher the contents of a conversation in a foreign language. Make a check with Difficulty 20 for the simplest messages, Difficulty 25 for standard ones, and Difficulty 30 or higher for intricate or exotic conversations.

Action: Deciphering the equivalent of one minute of conversation or a single page of script takes one minute (10 consecutive full-round actions).

Try Again: You may attempt a Knowledge (linguistics) check on a page of text once per day. If the check fails, you must wait a day to try again.

Special: You may take 10 on Knowledge (linguistics) checks, but you cannot take 20, because a failed check carries a penalty (you cannot make another check to read the document for 24 hours).

MEDICINE

The Medicine skill can be used for autopsies, concealing homicides, resuscitating patients, and providing temporary care.

Check: The following are new uses for the Medicine skill.

Autopsy: You can use the Medicine skill to study a corpse in order to find out the cause of its death. After studying a corpse for two hours, you can make a Medicine check. The difficulty of the check is determined by the freshness of the corpse and the complexity of the death.

Corpse	Difficulty
Fresh corpse	15
Rotting corpse	20
Skeletal corpse	30
Complexity	
Natural	+0
Wounded	+1 for each wound
Concealed Homicide	Murder's Wisdom or Medicine check - 15

If successful, you can determine what it was that caused the death of the creature. While the cause of death usually

corresponds to an obvious wound, this use of the Medicine skill is also able to detect less obvious causes of death (poison, disease, etc.) and reveals which wounds upon a corpse were sustained after death (if any). In order to perform an autopsy in this way, at least half of the corpse to be studied must be on hand.

Challenges: You can take the following challenges with Medicine:

Quick Autopsy: In return for a -5 penalty, you can finish an autopsy in one hour. If you increase the penalty to -10, you can finish in 30 minutes.

Partial Autopsy: You can perform an autopsy with only one-quarter of the corpse on hand by taking a -5 penalty. You may only learn the cause of death if you have a piece of the corpse that has the appropriate evidence.

Temporary Bindings: By taking a -5 penalty to your check, you can temporarily bind a patient's wounds with temporary care. If successful, you immediately erase all bruised, dazed, hurt, and wounded conditions. However, there is a 20% chance (a roll of 17 or higher on d20) per hour that the patient suffers from the conditions you temporarily healed (maximum 24 hours).

Action: Autopsies take two hours, while concealing a homicide takes one minute or more. Resuscitating a patient takes one minute, and temporary care is a standard action.

Special: You can take 20 on Medicine checks to do autopsies, but this requires 40 hours of work without anyone else interfering with your work. You can also take 20 when concealing a homicide, but doing so requires one hour of uninterrupted work.



SEARCH

This skill can be used to discover or conceal clues, items, search attempts, or traps.

Check: The following are new uses for the Search skill.

Conceal Clue/Item/trap: You can use Search to conceal clues, items, or traps within a particular area, making your check result the Difficulty of a Search check to find the object. Your Search check is modified by the size and condition of the area you are attempting to conceal the item in and the object's size modifier.

Area Size	Modifier	Area Size	Modifier
Fine	-8	Large	+2
Diminutive	-6	Huge	+4
Tiny	-4	Gargantuan	+6
Small	-2	Colossal	+8
Medium	+0		

Condition	Modifier
Barren*	-
Simple or clean	-2
Moderately complex, cluttered, or overgrown	+0
Perplexingly complex, cluttered, or overgrown	+2
Exceedingly complex, cluttered, or overgrown	+4

Item Size**	Modifier	Item Size**	Modifier
Fine	+8	Large	-2
Diminutive	+6	Huge	-4
Tiny	+4	Gargantuan	-6
Small	+2	Colossal	-8
Medium	+0		

* You cannot conceal an item in a barren room.

** You cannot conceal an item in an area smaller than the item.

You can also use this ability to conceal your own search attempts, though there are no modifiers for area or object size.

Discover Clue: You can make a Search check to find a clue. This skill does not give you clues where none existed before. It simply allows you to find clues that are already there. The base Difficulty to find a clue is 10. It is modified by whether or not the scene was disturbed and how large the clue is. If someone tried to conceal a clue, the Difficulty is equal to the Search check to conceal a clue. If successful, you discover the clue. If you fail, you overlook the clue. You make one check for all clues within a 5-foot by 5-foot area or a volume of goods 5 feet on a side.

Circumstances	Modifier
Scene slightly disturbed or weathered	+2
Scene moderately disturbed or weathered	+4
Scene extremely disturbed or weathered	+6

Item Size	Modifier	Item Size	Modifier
Fine	+16	Large	-4
Diminutive	+12	Huge	-8
Tiny	+8	Gargantuan	-12
Small	+4	Colossal	-16
Medium	+0		

Challenges: You can take the following challenges with Search:

Sharp Eyes: If you take a -5 penalty to your Search checks, you can Search areas up to 20 feet away from you. If you increase the penalty to -10, you can search areas up to 30 feet away.

Widen Search: In return for a -10 penalty, you can search a 10-foot by 10-foot area or a volume of goods 10 feet on a side as a full round action.

SENSE MOTIVE

The Sense Motive skill can be used to gain an edge in combat, predict the behavior of others, profile them, or uncover their aliases.

Check: The following are new uses for the Sense Motive skill.

Predict Behavior: You can use this skill to predict the behavior of a particular target. As a full-round action, you can attempt to predict the action of a target within 30 feet of you. Make a Sense Motive check (Difficulty 10 + your target's Bluff or Sense Motive check). This Sense Motive check is modified by your familiarity with the target (see **Profiling Table**).

If you are successful, you can predict a general action (attack, flee, use a power, etc.) your target will take with his next action. If you fail, you cannot draw any conclusions about what your target will do. If you fail by 5 or more, you draw a false conclusion. The Sense Motive check is made secretly by the Narrator, so you can't tell whether your conclusions are true or false. If something happens during the encounter that would alter your target's next action from what was predicted, you immediately know the new action.

Profile Target: You can use your knowledge of a target's body language, motivations, and past actions to attempt to predict what he will do in the near future. In order to profile someone, you must interact with them in some manner, either face to face or via clues, for one week. After this time has passed, you can make a Sense Motive check (Difficulty 10 + your target's Bluff or Sense Motive check). This Sense Motive check is modified by your familiarity with the target.

Familiarity	Modifier
Only known through clues or other impersonal contact	-5
Known as a complete stranger	+0
Known in passing or via minor clues	+2
Known on sight or via a moderate clue	+4
Known as a friend or associate or via multiple moderate clues	+6
Known as a close friend or via major clue	+8
Intimate or known via multiple major clues	+10

If you are successful, you can predict a general action (murder a servant, flee the local area, rob a theatergoer, etc.) your target will take in the next week. If you fail, you cannot draw any conclusions about what your target will do. If you fail by 5 or more, you draw a false conclusion. The Sense Motive check is made secretly by the Narrator, so you can't tell whether your conclusions are true or false. You can improve your familiarity with a target by interviewing him or his close relations via the Gather Information skill.

Read a Person: You can analyze a person's demeanor, dress, and attitude to learn about his background in a manner similar to a skilled detective. Make a Sense Motive check opposed by the target's Bluff or Disguise check.

A person in disguise uses the result of his Disguise check to oppose your attempt. If you succeed, you learn a single fact about the target's background, history, or personality, as described following. If you fail by 4 or less, you do not learn anything. If you fail by 5 or more, you draw information based on the target's false identity.

Anyone not actually in disguise, who attempts to mask his true nature, opposes your Sense Motive attempt with a Bluff attempt. If you succeed, you learn a single fact about the target's background, history, or personality. If you fail by 4 or less, you do not learn anything. If you fail by 5 or more, you draw information based on the target's alias.

Your Narrator judges what you could learn based on the situation and the person in question. You might learn that the butler was once a soldier because of the way he walks, but you might never realize that he is having an affair with his employer's wife. Such a deep secret would rarely, if ever, be immediately obvious, unless the butler and the lady of the house happened to be in the same room.

In general, Sense Motive shows you information that is open rather than secret.

Challenges: You can make the following challenges with Sense Motive:

Limited Interaction: In return for a -5 penalty, you can make a Sense Motive check against a target you have had limited interaction with. Normally you need to be able to see and hear a target to make a Sense Motive check, but with this challenge, you need only see or hear the target, or otherwise interact with them, such as communicating with them via written messages or discovering clues about them.

Precise Prediction: You can take a -10 penalty to your Sense Motive check while predicting behavior or profiling in order to make a specific prediction about the actions of your target (attack a specific ally, flee in a particular direction, use a particular power, eat dinner at a particular type of restaurant, commit murder in a particular neighborhood, etc.).

FEATS

The following feats are particularly appropriate to detective stories.

AWARENESS (EXPERT)

You can sense when something is amiss in your surroundings.

The Narrator makes Notice, Search, Sense Motive, and Survival checks for you in secret whenever such a check would reveal a falsehood or a hidden hazard, object, or creature. If the check succeeds, you learn that something is amiss.

You must make another normal check yourself to determine the exact nature of the deception; the first check gives you only its general location or nature.

For example, if there is a secret door in a library, you might notice that something is amiss about one of the bookshelves.

FOUNT OF KNOWLEDGE (GENERAL)

Prerequisites: Eidetic Memory

You may make Knowledge skill checks as if you had ranks in them equal to your Intelligence. If your Intelligence is lower than the number of ranks you have in a Knowledge skill, use your Knowledge skill ranks.

For example, if you have an Intelligence score of +5 and 0 to 4 ranks in a Knowledge skill, then if you attempt a skill check, you are considered to have 5 ranks in your Knowledge skills, instead of your actual ranks. As such, you would apply your Intelligence of +5 to your Knowledge check twice, once as the ranks of the skill and once as the key ability.

Alternatively, if you have 5 or more ranks in a Knowledge skill, you would use its ranks, though you would still add your Intelligence as normal to your skill check.

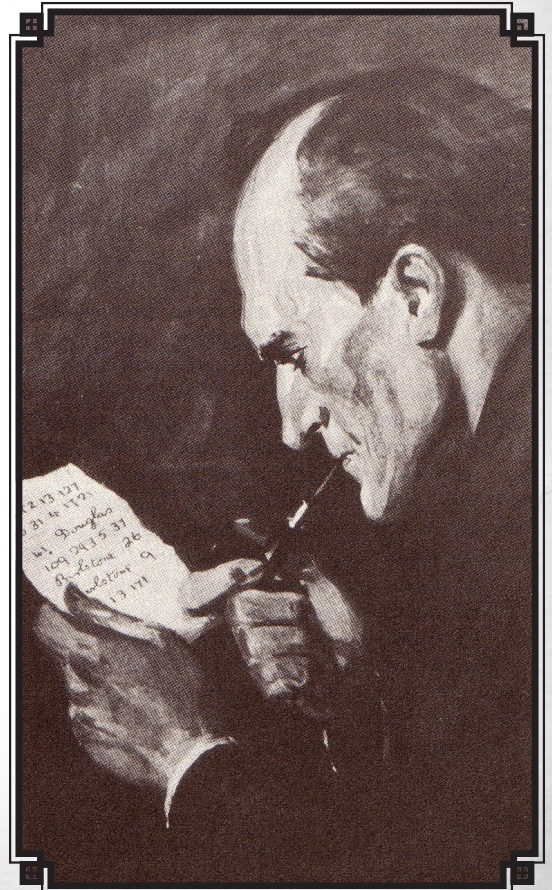
INTUITION (EXPERT)

Prerequisites: Awareness, Skill Mastery (Notice, Search, Survival)

You have a sixth sense when it comes to noticing things are amiss. Whenever you sense something is amiss via the Awareness feat, you may immediately make the appropriate skill check with a +2 bonus.

REFLECTIVE (GENERAL)

You have the ability to gain insight into lingering questions, by remembering key details at a later time. Should you fail a Knowledge or Sense Motive check, you can try again after eight hours of rest with a +2 bonus.



URBAN TRACKING (GENERAL)

You can track down the location of missing persons or wanted individuals within communities.

To find the trail of an individual or to follow it for an hour requires a Gather Information check. You must make another Gather Information check every hour of the search, as well as each time the trail becomes difficult to follow, such as when it moves to a different area of town. The Narrator should determine the number of successes needed to find the tracked party. For stationary parties, the first check provides you with a general area or district to look in, the second check narrows the search area to a particular neighborhood, and the third check pinpoints the party's location. However, if the party is moving, you will need to make additional checks to follow them from area to area, before you can start to narrow the search to their location. The Difficulty of the check depends on the community size and the conditions:

Community Size	Difficulty	Conditions	Modifier
Village or smaller	5	Every three persons in the group being sought	-1
Small town	10	Every 24 hours the party has been missing/sought	+1
Large town	15	Tracked party "lies low"	+5
Small city	20		
Large city	25		
Metropolis	30		

If the party you are tracking is moving in disguise or hiding, your Gather Information check must also beat their Disguise or Stealth check result.

If you fail a Gather Information check, you can retry after one hour of questioning.

A character without this feat can use Gather Information to trace the location of a party, but you can follow them only if the Difficulty is 10 or lower. You can cut the time between Gather Information checks in half (to 30 minutes per check, rather than one hour), but you take a -5 penalty on the check.

POWERS

The following detective powers were taken from the *True20 Adept's Handbook* and reprinted here for convenience. The remaining detective power descriptions are found in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*.

BIBLIOMANCY

Concentration, Fatiguing

This power puts you in an oracular trance as you pore through books in a library. At the end of the power's casting time, the Narrator makes a power check for the adept. With a successful Difficulty 20 power check, you uncover lore about an important person, place, or thing beyond the limits of mundane research. The Narrator may add modifiers to this Difficulty based on the type of knowledge sought.

The information gleaned through Bibliomancy isn't necessarily known to anyone, and it may not be in any of the books in the library. Nonetheless, something within the books triggers the burst of supernatural inspiration that reveals the information.

No set of rules can adequately describe how much information Bibliomancy provides, and such information is left up to the Narrator. If you have the item or person at hand, you'll learn more than if you just have a name or a cryptic clue.

If the power check fails by 10 or more, the power reveals information that seems accurate, but is actively misleading.

Time: 60 minutes (minimum)

DANGER SENSE

Fatiguing

Your supernatural powers allow you to sense danger before it strikes. You may add half your Danger Sense rank as a bonus to your Initiative and Reflex saves.

Time: Reaction

CHAPTER EIGHT: ESPIONAGE STORIES

I sat in the back of the Cock and Bull, drinking a pint. I'd been doing so every Thursday for several weeks now. The pub sat just off of Trafalgar Square, not far from the Pall Mall. As usual, I was waiting for someone.

Edmund Wheeler nervously walked in. He was a small, unimposing chap, attempting to look stylish in a new suit and bowler. He had a walking stick that he'd carried awkwardly. He wasn't used to using one of course, since he normally went without. I'd purchased the one that he was currently using, while my own, which matched his exactly, rested against the wall beside me.

"Hello, Mr. Wheeler," I said with the slightest of accents. "I hope your day has proven fruitful? Allow me to buy you a drink."

"N-no, thanks," he stammered, taking a seat after carefully resting his stick next to mine. His voice dropped to a whisper. "I'd just like to get this over with."

"Nonsense," I smiled. "How would that look? After tonight, we may never meet here again. Please allow me the courtesy of buying you one final drink." I turned and shouted at the bartender. "Barkeep, another pint for my friend, if you please!"

"Th-thank you," Wheeler said, playing with his fingers.

I took another sip and looked him in the eye. "You never answered my question, Edmund. How was your day?"

"Fruitful." He nodded slightly towards his walking stick. He whispered again. "I wouldn't normally do this, you know, but..."

I dismissively held up my hand. "Speak no more of your reasons. It is enough that you did." A waitress placed his beer in front of him. To my surprise, Wheeler practically guzzled it.

We conducted idle conversation for a few minutes before he got up to leave. I pretended not to care as he took my walking stick, presumably filled with his payment in the hollowed center, and walked out of the pub. I turned and took his stick and unscrewed the top. Inside were a number of papers. I pulled them out and smiled as I glanced at the first page. Wheeler believed that he'd just betrayed his country for a secret treaty that he'd just handed to a third party.

I secured the papers back inside the stick and stood, leaving a tip on the table as I collected my hat and coat. I confidently walked out into the cold London evening, where Mr. Wheeler was being held by two plainclothes officers. He looked at me in surprised panic.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Wheeler," I said with no trace of an accent this time. "I've never properly introduced myself to you." I held out my hand, which he of course could not grab. "Inspector Paul Ferguson, Scotland Yard."

While Victorian Britain is hardly the first thing to come to mind when someone says "espionage stories," a British spy usually is. I'm speaking, of course, of James Bond, Ian Fleming's fictional Cold War spy/assassin that is in many ways the face of espionage. The twentieth century saw the creation of a number of acronyms linked to espionage: MI5, SIS, FBI, CIA, NSA, to name a few (and the early twenty-first century saw the birth of the DHS just after the 9-11 terrorist attacks).

That said espionage was alive and well in the Imperial Age and romantic notions of the spy go back at least to American author James Fenimore Cooper's *The Spy* (1821). Set towards the end of the American Revolution, the spy of the title, Harvey Birch, is a patriot that sacrifices honor, personal gain, and ultimately his life in the service of America. Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1900-1901) is set during the Imperial Age and involves the Great Game between Britain and Russia over Afghanistan.

Even Sherlock Holmes got embroiled in espionage. On three occasions he prevents damaging information from leaking to Britain's enemies and, in his last story, he acts as a double agent against the Germans on the eve of the Great War. With the exception of the final story, these tales are set in the Imperial Age and France or Russia, rather than Germany, fills the role of enemy nation.

Of particular interest in Holmes' case is that all of the espionage stories took place within England. Narrators don't have to set their campaigns around the world for espionage adventures. There are many spies, traitors, and terrorist groups within the country that require ferreting out. That said espionage campaigns offer opportunities for exotic adventures, whether the heroes get involved in the Great Game or the Scramble for Africa.

CRAFTING AN ESPIONAGE STORY

Espionage stories are ideal for Players that enjoy social interaction. Espionage can take place during a dinner party, a night at the opera, or a communist rally. The heroes often have to adopt secret identities to gain access to secure locations or the confidence of an enemy and spend a lot of time distracting key Narrator characters or otherwise pumping them for information.

FOREIGN ESPIONAGE

Foreign espionage is the meat-and-potatoes of espionage stories. While the highlight of foreign espionage is "the Great Game" between Great Britain and Russia over Central Asia (and probably owes more to fiction than fact), there are many opportunities for espionage at home as well as abroad. Since the Treaty of Paris in 1815 the Great Powers have been keeping a delicate balance in Europe; the knowledge of a secret treaty amongst two or more Great Powers could threaten that balance and plunge the Continent into war.

Similarly, actions abroad could also spark wars at home. Territorial disputes and influences in Africa and Asia threatened to start a war between two Great Powers on more than one occasion, and the other Great Powers are usually treaty-bound to intervene (as would happen in the Great War fourteen years after the Imperial Age).

Foreign espionage also involves playing local societies against each other for one's national interest. An agent may attempt to negotiate treaties on behalf of his government or work to remove a foreign government's interest in the region.

Heroes in foreign espionage stories are often part of a diplomatic envoy or local natives employed to blend in with the local population. After the Second Afghan War, the new Amir created a network of spies to keep an eye on his regional leaders. It's possible that the British and the Russians have infiltrated this network with their own Afghan spies, playing a dangerous game against each other with Afghanistan in the middle.

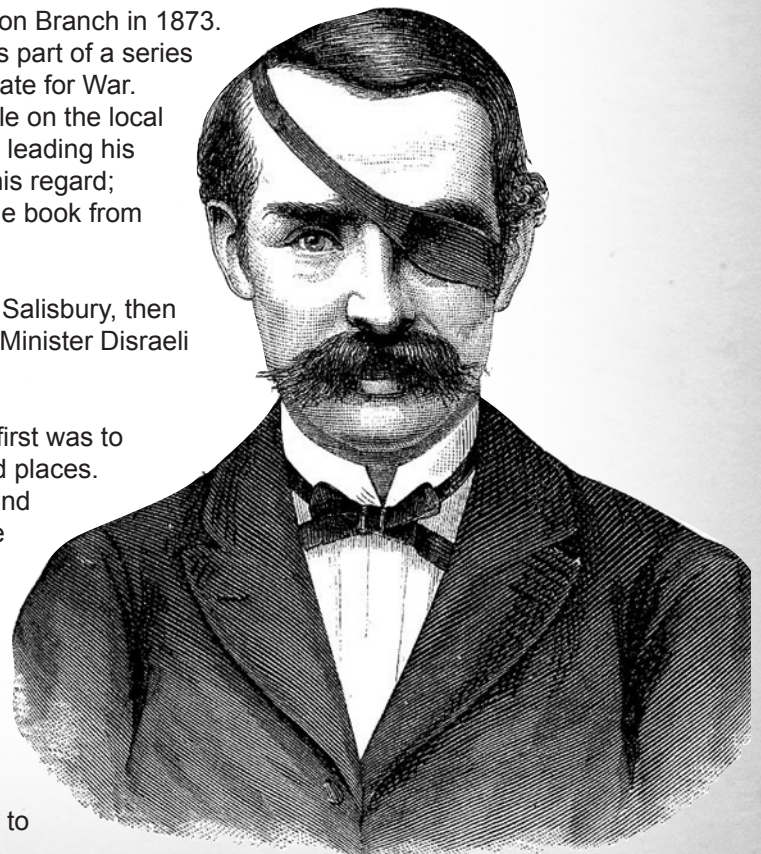
THE INTELLIGENCE BRANCH

The British Army established the Intelligence and Mobilization Branch in 1873. General Garnet Wolseley was instrumental in its creation as part of a series of reforms undertaken by Edward Cardwell, Secretary of State for War. Wolseley believed in having as much information as possible on the local topography, history, and culture of the land in which he was leading his forces. The Intelligence Branch learned to be thorough in this regard; Wolseley's expeditionary army in Egypt received a 400-page book from the Branch that various topics in the region.

The Intelligence Branch was also useful in diplomacy. Lord Salisbury, then Secretary for India, credited the Branch with helping Prime Minister Disraeli avert war with Russia at the Congress of Berlin in 1878.

Generally, the Intelligence Branch had two objectives. The first was to collect as much intelligence as possible on local people and places. The second was to travel with regiments and provide on-hand knowledge. This second objective was important, as, by the Imperial Age, the British Army had learned that it would not simply roll over opposition in Africa. Accurate intelligence was critical to success or failure.

In the collection of this information the Branch cultivated native agents and informers, although the Branch would also verify information gained from these sources on their own when possible. Intelligence personnel not only had to be aware of foreign leaders and forces; they had to be able to anticipate their actions.



SHIFTING ALLIANCES

In order to run espionage stories it's important to know one's allies and enemies. Many alliances shifted during the Imperial Age, and one's friends today could be one's enemies tomorrow. To help the Narrator keep things straight, short descriptions of the major alliances between the Great Powers are given here.

Concert of Europe (1815-1914)

Not an official treaty, the Concert of Europe was born in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars. The Concert included all of the Great Powers at the time (Austria, Britain, France, Prussia, and Russia). Its purpose was to create a balance of power that would secure national boundaries (including suppressing rebellions within states) and prevent another Continental War.

By the Imperial Age, the Concert was more theory than fact. The Concert failed to prevent the popular uprisings in 1848 or the unification of Italy and Germany. More telling was four wars which involved some of the Great Powers on opposite sides. Still, the Great Powers held to the Concert in theory and continue to host meetings with each other. The Congress of Berlin in 1878 tempered Russian gains in the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878) and the Berlin Conference of 1884 set out the terms for imperial claims in Africa.

Dual Alliance (1879-1882)

Fearing Russian expansion into central Europe, Germany (through Bismarck) created an alliance with Austria-Hungary, former adversaries in Prussia's drive to unify Germany. The alliance promised that each would support each other if Russia attacked either and neutrality if one member of the alliance was fighting against another nation (Germany was concerned about Austrian involvement should France attack Germany). The Dual Alliance was not ended; instead it grew into the Triple Alliance.

League of the Three Emperors (1881-1886)

This was the second of two alliances between Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Russia. The first of these, which lasted from 1873-1878 was dissolved after Russia's anger over Germany's position on the Balkans. Russia, however, had a change of heart after learning of the Dual Alliance and offered to renew the League. This League lasted until competition between Austria and Russia in the Balkans caused the League to collapse in 1886.

Triple Alliance (1882-1915)

Italy joined the Dual Alliance in 1882, effectively turning it into the Triple Alliance. Austria-Hungary and Germany pledged to support Italy if it were attacked by France. Italy pledged to support Germany if it was attacked by France. Italy also pledged to remain neutral if Austria-Hungary was attacked by Russia, allowing Austria to pull troops from its western borders to defend against Russia. The Triple Alliance also indirectly gave Italy the status of a Great Power.

Reinsurance Treaty (1887-1890)

Under Bismarck's direction, an alliance was forged between Germany and Russia in the wake of the League's collapse. The treaty provided that each would remain neutral if the other was embroiled in a war with another Great Power. This treaty would not apply if Russia attacked Austria (in which Germany's neutrality would violate the terms of the Triple Alliance) or if Germany attacked France. Germany also agreed in secret to remain neutral if Russia enforced its control of the Black Sea.

The Reinsurance Treaty ended with Bismarck's dismissal as Prime Minister. While Russia wanted to renew the treaty, Germany was looking to strengthen its ties with Britain and no longer desired a close bond with Russia. Russia responded by negotiating the Franco-Russian Alliance.

Franco-Russian Alliance (1894-1917)

Also known as the Dual Alliance, this was a secret treaty between France and Russia. Russia pledged to attack Germany in the event of a German or German-supported Italian attack against France. France pledged to attack Germany in the event of a German or German-supported Austrian attack against Russia. This treaty was to remain in effect so long as the Triple Alliance was in effect.

POLITE ESPIONAGE

Not all espionage stories take place in exotic lands, embassies, or palaces. At its core, espionage is the acquisition of information, and sometimes there's no better place to get it than at afternoon tea, a dinner party, or an evening ball. Polite espionage scenes and adventures work well for heroes (and players) that like to roleplay the cultural and social aspects of Victorian society. A young wealthy widow may be an agent for Her Majesty, using her social connections to keep tabs on troublesome elements of the aristocracy. A servant may secretly be in the employ of a foreign power. A well-respected tailor may stitch messages inside clothes.

Successful heroes in a drawing room scene know how to put their victims at ease. They are well-mannered, have an excellent fashion sense, and are smooth talkers. Often they can trick a victim into giving information without the victim realizing that he gave it.

INNUENDO

Secret signs and coded messages are part and parcel of espionage stories. In polite settings, the fan is often used in this role. A fan is an essential part of a lady's wardrobe; as it helped her keep cool in warm ballrooms. It was also thought that women used fans to discreetly convey messages to each other and potential suitors. While this probably owes more to myth than reality, using a fan in such a manner works well for an espionage story. A lady could create secret messages with her fan that only a few others know, even while carrying on an unrelated conversation. This would be a normal use of Innuendo under the Bluff skill.

Of course, this tactic need not be limited to fans or the fair gender. Gentlemen could use hand gestures, such as touching one's right or left lapel, twisting a ring, or patting his forehead with a kerchief, to send messages. Secret societies often have specific gestures that one is expected to perform when introduced in order to telegraph his membership to other members in attendance.

PLEASANT DIVERSIONS

Not all social gatherings have to involve dinner parties, fancy balls, and the opera. There are a number of pleasant diversions that offer opportunities for heroes to improve the attitudes of Narrator characters or make them lower their guard. These games can be played in or around country homes or organized into clubs.

Automobile Racing

While the automobile was invented around the middle of the Imperial Age, it largely remained a toy of the wealthy. Small races were organized in France in the 1890s, but private races on country estates were starting to spring up on English country estates towards the end of the Victorian era. If the campaign allows fantastical engines, then such races may take place earlier, perhaps with steam-driven automobiles.

Croquet

Croquet took England by storm in the 1860s and quickly became a popular pastime, as it could be easily set up in a yard and could be enjoyed by both men and women (as the game involved using a mallet to hit a wooden ball through hoops, a woman could play while fashionably attired). Croquet pairs well with a garden party.

Fox Hunting

Fox Hunting is a sport of the wealthy in *The Imperial Age*. It is a social occasion, drawing rural families together from all over the countryside. The cost of maintenance of a fashionably-sized pack of hounds and servants can be high (Purchase Difficulty of 39), so most hunters pay an annual subscription (cost varies, but usually around a Purchase Difficulty of 22) to a "master of the hunt" that maintains the hounds throughout the year.

GAMES AND SKILLS

While games are generally used as background for a scene, there will be times when you may want to determine winners and losers, especially if a friendly wager is involved. In *True20*, however, skills are based on utility and games rarely come into play often enough to justify a new skill.

For some diversions, skills are already pertinent. Automobile racing uses the Drive skill. The Narrator could either simply compare Drive skill checks or use the Pursuit rules to play out the race. Fox Hunting involves spotting a fox (Notice check) and shooting it (ranged combat check) while remaining mounted (Ride check). Horse Racing is a Ride check (if the hero is participating) or a Gamble check.

For other diversions, a simple attack roll would suffice, comparing the results to declare the winner (the Narrator may wish to divide this into multiple checks; the character with the highest number of "wins" wins the overall game). A character is considered to be "trained" in the game if he makes an appropriate Knowledge check at a Difficulty of 15 (this check need only be made the first time, unless the rules have changed). Untrained characters take a -4 penalty to their rolls, or a -2 penalty if they are normally trained in the game but using an unfamiliar set of rules.

Fox Hunting generally involved the whole family; women were active participants in fox hunts by the 1880s, and fox hunts usually included dinner and a ball.

Fox hunting takes place over large tracts of land, usually owned by multiple landowners. Such landowners are compensated for the use of their land, which gives rural landowners hard hit by the effects of the Great Depression/Industrial Revolution much-needed income. This situation has also caused the landowners to demand higher prices for the use of their land.

Golf

Generally considered of Scottish origin, golf involves hitting a small ball with a club over varying terrain in order to sink it in a hole. Golf was a gentleman's game, as golf courses were often maintained by clubs (few private estates could afford to set aside and landscape such a large tract of land solely for golfing). Golf is also a social sport, as there is ample time to chat between strokes.

Women weren't admitted to gentlemen's golf clubs and golf clubs for women did not open until the last years of the Imperial Age.

Horse Racing

Horse racing is a popular spectator sport (and gambling venue). The sport was popular amongst all social classes, and many people flocked to Derby Day (held in late May or early June) at Epsom Downs in Surrey (easily reached by rail). Other large racing venues include Newmarket and Royal Ascot (in Newmarket and Ascot, respectively). The Royal Ascot also lent its name to the wide formal tie popular with morning coats.

Gamblers did not have to be present to gamble. The telegraph (and later, the telephone) enabled results to be transmitted almost instantaneously and most cities or large towns had a store that allowed people to place their bets.

Tennis

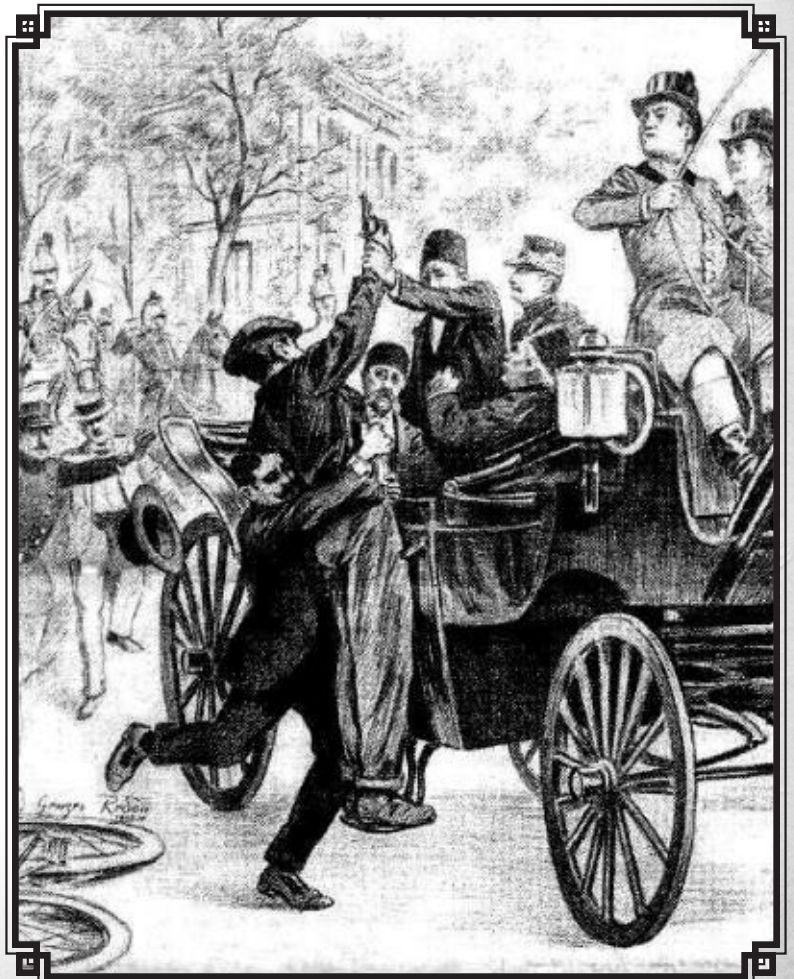
Supplanting croquet as the lawn game of choice, tennis is becoming a country house favorite in the Imperial Age. Another game that could be enjoyed by both sexes, tennis could also be played in pairs or groups of four. Tennis also replaced croquet in social clubs; many clubs in the Imperial Age converted their croquet fields to tennis courts.

TERRORISM

Terrorism was a constant threat in the Imperial Age. There were many reform movements and anti-government organizations in the Nineteenth Century and some members turned to violence to achieve their goals. Some planted bombs in very public places to influence popular opinion and force the government to reform, while others assassinated government officials or heads of state.

There were many different types of terrorist groups, each with their own agenda. Many anarchists believed in the "propaganda of the deed;" that violence against a government would inspire the people as a whole to rise up against it. The Narodnaya Volya (People's Will) assassinated Tsar Alexander II in 1881 using the new terrorist weapon of choice, dynamite. The Irish National Invincibles assassinated the new Irish Chief Secretary and Undersecretary in 1882 in the hopes of getting Great Britain to leave Ireland.

Unfortunately, the actions of these smaller groups often gave governments cause to crackdown on any social reform movements and trade unions, as well as stoke popular support for the crackdowns. This created a chilling effect, as no one wanted to be associated with any group that might catch the ire of



the government. Union strikers were often met with violence, and the Pinkerton National Detective Agency in the USA became notorious as a private security firm often brought in to break up strikes.

Espionage heroes in terrorism adventures are usually called upon to prevent the terrorism from occurring or, in the case of pre-existing terrorism, infiltrate or investigate a terrorist group before they strike again. The heroes may even find themselves in the uncomfortable position of being a secret police of sorts, ferreting out potential threats and shutting them down on orders from a higher authority.

THE SPECIAL BRANCH

The British Government's espionage organization evolved over the course of the first decade of the Imperial Age. There were two organizations operating in 1880. The first was the Criminal Investigations Department of the Metropolitan Police Force (CID), which essentially treated terrorism as it would any other crime. The second was the Home Secretary's Office, which ran a spy network based in Dublin against Irish republican groups (such as the Clan na Gael, the Fenian Brotherhood and the Irish Republican Brotherhood; usually all were lumped under the title "Fenians" by opponents).

After the Phoenix Park Murders in 1882, in which the Chief Secretary and his undersecretary were assassinated in Dublin, the Criminal Investigations Department at Scotland Yard created the Special Irish Branch in 1883. This section was specifically tasked with gathering intelligence on Fenian terrorism and preventing terroristic attacks. Unfortunately, the bombings continued (including a toilet bomb that destroyed part of Scotland Yard in 1884).

The Home Secretary brought in Edward Jenkinson as an advisor in 1884. Jenkinson had been running the Dublin operation and was well-versed in developing an espionage network. Jenkinson began to develop a spy network in London that was autonomous of the Special Irish Branch. Indeed, Jenkinson began avoiding dealing with CID altogether. His network was answerable only to him and he was only answerable to the Home Office.

Naturally, this didn't sit well with CID. The Assistant Commissioner, James Monro, felt that CID should handle domestic terrorism and didn't like the Home Office having a parallel network alongside his own. Specifically, he didn't like Jenkinson's methods (which seemed to get more eccentric as time went on) or his keeping information from CID. In spite of there being essentially two spy networks in London, the bombings continued. Things between Jenkinson and Monro came to a head in 1886, when the latter learned that the former was recruiting agents to spy on CID. Apparently, Jenkinson believed that CID was corrupt. Monro complained and in December of 1886 he got his wish. Jenkinson was dismissed.

SIBLING RIVALRY

From 1884 through 1886 there were essentially two intelligence operations in London, each with its own spy network. One was the CID and the other was the Home Office Secret Department. The two often came into conflict and competition with each other while ostensibly on the same side (this is especially true of Secret Department agents, who are trained to consider CID agents as corrupt). This provides an excellent backdrop to espionage stories, as the heroes aren't sure who to trust even when a Narrator character identifies himself as a government agent. A scheming terrorist could even use this rivalry for his own benefit, pitting the two groups against each other while the terrorism continues unabated.

THE JUBILEE PLOT

One early victory for the Secret Department was its role in preventing the Jubilee Plot. The Jubilee Plot was a Clan na Gael attempt to bomb Westminster Abbey during Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, which would have killed the Queen, her family, and half of the British Cabinet. Scotland Yard uncovered the plot a few days before the event and arrested many of the bombers. Their leader, identified as Francis Millen, escaped to America where he soon died under mysterious circumstances.

Dublin journalist Richard Pigott revealed letters that proved Charles Parnell, a Member of Parliament and founder/leader of the Irish Parliamentary party that advocated Home Rule, had supported both the Phoenix Park murders and the Jubilee Plot. A subsequent investigation revealed the letters to be forgeries in 1889 and Pigott fled to Madrid where he committed suicide by shooting himself in the head.

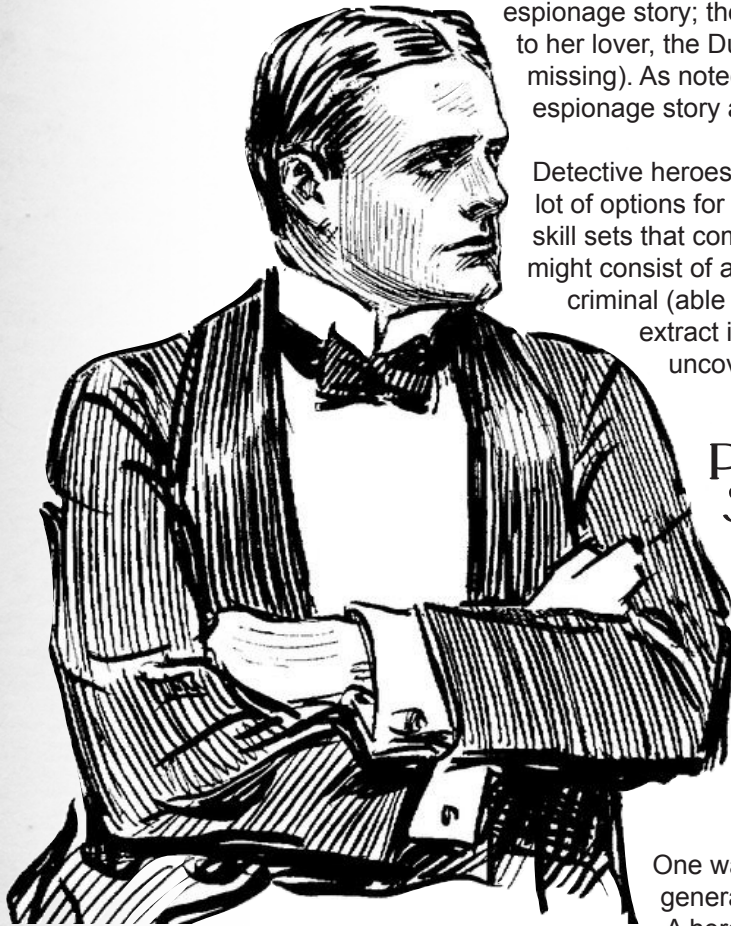
Modern journalist Christy Campbell offers an interesting take on the Jubilee Plot in his book *Fenian Fire: The British Government Plot to Assassinate Queen Victoria* (2002). Jenkinson, Munro, Millen (portrayed as a double agent), and Prime Minister Lord Salisbury all play key roles (not necessarily on the same side) in a conspiracy to net Irish militants. Narrators looking for a juicy conspiracy for their campaigns need look no further.

The Special Irish Branch of the London Metropolitan Police was created to counter terroristic acts of the Fenians and the Irish Republican Brotherhood (both groups were often lumped together pejoratively as “Fenians”) in 1883. Agents of the Irish Branch were employed to infiltrate and gather intelligence on the activities of these groups in order to prevent bombings, assassination attempts, and other terroristic acts.

Munro was appointed head of the Secret Department (under which Jenkinson had operated) the following January. He retained his position as head of CID, which united the two espionage branches under one authority in Scotland Yard. The Special Irish Branch was renamed the Special Branch and given more authority against all terrorists. The Special Branch would continue to pursue terrorism throughout the rest of the Imperial Age and saved the Queen from at least one assassination attempt (see **The Jubilee Plot** sidebar).

THE ESPIONAGE DETECTIVE STORY

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the detective and espionage genres occasionally cross. This usually involves some crucial piece of information that must be recovered before it damages international relations or a dignitary’s reputation (while not set in the Imperial Age, *The Three Musketeers* (1844) is an espionage story; the heroes must return diamonds to the Queen that she gave to her lover, the Duke of Buckingham, before the King realizes that they are missing). As noted above, Sherlock Holmes was embroiled in the occasional espionage story as well.



Detective heroes and espionage heroes mesh well together and provide a lot of options for a party of heroes. Both are investigative types and involve skill sets that complement each other. For example, a party of four heroes might consist of an antiquarian (specialized knowledge and research), a criminal (able to break into secure locations), a social butterfly (able to extract information in social situations), and a detective (able to uncover clues when searching locations).

POWERS IN ESPIONAGE STORIES

Powers can be a boon or a curse in espionage campaigns, especially ones that can read minds or otherwise extract information quickly (such as reading objects or seeing through walls). The Narrator must be careful as to the types of powers she allows in the game, as it will have an impact on the types of plots she’ll be able to use. She’ll also need to be careful that, if she allows a hero to have a power, she doesn’t frustrate the use of that power too often.

One way to mitigate this is to have an arms race. While the general public might be unaware of adepts, governments should. A hero adept walking into a fancy ball should expect that rival governments have employed adepts to keep an eye out for

power use or to protect secret information. Such heroes may have to work a little harder to use their powers, but they won’t be able to walk all over the adventure.

Powers also make great plot devices. Assassins that can kill with a thought provide a new challenge for a ruler’s security, and the heroes may find themselves trying to hide information from a mind-reader. Anti-industrial terrorist groups or oppressed natives may have adepts on their side, lashing out against “civilization.” Perhaps an ancient secret magical order is attempting to pull the strings of the Great Powers for some nefarious purpose.

CRAFTING HEROES FOR ESPIONAGE STORIES

Espionage stories are excellent for parties of heroes because they often need a team of specialists to successfully complete a mission. Each hero should get a chance to shine in an espionage story, as they often involve diverse challenges, each that a particular hero is well-suited to overcome.

ADEPT

An adept is a game-changer in an espionage campaign. As noted in the prior section, adepts have a huge impact on the types of adventures a Narrator can run. If, however, the *Imperial Age* campaign allows adepts with fantastical powers, then it's a sure bet that national governments will employ them.

The following three paths highlight adepts that might be encountered in a typical espionage adventure.

ARCANE ASSASSIN

The arcane assassin uses his powers to get close to his intended target and eliminate him. Arcane assassins are deadly foes, as physical barriers are helpless against them.

Key Abilities: Dexterity, Wisdom

Starting Skills: Concentration, Knowledge (streetwise), Knowledge (supernatural), Stealth

Starting Feats: Light Shaping, Phase, Phantom Projectiles, Supernatural Weapon

BOMBARDIER

The bombardier is an adept that uses his powers for terrorism. It's not enough to kill a target; the bombardier wants to do it in the flashiest, most public way possible.

Key Abilities: Dexterity, Charisma

Starting Skills: Concentration, Craft (Demolitions), Knowledge (popular culture), Perform (oratory)

Starting Feats: Fire Shaping, Infuse Projectile, Light Shaping, Widen Power

INVISIBLE

The invisible uses powers to spy on others or steal secret documents. In addition to making herself invisible to the naked eye, the Invisible can also levitate. Doors may be locked but windows three floors up may be open. A few Invisibles prefer to use their powers for assassination rather than acquisition.

Key Abilities: Intelligence, Dexterity

Starting Skills: Concentration, Disable Device, Search, Stealth

Starting Feats: Firearms Training, Levitate, Light Shaping, Phase

MENTALIST

A mentalist uses psychical powers to extract information from the minds of others. Generally charismatic, the mentalist charms her targets into unwittingly giving her information simply by thinking about it.

Key Ability: Charisma

Starting Skills: Bluff, Concentration, Diplomacy, Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Mind Probe, Mind Reading, Mind Touch, Supernatural Talent (Mind Probe and Mind Reading)

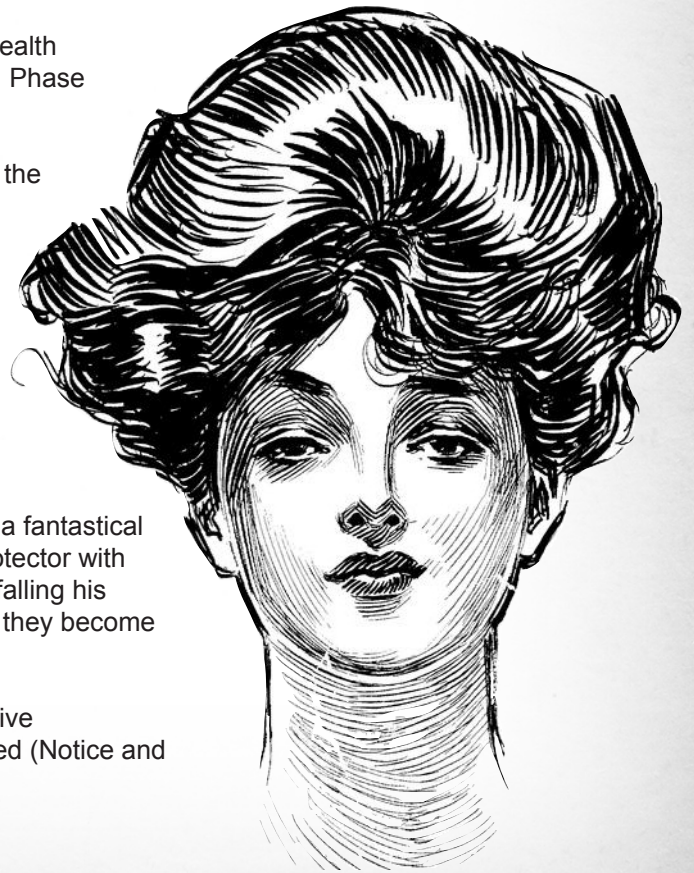
PROTECTOR

The protector acts as a bodyguard for traveling dignitaries. In a fantastical world, a government leader would be foolish not to have a protector with him in public. Not only can the protector prevent any harm befalling his employer but, should he fail, he can often heal injuries before they become worse.

Key Abilities: Wisdom, Dexterity

Starting Skills: Concentration, Notice, Search, Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Cure, Danger Sense, Mana Shield, Talented (Notice and Sense Motive)



EXPERT

Experts are the bread and butter of espionage stories. Heroes generally rely more on their skills than their combat prowess, and historical campaigns lack adepts. Enemy assassins rely more on their skills than combat abilities as well; bombs only need to get close.

The following paths are a sample of useful experts for espionage campaigns.

AGENT PROVOCATEUR

An agent provocateur is someone trained to get others to do something against their interests. The classic agent provocateur is the femme fatale, a woman trained to seduce men so that they let down their guard. Many diplomats are also agent provocateurs, using their position and connections to get others to spill secrets. An agent provocateur with a long-term assignment will place themselves close to a victim where their counsel and confidence can do the most damage.

Key Abilities: Charisma

Starting Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge (art), Knowledge (civics), Knowledge (popular culture), Notice, Sense Motive, Sleight of Hand

Starting Feats: Bewitching, Fascinate, Skill Focus (Bluff), Talented (Bluff and Diplomacy)

AGITATOR

An agitator is someone that advocates political or social change. During the Imperial Age there are many groups, such as anarchists, Fenians, communists, that are led by charismatic leaders. The important distinction between this path and the anarchist path is that the agitator generally doesn't condone violent action. Ironically, they are often the targets of violence themselves when an anarchist attack takes place.

Key Abilities: Charisma (at least +1)

Starting Skills: Diplomacy, Gather Information, Intimidate, Knowledge (civics), Knowledge (popular culture), Knowledge (streetwise), Perform (Oratory), Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Connected, Fascinate, Inspire, Skill Focus (Perform (oratory))

SECRET AGENT

The secret agent is trained to find and procure objects for her superiors. Unlike the agent provocateur, the secret agent concentrates more on positioning herself and breaking into places without arousing suspicion. Secret agents work well in tandem with the agent provocateur, as the former extracts an item while the latter provides distractions.

Key Abilities: Dexterity, Wisdom

Starting Skills: Acrobatics, Bluff, Disable Device, Disguise, Notice, Search, Sleight of Hand, Stealth

Starting Feats: Firearms Training, Improvised Tools, Master Plan, Talented (Disable Device, Stealth)

TERRORIST

The terrorist attempts to achieve her goals through violent action. The terrorist generally accomplishes this by bombing public places or assassinating government officials. The most dangerous terrorists care nothing for their own safety as long as they further their cause. Terrorists are usually found amongst any aggrieved group, unfortunately tainting the entire group through their own actions.

Key Abilities: Dexterity, Intelligence

Starting Skills: Concentration, Craft (Demolitions), Disable Device, Disguise, Knowledge (streetwise), Notice, Sleight of Hand, Stealth

Starting Feats: Dedicated, Firearms Training, Nondescript, Talented (Craft (Demolitions) and Disable Device))



WARRIOR

Warriors are also important in espionage stories. Intimidation is a potent information-gathering tool, and many assassins (especially snipers) were trained as soldiers. The following are some typical warrior paths in an espionage campaign.

ASSASSIN

The assassin is trained to kill without getting caught or being implicated in the act. Assassins are used to eliminate key figures within a government or organization (thereby causing it to crumble or at least temporarily incapacitate it) or to eliminate troublesome "loose ends" as part of a larger operation. Some assassins also take levels in Expert to gain the Sneak Attack feat.

Key Abilities: Dexterity

Starting Skills: Disguise, Notice, Sleight of Hand, Stealth

Starting Feats: Attack Focus, Attack Specialization, Improved Critical, Firearms Training

BODYGUARD

Bodyguards protect important people from assassins and terrorist attacks. They are trained to spot trouble before it can affect their employer and to take the brunt of the attack when necessary.

Key Abilities: Dexterity, Wisdom

Starting Skills: Acrobatics, Notice, Search, Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Challenge (Sense Motive (Read Situation)), Firearms Training, Interpose, Seize Initiative

INSTRUCTOR

An instructor is a soldier hired to provide training to a group unaffiliated with the instructor's homeland. Some non-Western governments hire instructors to modernize their forces, placing the instructor in an excellent position to acquire and provide intelligence.

Key Abilities: Dexterity, Charisma

Starting Skills: Climb, Intimidate, Knowledge (Tactics), Survival

Starting Feats: Firearms Training, Set Up, Track, Weapon Training

INTERROGATOR

An interrogator is trained to forcibly extract information from a victim. While the interrogator's methods are often brutal, they tend to be effective.

Key Abilities: Strength, Charisma

Starting Skills: Bluff, Intimidate, Knowledge (behavioral sciences), Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Firearms Training, Forceful Intimidation, Skill Focus (Intimidate), Weapons Training



SKILLS

The following new skill is useful for espionage campaigns.

CRAFT (DEMOLITIONS)

With this skill, you can set detonators and place or disarm explosives. This skill is only available in campaigns that have access to explosive devices.

Check: Setting a simple explosive to blow up at a certain spot doesn't require a check, but connecting and setting a detonator does. Also, placing an explosive for maximum effect against a structure calls for a check, as does disarming an explosive device.

Set Detonator: Most explosives require a detonator to go off. Connecting a detonator to an explosive requires a Craft

(demolitions) check (Difficulty 10). Failure means that the explosive fails to go off as planned. Failure by 10 or more means the explosive goes off as the detonator is being installed.

You can make an explosive difficult to disarm. To do so, you choose the disarm Difficulty before making your check to set the detonator (it must be higher than 10). The character's Difficulty to set the detonator is equal to the disarm Difficulty.

Place Explosive Device: Carefully placing an explosive against a fixed structure (a stationary, unattended inanimate object) can maximize the damage dealt, by exploiting vulnerabilities in the structure's construction.

The Narrator makes the check (so that you don't know exactly how well you have done). On a result of 15 or higher, the explosive deals double damage to the structure against which it is placed. On a result of 25 or higher, it deals triple damage to the structure. In all cases, it deals normal damage to all other targets within its burst radius.

Disarm Explosive Device: Disarming an explosive that has been set to go off requires a Craft (demolitions) check. The Difficulty is usually 10, unless the person who set the detonator chose a higher disarm Difficulty. If you fail the check, you do not disarm the explosive. If you fail by more than 5, the explosive goes off.

Action: Setting a detonator is usually a full-round action. Placing an explosive device takes one minute or more, depending on the scope of the job.

Special: You can take 10 when using the Craft (demolitions) skill, but you can't take 20. Without a demolitions toolkit, you take a -4 penalty on Craft (demolitions) checks.

Making an explosive requires the Craft (chemical) skill.

DISGUISE

The disguise skill can also be used to enhance one's appearance at social functions.

Check: The following is a new use for the Disguise skill

Becoming Presentable: Through use of make-up, fashionable dress, and other appearance-enhancing factors, you can acquire a bonus to social interaction skills for a scene. Normally, all characters are assumed to take 20 on Disguise checks, since they would spend at least an hour (if not more) making themselves presentable for a social function. As a result, it takes truly exceptional effort to stand out.

For every 10 points that you make your Disguise check over 20, you receive a +1 bonus to interaction skills for the duration of a scene. Thus, a result of 30 would give you a +1 bonus, a result of 40 would give you a +2 bonus, and so on. There is a slight risk of failure, should you get a result less than 20, then you are at a -1 penalty (or -2 if the result is 10 or less). This represents a fashion disaster.

If you are not wearing fashionable clothes, then you take a -4 on your Disguise check (this is in addition to the -4 you'd take if you don't have the proper tools).

WHY IS BECOMING PRESENTABLE SO HARSH?

At first glance, it would seem that the Disguise checks for Becoming Presentable are set rather high. If the hero takes 20, he doesn't even have a chance of succeeding until at least 2nd level, and that's assuming a +5 Charisma, maximum ranks in Disguise, and wearing fashionable clothes. Why so harsh?

First, heroes are always assumed to be "at their best" when attending a social function. Piling on modifiers for heroes appearing as they are expected to is redundant and artificially inflates their interaction skills. There are already mechanics in place for particularly attractive heroes. The Disguise skill simply provides a bit of an edge for someone that truly stands out in the crowd.

FEATS

Below is a selection of feats particularly applicable to espionage stories.

BENEFIT (GENERAL)

The following new benefits are useful for espionage stories.

Double Agent: Two governments believe that the hero ultimately works for them. This can grant the hero certain benefits (as well as the benefit of the doubt if caught working against them), but can also put the hero in a great deal of danger.

Social Chameleon: The hero has an innate ability to get himself into social functions, even when he lacks an invitation. Social doors are always open to him.

The Benefit (Alternate Identity) feat found in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* provides the hero with a complete alternate identity. While this may be good for a long-term cover, it may be a poor fit for some *Imperial Age* campaigns. At the Narrator's discretion, a hero may "swap" one alternate identity for another if the original alternate identity is no longer useful. This switch generally should take place between adventures.

EXPLOSIVE KNOWLEDGE (EXPERT)

When you successfully place an explosive device (getting at least 15 on a Craft (Demolitions) check, the explosive will deal +2 damage to all targets within its burst radius. Targets immune to critical hits take no extra damage. You can take this feat multiple times; increasing your damage bonus by one each time, to a maximum of +5.

FORCEFUL INTIMIDATION (WARRIOR)

You get physical when intimidating people. You add your Strength and Charisma to Intimidate checks. You cannot use this feat with other feats (for example, you cannot add Strength when using Intimidate as part of the Startle feat).

INTERPOSE (GENERAL)

Once per round, when an ally adjacent to you is targeted by an attack, you can choose to trade places with that ally as a reaction, making you the target of the attack instead. If the attack hits, you suffer the effects normally. If the attack misses you, it also misses your ally. You must declare your intention to trade places with an ally before the attack roll is made. You cannot use Interpose if you are stunned or otherwise incapable of taking free actions.



POWERS

The following powers are useful in espionage stories.

DANGER SENSE

Fatiguing

Your supernatural powers allow you to sense danger before it strikes. You may add half your Danger Sense rank as a bonus to your Initiative and Reflex saves.

Time: Reaction

INFUSE PROJECTILES

Fatiguing

Prerequisite: Fire Shaping

This power allows you to infuse a number of projectiles such as rocks, arrows, or bullets with explosive energy, effectively turning them into grenade-like weapons. You can infuse any such projectiles with an amount of explosive fire damage equal to your adept level divided evenly among the projectiles (round down). When a charged object is thrown or fired, they explode, dealing an additional amount of fire damage to everything within a 5 foot radius, and potentially catching flammable objects on fire.

Time: Standard action

LEVITATE

Fatiguing, Maintenance

Levitate allows you to move yourself, another creature, or an object up and down as you wish. Levitate can affect up to 100 lb. per adept level of the caster. A creature must be willing to be levitated, and an object must be unattended or possessed by a willing creature. You can mentally direct the recipient to move up or down as much as 20 feet each round; doing so is a move action. You cannot move the recipient horizontally, but the recipient could clamber along the face of a cliff, for example, or push against a ceiling to move laterally (generally at half its base land speed).

A levitating creature that attacks with a melee or ranged weapon finds itself increasingly unstable; the first attack has a -1 penalty on attack rolls, the second -2, and so on, to a maximum penalty of -5. A full round spent stabilizing allows the creature to begin again at -1. The effect ends when the target's feet touch the ground. Levitate is fatiguing (make the fatigue save when your use of this ability ends). If you stop maintaining the power for any reason, the target falls.

Time: Standard action

MANA SHIELD

Fatiguing, Maintenance

With this power, you create a shield of pure mana around you or the subject of your choice. Make a power check (Difficulty 15) to bring the shield into being. It provides a Toughness save bonus equal to half your adept level. Each round you have the shield active, you must make another power check (Difficulty 15). Failure indicates the shield disperses. This is in addition to any Concentration checks required if you are distracted in any way.

Time: Full action

PHANTOM PROJECTILES

Fatiguing

Prerequisite: Supernatural Weapon

This power turns 10 projectiles per adept level (such as arrows, bolts, bullets, or shuriken) into incorporeal ammunition that damages only their intended targets.

Phantom projectiles pass through intervening obstacles (including armor) and thus ignore cover bonuses and equipment bonuses to Defense. Barriers of supernatural force still stop them. Phantom projectiles count as supernatural weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction. Additionally, the phantom projectiles disappear 3 rounds after being fired, making it impossible to gather ballistic evidence.

Time: Standard action

CHAPTER NINE: HORROR STORIES

William Stanton held the oil lamp as he led his employer through the sewers. It shook violently in his hand. Billy was normally an adept rat catcher, but there was something new hunting in the sewers, something that fought back. Billy was content to leave well enough alone and find another occupation. Unfortunately, he stumbled into Dr. Wolfgang Ritter while drinking in memory of one of his former friends and victim.

"Steady hand, Billy," Dr. Ritter said in a thick German accent as he followed behind him. "We will find this elusive creature, I assure you."

"Easy for you to say," Billy complained, "you're the one with all the weapons."

"And you would be too if I didn't think you'd just start shooting at shadows!" Dr. Ritter hissed. He put his hand on William's shoulder. The rat catcher almost jumped out of his skin. "Wait. Give me that lamp."

Billy hesitantly did so. Dr. Ritter crouched down, examining the dirty stone floor beside the flow of waste. "There are tracks here, fresh by the look of them. We're close now; I can feel it. All we need is the proper bait." Dr. Ritter opened a small sack that hung from his belt.

"What's that, a hunk of cheese?" Billy asked lightly, trying to ease his tension.

Dr. Ritter didn't answer him. Instead, he silently pulled out the decomposed remains of a human forearm. If Billy weren't so used to pungent smells, he would have lost his supper. Dr. Ritter placed it on the ground and slowly stepped back, gesturing for Billy to follow him. They hid out of sight in a nearby alcove.

"Now what?" Billy whispered.

"We wait," Dr. Ritter answered. "Quietly."

They didn't have to wait long. After a few minutes, Billy was certain that he heard a shuffling sound, like a rat sniffing around. Only this sound was much louder. He tried to calm himself as Dr. Ritter invited him to take a look.

Look he did. And what he saw frightened the young rat catcher to his core. It was like some devilish retribution for all of the rats he killed in the course of his work. What was hunched in front of him and sniffing at the rotting flesh was a bizarre combination of human and rat.

"Now what?" Billy whispered, praying that Dr. Ritter would advise a retreat. He would have no such luck.

Dr. Ritter produced two revolvers. He handed one to Billy. "Now, my young friend, we blast that unholy beast back to the nether region from whence it came!"

Horror stories were very popular in the Victorian era. While the Gothic era is generally considered pre-Victorian (or, at best, early Victorian), Gothic themes and tales remained prevalent throughout the era. By the end of the Imperial Age, the Gothic tale would again take centre stage, with Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) burning certain Gothic tropes into popular culture. Progress and industrialization would also provide fodder for horror stories, with one of the first influential stories, *Frankenstein*; or the *Modern Prometheus* (1818, revised in 1831), being written during the Gothic era. Dr. Frankenstein would provide a template for later mad scientists that would cross lines man was not intended to cross by creating life.

Horror tales typically use one of the Imperial Age themes and add a horrific twist, usually ending badly for the protagonist. Victor Frankenstein, pushing progress beyond where man was meant to go, loses his bride and friends to the Monster before perishing in the Arctic; the Monster hates what he has become and commits suicide. Dr. Jekyll's Mr. Hyde persona represents a shedding of the rules of society. The Invisible Man doesn't quite perfect his formula. He feels superior to those around him and is willing to sacrifice others for the perfection of his invention. In *The Invisible Man* (1897), the title character is driven insane by his permanent invisibility, entertains notions of world domination, and is, in the end, beaten to death.



The classic Victorian horror creature is, of course, the vampire. The modern interpretation of the modern vampire myth has its roots in the same story-writing contest that produced Frankenstein. *The Vampyre* (1819) was written by Lord Byron's physician and partly modeled on Lord Byron. This novel marks the point in popular culture when the vampire was transformed from a folkloric demon into the aristocratic monster immortalized almost eighty years later in *Dracula*. Another popular Victorian vampire story, *Varney the Vampire* (1845), placed the aristocratic vampire Sir Varney in the mid 1700s. *Carmilla* (1872) would add some new angles to the vampire myth. While female vampires became increasingly common in Victorian literature, Carmilla (or Countess Millarca Karnstein) is portrayed as a lesbian. She preys exclusively on women and develops romantic feelings for some of them (quite shocking for a contemporary reader and a prime example of mixing horror with the theme of sexuality). The other major angle is Carmilla's shape changing ability. Rather than transforming into the expected bat, Carmilla changes into a cat. Carmilla would be a major influence on Bram Stoker, and its placement in the Imperial Age actually makes it prime source material.

Perhaps the ultimate "horror story" of the Imperial Age is the Martian invasion in *The War of the Worlds* (1898). While other Imperial Age themes can be read into it (such as extreme versions of Colonialism and Westernization, as the Martians clear the Earth and transform it for their own use), at its heart *The War of the Worlds* is a horror story. The protagonist is helpless, and it takes a *deus ex machina* to save the world.

Narrators running horror adventures can take inspiration from Imperial Age themes. Horror does not have to have a paranormal or super-

scientific angle. A medical scientist that kidnaps street children or prostitutes and infects them with a deadly disease in the name of science is just as horrific (if not more so) as a vampire stalking the West End. A Narrator can also draw from real literature. Perhaps Dr. Frankenstein really did exist, and a passing Russian steamer recently thawed his Monster, frozen in the arctic for decades. Perhaps, as in the movie version of *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (2003), someone else has come across the Invisibility formula.

CRAFTING A HORROR STORY

Crafting a horror story provides some unique challenges. While it's near-impossible to actually frighten your players, you do need to push them out of their comfort zone. At some point, the players will need to feel outmatched as they desperately search for the one way to defeat the menace terrorizing their heroes. This section is designed to help Narrators craft horror adventures.

HORROR OR ACTION-ADVENTURE?

The first question a Narrator must answer when crafting a horror story is whether to put the emphasis on horror or action-adventure. Just because a story contains dark and stormy nights, flying bats, and werewolves does not necessarily make it a horror story. This is particularly true of horror campaigns; if the heroes are expected to regularly encounter and defeat monstrosities then what the Narrator is more properly running is an action-adventure story cloaked in the trappings of horror.



For long-term campaigns, action-adventure is the way to go. Indeed, the monster hunter role is best suited for this type of campaign. Don't let the label dissuade you, just because a campaign is "action-adventure" does not mean it can't have its scary, horrific moments or that a particular monstrosity won't send a shiver down a monster hunter's spine. It's just that the underlying assumption is that the heroes will win the day in time for the next adventure. That's just not a horror adventure.

Horror adventures are best suited for one-shots or short campaigns. The heroes aren't expected to win without great sacrifice,

if they are to win at all. They aren't even "heroes;" most protagonists in a horror story are victims of circumstance and ill-equipped for what they are about to face. Here, the horror tropes are in full-force; the heroes must overcome their fears and crumbling sanity just to survive, and even then it might not be enough.

Generally speaking, if the heroes are professional monster hunter/investigators then they are more suited to an action-adventure campaign. Ordinary protagonists, often victims of circumstance, are more suited to a horror adventure. There can be overlap, of course; Van Helsing was a monster hunter in *Dracula* and many proper action-adventure campaigns start with the heroes as victims of circumstance.

This distinction is very important for the Narrator. An action-adventure will deal with having the Players learn of a threat and take steps to defeat it. Most of the story will be about the investigation and confrontation with the threat. Horror, on the other hand, is all about scaring the heroes (and possibly the Players). A Narrator trying to scare his professional heroes is just as likely to be as disappointed as the Narrator that expects his ordinary protagonists to go chasing after the thing in the dark that just killed everyone three train cars up.

SETTING AND ATMOSPHERE

"It was a dark and stormy night" may seem trite today but that's largely because of the impact of Gothic fiction and its reinterpretation in the Victorian era has had on the genre. Crumbling castles, stormy weather, and remote locations all helped convey a sense of gloom and doom in the mind of a reader.

The Victorian era is rife with sinister locales. In addition to the traditional crumbling castles and tiny villages, the industrial age has created more urban venues for horror. The coal-fueled yellow fogs of London and the growing Underground offer new settings to terrorize heroes. Empty factories and warehouses can become deathtraps between the setting and rising of the sun.

Once you've picked as setting it's time to ramp up the atmosphere. The best atmospheric descriptions will engage all of a hero's senses. Don't say that there's a crumbling statue in the yard when you could say "the cracked marble statue of an English noble stands defiantly before you, surveying the tangle of weeds and bushes as if they were a magnificent garden. Small vines crawl up its legs as if they were pulsing veins, and his cracked feet are covered with moss. Below the statue sits a dark, stagnant pool from which emanates a sickly sweet smell. Of note in the pool is a slimy green marble hand which must have broken off the statue long ago; its fingers seem to beckon you towards the old country house behind it."

NORMALCY

One way to push players out of their comfort zone is to get them used to a world without monsters before springing one on them. If the heroes are conditioned to find rational reasons behind supposed monster attacks, then a true monster is going to surprise them. Heroes capable of dealing with rational threats will suddenly be out of their element.

This works especially well for a mixed genre campaign. If the campaign seems to be comprised of detective stories (with at least one or two "fake monster" mysteries), then the heroes (and their players) will be surprised when you spring a real vampire or werewolf on them. The Big Reveal works less well for one-shots or campaigns that have fantastic science (is there really much difference between a chemically-created zombie and an occult zombie?).

ISOLATION

A good horror story relies on isolation. The heroes are cut off from the rest of the world and must face the monstrosity alone. This need not be literal isolation; being snowed in with a village full of terrorized villagers can leave the heroes feeling just as isolated as if they were exploring an abandoned castle. The heroes have only each other to rely on, and sometimes they cannot even do that.

Isolation is important for horror stories about survival. Maybe the heroes simply have to hold off the werewolf pack until the snow lets up and Her Majesty's Werewolf Hunters can get through. Maybe the monstrosity is tied to a particular area and if the heroes can somehow get past the boundary then they will be okay.

FEAR

Victorian literature often takes society's fears and manifests them in a monstrous way. Dracula is a foreigner preying on a proper Englishwoman. Carmilla is a lesbian. The Martians invade Britain. Dr. Jekyll realizes that deep down he really is an amoral monster. Dr. Moreau and Frankenstein play God. Vampires can represent a decadent aristocracy preying on common folk, while werewolves may represent a fear of communicable disease.

A good horror adventure relies on fear. The heroes must be afraid of what they may face. While this is difficult to pull off in a roleplaying setting, there are ways to give the Players a taste of fear. It's all in the presentation.

First, horror must be personal. The heroes need to feel that the monstrosity is after them. Perhaps they disturbed the monstrosity in some way. Perhaps they have qualities that are attractive to the monstrosity. Perhaps they've wounded the monstrosity and it wants to return the favor. Whatever the reason, the heroes must feel that the monstrosity, if left alone, will simply go away.

Second, the monstrosity should never be revealed until the end of the adventure. A hero should never stumble upon a vampire sinking his fangs into a victim early in the adventure; instead, he should hear a scream suddenly silenced and as he investigates comes across the crumpled body of a woman as a strange shadow passes over him.

Third, the horror should be unknown. While vampires are a classic Victorian villain, they are familiar. Familiarity isn't frightening. In the example above, the hero expects that he'll find two fang marks on the woman's neck. What if he finds her heart torn out instead? Familiar monstrosities such as vampires and werewolves, however, are perfect for action-adventure campaigns.

Fourth, horror should deny one a safety zone. Heroes must feel that the monstrosity can follow them anywhere. When the heroes feel safest is exactly when you should spring the monstrosity on them. Once the heroes are truly safe, then the danger is over. Should the heroes choose to go back and confront the monstrosity, then the horror adventure has morphed into action-adventure.

Fifth, the horror should be unstoppable, at least initially. The heroes should feel that a simple encounter with the monstrosity will end badly for them. All monstrosities should have a weakness, but this should be learned in play (this provides an exception to the familiarity rule. It's okay to use vampires and werewolves if they have different weaknesses than the ones the heroes expect).

SCIENTIFIC HORROR

The Industrial Revolution brought forth great advances in science and technology. Suddenly, children were born into very different worlds than that of their parents and grandparents. Scientific miracles constantly changed the way people lived their lives. Many feared this change and felt that established traditions (and God's Will) were being shredded in the name

of progress. Thus 19th century literature saw the rise of the scientist as a horror villain. The typical tale told of the scientist that stepped too far, crossed a scientific boundary man was not meant to cross, and paid the price. Perhaps the most famous example is Frankenstein, but the Imperial Age saw its fair share as well (Dr. Jekyll, Griffin, Dr. Moreau, and Dr. Raymond, among others).

Heroes in a scientific horror adventure are often potential victims. Perhaps the scientist needs test subjects or the heroes inadvertently stumble into the scientist's laboratory. The heroes must escape the clutches of the scientist and warn society at large (which calls upon another horror trope, the "angry mob with torches and pitchforks"). Of course, the problem with science is that an idea can't be suppressed forever...

DETECTIVE HORROR

Occasionally, the tropes of detective stories and horror stories converge to create a very interesting combination, especially for roleplaying scenarios. While such stories tend to be a more cerebral action-adventure tale as opposed to true horror, they can certainly be a lot of fun and allow for a number of heroic roles to band together to stop an evil monstrosity.

Detective horror story adventures are generally written as detective stories. A strange (usually murderous) event has caught the eye of a detective hero, who engages his occult expert and monster hunter allies in tracking down the threat. As stated above, such stories tend toward the action-adventure mold, with the heroes victoriously solving the crime and defeating the horror.

One variant of detective horror is the "fake horror" story. *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (written in 1901-1902 but set in the early 1890s) involved a spectral hound that was actually coated with luminescent paint. This trope would blossom in the following century, the most popular of which is likely the *Scooby Doo* cartoon series.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

There are always potential problems that you may have when designing a horror adventure. The following are some of the most common pitfalls of horror adventure design.

PACING

Horror is never slow. Just when the heroes get a moment to catch their breath, something should interrupt them. A Narrator needs to keep the pace of her horror session moving. The pace should not only be applied to heroes but Players as well.

Don't give your Players time to think. When the monstrosity attacks, only give each Player a few seconds to react; failure to do so results in the hero fleeing. At this point, the hero can make a Difficulty 15 Will Save to remain rooted to the spot instead. This should encourage Players to make quick decisions; after all, something is better than nothing, right?

It's okay to slow the pacing at the beginning of a horror adventure; it may be a dark and stormy night, but the heroes will probably have time to walk up to that crumbling mansion and interact with the servants and master of the house before anything terrible happens. This is also a good time for the Players to get a good grasp of their hero's personalities and relationships to each other (which is important in a one-shot horror story, as the Players don't have previous adventures to draw upon).

FAMILIARITY

As stated above, familiarity makes it difficult to foster a "fear of the unknown," especially in a horror campaign. The moment the heroes see a blood-drained corpse they are going to grab garlic and crucifixes and the moment a body is found mauled in the woods they'll be loading their revolvers with silver bullets.

There are three common ways to combat familiarity. The first, of course, is to use an unknown horror. There are numerous sources of inspiration for creatures that your players may be unfamiliar with and of course you are always free to design your own. If an ancient ritual summons a demon or undead, then you can give it a unique description and special abilities.

Second, it's possible to lull the Players into a false sense of security by using a familiar horror but changing its description, powers, or weaknesses. In many cases, this can be accomplished simply by remaining true to the horror's

origins. Many vampires could walk freely in the daylight (although moonlight was often necessary for regeneration) and werewolves were not initially vulnerable to silver.

Third, the Narrator can use the bait-and-switch approach; what appears to be one type of horror at first ends up being another. For example, strange murders may be attributed to an invisible man, only to actually be due to a psychic's machinations. "Werewolf" attacks may actually be caused by a vampire in wolf form. Monsters from the deep may actually be normal thieves in diving suits.

SUPPORT

Another element to keep in mind is that the heroes should lack support, either from within themselves or from society at large. This is less important in an action-adventure campaign, as the heroes are expected to be capable opponents, but in such campaigns the heroes usually do "what no one else can." It dilutes the horror when there are numerous allies that can provide support against monstrous foes.

EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENTS

In a one-shot horror story, it is relatively easy to kill, maim, or drive heroes insane; the Player's emotional investment in the hero is low. As a campaign progresses, Players grow more attached to their heroes and are less likely to want to lose them. Narrators may be less likely to kill them as well, since the heroes tend to become the subject of plot threads and killing them often means the end or reworking of several hours of preparation.

This emotional investment can also branch out to Narrator characters. A hero losing a spouse in a one-shot is tolerable; a Player enjoying the relationship with his spouse may not react well to her death four adventures into the campaign. Similarly, it is easy for a Narrator to get attached to her Narrator characters and shield them from the horrors she unleashes.

When running a horror campaign (even an action-adventure campaign), it's important to make the Players realize that they're playing

PLAYER APATHY

Throw the players into too many no-win situations or showcase the awesome power of the horror once too often and you risk player apathy. Player apathy is when the player feels that her hero is so hopelessly outmatched that she will either get killed by the horror or saved by GM fiat. Either way, the hero's destiny is out of her hands. At this point, the player will start committing her hero to illogical or suicidal actions.

One way to beat player apathy is to give them some hope early on. The horror killed three people in a section of the sewers but left one unmolested. Why? The creature attacked one of the heroes and then suddenly fled the scene. Why? What was the hero doing? What were the circumstances?

Another way to combat player apathy is to allow your campaign to migrate from horror to action-adventure. Maybe your players can tolerate being scared out of their wits with inferior heroes for an adventure or two, but eventually they are going to want to be able to fight back with prejudice.

THE BIG REVEAL...SUCKS

One potential pitfall with surprising players with horror after setting them up with a different campaign style is that they may actually prefer the non-horror campaign. This is especially likely if you've established a pattern (every adventure up to this point has been a Holmesian mystery or international spy caper) and, unfortunately, there is little you can do to transfer that enthusiasm if the players feel they're losing something they enjoy in order to do something else.

One way to combat this is preventive maintenance. Don't let the heroes get too many adventures under their belt until you pull the big surprise. You can also foreshadow events by having rationally unexplainable events occur in the background of the early adventures.

If the players do lament the change and you aren't willing to return to the way things were, you could compromise by offering alternating adventures between true horror and the pre-horror adventure style.

CRAFTING HEROES FOR HORROR STORIES

While heroes in horror stories don't often understand the horrors they face, most heroes are capable in dealing with them on some level. If you spring a pack of werewolves on your North-Western Frontier colonial soldier heroes, then the heroes will be able to bring their combat capabilities against them. A detective hero may be able to discover a monstrosity's weakness through her excellent powers of deduction. And, of course, an occult hero or an engineer can bring awesome powers and engines to bear against horrific threats.

Some heroes are specifically dedicated to combat monstrosities. These monster hunters ("monstrosity hunter" would be quite a mouthful) often have an edge against their foes.

THE MONSTER HUNTER

Monster hunters are dedicated to ridding the world of unnatural menaces. While universal in mission, they are diverse in their approaches. Some monster hunters are educated scholars who execute careful plans. Others walk in where angels fear to tread once they learn of a monster's presence. Some monster hunters specialize in ridding the world of one type of monster, while others have a more general mission. Some monster hunters will work for an organization, while others prefer to work alone. The quintessential monster hunter is Abraham Van Helsing, Dracula's nemesis.

Monster hunters are found amongst all roles and their approach to monster hunting varies accordingly. Monster hunter adepts rely on their powers to overcome monstrous foes. Monster hunter experts do diligent research on their preys' weaknesses (and some even create inventions to deal with particular threats. Monster hunter warriors prefer to take the battle to their foes directly, relying on their purity of mind and their martial skills to defeat paranormally strong opponents.

ALTERNATE CORE ABILITIES

Most monster hunters are set apart, either from a quirk of fate or an early life experience. When designing a monster hunter, you may opt to replace the usual core ability for your starting role with one of the alternatives presented here.

Fearless

You are completely immune to affects that cause fear (including supernatural powers like Heart Shaping) and to the effects of the Intimidate skill, unless the user's total level is at least four greater than yours. You can also eliminate a fear-induced condition from an ally at any time by spending a point of Conviction and standing up to the source of the fear (often with a resounding speech or a simple statement like "We're not afraid of you!"). This ability only works against fear-based Sanity saves, not Terror-based ones.

Magic Resistant

You may spend a Conviction point to automatically shrug off the effects of a supernatural power or ability that would have otherwise affected you.

Lore

When making a Knowledge skill check, you can spend a point of Conviction and automatically treat your die roll as a 20.

Prepared

Throughout your monster-hunting career you have collected and keep on your person items that exploit a monstrosity's weaknesses. You may spend a Conviction point to automatically possess and understand how to use such an item. For example, if a monstrosity is vulnerable to silver then you may have silver bullets or a silver knife. If a monstrosity is vulnerable to fire you may have a flask of oil on your person. If a vampire attacks you'll have a holy symbol ready.

Spiritual Warrior

You can spend a Conviction point to cause your attacks to overcome all supernatural forms of damage resistance such as Damage Reduction, Incorporeality, or supernatural powers that provide a Toughness bonus for the rest of the encounter.

Unshakeable

You can spend a Conviction point to automatically succeed on any Concentration check.

ADEPT

Adepts are good choices for action-adventure campaigns. Occult magicians, miracle-workers, and psychical heroes can use wondrous powers against the creatures of the night. In horror campaigns, an adept is more often an adversary than a hero. Adepts in horror stories are rarely able to hurl fire balls or lightning bolts against their foes. Still, one could design a less-flashy adept, such as a fortune teller or medium, that would fit well within a horror story.

MONSTER MAKER

Some adepts specialize in creating monstrosities. While these are generally horrific villains, a heroic monster maker may use his powers to transform himself into a monster hunting monstrosity. Sometimes you have to fight fire with fire.

Key Abilities: Dexterity, Intelligence

Starting Skills: Acrobatics, Concentration, Intimidate, Stealth

Starting Feats: Body Control, Enhance Ability, Self Shaping, Supernatural Strike

NECROMANCER

The necromancer is another horror staple. That said a heroic version could use her powers to control and defeat the undead rather than raise undead armies to attack the living.

Alternate Core Ability: Fearless

Key Ability: Intelligence

Starting Skills: Concentration, Knowledge (supernatural), Knowledge (theology and philosophy)

Starting Feats: Harm, Mind Touch, Speak with Dead*, Spirit Sense*

*See Occult Stories chapter for power descriptions

PSYCHICAL HUNTER

A psychical hunter uses his disciplined mind to track down and defeat paranormal foes. Many psychical hunters are members of the Society for Psychical Research (see Occult Studies chapter).

Key Abilities: Charisma

Starting Skills: Concentration, Diplomacy, Knowledge (supernatural), Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Mind Touch, Pain, Psychic Blast, Psychic Shield

EXPERT

Next to the Ordinary, the expert is the best role for a horror campaign. Lacking the metaphysical might of the adept or the raw strength of the warrior, the expert must use her wits and knowledge to survive and overcome horrific monstrosities. A classic example of an expert in a horror campaign is the gentleman scientist, who creates seemingly magical concoctions or devices.

This role also makes a good academic monster hunter, using the resources at her disposal to research information and key weaknesses against paranormal foes. On the flip side, an expert makes an excellent supporting role alongside a monster hunter.

EXORCIST

The exorcist is a priest or other religious person trained in banishing spirits.

Alternate Core Ability: Unshakable

Key Abilities: Intelligence, Charisma

Starting Skills: Concentration, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Knowledge (history), Knowledge (linguistics), Knowledge (supernatural), Knowledge (theology and philosophy), Stealth

Starting Feats: Alternate Approach, Inspire, Iron Will, Ritual Knowledge (exorcism)

GENTLEMAN SCIENTIST

The gentleman scientist is a private inventor that has discovered a scientific wonder. Gentleman scientists make great horror villains, but they can also be heroes that use scientific wonders against monstrosities.

Key Ability: Intelligence

Starting Skills: Concentration, Craft (chemical), Craft (pharmaceutical), Knowledge (earth sciences), Knowledge (life sciences), Knowledge (physical sciences), Knowledge (technology), Research

Starting Feats: Benefit (Gentleman's Title), Scientific Wonder, Talented, Wealthy

OCCULT SCHOLAR

The occult scholar is a fount of information. He usually has a large library and the idle time to look up almost any topic.

Alternate Core Ability: Lore

Key Ability: Intelligence

Starting Skills: Knowledge (behavioral sciences), Knowledge (art), Knowledge (history), Knowledge (linguistics), Knowledge (supernatural), Knowledge (theology and philosophy), Languages, Research

Starting Feats: Contacts, Ritual Knowledge (any), Talented, Wealthy

PENNY DREADFUL WRITER

The penny dreadful writer hunts monsters for inspiration. She wants to portray monstrosities accurately in her stories and, if she helps defeat one, then a little publicity to that effect would help her sell stories.

Alternate Core Ability: Fearless

Key Abilities: Intelligence, Charisma

Starting Skills: Bluff, Craft (writing), Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge (supernatural), Notice, Research, Search

Starting Feats: Alternate Approach, Contacts, Jaded, Well Informed

Warrior

Warriors often have short lives in horror stories, as they are the ones that learn the hard way of a monstrosity's durability against conventional weaponry. Still, the warrior makes a great supporting role, using his abilities to buy time for better-equipped allies to use rituals or other means against supernatural foes.

MONSTER HUNTER

The monster hunter is a warrior that doesn't mind meeting the enemy face to face. The monster hunter is always prepared with weapons and equipment that exploits a monstrosity's weaknesses.

Alternate Core Ability: Prepared

Key Abilities: Strength, Dexterity

Starting Skills: Intimidate, Knowledge (supernatural), Notice, Stealth

Starting Feats: Attack Focus, Cold Blooded, Favored Opponent, Weapon Training

SHARPSHOOTER

While not a monster hunter himself, the sharpshooter uses his abilities to buy time. He provides cover for escaping victims or support to enable a monster hunter to get close to a monstrosity.

Key Abilities: Dexterity

Starting Skills: Acrobatics, Notice, Stealth, Survivor

Starting Feats: Attack Focus, Attack Specialization, Firearms Training, Point Blank Shot

SPIRIT HUNTER

A spirit hunter is a monster hunter that specializes in fighting spirits. Spirit hunters work well in tandem with adepts or occultists that can spot invisible spirits.

Alternate Core Ability: Spiritual Warrior

Key Abilities: Strength, Dexterity

Starting Skills: Intimidate, Knowledge (supernatural), Notice, Stealth

Starting Feats: Attack Focus, Firearms Training, Loner, Weapon Training



ORDINARY HEROES

As horror stories (as opposed to action-adventure stories) tend to work best as one-shots, the Narrator may have the heroes to take Ordinary levels in place of Heroic levels. Ordinary heroes lack feats, conviction, and core abilities, limiting the heroes to their skills. By stripping them of their usual tools, Players have to rely on their wits to survive. It also allows for heroes to have high skill levels within specific areas without becoming better combatants.

There is, however, the risk of Player apathy, especially since, beyond skills, there is little to differentiate the heroes. The Narrator could mix and match ordinary levels with heroic levels in order to give the heroes some feats, combat, and save bonuses to rely on (whether they gain a core ability depends on whether they take an ordinary or heroic level first; if the Narrator is allowing adepts in a horror campaign, it is probably best to insist on an ordinary level first to deprive them of the ability to cast any power they wish).

FEATS

The following feats are appropriate for horror stories.

ALTERNATE APPROACH

Instead of relying on willpower and discipline, you handle the mind-bending and sanity-stretching effects of horror with either sheer guts or incredible mental flexibility.

Benefit: Select either your character's Intelligence or Constitution score. Use that ability score's modifier for all Sanity saves (see **Fear and Terror** later in this chapter).

COLD BLOODED (GENERAL)

You get +1 to Sanity saves and +1 to Intimidation attempts. Also, you gain +2 on saving throws to resist the Mind Touch power—your mind is a cold, dark place where few go willingly.

INSPIRE (GENERAL)

The following is a new use of the Inspire feat found in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*.

Commanding Voice: You are especially good at snapping people out of a freeze and reassuring them that things aren't as bad as they seem. If you shout at someone who has a failed Sanity save, they can immediately reroll their Sanity save using your Charisma bonus to determine the new result. Doing this counts as a standard action and is considered the use of an interaction skill, even though no skill check is required. This means your subjects have to be able to hear and understand you. You can affect a number of subjects equal to half your expert level (with a minimum of one). You can use this feat once per day per expert level. You can spend a Conviction point for an additional use that day.

JADED (GENERAL)

You've seen it all. You receive a +2 bonus on all Sanity saves.

LONER (GENERAL)

You have few connections to other people or ideals. You do not suffer any penalties to Sanity saves for being alone or only having one person present.

RITUAL KNOWLEDGE (GENERAL)

Prerequisite: You must have discovered a ritual in written form or through a tutor and had at least a week to study and practice it.

You have memorized the requirements and procedure for a particular ritual. Pick one supernatural power. You can perform that power as a ritual without requiring access to the written form of the ritual. You must still meet all other requirements of the ritual, such as special materials and conditions. See **Rituals** for further details and examples.

SCIENTIFIC WONDER (EXPERT)

Through intense experimentation, you have developed a wonder of science. Choose one power or adept feat that modifies a power (such as Empower or Widen Power). While you cannot use it on your own, you can create an invention that utilizes that power (see **Scientific Wonders** below).

POWERS

The following powers are suitable for horror stories. Alter Ego and Time Travel are scientific wonders taken from Victorian literature. While they could be made available to adepts, they are designed to be used as they were in their original stories (the *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *The Time Machine* respectively). Banishment, Bless and Curse were originally presented in the *True20 Adept's Handbook*.

ALTER EGO

Prerequisite: Narrator Approval

You are able to chemically alter your body into a different but similar form with a separate personality. This new personality, or alter ego, has the same number of heroic levels as the original but need not share the same traits. Ability scores, backgrounds, roles, skills, feats, and powers can be completely different.

Generally, the original is unaware of the alter ego's thoughts and actions, although the original can become aware of his alter ego's actions by making a Will Saving Throw. Once the original is aware, he can attempt to influence the alter ego's actions through use of a Mental Grapple. If the original wins the Mental Grapple, he may regain control until the alter ego feels strong enough to try another Mental Grapple or the power duration is over, whichever comes first.

BANISHMENT

Concentration, Fatiguing, Mental Contact

Dispel Possession (Difficulty 10): You can forcefully expel a spirit or other dominating force that has taken possession of a person or object. The possessing spirit is forced to make a Will save against this power, or it is forced from the person or object that it is possessing and must leave the area immediately, returning from whence it came. Outsiders and elementals are forced to return to their home dimension. Earth-bound creatures are forced to flee back to their lairs. This power can be used to counter the Dominate power.

Dismiss Extraplanar Creature (Difficulty 20): This power can also be used to force an outsider, elemental, or any creature with the extraplanar subtype with fewer levels than your adept level to return to its home plane. The target may attempt a Will save to resist banishment.

BLESS

Fatiguing, Maintenance

Prerequisite: Cannot have the Vice Subtype

Bless Creature: By bestowing your supernatural blessing, you fill an ally with courage. That ally gains a bonus on defense and saving throws against fear effects based on your Bless power check. These bonuses last for 1 minute (10 rounds).

Difficulty	Bonus
15	+1
20	+2
25	+3
30	+4
35	+5

PLAYING WITH ALTER EGOS

The Narrator may decide whether the alter ego is treated as a Narrator character or continues to be controlled by the player. Obviously, this will depend on the circumstances of the campaign and the maturity level of the affected player, but generally you should let the player portray the alter ego. After all, Alter Ego isn't much of a power if the player can't control it (and would perhaps more properly be a drawback).

Nevertheless the Narrator should feel free to overrule any actions that he feels is inappropriate or against the alter ego's interests. Also, there is the possibility that the alter ego may become stronger (and gain a bonus to his mental grapples) as well as attempt to control the original. Such plot devices are more common among Narrator characters.

It is also possible that, once the original becomes aware, he and the alter ego can communicate with each other. In this case, the original may use interaction skills to influence the alter ego's behavior. If the Narrator decides to run the alter ego himself then this is a good compromise, as it enables the player to exert some influence on the alter ego's actions.

Bless Water: This use of the Bless power imbues up to 1 flask (1 pint) of water per adept level with positive energy, turning it into holy water. Holy water burns undead and creatures with the vice subtype as if it were acid. Splashing one such creature with holy water deals +2 virtue damage, while complete immersion with holy water will destroy them.

Bless Weapon: This use of Bless makes a weapon strike true against evil foes. The weapon is treated as a virtue-aligned weapon for the purpose of bypassing the damage reduction. Individual arrows or bolts can be blessed, but affected projectile weapons (such as bows) don't confer the benefit to the projectiles they shoot.

Special: Bless counters and mutually negates the effects of the Curse power.

Time: Standard Action

CURSE

Fatiguing

Prerequisites: Cannot have the Virtue subtype

Curse of Animal Enmity: If the victim fails a Will save, animals of all types act aggressively towards the victim, and they will back away or attack them if approached.

Curse of Barrenness: The victim becomes unable to conceive children if they fail a Fortitude save.

Curse of Debilitation: You place a debilitating curse on a subject in your line of sight. If they fail a Will save, they suffer a penalty to the ability score of your choice. The severity of the penalty depends on your power check, but it cannot decrease an ability below -4.

Difficulty	Penalty
15	-1
20	-2
25	-3
30	-4
35	-5

Curse of Flies: The target must make a Fortitude save or attract a cloud of flies that will incessantly buzz about them and crawl on their body.

Curse of Humiliation: If the target fails their Will save, they will be laughed at and ridiculed wherever they go.

Curse of Insatiable Hunger: The target becomes afflicted with insatiable hunger if they fail a Will save. Each time they eat, they must make another Will save against this power or eat until they are sick. Whenever they see food, they must make another Will save or immediately try to grab at it and begin eating.

Curse of Misfortune: You place a curse on a subject in your line of sight that gives them a penalty to all attack rolls, Fortitude saves, Reflex saves, Will saves, ability checks, and skill checks. As with the curse of debilitation, the severity of the penalty depends on the result of your power check. See the accompanying table for the penalties inflicted.

Curse of Lethargy: This curse causes the target to have a 50% (1-10 on a d20) chance each round of being unable to take any actions.

Curse of Painful Joy: If the target fails a Will save, they will suffer +1 damage each time they experience great joy or ecstasy.

Curse of the Sour Feast: If the target fails their Will save, food will spoil in their mouths, and drink will become rancid as it touches their lips. They will still be able to eat, but they will need to make another Will save to avoid becoming Nauseated.

Curse of Troubled Sleep: If the target fails their initial Will save, she must make a new Will save each night or be unable to sleep that night and suffer fatigue accordingly.

Curse of Unrest: If the target fails their Will save, they will become a ghost after their death.

Evil Eye: Any of the above curses may be used as a gaze attack, requiring the victim to make eye contact. Curses cast in this way are harder to resist, and the save Difficulty is increased by 1.

Special: Curse counters and mutually negates the effects of the Bless power.

TIME TRAVEL

Prerequisite: Narrator Approval

You have discovered a way to travel through time. Time travel is more of a plot device than a power and the exact details and consequences of time travel are left to the Narrator. Generally, the amount of time travelled is not relevant, but weight and familiarity are. The base difficulty of Time Travel is 10, although this Difficulty may increase based on the amount of additional mass carried.

Difficulty	Mass
10	Up to 20 lb.
15	50 lb.
20	100 lb.
25	250 lb.
30	500 lb.
35	1000 lb.
40	2000 lb.

The Difficulty is further modified by familiarity. For purposes of Victorian travel, a time engine will arrive at the exact spot in which it left at the appropriate point in the past or future. If something would significantly block its way, then the time engine will stop short at the last instant in which it could appear before the blockage is in the way (unless the blockage was temporary). If the obstruction is minor (weighs less than the time engine), then the time engine will brush it aside to manifest.

Because of this, familiarity with an area or time increases the chances that the time engine will arrive when it was supposed to. For purposes of this power, an unfamiliar condition applies a +30 Difficulty modifier rather than an impossibility.

Example: Henry Walker gets into his time engine in his workshop in 1885. He decides to go back to 1710, just after the house was built. Since Henry is very familiar with his own home and would know that the first owners didn't move in until 1711, he receives a +5 modifier. Next, Henry decides to visit the future. He tries to go to 1950. Since he has never been to the future before, he receives a +30 modifier. Unfortunately, his house was demolished in 1920 and filled in for a city park. Henry appears in 1920 and learns of his house's fate. He decides to go back to 1910. The Narrator rules that, since Henry knows the condition of the basement in 1885 and 1920, he is somewhat familiar with it in terms of 1910 and applies a +15 modifier.

SCIENTIFIC WONDERS

Scientific Wonders are masterwork items imbued with one or more feats or supernatural powers. These items may be single use, multiple use, or permanent. Scientific wonders are assumed to be portable personal gear, easily carried by the average person.

In order to construct a scientific wonder a hero must have the Scientific Wonder feat for each power or adept feat he wants to build into the item. He or one of his assistants must also have any other feat he wants to build into the item.

SINGLE-USE SCIENTIFIC WONDERS

Single-use scientific wonders are essentially feats or supernatural powers that act once on the user and are expended. The most common single-use item is a potion or elixir. The power check is made, the save Difficulty is set and the specific effect (if the power has more than one potential effect) is chosen at the time of the item's creation.

The inventor must succeed on a Difficulty 20 Craft or Knowledge check to create the item. For example, potions might require a Knowledge (physical sciences) or Knowledge (life sciences) check. If a power has more than one effect, such as Heart Shaping, the inventor must choose which effect to build into the item at the time of the item's creation. Creating the item takes an hour or the use time of the power (whichever is longer).

After this time has passed, the inventor must succeed on an expert level check using 1d20 + his expert levels + his Intelligence bonus. The Difficulty of the level check is equal to the power check required to use or activate the power (if any), including a +5 power challenge.

The inventor may take 10 on the Craft and Knowledge checks, but not the level check. If any of these checks fail, the process must begin anew.

Finally the inventor must spend a Conviction point to seal the effect into the item until it is released. This point must be spent on the last day of the item's creation.

Cost: The components to make a single-use item have a purchase Difficulty of 10 +1 per 5 ranks of power check bonus that the inventor wishes to imbue.

Sample Single-use Scientific Wonder: Medical Elixir: Single use of Cure with a pre-set power check of 10; Requirements Scientific Wonder (Cure), Difficulty 20 Knowledge (life sciences) check, Difficulty 15 level check, 1 point of Conviction; Component cost 12 (10 base +2 for power check).

MULTI-USE SCIENTIFIC WONDERS

Multi-use scientific wonders are similar to single-use magical items, except the item is limited to a certain number of uses or "charges" of the effect. The item's wielder may use a standard action to activate one of the item's charges and gain the benefits of the imbued feat or power.

If the power requires a power check, then the item functions as though the user had just made a power check equal to the power check chosen by the inventor at the time of creation. The save Difficulty for the powers of a multi-use item is equal to 10 + 1/2 the inventor's expert levels at the time of creation + the inventor's Intelligence at the time of creation.

The inventor must succeed on a Difficulty 25 Craft or Knowledge check of the appropriate type to create the item. Creating the item takes one week +1 day per feat or power to be built into the item +1 day per 5 charges.

After this time has passed, the inventor must make an expert level check using 1d20 + his expert levels + his Intelligence bonus. The Difficulty of the level check is equal to the power check required to use or activate the power (if any), including a +5 power challenge.

The inventor may take 10 on the Craft and Knowledge checks, but not the level check. If any of these checks fail, the process must begin anew.

Finally, the inventor must spend a number of Conviction points equal to 1 + the number of powers and feats being built in. These points must all be spent on the last day of the item's creation.

One charge powers the device for 1 round or a single use of the power, whichever is greater. Once the item's charges are expended, the item ceases to function until it has been re-charged. This process takes 1 minute (10 rounds) per charge. The method of recharging is left up to the inventor; the batteries must be recharged, or the device's clockworks must be rewound, and so on. If a multi-use scientific wonder has a power with a prerequisite, using that power costs 1 charge plus 1 charge per prerequisite feat or power, plus 1 charge for any adept feat that modifies that power. For example, the sample item, a Mind Control Helmet, has Mind Touch and Dominate and the Widen Power feat. If the user just uses Mind Touch, he expends 1 charge. If he uses the Dominate power, he expends 2 charges (1 for Mind Touch and 1 for Dominate), if he uses a Widened Dominate, he expends 3 charges (1 for Mind Touch, 1 for Dominate, and 1 for Widen Power).

Cost: The components to make a multi-use item have a purchase Difficulty of 15 + 2 per power or feat to be imbued +1 per 5 charges.



Sample Multi-use Scientific Wonder: Mind Control Helmet: Masterwork helmet with Widened Mind Touch and Dominate, with 10 charges and a pre-set power check of 20; Requirements Scientific Wonder (Dominate), Scientific Wonder (Mind Touch), Scientific Wonder (Widen Power), Difficulty 25 Knowledge (behavioral sciences check), Difficulty 25 level check, 3 points of Conviction; Component cost 23 (15 base +4 for two imbued powers +2 for one imbued feat + 2 for 10 charges).

Sample Multi-use Scientific Wonder: Night Vision Spectacles: Masterwork goggles with 10 charges of Night Vision; Requirements Night Vision, Difficulty 25 Knowledge (physical sciences) check, 2 points of Conviction; Component cost 19 (15 +2 for Night Vision +2 for 10 charges).

PERMANENT SCIENTIFIC WONDERS

Creating a permanent scientific wonder is an expensive and difficult process, but is otherwise similar to constructing a multi-use item.

Creation of these powerful items first requires a masterwork item specially created to serve as the receptacle for the imbued powers (See the description of the Craft skill in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* for more on creating masterwork items). The Narrator may also decide special components are required that can only be acquired through some special quest.

If the power requires a power check, then the item functions as though the user had just made a power check equal to the power check chosen by the inventor at the time of creation. The save Difficulty for the powers of a multi-use item is equal to $10 + 1/2$ the inventor's expert levels at the time of creation + the inventor's Intelligence at the time of creation.

The inventor must succeed on a Difficulty 30 Craft or Knowledge check of the appropriate type to create the item. Creating the item takes one month +1 week per feat or power to be imbued.

After this time has passed, the inventor must make an expert level check using $1d20 +$ his expert levels + his Intelligence bonus. The Difficulty of the level check is equal to the power check required to use or activate the power (if any), including a +5 power challenge.

The inventor may take 10 on the Craft and Knowledge checks, but not the level check. If any of these checks fail, the process must begin anew.

Finally, the inventor must then spend a number of Conviction points equal to $1 +$ the number of powers and feats being built in. These points must all be spent on the last day of the item's creation.

Cost: The components to make a permanent item have a purchase Difficulty of $20 + 2$ per power or feat to be imbued.

Sample Permanent Scientific Wonder: Aetheric Sword: Masterwork sword with Attack Specialization (Aetheric Sword), Cleave, Ghost Touch, Great Cleave, Greater Attack Specialization (Aetheric Sword), and Improved Critical; Requirements Attack Specialization (Aetheric Sword), Cleave, Great Cleave, Greater Attack Specialization (Aetheric Sword), Improved Critical, Scientific Wonder (Ghost Touch), Difficulty 30 Craft (weaponsmith) check, 7 points of Conviction; Component Cost 32 ($20 + 12$ for six feats and powers).



RITUAL MAGIC

A curious spiritualist recites an incantation she found in an old book of magic and accidentally calls forth a demonic entity. A business tycoon who is secretly a powerful cult leader erects monuments that enable him to call down his alien god. A brave priest and his assistant face off in an exorcism against an evil spirit inhabiting the body of an innocent child. Rituals are a way for Narrators to enable adversaries and even ordinaries to wield some control over supernatural forces.

Access to ritual magic should be tightly controlled by the Narrator. Power should not be so easy to come by that it becomes commonplace. A would-be ritualist may have to track down multiple ancient texts in order to piece together the various parts of a ritual, or the book in which the ritual can be found may be closely guarded in the archives of a museum or university.

The heroes should not be given free and regular access to ritual magic, as that takes some of the mystery away from the horror genre. More than anything, ritual magic should be a plot device that begins or ends an adventure. The heroes may have to fight against a creature called to this world by a ritual, or, more dramatically, they have to interrupt a ritual in progress to prevent the creature from being summoned. Furthermore, many rituals have drastic and lasting consequences. The heroes must be aware of the ramifications of their actions; one who engages in the forbidden art of ritual magic risks corruption, his mind, his soul, and even the fate of the world itself.

GUIDELINES FOR RITUALS

A ritual always requires some form of incantation, usually accompanied by gestures. Most rituals also require certain material components such as incense, a circle containing mystic symbols, or sacrifices of blood from a living victim.

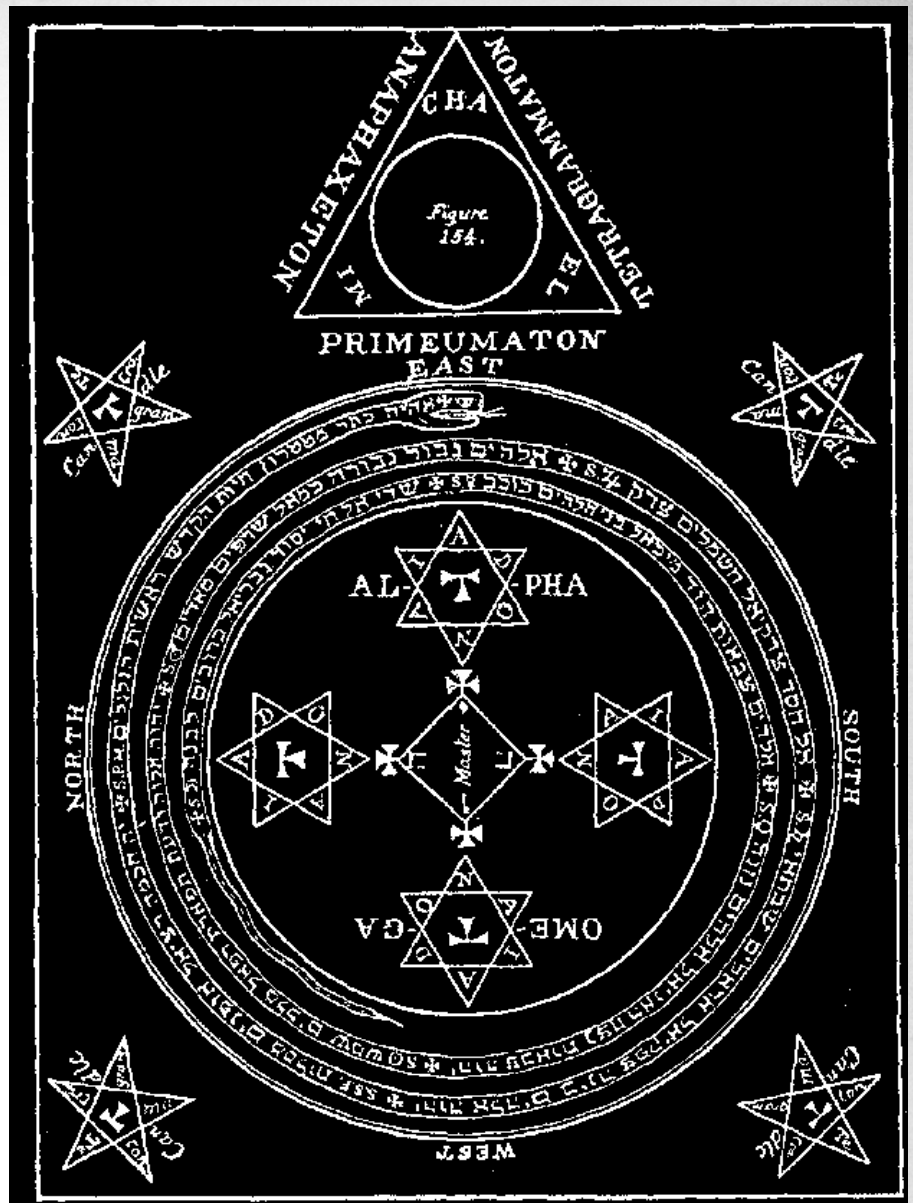
During a ritual the ritualist must make an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma check depending on the nature of the ritual. Rituals with more powerful effects have much higher Difficulties, with the most powerful among them having a Difficulty so high the ritualist must rely on assistants to have any chance of success.

SUPERNATURAL POWERS AS RITUALS

The easiest way to create a new ritual is to base it on one of the supernatural powers in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* or the *True20 Bestiary*. Not all supernatural powers are appropriate for conversion to rituals; usually rituals involve calling or driving away supernatural creatures, empowering one's self, or altering some feature of the local environment (i.e. causing earthquakes or controlling weather).

Narrators can use the following general guidelines to convert a supernatural power into a ritual.

Difficulty: The base Difficulty to perform a ritual is equal to 10 + the power's normal power check Difficulty. If the effect of a power depends on the result of a power check, the ritualist chooses the Difficulty that will achieve the desired result.



Adept Levels: Use the ritualist's total level as the adept level for any calculation relying on adept level (but not for powers in which the adept level is part of a d20 roll). For example, the Ward power would use the ritualist's total level to determine its area of effect.

Fatiguing: If the supernatural power is fatiguing, increase the base Difficulty by +2. Furthermore, the ritual is fatiguing as well, requiring a successful Will save with a Difficulty equal to half the ritual's Difficulty to avoid fatigue. The fatigue save Difficulty is calculated from the *final* Difficulty for the ritual, after all bonuses from aids and extended time have been applied.

Maintenance/Concentration: If the supernatural power requires maintenance or concentration, increase the base Difficulty by +2. If it requires both, increase the base Difficulty by +4.

Prerequisites: If the power has another power as a prerequisite, increase the base Difficulty by +2 for each required power. If the power has a level-based prerequisite—which includes powers with a power rank prerequisite—increase the base Difficulty by 1/2 the required level (rounded up). For example, Imbue Life has a prerequisite of Cure rank 12, which translates to at least 9 adept levels since power rank is equal to level + 3. This results in an increase of +7 to the base Difficulty: +2 for the power requirement and +5 for the level requirement.

Effects: A ritual normally only allows the ritualist to perform a single effect. To allow a single ritual to have multiple effects, increase the base Difficulty by +2 per extra effect. For example, the Ward power entails an area effect and a creature ward. A single ritual that does both has its base Difficulty increased by +2.

Time: Multiply the time required to use a supernatural power by 10. The result is how long it takes to perform the ritual. A supernatural power that is a move action or a standard action requires five rounds (30 seconds) to perform as a ritual, and a power that is a full-round action takes at least one minute (10 rounds). This time cannot be reduced, but it can be increased as the ritualist takes time and makes absolutely certain everything is being done correctly. Increasing the time required to perform a ritual reduces the Difficulty by an amount equal to the multiple minus 1. Therefore twice as long to perform the ritual reduces the Difficulty by 1, three times as long reduces it by 2, and so on to a maximum of -19 (20 times as long).

RITUAL ELEMENTS

Each ritual description has the following elements:

Power: The supernatural power upon which the ritual is based, if any. Other than the ritual requirements, the power functions as written when used as a ritual.

Difficulty: The ability check required and the Difficulty. During a ritual, the ritualist must usually make an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma check against a set Difficulty. Each assistant must also make a check of some sort, usually similar in nature to the check required by the ritualist. For each assistant who succeeds, the ritualist gets a +2 bonus to her roll as per Aid. A character involved in a ritual cannot take 10 or 20 on any check required by the ritual.

Ritualists: Each ritual has a ritualist who leads the ceremony and usually one or more assistants who aid the ritualist.

Components: Any special items or materials required for the ritual.

Aids: Any special qualities the ritualist and her assistants must possess, as well as certain qualities that provide a bonus to the ritualist's check. One aid consistent for all rituals is adept levels. The ritualist adds half her adept level (rounded down) to her ability score check to perform the ritual.

Time: How long it takes to perform the ritual.

Costs: Some rituals inflict injury or ability damage, or negatively affect some other aspect of the participants.

Success: What effect the ritual has if successful. Usually, success means the power works as written.

Failure: What happens if the ritual fails. Unlike normal supernatural powers, rituals usually have some drastic consequence for failure.

SAMPLE RITUAL: FAITH HEALING/PSYCHIC SURGERY

This ritual channels divine or psychic energy to heal injuries.

Power: Cure, Cure Blindness/Deafness, Cure Disease, or Cure Poison, fatiguing

Difficulty (Cure): Wisdom check Difficulty 22 (10 + base Difficulty 10 +2 for fatiguing). Each assistant must succeed on a Difficulty 10 Wisdom check to aid the ritualist. Will save Difficulty 11 to avoid fatigue.

Difficulty (Cure Blindness/Deafness): Wisdom check Difficulty 27 (10 + base Difficulty 15 +2 for fatiguing). Each assistant must succeed on a Difficulty 10 Wisdom check to aid the ritualist. Will save Difficulty 13 to avoid fatigue.

Difficulty (Cure Disease, Cure Poison): Wisdom check Difficulty 22 (10 + base Difficulty varies +2 for fatiguing). Each assistant must succeed on a Difficulty 10 Wisdom check to aid the ritualist. The base Difficulty is equal to the saving throw Difficulty for the disease or poison. Will save Difficulty to avoid fatigue is equal to 1/2 the ritual's Difficulty rounded down.

Ritualists: Faith Healing/Psychic Surgery requires only a ritualist and, of course, a subject with some sort of affliction to be cured.

Components: No physical components are required, but religious healers generally use prayers and texts sacred to their religion.

Aids: The ritualist must be trained in either the Knowledge (theology and philosophy) skill for faith healing or Knowledge (supernatural) skill for psychic surgery. Other requirements may be enforced by the Narrator depending on the ritualist's beliefs. The Difficulty of the Wisdom check increases by +2 for each condition he fails to meet. Before starting this ritual, the ritualist must choose which Cure power he is using on the subject.

Time: 1 minute (10 rounds)

Costs: None.

Success: If the ritualist succeeds on his Wisdom check, the subject of the ritual is cured as per the stated Cure power.

Failure: If the ritualist fails the Wisdom check, the subject retains his affliction.

SAMPLE RITUAL: EXORCISM

This ritual drives out demons or evil spirits possessing a victim or inhabiting a building.

Power: Ward (creature ward vs. Outsiders), fatiguing

Difficulty: Charisma check Difficulty 32 (10 + base Difficulty 20 +2 for fatiguing). Each assistant must succeed on a Difficulty 10 Charisma check to aid the ritualist. Will save Difficulty 11 to avoid fatigue.

Ritualists: An exorcism requires a ritualist and usually at least one assistant.

Components: No components are required, but religious exorcists generally use symbols and texts sacred to their religion as well as other substances symbolizing purity, such as holy water, salt, or white candles.

Aids: The ritualist must be trained in either the Knowledge (theology and philosophy) or Knowledge (supernatural) skills. The ritualist must also be pure of heart and faith: he must have no Corruption and must not have gained Conviction by giving in to his vice for at least a week prior to the exorcism. Other requirements may be enforced by the Narrator depending on the ritualist's religion, such as a Catholic priest needing the approval of the church before attempting an exorcism. The Difficulty of the Charisma check increases by +2 for each condition he fails to meet.

The ritualist receives a +1 bonus if he has 6 or more ranks in Knowledge (supernatural) or Knowledge (theology and philosophy), and a +2 bonus if he has 6 or more ranks in both skills. The ritualist gets an additional bonus of +1 to +4 if he has some sway

DEMONIC POSSESSION

In the Horror genre, fiends rarely manifest physically unless they are specifically summoned via the Summon Outsider power or the Summon Demon ritual. Instead, fiends prefer to rely on more subtle approaches to influence mortals; they tempt those who contact them, spreading corruption and vice through suggestions and promises of power. Usually, the most overt actions a fiend takes involve possession of a living host. To reflect this, all fiends with the Mind Touch power have the Malevolence trait:

Malevolence: A fiend can possess a living creature through the use of the Mind Touch power. The target can resist the attack with a successful Will save (Difficulty of 10 + 1/2 the fiend's level + the fiend's Charisma). A creature that successfully saves is immune to that fiend's Malevolence for 24 hours. If the save fails, the fiend vanishes into the target's body and controls it as if using the Dominate supernatural power. While in possession of a mortal body, the fiend uses its own mental ability scores and Will save and has access to all of its Intelligence-, Wisdom-, and Charisma-based skills, all of its adept feats and skill-based feats, and all of its supernatural powers and traits except the ability to summon other fiends. It does not have access to its physical ability scores, skills, feats, or traits (such as DR).

If you are using the Corruption rules, a character possessed by a fiend automatically gains a point of Corruption. If the character willingly allowed the fiend to possess him, he gains two points of Corruption.

over the entity, such as having knowledge of a spirit's past life or knowing a demon's true name. The amount of this bonus (if any) is up to the Narrator. Assistants with 6 or more ranks in Knowledge (supernatural) or Knowledge (theology and philosophy) provide a bonus of +3 to the primary ritualist rather than the usual +2.

Time: 5 rounds

Costs: The ritualist and each assistant may have to make Sanity saves depending on what the entity does during the exorcism. Anyone who fails a Sanity save automatically fails any other check she must make during the ritual. Any character present at an exorcism can offer himself to the entity to spare the body of the possessed victim. This is usually an act of desperation when an exorcism has gone wrong and the entity threatens to hurt its current victim. In this case, the martyr automatically gains a point of Conviction because of the sacrifice. Of course, the entity can always choose not to accept the offer. The exorcism must begin anew to confront the entity in the new victim.

Success: If the ritualist succeeds on his Charisma check, the entity must succeed on a Will save or be forced from its host. The save Difficulty is equal to the base Difficulty chosen by the ritualist. (In this sample exorcism, the base Difficulty is 20, so that is the fiend's Will save Difficulty). If the entity is an outsider, it is forced to return to its plane of origin and may not return unless specifically summoned. If the entity is a ghost it is disrupted and cannot manifest for d20 months. A ghost with a number of levels equal to less than half of the ritualist's adept levels (rounded down) is destroyed.

Failure: If the ritualist fails the Charisma check or the entity succeeds on its Will save, the entity remains in place and the exorcism must be started anew. The entity may also choose to possess any character present instead. The victim and the entity must make opposed Will saves, with the entity taking possession of its victim if it succeeds.

SAMPLE RITUAL: FORTUNE TELLING

This ritual enables the ritualist to glimpse the future.

Power: Visions

Difficulty: Wisdom check Difficulty 20 or 25 (10 + base Difficulty 10 or 15). The base Difficulty is 20 for a vague vision of the future, of the sort usually given by the typical carnival gypsy, and 25 for an accurate vision. Each assistant must succeed on a Difficulty 10 Wisdom check to aid the ritualist.

Ritualists: Fortune telling requires only a ritualist.

Components: A ritualist must have some sort of fortune-telling paraphernalia, such as tarot cards, a crystal ball, I-Ching tiles, chicken entrails, a palm, or even tea leaves.

Aids: The ritualist needs only to have some knowledge of the supernatural; she must be trained in the Knowledge (supernatural) skill. The ritualist gets a +2 bonus if she has 6 or more ranks in Knowledge (supernatural).

Time: 1 minute (10 rounds)

Costs: None.

Success: If the primary ritualist succeeds on her Wisdom check, she receives a vision of the future. The accuracy of the vision depends on the base Difficulty chosen by the ritualist.

Failure: If the ritualist fails the Wisdom check by 4 or less, she either receives no vision. If she fails the Wisdom check by 5 or more, she receives a wholly inaccurate vision.

SAMPLE RITUAL: SEANCE

This ritual enables the ritualist to force an apparition to manifest in order to communicate with it.

Power: Mind Touch

Difficulty: Charisma check Difficulty 20 (10 + base Difficulty 10) if the spirit is in the location where the séance is taking place. If the spirit is being called from another location, the Difficulty is modified by the ritualist's familiarity with the spirit. Most ritualists are at least slightly familiar with the spirits they try to contact either through personal research or by having them described in detail before the séance. Likewise, prior use of other powers such as Sense Minds and Second Sight may allow a ritualist to learn enough about a local spirit to be considered casually familiar. Each assistant must succeed on a Difficulty 10 Charisma check to aid the ritualist.

Ritualists: A séance requires a circle of at least two people, one of whom is the ritualist.

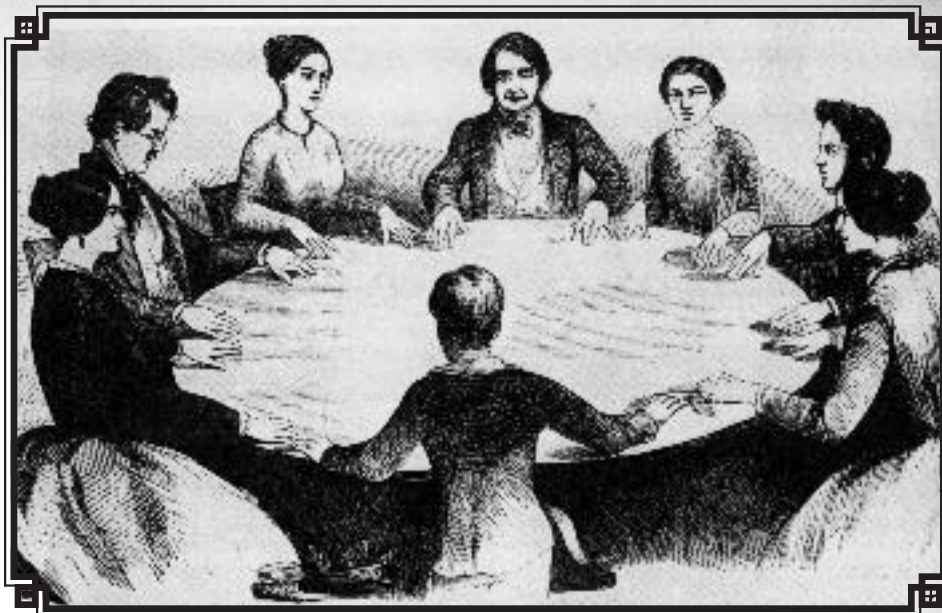
Components: None. The ritualist and each assistant need only link hands and concentrate.

Aids: The ritualist needs only to have some knowledge of the supernatural; she must be trained in the Knowledge (supernatural) skill. The ritualist gets a +2 bonus if she has 6 or more ranks in Knowledge (supernatural).

Time: 1 minute (10 rounds)

Costs: The ritualist and all assistants may have to make Sanity saves if an apparition does appear, and may have to make more Sanity saves depending on what it does during the séance. A character involved in the ritual who fails a Sanity save automatically breaks the séance chain, which might dismiss the apparition.

Success: If the primary ritualist succeeds on her Charisma check, an apparition responds to her call. Depending on its whims, it can manifest and communicate with the ritualist or anyone present in the room. If the séance is held in a place known to be haunted, the answering apparition will be the most powerful entity in that area (measured by level + Charisma) or the specific entity named, whichever condition applies. If a séance is held in a place that is not haunted or where a haunting is only suspected, the ritualist must call a specific entity by name. Otherwise, any entity may answer the call. The latter is a potentially dangerous situation and should only be attempted by a ritualist who is certain she can control the answering entity.



Once called, an apparition remains for a number of minutes equal to its Charisma (minimum of one minute). The ritualist can dismiss an apparition before that time expires by making a Charisma check opposed by the apparition's Will save. Dismissing an apparition is a standard action. If the séance chain is ever broken, such as by a member of the chain releasing her partners' hands, the apparition can try to possess that person as a free action if it has the Malevolence trait. If it does not possess the trait or cannot possess the person, it must succeed on a Difficulty 20 Will save or be instantly dismissed. A dismissed apparition cannot be summoned by a séance or manifest for 24 hours.

Failure: If the ritualist fails the Charisma check by 4 or less, no apparition is called and the séance is a failure. If the ritualist fails by 5 or more, the results can be disastrous. The narrator is free to interpret the consequences of a failed séance as he sees fit. One possible consequence is that a hostile entity—such as an evil apparition or even a demon—answers the call.

SAMPLE RITUAL: SUMMON DEMON

This ritual allows the ritualist to call forth a fiend to do his bidding.

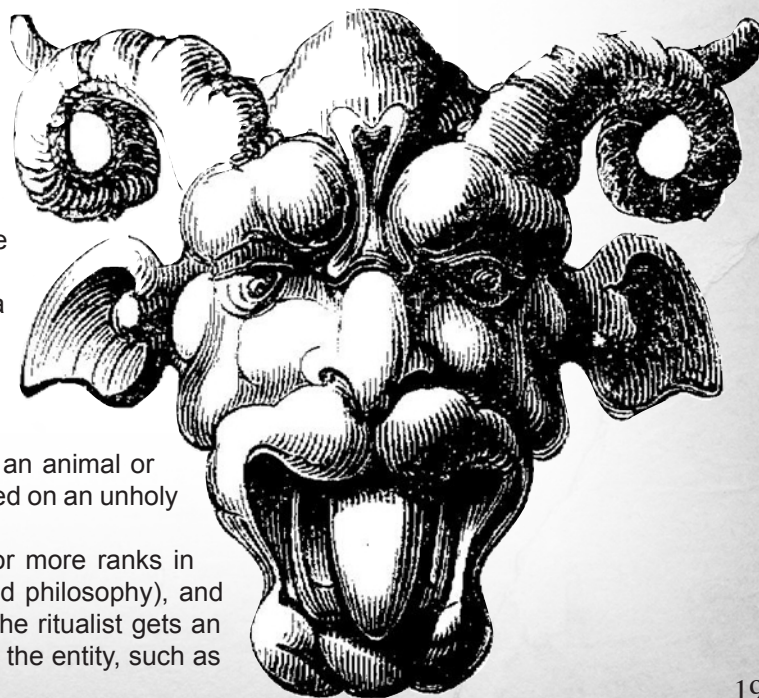
Power: Summon Outsider, fatiguing

Difficulty: Charisma check Difficulty 37 (10 + base Difficulty 22 + 2 for fatiguing + 3 for level prerequisite). Assistants must succeed on a Difficulty 10 Charisma check to aid the ritualist. Will save Difficulty 12 to avoid fatigue.

Ritualists: Only a ritualist is required, but assistants are usually utilized due to the high Difficulty.

Components: The ritualist must perfectly inscribe a summoning circle into which the summoned fiend will appear. The ritualist gets a +1 bonus for each of the following additional components used: an altar specifically dedicated to the summoning of fiends, special incenses and candles, an animal sacrifice (of an animal or animals with a total level of 5 or greater), ritual performed on an unholy day.

Aids: The ritualist receives a +1 bonus if he has 6 or more ranks in Knowledge (supernatural) or Knowledge (theology and philosophy), and a +2 bonus if he has 6 or more ranks in both skills. The ritualist gets an additional bonus of +1 to +4 if he has some sway over the entity, such as



knowing a demon's true name. The amount of this bonus (if any) is up to the Narrator. The sacrifice of an intelligent creature (Int -2 or greater) provides a +10 bonus.

Time: 1 minute (10 rounds)

Costs: When the fiend appears in the summoning circle, everyone present must make a Sanity save with a Difficulty equal to the Terror level of the fiend. Witnesses not subject to Sanity saves are immune. If you are using the Corruption rules, the ritualist and all assistants automatically gain a point of Corruption for participating in summoning a fiend.

Success: If the ritualist succeeds on the Charisma check, a fiend of the desired type (or the specific fiend named) appears in the summoning circle and awaits its orders. The base Difficulty of this sample summoning ritual is 22; using this ritual, the ritualist can summon a 6th-level fiend (such as a bearded fiend or a succubus).

Failure: If the ritualist fails his Charisma check, no fiend is summoned. The ritual is a failure and must be restarted. If the ritualist fails by more than 5 or more, a fiend of 2nd level or lower may appear for no other purpose than to wreak havoc among those involved in the ritual. It obeys no one and attacks everything in sight for five rounds before returning to its home plane.

SAMPLE RITUAL: ZOMBIE

This ritual allows the ritualist to transform a corpse into a zombie slave.

Power: Imbue Unlife, fatiguing

Difficulty: Wisdom check Difficulty 12 (10 + 2 for fatiguing). Each assistant must succeed on a Difficult 10 Wisdom check to aid the ritualist. Will save Difficulty 6 to avoid fatigue.

Ritualists: The zombie ritual requires only a ritualist.

Components: A fresh corpse, grave dirt, at least one pint of animal blood.

Aids: A ritualist with at least 6 ranks in the Knowledge (supernatural) skill receives a +2 bonus on her Charisma check.

Time: 10 minutes

Costs: When a zombie rises, everyone present must make a Sanity save with a Difficulty equal to the Terror level of the zombie. Witnesses not subject to Sanity saves are immune. Creating If you are using the Corruption rules the ritualist automatically gains a point of Corruption for creating a zombie.

Success: If the ritualist succeeds on her Wisdom check, the corpse animates as a zombie. The zombie is animated indefinitely (until it is destroyed) and is fanatically loyal to the ritualist. The zombie can be destroyed by physical means, or de-animated by filling its mouth with salt.

Failure: If the ritualist fails her Wisdom check, the corpse is not animated and can never again be subject to any form of the Imbue Unlife power or any rituals dealing with necromancy.



FEAR AND TERROR

Whether it's called a Horror Check, a Fear Save, or Sanity, one of the staples of Horror gaming is some mechanic to represent the character's "fight or flight" reaction to supernatural events. Although some players claim that such mechanics unfairly deny them control of their own character, it does bring an element of fear into the game itself. You never know how badly you're going to roll on a Sanity save, and it could mean the difference between fighting bravely and curling up into a terrified ball. That uncertainty helps bring the drama to the player more than just straight roleplaying alone. Certainly, no one wants their character to be the one paralyzed with fear when the monster rears its ugly head, but likewise no one wants their character to be injured in a battle. Having heroes who are subject to fear and terror isn't all that different from heroes subject to injury and death—it's just a matter of game mechanics. Physical trauma damages the character's body, and psychological trauma damages the character's mind.

THE SANITY SAVE

Anyone encountering a sudden shock or horror must make a Sanity saving throw. This is a Will save, to which you add any relevant feats, and represents the mind's ability to deal with scary situations and reality-bending encounters. Think of it as a kind of "psychological Toughness saving throw." In fact the Sanity save mechanic uses a system almost identical to the Toughness save mechanic described in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*.

A Sanity save has a base Difficulty of 15 plus a modifier equal to the Fear/Terror Level of the encounter. For example, a ghoul springs out of the dark. It has a Fear Level of 3, so the Difficulty is 18 (15+3).

Sanity Saving Throw = d20 + Will save bonus + Feats vs. Difficulty 15 + Fear Level

If the Sanity save succeeds, the target suffers no significant effect, nothing more than a slight scare or jolt. If the Sanity save fails, the target suffers mental health damage. The effects depend on the degree of the encounter (Fear or Terror) and the amount the Sanity save result is below the Difficulty.

Fear is instilled by lesser horrors and scares: a sudden cry, a gunshot, a man leaping out of a dark alley, etc.

A failed Sanity roll against Fear means the target is *startled*, imposing a -1 penalty on further saves against Fear, but not affecting saves against terror. If the Sanity save fails by 5 or more, the target is *spooked*; mark down a spooked condition on the Mental Health Track. A spooked condition also imposes a -1 modifier on further saves against Fear. If the Sanity save fails by 10 or more, the target is *frightened*; check off the frightened box on the Mental Health Track. If the Sanity save fails by 15 or more, the target is *terrified*; check off the terrified box on the Mental Health Track. If a target suffers a result that is already checked off, check off the next highest result. So, if a target is already frightened and suffers another frightened result, check off the terrified box. If the terrified box is checked and the character suffers another effect from Fear, check off the first available Terror box (so, go to confused, unhinged and so forth).

Terror is inflicted by great horrors and shocks that question the viewer's perceptions of reality: a window frosting over in the middle of summer, a ghost walking through the wall and so on.

A failed Sanity roll against a terror means the target is *scared*. Each scared result imposes a -1 penalty on further Sanity saves. If the Sanity save fails by 5 or more, the target is *confused*; mark down a confused condition on the Mental Health Track. A confused result also imposes a -1 modifier on further Sanity saves. If the Sanity save fails by 10 or more, the target is *unhinged*; check off the unhinged box on the Mental Health Track. If the Sanity save fails by 15 or more, the target is *psychotic*; check off the psychotic box on the Mental Health Track. If a target suffers a result that is already checked off, check off the next highest result, so if a target is already confused and suffers another confused result, check off the unhinged box. If that's already checked off, check off the psychotic box. A character can only be pushed immediately over the brink of sanity by being exposed to a great shock or a series of shocks while already in a mentally unstable condition.

Mental Anguish: Terror effects cause fear effects as well. Whenever your hero suffers a terror effect, check off the corresponding Fear box, too. So, a hero who is confused is also spooked, a hero who is scared is also startled. The effects of the mental health conditions are cumulative, except for startled and scared conditions, where only the highest value applies.

Mental Health Track

0	5+	10+	15+	
Startled	Spooked	Frightened	Terrified	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scared	Confused	Unhinged	Psychotic	Insane

IMPOSSIBLE SANITY SAVES

If the Difficulty of a Sanity save is so high the hero cannot possibly succeed, even with a 20 on the die roll, the Sanity save is still rolled to determine the effect (the amount by which the character misses the Difficulty). A natural 20 means the character is only startled or scared, regardless of the Difficulty. Fate intervenes to shield the character's mind from otherwise certain trauma.

Narrators interested in more realistic consequences for fear and terror should ignore this rule.

MINIONS AND SANITY

A minion makes a Sanity save against mental health damage as usual; however, if the save fails, the minion suffers the maximum possible result for the Fear/Terror in question. For Fear, this usually means terrified, while for Terror, this usually means psychotic. This is, of course, subject to the Narrator's discretion.

Modifiers to Sanity Saves	
Situation	Modifier
A loved one is endangered.	+4
You possess something proven to be useful against the threat.	+4
A loved one is clearly endangered by the threat.	+4
A friend or ally is clearly endangered by the threat.	+2
You possess something believed to be useful against the threat.	+2
You have been warned about what you're about to see.	+2
You are with several (4+) allies.	+2
You defeated a similar threat in the past.	+1
You are in close quarters (no place to run).	-1
You have faced and been defeated by a similar threat in the past.	-1
An innocent is participating in the scene (but not threatened).	-1
Each previously failed Sanity save	-1
You are accompanied by only 1 other person.	-2
A friend or ally is participating in the scene (but not threatened).	-2
Dim light.	-2
You are alone.	-4
Total darkness.	-4
You are at "wounded" or worse on the damage track.	-4

FEAR EFFECTS

Startled: A startled character receives a -1 penalty to further Fear saves.

Spooked: A spooked character receives a -1 penalty to further saves against Fear. The character flees as fast as possible for one full round or cowers, dazed, if unable to get away. He defends normally, but cannot attack. The following round, he can act normally.

Frightened: A frightened character loses one full round action. They can take no action, lose their dodge bonus to Defense, and have a -2 penalty to Defense. In the following rounds, frightened characters can only take a standard or move action.

Terrified: A terrified character falls to the floor, catatonic and helpless until he recovers.

TERROR EFFECTS

Scared: A scared character receives a -1 penalty to further Sanity saves.

Confused: A confused character is *shaken*. They receive a -2 penalty on all checks, including attack rolls and Fortitude, Reflex and Will saving throws. This persists until the confused condition is lifted. Additionally, a confused character is *stunned* for one round after being confused. They can take no actions, lose their dodge bonus to Defense, and have a -2 penalty to Defense.

Unhinged: An unhinged character suffers -2 penalty to effective Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma until this condition is lifted.

Psychotic: Psychotic characters suffer a -3 penalty to effective Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma until this condition is lifted and may only take a single action each turn. If a character was previously unhinged, these penalties replace those.

Insane: This character is unable to interact meaningfully with the world. This usually means the end for the character, as he is a gibbering shadow of his former self. Powerful sorceries or long-term counseling can restore sanity in some, but not all, cases.

REGAINING YOUR WITS

Recovering from mental health damage requires a Wisdom check (Difficulty 10). A successful check erases the mental condition, while an unsuccessful check means there is no significant improvement for that time period.

You can make a recovery check once per minute for frightened and terrified, once per hour for confused, once per day for unhinged and once per week for psychotic. Insane characters are over the brink and can only be returned to sanity (and to play) by special dispensation of the Narrator.

You can spend a Conviction point to get an immediate recovery check from Fear effects, rather than having to wait a minute. You can also spend Conviction on your recovery check.

Startled and spooked conditions fade automatically at a rate of one per minute. Scared conditions do the same at a rate of one per hour.

Characters may use Knowledge (behavioral science) or an interaction skill as deemed appropriate by the Narrator to use the Aid action to assist the target's recovery. A character may only benefit from one person's help at a time in this manner.

THE BASIS OF SANITY

A Sanity save is a Will save, but the results are read on the Mental Health Track.

As a Will save, the character's Sanity bonus increases with level and is explicitly tied to Wisdom. The character can be assumed to be growing more accustomed to the unnatural as she progresses in level, thanks to the increasing Will save. Naturally, adepts and experts who select Will as their good save have a distinct advantage over other characters when using this method. Furthermore, since the effects of the Iron Will, Jaded, and Lucky feats stack, it is easy to build up a character's bonus to Sanity saves.

DETERMINING THE SANITY SAVE DIFFICULTY

Narrators should keep a few key concepts in mind when setting the Difficulty for a Sanity save. Firstly, they must decide which effect is most appropriate for the save: Fear or Terror. A Sanity save results in a Fear effect if it is caused by frightening but otherwise normal (or at least natural) events. A Sanity save results in Terror if it is triggered by supernatural events or events that can cause psychological trauma. A supernaturally inspired Sanity save should only have a low Difficulty if it can somehow be explained away through odd coincidences or natural forces.

Static Sanity Save Difficulties		
Difficulty	Sample Causes for a Situational Sanity Save	Fear/Terror Effect
5	Hearing a distant gunshot.	Fear
5	Finding a human skeleton.	Terror
10	Trapped in a potentially deadly situation.	Fear
10	Finding a human corpse.	Terror
15	Hearing a sudden scream very close by.	Fear
15	Witnessing a scene of great pain or suffering.	Terror
20	A large explosion happens nearby.	Fear
20	Seeing someone sacrificed in a dark ritual.	Terror

FEAR/TERROR LEVEL FOR CREATURES

With the introduction of Sanity saves into the game, it is necessary to add the traits of Fear and Terror to existing Adversaries found in such reference works as the *True20 Bestiary*. Any creature listed with a Fear or Terror Level forces an appropriate Sanity save and is immune to the effects of Fear and Terror.

Adding a Fear/Terror Level to a creature is easy: it is equal to its total levels. Consult the chart below to determine the appropriate classification, either Fear or Terror. You can add situational modifiers as you see fit. It is suggested you reserve assigning Fear for animals and vermin to those especially scary ones, like giant cockroaches and hungry wolves, not the neighborhood dog or an individual rat. Likewise, normal animals that are dangerous but which have been rendered harmless (or at least seemingly so) would not trigger a Sanity save; looking at a tiger in a zoo is not nearly the same as encountering one in the wild with no fence between you and it.

A creature's Fear/Terror level can be reduced by virtue of its appearance or reputation. For example, unicorns and true gargoyles are each 4th-level creatures, which gives them a Fear level of 4. Unicorns are less fearsome-looking than gargoyles and are more likely to inspire awe than fear, so it wouldn't be out of line to reduce the unicorn's Fear level to 2 or even 0.

Creature Fear/Terror		
Creature Type	Fear	Terror
Aberration	—	Y
Animal	Y	—
Construct (automaton)	Y	—
Construct (supernatural)	—	Y
Dragon	—	Y
Elemental	—	Y
Fey	Y	—
Humanoid	Y	—
Monstrous humanoid*	Y	Y
Ooze	—	Y
Outsider	—	Y
Plant	Y	—
Supernatural beast*	Y	Y
Undead	—	Y
Vermin	Y	—

*A monstrous humanoid or supernatural beast provokes Fear or Terror depending on its appearance.

OPTIONAL RULE: DISORDERS

Characters reduced to “unhinged” or worse on the mental health track suffer from severe penalties as a result of the mental trauma they have experienced. Depending on how well those characters roll on their recovery checks, the more severe penalties could last for days or even weeks.

RANDOM DISORDER TABLE

d20	Disorder
1	Weakened mind
2	Depression
3	Sociopathic tendencies
4	Obsessive-compulsive disorder
5–6	Addiction
7	Psychotic episodes
8	Paranoia
9–11	Phobia
12–13	Generalized anxiety disorder
14–15	Delusions and hallucinations
16–17	Night terrors
18	Obsession
19	Mania
20	Amnesia

Rather than dealing with those penalties, a character can wipe out all mental health conditions in exchange for a disorder selected by the Narrator or rolled on the Random Disorder Table. A Narrator can also automatically give a character a Disorder if the player rolls a natural 1 on the Sanity save or recovery check.

A disorder comes into effect within one day of the event that triggered it.

If a character develops a mania or a phobia, the disorder should be tailored to fit the circumstances of the event that triggered it. For example, a character who avoided a ghoul in a cemetery by hiding behind a tree might develop dendromania—the overwhelming desire to be around trees. Without a tree to hide behind, he feels vulnerable and exposed. Likewise he could just as easily develop coimetrophobia (ghouls dwell in cemeteries, after all) or necrophobia (dead things attract ghouls).

Addiction: The character turns an addictive substance to banish the memories that haunt him. While under the influence of the

substance he suffers a –1 penalty on all attack rolls, saves, ability score checks, and skill checks. This penalty lasts for 24 hours. He can go a maximum number of days equal to his Charisma or his Constitution (whichever is greater) before entering withdrawal. When in withdrawal, the character must succeed on a Difficulty 10 Fortitude save each day or be

shaken until a new fix is gained. A character who is tempted by his addiction (e.g. someone offers him a drink) must succeed on a Difficulty 10 Will save to resist. A character addicted to an illegal substance also risks arrest.

Stacking Effects: Increase the penalty while under the influence by 1, or increase the Fortitude save Difficulty to resist withdrawal by 2, or select an additional substance to which the character is addicted. A character with multiple addictions must satisfy each addiction to avoid withdrawal. Every time a character receives the Addiction disorder, his Wealth bonus decreases by 1.

Amnesia: The character mentally blocks out the memories of whatever caused the trauma, but suffers from occasional flashbacks. If this disorder is selected, take note of the event that triggered it and the Sanity save Difficulty. If reminded of the event in the future, the character must succeed on a Sanity (Terror) check with a Difficulty equal to that of the original event as the repressed memories flood back in. If the character succeeds on the Sanity save, her denial is still in effect and she can lock out the memories once more.

Stacking Effects: If this disorder is caused by a similar event or memories of the original event, increase the Sanity save Difficulty by 1 as the memories become harder and harder to shut out.

Delusions and Hallucinations: The character begins to hear voices, catch movement out of the corner of her eye, and see fleeting glimpses of things when nothing is present. She cannot be certain if what she is seeing is real or just the product of her own troubled mind. She has a -1 penalty on all Notice and Search checks and on Sanity saves.

Stacking Effects: Increase the penalty on Notice and Search checks and Sanity saves by 1.

Depression: The character loses hope for the future and ceases attaching emotional importance to certain aspects of life. He suffers a -2 penalty on Will saves and a -1 penalty on all other saves and checks due to a lack of motivation. This penalty does not apply to Sanity saves; the character simply does not care enough to be particularly bothered by anything he sees.

Stacking Effects: Increase the penalty by 1 each.

Generalized Anxiety Disorder: The character suffers from a variety of physical and emotional symptoms such as jumpiness, twitches, expectations of doom, and hyper-vigilance. He jumps at shadows and is always looking for danger. All attack rolls, saving throws, ability checks, and skill checks (except for Notice checks) suffer a -1 penalty. Notice checks have a +1 bonus.

Stacking Effects: Increase the penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, ability checks, and skill checks (as well as the bonus on Notice checks) by 1.

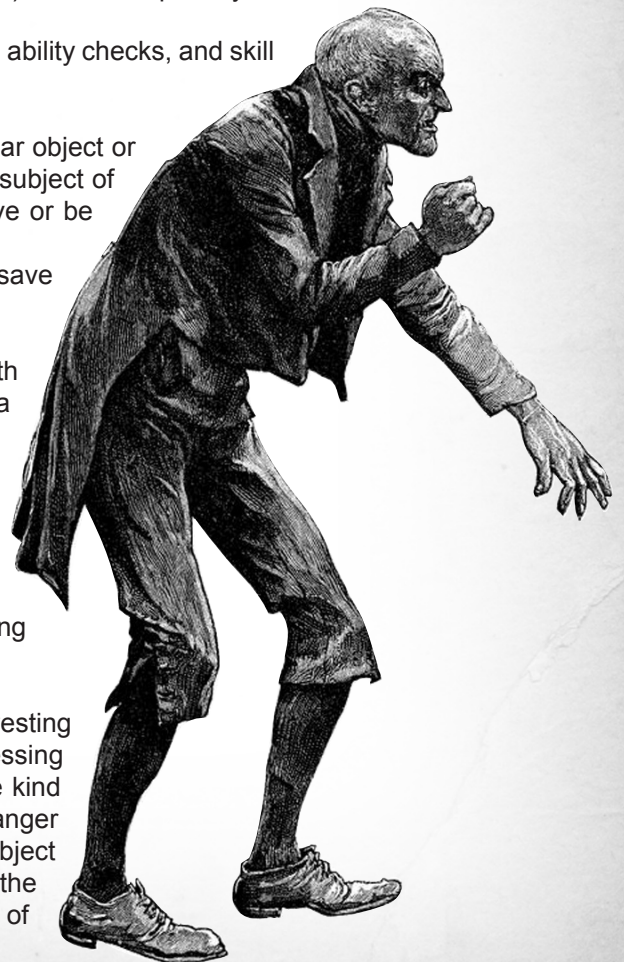
Mania: The character has a strong, unnatural desire for some particular object or situation and feels comforted by its presence. In situations where the subject of his mania is not present, he must succeed on a Difficulty 10 Will save or be shaken until he can obtain it.

Stacking Effects: Select an additional mania or increase the Will save Difficulty by 2 for an existing mania.

Night Terrors: The character's sleep is frequently plagued with nightmares. Each time the character sleeps, she must succeed on a Difficulty 10 Will save or suffer a nightmare so vivid she wakes up screaming and cannot sleep for at least 8 hours. The character is automatically fatigued for the next 24 hours due to lack of sleep. The only way to alleviate this penalty is through a full 8 hours of sleep. A character that resorts to pharmaceutical means to achieve her needed rest may become addicted to the medication.

Stacking Effects: Increase the Will save Difficulty by 2 to avoid having a night terror.

Obsession: The character becomes obsessed with something, investing strong emotional bonds in it or gaining a sense of security from possessing it. The object of the obsession could be a sentimental trinket of some kind or something the character insists can protect or shield them from danger (such as a crucifix or good luck charm). The character must keep the object of her obsession with her at all times. She frequently checks to see if the item is on her person, and absentmindedly fondles the item in times of



stress. If the item is removed from the character, she becomes frantic and suffers a -1 penalty on all attack rolls, skill checks, ability checks, and saving throws until the object is returned or the disorder is removed.

Stacking Effects: Increase the penalty on all attack rolls, skill checks, ability checks, and saving throws by 1.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder: The character develops a set of rituals and nervous responses that he must perform. This unsettles people around him, giving the character a -1 penalty on all Charisma-based checks. If the character is prevented from performing his rituals, he suffers a -1 penalty on all skill checks.

Stacking Effects: Increase the penalty on Charisma-based skill checks by 1.

Paranoia: The character becomes convinced that enemies are everywhere. He suffers a -2 penalty on Sense Motive checks and always believes that others are plotting against him if he fails a Sense Motive check.

Stacking Effects: Increase the penalty on Sense Motive checks by 2.

Phobia: The character has a strong, unnatural fear of some particular object or situation. If confronted with the subject of her fear, she must succeed on a Difficulty 12 Sanity (Fear) check. If the Sanity save is triggered by a creature, the creature's Sanity save Difficulty is increased by +2.

Stacking Effects: Select an additional phobia or increase the Fear (panic) save Difficulty by 1 for an existing phobia.

Psychotic Episodes: The character suffers occasional psychotic episodes during which he becomes mentally detached from reality. He may become delusional and see terrifying hallucinations, or he may become manic and rant wildly about the horrors that he has seen. Before each game session, the character must succeed on a Difficulty 15 Will save or suffer a psychotic episode at some point during the game session. The Narrator decides when the psychotic episode occurs. During a psychotic episode, the character is shaken.

Stacking Effects: Increase the Will save Difficulty to avoid having a psychotic episode by 1.

Sociopathic Tendencies: A character who becomes a sociopath slowly loses the capacity to connect with anything he experiences or is involved in. He suffers 1 point of Charisma drain as his emotions deaden and he stops caring about the world around him. The only Charisma skill not affected by the Charisma drain is Intimidate. A character whose Charisma drops to less than -3 by taking this Disorder becomes an incurable sociopath and is taken over by the Narrator.

Stacking Effects: 1 additional point of Charisma drain.

Weakened Mind: A character with this disorder gains a permanent -1 penalty to all Sanity saves and a -2 penalty to Will saves to recover from disorders. This condition must be eliminated before any hope exists of curing other mental disorders the character may have.

Stacking Effects: An additional -1 Penalty to Sanity saves and an additional -2 to Will saves to recover from disorders.

For every two instances of this disorder, the character's Charisma is reduced by 1 as he exhibits nervous twitches and erratic behavior.

A Bag Full of Bones

The following list of manias and phobias is included as a handy reference and as a source of inspiration for Narrator's crafting their adventures. Many great works of horror, both cinematic and written, pare down their themes to the essence of one idea and use it as a motif in their work. You, as the director of your own nightmares, can pluck out a bone, such as Automysomania, the desire to be dirty, and easily flesh it out for an evening's entertainment.

Prefix	Desire for (-mania)/Fear of (-phobia)	Prefix	Desire for (-mania)/Fear of (-phobia)
Acro-	Heights	Biblio-	Books
Aero-	Air	Blenco-	Slime
Agora-	Open spaces	Botano-	Plants
Ailuro-	Cats	Bronto-	Thunder and lightning
Andro-	Men (males)	Bufono-	Toads
Anthropo-	People or society	Caco-	Ugliness
Arachno-	Spiders	Ceno-	Emptiness, empty rooms
Astro-	Stars	Chiono-	Snow
Auto-	Being alone or by oneself	Chronomentro-	Clocks
Automyso-	Being dirty	Claustro-	Confined spaces
Aviato-	Flying	Coimetro-	Cemeteries
Bacterio-	Germs	Coultro-	Clowns
Ballisto-	Missiles or bullets	Cyno-	Dogs
Baro-	Loss of gravity	Daemono-	Demons
Batho-	Depth or deep places	Demo-	Crowds

Prefix	Desire for (-mania)/Fear of (-phobia)	Prefix	Desire for (-mania)/Fear of (-phobia)
Dendro-	Trees	Odonto-	Teeth
Dipso-	Drinking	Oneiro-	Dreams
Entomo-	Insects	Ophidio-	Snakes
Gephyro-	Crossing bridges	Ornitho-	Birds
Geronto-	Old people or of growing old	Osse-	Bones
Gyne-	Woman (females)	Pago-	Ice or frost
Hamarto-	Sin or making an error	Pedi-	Children
Haphe-	Being touched	Phago-	Eating
Helio-	The sun	Phono-	Noise
Hemato-	Bleeding	Pyro-	Fire
Hemo-	Blood	Scoto-	Darkness
Herpeto-	Reptiles	Somni-	Sleep
Hydro-	Water	Spectro-	Mirrors
latro-	Doctors	Taphe-	Being buried alive
Icthyo-	Fish	Terato-	Monsters
Insecto-	Insects	Thalasso-	The sea
Ligyro-	Loud noises	Thanato-	Death or dying
Mechano-	Machines	Tomo-	Surgery
Motor-	Automobiles	Urano-	The heavens, the sky
Muso-	Mice and rats	Vermi-	Worms
Necro-	Death or dead things	Xantho-	The color yellow
Nelo-	Glass	Xeno-	Strangers
Nocti-	The night	Xylo-	Wood
Nosocome-	Hospitals	Xyro-	Razors
Nycto-	Night or nightfall	Zoo-	Animals

ELIMINATING DISORDERS

Regardless of the time period, mental disorders are not easy to eliminate. At best, a patient with a single disorder can recover in a month's time with proper care and intensive counseling. In less prosaic conditions, the character can be subjected to extremes of physical and psychological trauma, possibly resulting in further withdrawal into the dark recesses of the mind.

Level Gain: When a character goes up a level, she can make a Difficulty 15 Will save for each disorder she has. On a successful save, she eliminates the disorder.

Personal Psychiatric Care: Prolonged one-on-one psychiatric care of at least 1 month, with no odd occurrences during the therapy, allows the character to make a Difficulty 15 Will save to remove a single disorder. The psychiatrist may make a Knowledge (behavioral science) check to assist the character using the Aid rules found in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*.

Sanitarium Care: While the purpose of a sanitarium is to cure mental disorders, in the Imperial Age they more often simply served as prisons for the insane. The sad truth is that a patient in a sanitarium is unlikely to receive the careful attention she requires. In addition, the very conditions in early sanitariums lead themselves to Sanity saves. There is rampant abuse and harsh therapies such as shock treatment. Patients are strapped into straitjackets at the first sign of unrest with little or no concern for their comfort or well-being. Inmates are chained to walls, strapped down, poked, prodded, and humiliated by the orderlies and even the doctors.

Recovery in a sanitarium works as described above, but because of the lack of proper treatment, the character can only roll for recovery once every two weeks. Furthermore, because of the horrific living conditions the character has a modifier of between -1 to -5 (Narrator's choice) to all Will saves made on the road to recovery in a sanitarium. As the modifier indicates, many patients in sanitariums would be better off locked in their nephews' attics.

CORRUPTION

In the horror genre, characters can acquire both moral and mental decay quite readily.

Corruption represents moral decay and the slippery slope of a character's descent into evil thought and deed. In some circumstances, subject to the Narrator's discretion, evil influences can be so overwhelming that characters automatically gain Corruption. Examples of this can be seen in the Rituals section.

The possibility of gaining Corruption occurs whenever a character performs one of the following corrupt acts:

- Using any power in a corrupt place.
- Using any power while in contact with a corrupt item.
- Using a power to take life.
- Using a power to directly control someone.
- Using a power to read someone's mind.
- Succumbing to one's vice nature while in a corrupt place.
- Succumbing to one's vice nature while in contact with a corrupt item.
- Summoning a creature from beyond the void.
- Necromancy.
- Killing in a corrupt place.
- Performing any other transgression listed on the table below.
-

Please note the above list is not comprehensive and the Narrator has final authority on what constitutes a corrupt act.

When a character commits a corrupt act, make a Charisma saving throw for the character. The difficulty is 10 plus half the rank of the power used for supernatural powers, or according to the following chart for other transgressions.

Difficulty	Act
10	Minor Transgression (Lying, petty theft)
15	Significant Transgression (Deliberately hurtful actions)
20	Major Transgression (Murder, rape)
30	Mortal Transgression (Conscious betrayal of companion, murder of innocents)

A successful save means there is no effect other than the consequences of the character's action. A failed save means the character acquires 1 point of Corruption.

CORRUPT PLACES

Places can become tainted with Corruption over time. Classic examples are houses where multiple murders occurred, apartments of serial killers, graveyards where dark rituals took place and so on. It is as though the dark soul of the demented took root and darkened the place for all times. Such corrupt places can spread their evil to those who spend their time there. The amount of evil a place has is reflected by its Corruption score, which can scale from 1 to 10.

THE EFFECT OF CORRUPT PLACES

Characters that do not have Corruption are not subject to the effects of corrupt places unless they willingly commit any of the acts listed under Corruption above. Characters with Corruption, however, are vulnerable to dark influences and add the Corruption score of such a place up to their own Corruption level. For example, three characters move through a haunted graveyard (Corruption: 2). One character has no corruption, the second has 1 point of Corruption, and the third has 3 points of Corruption. While in the tainted place, the first character is unaffected, the second has an effective Corruption of 2, and the third an effective Corruption of 4. The effects of Corruption then apply normally. Characters that have embraced Corruption gain the additional benefits of an enhanced Corruption.

CORRUPT ITEMS

A corrupt item is much like a corrupt place, except it only affects individuals in contact with the item. Anyone carrying a corrupt item is subject to Corruption checks. Some corrupt items bestow benefits to their possessor, which makes them darkly attractive.

EFFECTS OF CORRUPTION

A character's Corruption score applies as a penalty to the character's Constitution and Wisdom scores. This means a character with Constitution +2, Wisdom +1, and 2 points of Corruption has an effective Constitution +0 and Wisdom -1. These penalties reflect the impact of Corruption on the character's physical and mental well-being. Victims of Corruption experience these losses of Constitution and Wisdom as physical and mental symptoms. Physically she suffers fatigue, weakness, nausea, and gnawing hunger. Psychologically, she experiences growing fear, anger, paranoia, and mistrust.



The character begins losing control over her vice nature. When presented with an opportunity to regain Conviction by acting in accordance with her vice nature, the character must succeed on a Will save (Difficulty 10 + total corruption) to resist. Otherwise, she gives in and follows her vice nature for the scene. Characters that have a Wisdom score of 0 or greater can spend a point of Conviction to automatically overcome this urge. Characters with negative Wisdom cannot. A victim of Corruption whose Wisdom is debilitated goes mad in accordance with her vice nature, completely.

REDEMPTION

Eliminating Corruption takes time and Conviction. Characters may take the Conviction point they would normally earn each day and apply it towards their Corruption. Additionally, they may take any Conviction points earned by embracing their virtue during the course of play and apply those toward their Corruption as well. It takes ten applied points of Conviction to eliminate one point of Corruption. Dealing with the dark forces comes with a price.

Note that characters can still gain Corruption while working toward eliminating it, so it is often a struggle against the character's darker impulses. Characters may also find themselves in need of additional Conviction on occasion, taking an awarded Conviction point rather than applying it toward their redemption. This slows, but does not interrupt, the process.

EMBRACING CORRUPTION

If not stopped early on, Corruption eventually leads to insanity. A character is therefore faced with two choices: either find ways to eliminate it through conscious effort and virtuous acts, or embrace it. Characters embracing corruption become NPCs under the Narrator's control and gain the following benefits:

- The character no longer suffers any Constitution or Wisdom penalties from accumulated Corruption.
- The character cannot benefit from Cure powers used by a non-corrupt healer. The powers simply have no effect. A healer who has embraced Corruption can use Cure on other corrupt characters, including himself.
- A corrupt adept changes the key abilities of all his powers to his Corruption score. Instead of applying his Intelligence score to Move Object, for example, the adept applies his Corruption score. This means adepts who have embraced Corruption wield considerable power. The maximum Corruption score is normally 10; characters who have embraced Corruption, however, continue to gain Corruption points, although they add their Corruption score to all future saves to resist gaining additional points.

DISORDERS AND CORRUPTION

Disorders and Corruption present additional opportunities for the Narrator to further define and refine their horror setting. If you want to limit the effectiveness of a power like Mind Touch or Vision, for example, attach a "price tag" with an attached disorder or Corruption to it. Maybe reading someone's mind without permission (the most useful application of that power) leads to corruption. Seeing into the future might expose precognitive viewers to things "outside of time" the mortal mind wasn't meant to see and possibly cause a Sanity save or a weakened mind. You don't have to ban the troublesome powers outright, but you can ensure that players have good reason to use them with caution. Alternatively, you can make Corruption or a certain disorder a prerequisite for even *having* certain powers, limiting them to tainted characters only (which is a good way to limit them to the bad guys without flatly saying so).

SAMPLE MONSTROSITIES

The following four monstrosities were selected from the *True20 Bestiary*. The Apparition and Fiend were selected because they may be summoned by the sample rituals in this chapter, while the lycanthrope (werewolf) and the mummy were chosen due to their archetypal status as horror villains.

APPARITION

Apparitions are the spectral remnants of intelligent beings that, for one reason or another, cannot remain at rest. The ghost is given as an example of an apparition (and the one most likely to be summoned at séances); for more apparitions, see the *True20 Bestiary*.

APPARITION (TEMPLATE)

Type: The base creature's type changes to undead. Do not recalculate base combat bonus, saves or skills. If the base creature was a humanoid, it loses its background subtype (dwarf, elf, human, etc.) but retains its background traits.

Speed: Apparitions have a fly speed of 30 feet (perfect), unless the base creature has a higher fly speed.

Abilities: Same as the base creature, except the apparition has no Constitution because it is undead. The apparition retains its Strength but it only applies to attacks against other incorporeal or ethereal creatures. All apparitions receive at least a +2 increase in Charisma. An apparition may also have bonuses or penalties to other abilities, depending on the nature of the apparition.

Skills: Apparitions have a +8 racial bonus on Notice, Search and Stealth checks. An apparition may also have bonuses to other skills, depending on the nature of the apparition.

Traits: An apparition retains all the traits of the base creature, although those relying on physical contact do not affect corporeal creatures. The apparition also gains the manifestation, rejuvenation and unnatural aura traits and one or more other qualities.

Combat: An apparition retains the attacks of the base creature, although those relying on physical contact do not affect creatures unless they are incorporeal or ethereal. Against corporeal creatures, an apparition usually cannot deal physical damage at all. However, the apparition can use its special attacks, if any, when it manifests. An apparition gains a bonus to defense equal to its Charisma or +1, whichever is higher.

Saving Throws: An apparition's natural armor bonus to toughness is the same as the base creature's but applies only to incorporeal or ethereal encounters. When the apparition manifests its natural armor bonus is +0.

Advancement: An apparition advances by heroic role, usually continuing in the role(s) it had in life.

Level Lag: 3.

Ghostly Equipment: When an apparition first forms, all its equipment and carried items usually become incorporeal along with it. In addition, the apparition retains items it particularly valued in life (provided they are not in another creature's possession).

The equipment passes harmlessly through corporeal objects or creatures. A supernatural weapon, however, can harm corporeal creatures when the apparition manifests, but any such attack has a 50% miss chance (11 or better on d20) unless the weapon has a supernatural quality that states otherwise (such as the Ghost Touch supernatural power). The original material items remain behind, just as the apparition's physical remains do. If another creature seizes the original items, the incorporeal copies fade away. This loss invariably angers the apparition, which stops at nothing to return the items to their original resting place.

GHOST (APPARITION)

A ghost resembles its corporeal form in life, but often with some telltale sign of its ghostly nature: foggy wisps where its legs once were, an eerie blue glow, a chilling aura, and the like. Ghosts usually have the following traits.

Ability Score Increase: Charisma +2

Frightful Moan: A ghost can emit a frightful moan like the *fear* effect of the Heart Shaping supernatural power. Doing so causes the ghost no fatigue.

Horrific Appearance: Any living creature within 60 feet that sees the ghost must succeed on a Fortitude save or immediately take 1 point of damage to all physical abilities. A creature that successfully saves against this effect cannot be affected by the same ghost's horrific appearance for 24 hours.

Move Object: A ghost can use the Move Object supernatural power as a standard action (adept level 12th or equal to the ghost's level, whichever is higher). Ghosts cannot expend fatigue on Move Object.

Unnatural Aura: Animals, whether wild or domesticated, can sense the unnatural presence of the ghost at a distance of 30 feet. They do not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so; they remain panicked as long as they are within that range. All ghosts have this ability.

FIEND (GENERAL)

Some call them demons or devils; others call them evil spirits, dark forces or even fallen angels. Regardless of what names they have been given, fiends are creatures associated with evil from another plane of existence. Most fiends are associated with one or more vices in particular.

Fiends with supernatural powers use their abilities to delude and confuse foes as much as possible. A favorite trick is to create illusory reinforcements; enemies can never be entirely sure if a threat is only a figment or real summoned fiends joining the fray.

FIEND TRAITS

A fiend may possess one or more of the following traits (unless otherwise noted in a creature's entry).

Damage Reduction: Most fiends have some form of damage reduction. The amount of DR and the substances to which the fiend is vulnerable vary with the type of fiend (usually virtue-aligned and cold iron or silver).

Immunities: To electricity, fire and poison.

Resistances: To acid 4, cold 4 and fire 4.

See in Darkness: Some fiends can see perfectly in darkness of any kind, even that created by supernatural powers.

Summon: Many fiends share the ability to summon others of their kind (the success chance and type of fiend summoned are noted in each creature description). Fiends are often reluctant to use this power until in obvious peril or extreme circumstances.

Supernatural Resistance: Many of the most powerful types of fiends have supernatural resistance. The amount varies with the type of fiend.

BEARDED FIEND

Type: 6th Level Outsider (Extraplanar, Vice)

Size: Medium

Speed: 40 ft.

Abilities: Str +2, Dex +2, Con +3, Int -2, Wis +0, Cha +0

Skills: Climb 9 (+11), 9 (Notice +9), Sense Motive 9 (+9), Stealth 9 (+11)

Feats: Attack Focus (polearm), Cleave, Improved Initiative, Improved Strike^B, Power (2)^B, Rage^B, Weapon Training^B

Traits: Beard, Damage Reduction 2/silver or virtue, Darkvision 60 ft., Immunity to Fire and Poison, Persistent Wound, Powers (rank 9, Cha, save Difficulty 13, Mind Touch +9, Teleport +9), Resistance to Acid 4 and Cold 4, See in Darkness, Supernatural Resistance 17, Summon Fiend

Combat: Attack +8 (+6 base, +2 Dex) (+9 polearm), Damage +5 plus persistent wound (polearm, crit +4), or +4 (claws), Defense Dodge/Parry +8/+8 (+6 base, +2 Dex/+2 Str), Initiative +6

Saving Throws: Toughness +6 (+3 Con, +3 natural), Fortitude +8 (+5 base, +3 Con), Reflex +7 (+5 base, +2 Dex), Will +5 (+5 base)

Beard: If a bearded fiend hits a single opponent with both claw attacks, it automatically hits with its beard. The affected creature takes +5 damage and must succeed on a Difficulty 16 Fortitude save or be infected with a vile disease known as devil chills (incubation period 2 days, Damage 1 Str). Damage is dealt each day until the afflicted creature succeeds on three consecutive Fortitude saves, the disease is cured through supernatural means or the creature dies. The save Difficulty is Constitution-based.

Persistent Wound: Polearm; +2 damage each round; Difficulty 16 Medicine and adept level check. The infernal wound is a supernatural ability of the bearded fiend, not of the weapon.

Summon Fiend: Once per day a bearded fiend can attempt to summon 11 lemures (see *True20 Bestiary*) with a 50% chance of success (11 or better on d20), or another bearded fiend with a 35% chance of success (14 or better). Bearded fiends are fiends of wrath. They are the least organized or predictable of fiend-kind. They are legendary for their ferocious battlerages.

A bearded fiend is a feral looking humanoid with skin tones that can range from a sickly green to a dark rusty red. Bearded fiends are named after their jagged beards that appear as though made from sharpened metal wire. They stand 6 feet tall and weigh about 225 pounds. Every bearded fiend carries a saw-toothed glaive (a type of polearm).

Bearded fiends are aggressive and love to fight. They revel in their battle frenzy, spreading mayhem among their foes. A bearded fiend's natural weapons, as well as any weapons it wields, are treated as vice-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

SUCCUBUS

Type: 6th Level Outsider (Extraplanar, Shapechanger, Vice)

Size: Medium

Speed: 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average)

Abilities: Str +1, Dex +1, Con +1, Int +3, Wis +2, Cha +8

Skills: Bluff 9 (+19), Concentration 9 (+11), Diplomacy 9 (+17), Disguise 9 (+17)*, Escape Artist 9 (+10), Intimidate 9 (+19), Knowledge (any one) 9 (+12), Notice 9 (+19), Search 4 (+7), Stealth 9 (+10)

Feats: Attractive^B, Dodge Focus, Improved Strike^B, Power (5)^B, Skill Training, Talented (Bluff and Intimidate), Weapon Training^B

Traits: Change Shape, Damage Reduction 4/cold iron or virtue, Darkvision 60 ft., Immunity to Electricity and Poison, Kiss of Death, Powers (rank 9, Cha, save Difficulty 21, Heart Reading +17, Mind Reading +17, Mind Touch +17, Suggestion +17, Teleport +17), Resistance to Acid 4, Cold 4, and Fire 4, Supernatural Resistance 18, Summon Fiends, Tongues

Combat: Attack +7 (+6 base, +1 Dex), Damage +3 (claws), Defense Dodge/Parry +8/+8 (+6 base, +1 Dex/+1 Str, +1 dodge), Initiative +1

Saving Throws: Toughness +5 (+1 Con, +4 natural), Fortitude +6 (+5 base, +1 Con), Reflex +6 (+5 base, +1 Dex), Will +7 (+5 base, +2 Wis)

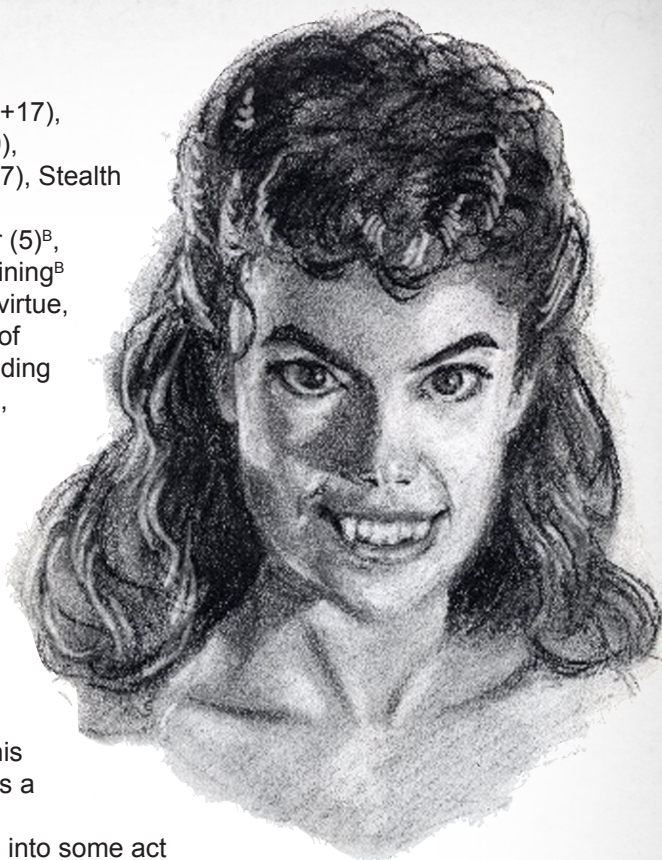
Change Shape: A succubus can assume the form of a Medium humanoid at will as a standard action. If it uses this power to impersonate a specific person, the succubus gets a +10 bonus on its Disguise check.

Kiss of Death: A succubus drains life from a mortal it lures into some act of passion, or by simply planting a kiss on the victim. If the target is not willing to be kissed, the succubus must start a grapple. The succubus' kiss or embrace drains 1 point of Constitution and 1 point of Wisdom from the victim. The kiss also has the effect of a use of the Suggestion supernatural power, asking the victim to accept another kiss from the succubus. The victim must succeed on a Difficulty 21 Will save to negate the effect of the Suggestion. The save Difficulty is Charisma-based.

Summon Fiend: Once per day a succubus can attempt to summon 1 vrook (see *True20 Bestiary*) with a 30% chance of success (15 or better on d20). If you don't have the *True20 Bestiary*, substitute a bearded devil and increase the chance of success to 50% (11 or better on d20)

Tongues: A succubus can speak fluently in any language. Succubi usually use verbal communication with mortals.

Skills: Succubi have a +8 racial bonus on Notice checks.



Succubi are fiends of lust and worldly temptation. Although frequently thought of as female fiends, a succubus can assume the form of nearly any humanoid creature of either gender. A succubus in male form is called an incubus. Regardless of the form it takes the body of a succubus is beautiful—by whatever standards of beauty apply to the humanoid type it is mimicking—and designed to tempt mortals into acts of passion. When a succubus reveals its fiendish form it appears much the same as it did in humanoid form, with the inclusion two small horns on its forehead, a demonic forked tail and large bat-like wings.

Succubi are not warriors. They flee combat whenever they can. If forced to fight, they can attack with their claws, but they prefer to turn foes against one another. Succubi use their Flesh Shaping supernatural power to assume humanoid guise, and can maintain this deception indefinitely. Their preferred tactic when dealing with heroes is to feign friendship and create an opportunity to be alone with one of them, whereupon the succubus applies its kiss of death. Succubi are not above taking on the role of a damsel in distress to lure in naïve heroes. A succubus' natural weapons, as well as any weapons it wields, are treated as vice-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

LYCANTHROPE (GENERAL)

Lycanthropes are humanoids who can transform themselves into animals. In its natural form, a lycanthrope looks like any other members of its kind, though natural lycanthropes and those who have been afflicted for a long time acquire features reminiscent of their animal forms. In animal form, a lycanthrope resembles a powerful version of the normal animal, but on close inspection, its eyes (which often glow red in the dark) show a faint spark of unnatural Intelligence.

Lycanthropy can be spread like a disease. Sometimes a lycanthrope begins life as a normal humanoid who subsequently contracts lycanthropy after being wounded by a lycanthrope. Such a creature is called an afflicted lycanthrope. Other lycanthropes are born as lycanthropes, and are known as natural lycanthropes.

A lycanthrope in its humanoid form uses whatever tactics and weapons are favored by others of its kind, though it tends to be slightly more aggressive. A lycanthrope possesses the senses of its animal form, including Scent and the Night Vision feat, and it has a deep empathy for (and ability to communicate with) animals of its animal form. An afflicted lycanthrope damaged in combat may be overwhelmed by rage, causing it to change to its animal form involuntarily.

A lycanthrope in animal form fights like the animal it resembles. It is preternaturally cunning and strong, and possesses damage reduction that is overcome only by silvered weapons.

Finally, a natural lycanthrope (or an afflicted lycanthrope that has become aware of its affliction) can assume a hybrid form that is a mix of its humanoid and animal forms. A hybrid has hands and can use weapons, but it can also attack with its teeth and claws. A hybrid has the same damage reduction that its animal form possesses.

All of the sample lycanthropes presented here are afflicted lycanthropes, and cannot pass on the curse of lycanthropy.

WEREWOLF FULLY ADVANCED (ANIMAL 2/WARRIOR 1)

Type: 3rd Level Humanoid (Augmented, Human, Shapechanger)

Size: Medium

Speed: 30 ft.

Abilities: Str +1, Dex +0, Con +1, Int -1, Wis +1, Cha -1

Skills: Handle Animal 4 (+3), Intimidate 5 (+4), Notice 5 (+6), Ride 4 (+4), Survival 0 (+1)

Feats: Attack Focus (sword)^B, Greater Attack Focus (sword), Light Armor Training, Iron Will^B, Night Vision^B, Run, Shield Training, Weapon Training

Traits: Alternate Form, Human Background Traits, Lycanthropic Empathy, Scent

Combat: Attack +2 (+2 base) (+4 with sword), Damage +4 (sword, crit 19-20/+3), Defense Dodge/Parry +4/+5 (+2 base, +1 Str, +2 medium wooden shield), Initiative +0

Saving Throws: Toughness +3 (+1 Con, +1 natural, +1 leather), Fortitude +4 (+3 base, +1 Con), Reflex +1 (+1 base), Will +3 (+0 base, +1 Wis, +2 Iron Will)

Alternate Form: A werewolf can assume a bipedal hybrid form or the form of a wolf. In these alternate forms the werewolf's abilities become Str +2, Dex +2 and Con +3. Furthermore the werewolf gains a natural bite attack, and its speed increases to 50 ft. The "Feats", "Traits", "Combat" and "Saving Throws" lines of the werewolf's stat block now read like this:

Feats: Attack Focus (sword)^B, Greater Attack Focus (sword), Light Armor Training, Improved Trip^B, Iron Will^B, Night Vision^B, Run, Shield Training, Track^B, Weapon Training

Traits: Alternate Form, Damage Reduction 2/silver, Human Background Traits, Lycanthropic Empathy, Scent

Combat: Attack +4 (+2 base, +2 Dex) (+6 with sword), Damage +5 (sword, crit 19-20/+3) or +4 (bite) or +3 (claw) (it cannot use its sword in animal form), Defense Dodge/Parry +6/+6 (it cannot parry in animal form) (+2 base, +2 Dex/+2 Str, +2 medium wooden shield) (+4 in animal form with no shield), Initiative +2

Saving Throws: Toughness +5 (+3 Con, +1 natural, +1 leather) (+4 in animal form with no leather armor), Fortitude +6 (+3 base, +3 Con), Reflex +3 (+2 base, +1 Dex), Will +3 (+0 base, +1 Wis, +2 Iron Will)

Wolf Empathy: Communicate with wolves and dire wolves, and +4 racial bonus on Charisma-based checks against wolves and dire wolves.

Skills: *In any form a werewolf gains a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

Werewolves in humanoid form have no distinguishing traits.

In wolf form, a werewolf can trip just as a normal wolf does. A werewolf in hybrid form usually dispenses with weapon attacks, though it can wield a weapon and use its bite as a secondary natural attack.

MUMMY

Type: 8th Level Undead

Size: Medium

Speed: 20 ft.

Abilities: Str +7, Dex +0, Con—, Int -2, Wis +2, Cha +2

Skills: Notice 11 (+16), Stealth 11 (+11)

Feats: Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (Notice), Tough

Traits: Damage Reduction 2/—, Darkvision 60 ft., Despair, Mummy Rot, Undead Traits, Vulnerable to Fire

Combat: Attack +4 (+4 base), Damage +9 plus disease (slam), Defense Dodge/Parry +4/— (+4 base), Initiative +0

Saving Throws: Toughness +10 (+4 undead, +5 natural, +1 Tough), Fortitude +4 (+2 base, +2 Great Fortitude), Reflex +2 (+2 base), Will +8 (+6 base, +2 Wis)

Despair: At the mere sight of a mummy, the viewer must succeed on a Difficulty 16 Will save or be paralyzed with fear for 3 rounds. Whether or not the save is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by the same mummy's despair ability for 24 hours. The save Difficulty is Charisma-based.

Mummy Rot: Supernatural disease—slam; Fortitude Difficulty 16, incubation period 1 minute; damage 2 Con and 2 Cha. The save Difficulty is Charisma-based.

Unlike normal diseases, mummy rot continues until the character reaches Constitution -5 (and dies) or is cured as described below.

Mummy rot is a powerful curse, not a natural disease. A character attempting to cast any Cure supernatural power on a creature afflicted with mummy rot must succeed on a Difficulty 20 adept level check, or the power has no effect on the victim.

To eliminate mummy rot, the curse must first be broken with a successful Difficulty 20 Cure Disease check, after which adept level checks are no longer necessary to use healing supernatural powers on the victim, and the mummy rot can be cured through supernatural means as any normal disease.

An afflicted creature who dies of mummy rot shrivels away into sand and dust that blow away into nothing at the first wind.

Mummies are preserved corpses animated through the auspices of forgotten Egyptian gods. They are often found in tombs wrapped in old crumbling gauze. Most mummies are 5 to 6 feet tall and weigh about 120 pounds. Mummies can speak, but seldom bother to do so (as most only speak ancient Egyptian).



CHAPTER TEN: OCCULT STORIES

They had been doing it all day, in the backs of shops, in exclusive clubs, and in the most destitute hovels in the city. Men and women, rich and poor, old and young were all dutifully fulfilling their part of the "Great Mystery;" inchoate rituals and blindly grappling lusts and sublimely exquisite reason.

He had done it. He had bribed and wheedled and connived and flattered and bullied. He had sold secrets and flesh, his own and that of others. He had moved his set pieces and tempered doubts and fears with money and promises of things money could not buy. He had acted alone and with partners who seemed to barely understand what he was about and he with but the faintest glimmer of their goals save they all seemed too yoked to the same terrible plow. He had brought all of this about.

By the end of the day some of his dupes would be dead, some pawns sacrificed, some battles lost. Small prices in the end, so long as it was carried off; so long as even most of them played their parts. It would be enough, enough to complete the movement, enough to get its attention.

And then...

And then....

Oh what would be born into the world this day! Born in betrayal and blood; born in secrets and lies and terrible truths.

He would be born; born as something new. He would walk across this world and it would shake with his footsteps.

It was probably a good thing that the fools did not know who they were really working for; but then again, neither did he.

And thus, consumed by his own preparations, he was utterly surprised when an antique pistol, a flintlock with DaVinci's mark on the butt, filled with salt, silver shavings and iron shot was discharged three inches from his left ear in the direction of his brain.

"Well, that was messy." The man in the bowler hat said and he returned the pistol to the velvet lined, and symbol bedecked valise he carried in his left hand.

"As it always is," said the lady in the black dress as she wiped a bit of brain from her elegant leather boots. "Do you think the others have successfully diverted his efforts?"

"They should have, although that's none of my concern really."

"I should think you would wonder who would take his place."

"My understanding is that they have determined that no one person should do so; too much power all in one place. I believe they have found a dozen orphan children to split it between. They, the ones that survive that is, will be groomed for leadership in the next generation. Not that I would know for what. Got to keep it all secret, you know."

"I know, and I am glad you do as well." She said as she pulled a tiny revolver from her boot and leveled it at his head.

The Occult Story is not so much a product of Victorian literature as it is of the time period. Often in Victorian literature the Hero is clear, and clearly a gentleman. He is going to be heroic in the proper way. Right is unquestionable, mighty, and clear. Real world Victorians, especially those that serve as inspiration for the Occult Story, were often larger than life characters that encompass both the best and worst of humanity. Sometimes what they did was heroic, or at least so in the eyes of certain people, but rarely did it fit into the model of the Victorian Hero. Thus the Occult Story is a one closer in character to those actual Victorians, rather than to the popular ideals of the era.



The Imperial Age was a world where men, and to a lesser degree women, frequently acquired and exercised powers through associations that were both mysterious and strange to the common man. Especially in the Byzantine structure of the British Government of the period the real work of decision making took place in private gatherings. In their most mundane manifestation these associations took the form of various Clubs, usually the domain of men only, and fraternal orders. In their more extreme iterations they were the Hermetic orders and secret cabals with in the halls of power which may have no name at all. Straddling the line between these two were popular groups that were nevertheless shrouded in

secrecy. While any shop keeper might belong to the Masons or the Rosicrucians, and know a few of the secret signs and rituals, even they whispered of what the upper echelons might be doing.

The quintessential occult society was the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, founded in 1887 and dedicated to the study of esoteric philosophy such as the tarot, astrology, and the Qabala. Technically it was only the outer most layer of a three tiered Occult Order. The second layer was dedicated to the actual practice of magick while a third were Secret Chiefs who had ascended to a spiritual form and yet guided the order through the second layer. The second order became active in 1892 as the movement spread beyond Great Britain to the continent. By the middle of that decade the Order was so popular it had hundreds of members from all walks of life and all levels of Imperial Age society. At the same time the Order began fragmenting as personal conflicts caused prominent members to leave and form their own secret societies, or just quit altogether. Thus it is that in many ways the Golden Dawn is the model of the Occult Story. It is not simply a tale of the pursuit of mysterious and fantastic powers but it is the story of the secretive, if not always truly secret, societies whose mission was to pursue and use power in all its forms, and the personalities and conflicts that drove them. The Occult Story is about the hidden struggle of these men and women to get what they want through any means necessary.

A narrator crafting such a story would do well to familiarize himself with the real and fictionalized biographies of men and women like Aleister Crowley, Maud Goone, Elphias Levi, Bram Stoker, Arthur Edward Waite, and William Butler Yeats. Just to name a few, for many familiar names from history and literature have surprising connections to esoteric and secret orders. One need not be confined to the era, however, works like **Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell**, set slightly before the Imperial Age, or Grant Morrison's **The Invisibles**, set in mostly modern but also historic times, are good examples of how secret societies might form, function, and evolve in their extremes. The later volumes of **The Dresden Files** represent an occult world where the average citizen may be in the dark, but there are numerous occult forces at work in the world and vying for power while the main characters on **The Fringe** deal with a world of strange forces and hidden powers from the bottom looking up.

CRAFTING AN OCCULT STORY

Crafting, and playing, a game of complex occult societies can simultaneously be one of the most difficult and one of the most rewarding experiences in game play. Creating and keeping track of all of the secrets, lies, hidden truths, and machinations of the occult world can be difficult, if not maddening. The joy of carefully revealing, or uncovering, the hidden plots and seeing the slow realization in the eyes of the players that they have learned some great secret, even if it is just that they are in over their heads, can be just as enjoyable.

FANTASY OR CONSPIRACY

The first thing both the Narrator and the Players need to agree on is the kind of Occult Story they want. For some "Occult" is simply another way of saying "the Supernatural." For these people an Occult game is just a game with magic or psychic abilities, it is a game about fantasy. A fantasy driven Occult Story minimizes the secret or hidden nature of the supernatural and focuses instead on using fantastic powers to confront fantastic foes. The fun is doing unreal things in unreal locales to unreal opponents. In that regard it is not too dissimilar to other fantasy RPGs that the Narrator and Players maybe know well. The challenge for both, however, is a feeling of setting. The Narrator needs to work to convey the Imperial Age feel of the story by making concrete references to place, culture, and events grounded in the Victorian world. Players, likewise, need to create characters that fit into that world and are not simply their fantasy characters in bowler hats under gaslight.

For others, inherent in the Occult Story is the concept of a hidden world, a world of conspiracy. This would certainly be most reflective of the real world Imperial Age occult community. In a conspiracy game nothing is what it seems, everyone has a secret, and there are hidden goals and powers at work in everything. The fun lies in the uncertainty, in the feeling of discovery and revelation. If this is not done carefully it can be frustrating. The Narrator needs to draw Players into an interesting world and slowly reveal answers, but only to lead to greater questions. Players, for their part, need to be proactive. They need to ask questions and think carefully about the game. In some ways a conspiracy focused game runs much like a Detective Story, there are simply multiple mysteries running at once and each successful conclusion just leads to three more mysteries.

NATURE

The first choice a would-be Narrator must make is the nature of the Occult in his or her campaign. It is quite possible to run an occult game and there be no real supernatural or fantastic elements at all. This type of game focus more on the perceived value of occult objects and practices more than any actual powers they may possess and on the struggle of Hermetic orders for influence and prestige. PCs, and even Players, in the setting may have a perception that the supernatural is real, an illusion maintained by the Narrator through carefully placed but vague clues or perception altering stimuli and credulous NPCs, but there is little real evidence of the supernatural. No one has special powers, although they may use subterfuge to claim them, and PCs focus on knowledge and social skills to achieve their goals.

Beyond this is a world in which the occult is real, whether it is magick or psychical abilities or anything else, but the PCs are some of the few that are aware of its existence and mystical artifacts and creatures are rare. This sets up an inherent struggle for the PCs. If there is occult danger they may be the only ones who can stop it and they are likely to have a few but very bitter rivals for any scrap of power be it an artifact, a tome, or even just a whispered name of power. Here the PCs are special and their knowledge and power is hard won, they are hidden heroes in a great struggle, but they have limited resources and may have to work to keep themselves from being attacked by a pitchfork wielding mob of the very villagers they are trying to protect. In this kind of Story the Narrator must choose what kind of supernatural forces are at work, what access the PCs have to them in the form of skills and special abilities, and how the existence of those forces may affect the world at large.

At the furthest extreme, and the least 'occult' (in the sense of 'hidden'), is a world where the supernatural is fairly common. Everyone may not know about mages or ghosts or demons, but the important powers in the world do and try to keep the dangers they represent from affecting the average citizen. The PCs are less special, but have more access to resources and assistance. They may even have some official standing within the government or influence in the halls of power. They may also have less freedom to choose their actions, since there are bigger forces at work in the world. Narrators should offer Players more choice in designing their PCs but make them aware of the consequences and potential forces that may constrain those powers.

SCOPE

A close second in terms of importance for the Story is the size and complexity of the setting. In an occult game where secrets abound it is almost always better to start small and build, especially if the focus is on conspiracy. It is a lot easier to add levels of intrigue than it is to reign in a campaign that starts out too big for the Narrator and Players to cope with. On the most basic level the PCs are a small group of like-minded individuals who are clued in on the nature of the "hidden world" of the occult. Their challenges and antagonists are rare supernatural creatures and other occult groups or lone individuals. Their goals are to get one ancient tome or stop a lone werewolf or exorcise a single house. They are not going to get any help by running to Scotland Yard to reveal the dangers of a demon worshipping cult. They are going to have to deal with it themselves. They may have a few allies, mentors, or contacts but the number of people who know about the occult world is limited, and the number with any influence over it is even smaller. The stakes are usually a single artifact, the life of one man, or the slow corruption of society. This size works well in that it makes the PCs the focus and neither Players nor Narrators feel overwhelmed by the number of characters, plots, and secrets at work in the world. It also works best if the game is more focused on fantasy than conspiracy.

The larger level Occult Story brings in more factions to the game. There are more secrets, bigger stakes, and more dangerous foes. While the PCs may still be primarily concerned with a single foe or organization, they operate in a world with many players on the stage. Exactly who works for whom and who wants what is unclear, and the PCs may have to satisfy themselves with limited knowledge and measured successes. Conspiracies are able to influence business or certain members of Parliament, but they do not have eyes in every room nor control every copper on the corner. That goes for both enemies and allies. The stakes might be high, with lives and reputations of important people and even cities hanging in the balance, but not truly earth shattering. The occult world is its own biggest rival and the conflicts are almost intramural in nature. PCs are challenged not just by an immediate foe, but by forces that act upon them beyond their understanding. This size works well if the Players and Narrator want to immerse themselves in a world of shifting allegiances and counter-countermeasures; and if they want to deal with truly powerful characters.

At the highest level Occult Story the secret organizations really do rule the world. The Illuminati, the Freemasons, the Hidden Masters really do run things, in part or in the whole. They operate through numerous cutouts and blinds, multiple organizations on multiple levels, and they really do have an eye in every room and anyone you meet might be working for a nebulous and nefarious Them. Their motives are myriad and strange. They work to enslave nations just so they can save the world. PCs can affect the destiny of millions of people, entire nations can rise and fall from the repercussions of what they do. This size works well for Change the World type games where Players and Narrators want the characters to have a big impact and maybe actually learn the Truth that is, we are told, Out There.

Another possibility is that all of the above are true. The game starts on the simplest of terms, with a limited scope and limited goals, but just as the PCs begin to feel they understand the world another layer is glimpsed leading eventually to far reaching, mind bending, and earth shattering conspiracies.

TONE

A Narrator must determine what he wants from an Occult Story. All stories are meant to entertain, but the question is "entertain how?" Occult Stories have room for horror, and certainly a complex conspiracy can leave the heroes feeling small and detached and at the mercy of powers both human and otherwise that they can barely begin to understand; but they also have room for humor and heroism. These elements grow not just out of the adventure the Narrator has prepared, but from the attitudes of the Players. It is always a good idea to discuss with Players what kind of Story they are looking for before going too far in any one direction.

OCCULT TRADITIONS

The Imperial Age was a renaissance of occult orders and traditions. In addition to large groups such as the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn or the Theosophist Society, there were hundreds of splinter groups and small societies. The following are some of the most common types of magical traditions an *Imperial Age* hero is likely to encounter.

CUNNING FOLK

The cunning folk (known known as cunning men/women and wise men/women) are primarily rural English practitioners of folk magic. Cunning folk avoided the label of "witch," as it had diabolic connotations and most cunning folk were at least nominally Christian (there are many references to Christian prayers, Biblical quotes, and figures in cunning folk practices) and many were regular church-goers. In fact, some cunning folk were hired as witch hunters, using their powers to drive witches out of villages.

Cunning folk are called upon to address concerns of rural folk. They are well-versed in herbalism and provide charms or increase the chances of success in a particular venture (such as a good harvest, a happy marriage, or simply good health). Some cunning folk were also diviners, offering clients a glimpse of their future.

In spite of their presence, little is known or remembered about the origins of English folk magic. Most likely, English folk magic is emblematic of English culture, a blend of Celtic, Greco-Roman, Anglo-Saxon, French, and Norse traditions, among others.

DRUIDS AND WITCHES

The cunning folk occupy an aspect of English rural society that the modern reader might reserve for druids or witches. Secret history aside little is known in modern scholarship about the actual practices of Celtic Druids, as Roman Catholic missionaries and others did a good job at stamping out druidic practices and putting a Christian spin in their writings about

them. Similarly, modern witchcraft (or Wicca) would not shake its diabolic reputation and be popularly accepted until the mid-20th century.

It is very possible that the cunning folk are connected to druids and witches. While outwardly Christian, they could be practicing the Old Ways in secret. The Narrator can apply modern Wiccan rituals and holidays to the cunning folk. Note that the typical Victorian would still see such activities as diabolic and any cunning man caught performing such rituals could find himself the victim of a witch hunt.

FAITH HEALING

Mary Baker Eddy founded the First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston in 1879, the start of Christian Science. This new sect was built on her life experiences with poor health and attempts to cure it through a form of mesmerism. Eddy spent years meditating on the true nature of her recovery, resulting in a book, *Science and Health* (1875). This book would become the key text of Christian Science.

Christian Science teaches that material reality is an illusion and that the only true reality is the Divine. Through prayer and study of the Scriptures, one can peel away the illusion of material reality; in effect healing illness and injury. It is the inverse of a miracle; rather than seeing God as changing reality for the benefit of an individual, an individual that understands that only God, not the material, is real can heal himself.

Still, at its core, Christian Science is about faith healing. Other religions also teach that recitation of particular Scripture or prayers can heal. In a fantastical **Imperial Age** campaign, such powers could be the result of the Divine working through religious adepts.

HERMETICISM

The hermetic tradition, it is said, originates in antiquity. Named for Hermes Trismegistus (“Hermes the thrice-great”), an almost assuredly legendary occult figure whose name first appears c. 172 BC in the minutes of an occult society in Memphis (Egypt), the discipline is based on the Corpus Hermeticum. These are a group of occult writings that synthesized various streams of Greco-Roman, Egyptian, and Eastern mysticism found at the time as a way of talking about the spiritual and the supernatural. Unlike some related movements, like Gnosticism, they incorporate no overtly Christian or Jewish ideas and instead are founded on intellectualized pagan thought. While they remained popular into the 500s, these works died out, only to be rediscovered in the late 1400s. Eventually it was suppressed by the church only to experience a revival during the Imperial Age.

During the Imperial Age there were two notable Hermetic groups, the Rosicrucians and Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. The founders of the latter, Dr. William Woodman, William Westcott, and Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers, were all students of the former and incorporate many of the ideas into their new Order.

The three foundations of Hermetic thought are Alchemy (transmutation), Astrology (divination), and Theurgy (both abjuration and conjuration). Theurgy, or the summoning of spirits, was of particular emphasis during the Imperial Age, and much of the literature of the time was related to the invocation and subjugation of spirits to do the bidding of the Occultist.

MESMERISM

Mesmerism teaches that the human body has a personal force, dubbed “animal magnetism,” that can affect others, particularly to heal. This force actually fills the entire universe and, once attuned to it, the adept can manipulate this energy to produce a variety of effects. The concept of animal magnetism is very similar to the East Asian concept of Chi or Ki energy (or, in recent popular culture, the Force of the *Star Wars* series) and, in the most basic sense, magick in general.

Mesmerism was developed by the German astrologist and physicist Franz Anton Mesmer. In his dissertation *On the Influence of the Planets on the Human Body* (1766), Mesmer reasoned that the human body had a magnetic fluid that was affected by the moon and the planets in the solar system. He further developed his theories over the next decade and came to believe that the human body was its own magnet and could be used to heal others. He even came to believe that animal magnetism was the driving force for

HISTORICAL ASIDE

King Louis XVI, while fond of Mesmer, was pressured to appoint the commission that would eventually discredit him. During the investigation, the commissioners asked the King to appoint commissioners from the Academy of Sciences. These included the American ambassador Benjamin Franklin and Dr. Joseph-Ignace Guillotin. Dr. Guillotin’s name would forever be connected to the execution device that ended the King’s life a few years later.

exorcisms.

Mesmer approached his work as science rather than magick and, while popular with patients in the late eighteenth century, drew the skepticism and ire of the established medical community. Having set up his practice in Paris in 1778, Mesmer soon found himself shunned and challenged by both the Royal Society of Medicine and the Academy of Sciences. In 1784, a report by the Faculty of Medicine found no credible evidence of a magnetic fluid and threatened to expel any members that continued to practice it.

While the scientific community rejected Mesmer's theories, he was embraced by the occult community. The Society of Universal Harmony, with chapters all over France, purchased Mesmer's works from him and began teaching them to their members. While the Society did not survive the French Revolution, Mesmerism was instrumental to the development of magickal thought. The concept of astral light or etheric energy, as posited by French magician Eliphas Levi (Alphonse Louis Constant) in various publications throughout the 1850s and 1860s, is animal magnetism by another name. It's worth noting that Aleister Crowley claimed to be the reincarnation of Levi (although he was already in the womb at Constant's death) and Levi's teachings, and by extension Mesmerism, were incorporated into hermetic magic.

MESMERISM IN OCCULT STORIES

While unverifiable by science, animal magnetism could be a true occult force. Mesmer himself seemed a magician in his own office. Wearing a purple robe and carrying an iron wand, he led patients into a dark-lit room with crystals and mirrors while an orchestra played music. He and his similarly attired assistants would hover over patients, waving their wands and probing them. It was the very picture of a magickal ritual.

The Narrator should decide exactly what "animal magnetism" is for flavor reasons. Is Mesmerism merely an application of magick, or is it psychological (psionic) in nature? Do the abilities of the Mesmerist come from a greater power, such as a ghost, demon, or even the Divine? How Mesmerism is classified will have an impact on its relationship with other occult organizations.

MESMERISM VS. HYPNOSIS

In 21st century parlance, mesmerism and hypnosis are used interchangeably. However, while hypnosis developed from mesmerism, they are not the same. The term "hypnosis" was coined by Scottish physician James Braid. Braid wished to disprove the notion of animal magnetism and, as so often happens in scientific experimentation, stumbled upon something else.

Hypnotism does not rely on animal magnetism or any other esoteric force. Instead, it is merely the ability to focus a subject's attention to the point in which he is more prone to suggestion. Thus, hypnotism is a facet of psychology rather than magick.

In *True20* terms, a Mesmerist would use the Suggestion power to plant a suggestion in the mind of a target, while a Hypnotist would use the Suggestion feat to accomplish the same result.

SPIRITUALISM

Spiritualism is the belief that man can interact with spirits of the dead in order to learn information and improve himself (some Spiritualists, especially Christian Spiritualists, extend this interaction to include supernatural beings such as angels). Practitioners of Spiritualism are generally known as Mediums. As the name implies, a Medium is the conduit through which spirits and other outsiders can interact with the physical world. While this title conjures images of séances in darkened rooms, mediums were considered capable of healing as well as divination.

Spiritualism is a practice at least as old as recorded history. Mankind has prayed to gods, ancestors, and other spirits for millennia, asking them to intervene on their behalf. The Oracle at Delphi in ancient Greece was consulted before all major undertakings. Many cultures throughout the world believed that one's deceased friends, relatives, and ancestors could intercede on their behalf.

Spiritualism as practiced in the Imperial Age was started in 1848, when two sisters from Hydesville, New York, Margaretta and Catherine Fox, claimed to be able to speak with the dead. They would call upon spirits that communicated through rapping sounds. Managed by their older sister Leah, the Fox sisters became a popular stage act. In 1852, a Boston medium brought Spiritualism to London. Spiritualism spread like wildfire through the western world and threatened traditional religions, as many people cast aside their old beliefs in favor of what they learned through direct contact with the afterlife.

Spiritualism had a unique spin on the spirit world. Rather than going to Heaven or Hell, spirits remained in contact with the world and continued to improve and evolve. These spirits were capable of great wisdom that they would share with those who contacted them, usually through séances. Practitioners of Spiritualism tended to drift away from their earlier beliefs and there was a schism between Christian Spiritualists, who sought to preserve as much of their original beliefs as possible, and "pure" Spiritualists, who thought to create a completely new religion. There were many variations on these two main schools of thought and Spiritualism was not a unified organization.

Needless to say, there were many parties interested in seeing Spiritualism discredited. Since spirits contacted mediums through rapping or similar means, skeptics claimed that the sounds were faked and Spiritualists could not conclusively prove otherwise. Many mediums actually were discredited, although prominent mediums, including the Fox sisters, were able to survive critical investigation. The Fox sisters actually discredited themselves in 1888; claiming that they had faked the rapping and that their sister Leah was responsible for making them continue the façade (Catherine would recant her "confession" the following year and continued to work as a medium, a testament to the strength of the movement).

Spiritualism is a powerful force in Britain during the Imperial Age. The first British Spiritualist publication was The Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph in 1855. There were many Spiritualist journals, including The Spiritualist, The Psychic World, and Two Worlds. Major Spiritualist groups in London included the Marylebone Spiritualist Association, founded in 1872 and the British National Association of Spiritualists, founded in 1884. By the end of the Imperial Age, there would be efforts to unite Spiritualist churches under one banner.

There were other movements during the Imperial Age that either grew out of Spiritualism or had similar teachings. Spiritism, which was started in France in the 1850s by occultist Allan Kardec, added reincarnation and belief in extraterrestrial life to the usual Spiritualist teachings. Theosophist founder Helen Blavatsky claimed to contact spirits for knowledge. Christian Science, founded by Mary Baker Eddy in 1875, included the belief that one could heal oneself through prayer (although Eddy was influenced by Mesmerism rather than Spiritualism).

SPIRITUALISM IN OCCULT STORIES

While the medium's craft is contacting spirits from the Other Side that does not mean that the medium is limited to powers dealing with such contact. Some of the spirits contacted are willing to teach the medium the secrets of magick, potentially offering any power available.

What this means is that an individual medium could have an array of powers as equal and varied as that of any occultist. The medium will also likely have to obey any Laws of Magick that the Narrator enforces.

SPIRITUALISM AND WOMEN

One very interesting aspect of Spiritualism was its appeal to women. Largely left out of leadership roles in established religions, women found that Spiritualism offered them a degree of equality and even dominance in the faith. More women than men were mediums, and Spiritualism was practiced in drawing rooms and parlors throughout the middle and upper classes of the western world. Partly as a result, many Spiritualists campaigned for equal rights for women during the Imperial Age (many had also argued for the abolition of slavery prior to the American Civil War).

In campaigns where Spiritualism grants supernatural powers, women that are shut out of magickal societies will find acceptance and prominence amongst Spiritualists.

EVIL SPIRITUALISTS

Historically, Spiritualism was not evil. Like established religions before it, Spiritualism provided yet another moral code and a positive view of the afterlife. Even in the case of medium fraud, the motives were for selfish economic reasons.

Still, the evil necromancer is a fiction staple and stands in stark contrast to Spiritualism. In campaigns where Mediums wield true power, there are those that will use that power for dark purposes. Evil Mediums are mechanically similar to regular mediums except that they can cause injuries and command the dead. Such mediums are not recommended as player characters but they make great villains. In fantastic campaigns, a society may even have laws that make evil Medium practice a crime. Good Spiritualists and their allies will want to bring "rogue" mediums to justice.

CRAFTING HEROES FOR OCCULT STORIES

As a general rule, the difference between a horror story and an occult story is the ability of the heroes to fight back. While horror stories tend to throw protagonists into situations beyond their depth, occult stories offer magickal firepower to their heroes. Adept heroes will tend to be at the forefront of an occult story. If your campaign revolves around occult adventures, then you may wish to have several types of adept within the hero group.

KEEPING IT OLD SCHOOL

The original *Imperial Age* product line used a rules set that did not allow heroes access to occult powers until 4th level. The two adventures published under those rules, *Hell Hath No Fury* and *The Price of Immortality*, presume that none of the heroes have occult powers. If a Narrator wants to impose the old 4th level baseline, then she can require a hero to have at least 6 ranks in Knowledge (supernatural) before he can learn powers.

A less strict way to keep that old school feeling is to simply disallow starting heroes to take the adept role. Even if a hero takes an adept level when he reaches the next level, he won't have access to the adept core ability (which allows him to spend a conviction point to use any power). This keeps with the old school flavor that an adept has a suite of powers and that's it.

In a secret magic campaign, this can be easily justified. Magical associations won't just accept anyone; a hero will have to meet certain standards before being allowed to learn magic. The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn had a number of levels that a student had to master before being invited into the inner circle.

HOW POWERFUL IS THE OCCULT?

When designing an occult campaign, the Narrator will have to determine the potency of occult powers. How powerful and effective can heroes use powers? Can they be as powerful as adepts, or should they be more limited? While there are limitless possibilities, we're going to narrow this discussion to three: Ritualist, Occultist, and Adept.

The ritualist is an occult scholar that has learned to cast ritual spells. Under this system, heroes can't use powers on the fly; all powers are the result of ritual. There is no role that grants powers; instead, the ritualist is an expert or warrior that gains powers through the ritual knowledge feat (see the **Horror Stories** chapter). This power level is good if you want to restrict powers to a smaller group of "behind closed doors" powers, as powers with more immediate applications, such as Elemental Blast, would need to be imbued in an item.

The occultist is a less potent version of the adept. While her powers are less effective, the occultist does have a broader selection of skills. The occultist is a good replacement role for the adept in campaigns where the Narrator wants heroes to be able to wield magic but not at four-color fantasy levels.

The adept, of course, is the most potent option. While balanced with the other roles, adepts can bring awesome powers to bear against their foes. This is the best option in campaigns where magic is commonplace or in the hands of a few potent individuals that work primarily behind the scenes.

ADEPT

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the adept role shines in occult stories (unless replaced by the occultist role). The adept represents a variety of different traditions and methods of learning to use powers beyond those of normal men and women. Some learn their powers through intense study, such as the magicians of esoteric clubs. Others are granted powers by another being, whether Divine, Infernal, or simply a ghost from the other side. Still others learn that there are powers within the human mind that are waiting to be unlocked.

When creating an adept, you should decide how your hero acquires his powers and make power choices based on that concept. A psychical hero that has learned to tap the resources of her mind would learn powers such as Dominate, Manipulate Object, and Psychic Blast, while a Druid may learn Beast Speech, Cure, and Nature Reading. A few examples of starting paths are provided here.

CUNNING MAN/WOMAN

The cunning (or wise) man or woman is an important role in rural communities. He or she provides herbal remedies, crafts charms, and otherwise carries on country magical traditions.

Key Ability: Charisma

Starting Skills: Knowledge (life sciences), Knowledge (supernatural), Medicine, Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Cure, Cure Poison, Probability Shaping, Talented (Knowledge (life sciences) and Medicine)

ONLY ONE NEW ROLE?

We'd considered new roles when designing this chapter for *The Imperial Age*. After careful consideration, we decided to stick with adepts. Why? The answer was simple: power creep. Most of the alternatives involved "false penalties;" in other words, if you only select powers that fit your heroic concept then you are rewarded with a more powerful hero. Heroes rarely spend enough feats on powers that the limitations become an issue.

It seems to me that the Narrator should be shaping power lists according to the needs of her campaign. Heroes shouldn't be rewarded for sticking to them. If anything, an adept should be penalized for straying from the norm for an adept of her background/path.

With this in mind, *The Imperial Age* treats all power-wielders as adepts. We also offer a lower-powered alternative, the occultist, for Narrators that want a more scholarly approach to adepts in their campaigns. That said this is your campaign. If you want to create new roles, then by all means do so. The Horror chapter in the *True20 Companion* offers some examples (the Arcanist was used as the basis for the Occultist).

SUPERNATURAL PHILOSOPHIES

The *True20 Adept's Handbook* introduces the concept of supernatural philosophies. Many of these philosophies track well to the occult traditions offered in the beginning of this chapter: Witchcraft (Cunning Folk), Monotheism (Faith Healing), Hermeticism (Hermeticism), and Mesmerism (Mesmerism). Spiritualism is a bit harder to pigeon-hole, as its powers seem to cut across several of the supernatural philosophies offered. A new supernatural philosophy is offered here for mediums (some of the powers listed are included in the *Adept's Handbook* and, if you're using supernatural philosophies, you likely have that book).

SPIRITUALISM

Spiritualism is the belief that one can contact the spiritual world and gain knowledge from it. The types of spirits and the information they have vary from individual to individual; this attempt to codify it into a philosophy represents the most common types of powers taught to a medium by the spirits she contacts. It is worth reminding that women are more often mediums than men.

Prerequisites: Ritualist (Séance), Knowledge (supernatural)

Key Ability:

Canonical Powers: Banishment, Beneficial Possession, Bind Spirit, Channeling, Ghost Touch, Scrying, Second Sight, Speak with Dead, Spirit Sense, Suggestion, Summon Apparition, Summon Spirit, Supernatural Insight, Visions

Barred Powers: Apport, Blink, Enhance Ability, Enhance Other, Nature Reading, Teleport

MAGUS

The magus is the closest you'll get to a "traditional wizard" in *The Imperial Age*. A student of the occult, the magus has unlocked the secrets of magic and has learned to bend reality to his will.

Key Ability: Intelligence

Starting Skills: Concentration, Knowledge (linguistics), Knowledge (supernatural), Research

Starting Feats: Elemental Blast (Fire), Fire Shaping, Ritual Knowledge (Summon Demon), Ward

MEDIUM

The medium is the title of a practicing Spiritualist, one that can contact beings on "the other side." Mediums are generally employed for séances, but some mediums have learned a great deal about the occult from their ghostly callers.

Key Ability: Charisma

Starting Skills: Concentration, Diplomacy, Knowledge (supernatural), Knowledge (theology & philosophy)

Starting Feats: Ritual Knowledge (séance), Mind Touch, Speak with Dead, Spirit Sense

MESMERIST

The mesmerist believes that he has the power to heal others through animal magnetism. Some mesmerists have learned to use the connection between people to control their actions.

Key Ability: Charisma

Starting Skills: Concentration, Diplomacy, Perform, Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Cure, Dominate, Mind Touch, Suggestion

MIRACLE WORKER

The miracle worker is a charismatic priest or minister that performs miracles. The faith healer believes that his powers are simply the Divine working through him. Thus the miracle worker often prays for guidance and tries to live a life according to his faith.

Key Ability: Charisma

Starting Skills: Diplomacy, Knowledge (theology & philosophy), Perform, Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Cure, Cure Disease, Energy Shaping (light), Supernatural Focus (Cure)

EXPERT

Experts will always have a strong place in occult stories. As adepts are generally focused on their powers, they often need assistance from others that are more skilled. Almost any type of expert is useful in an occult story, especially investigative or scholarly heroes.

The expert can also occupy a nebulous place between pure expert and occultist through use of the Ritual Knowledge feat. Such experts are "ritualists" (as explained above) and can use powers in ritual form. This may be ideal in a very low-magic occult campaign, where heroes interact with fortune-tellers or mediums that are limited to performing one type of ritual (and are otherwise performers).

EXORCIST

Historically in western civilization, exorcisms were the domain of Roman Catholic priests (although exorcism in some form exists in most major religions). In campaigns where the occult is real, it is likely that official exorcists would be found in most religious sects.

Key Abilities: Intelligence, Charisma

Starting Skills: Concentration, Intimidate, Knowledge (linguistics), Knowledge (supernatural), Knowledge (theology & philosophy), Language (Greek, Latin, Hebrew, choose one), Notice, Research

Starting Feats: Connected, Contacts, Iron Will, Ritual Knowledge (Exorcism)

FORTUNE TELLER

The fortune teller is usually a woman of foreign (i.e. not English) extraction that has the ability to foretell the future. She is also a consummate performer and information gatherer.

Key Ability: Wisdom

Starting Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge (behavioral sciences), Knowledge (supernatural), Notice, Perform, Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Gifted Skill (Perform), Ritual Knowledge (fortune telling), Skill Focus (Perform), Talented (Bluff and Perform)

OCCULT SCHOLAR

The occult scholar is a student of the occult. He is often an antiquarian, collecting occult symbols, tools and artifacts from around the world. While not an adept, the occult scholar sometimes discovers rituals within his vast library that he can use.

Key Ability: Intelligence

Starting Skills: Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge (linguistics), Knowledge (supernatural), Knowledge (theology & philosophy), Notice, Research, Search

Starting Feats: Ritual Knowledge (Summon Demon), Talented (Knowledge (supernatural) and Research), Wealthy, Weapon Training

STAGE MAGICIAN

The stage magician is a master of illusion; she can hold your attention and make you believe that you are perceiving things that aren't there. While the stage magician has no powers, her skills give her an excellent bag of tricks.

Key Abilities: Dexterity, Charisma

Starting Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Escape Artist, Perform, Notice, Sense Motive, Sleight of Hand, Stealth

Starting Feats: Fascinate (Perform), Suggestion, Talented (Bluff and Notice), Talented (Escape Artist and Sleight of Hand)

WARRIOR

Warriors will always have a place in occult campaigns. Adepts tend to be of frail stock and frequently employ or befriend others that can protect them. A warrior can be a grave threat to any adept, and some societies have warriors that are specially trained to fight adepts.

VALET

The valet is the personal servant/bodyguard of an adept. While his primary function is to protect his employer, the valet is also trained in other tasks, such as coach-driving, knowledge of proper etiquette, and acquisition.

Key Abilities: Strength, Charisma

Starting Skills: Diplomacy, Gather Information, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Knowledge (civics), Notice, Search, Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Attack Focus, Firearms Training, Improved Grab, Seize Initiative

WITCH HUNTER

The witch hunter is a warrior trained to hunt down adepts. Witch hunters tend to be born, not made; most have a core ability that gives them an edge against adepts. Some witch hunters belong to an organization while others prefer to work alone, dealing with problems as they present themselves.

Key Abilities: Strength, Dexterity

Alternate Core Ability: Magic Resistant or Spiritual Warrior (see **Horror Stories** chapter)

Starting Skills: Diplomacy, Gather Information, Intimidate, Knowledge (Supernatural), Notice, Research, Search, Survival

Starting Feats: Favored Opponent (adepts (occultists)), Firearms Training, Urban Tracking, Weapons Training



ALTERNATE ROLE: OCCULTIST

Both the occultist and the expert roles provide a wide spread of skills. They differ however in that while the expert is a better combatant; the occultist is able to call upon paranormal forces. Less powerful than an adept, the occultist is a more versatile role.

The standard occultist is the hermetic disciple, a middle class hero that has joined a magical gentleman's club and learns the secrets of magic. That said the occultist role also represents heroes of other persuasions, such as a religious scholar that allows the Divine to work through him or a poor

ABILITIES

Obviously, the most important ability to an occultist is the one selected as her key ability. That said all mental ability scores are important. Intelligence is important for knowledge skills and the overall number of starting skills. Wisdom increases the occultist's awareness of her surroundings. Charisma is useful when interacting with others.

ULTIMATE POWER (CORE ABILITY)

When making a power check, you can spend a point of Conviction and automatically treat your die roll as a 20.

POWERS

Whenever you have feat slots available you may choose a power instead of a feat. Your power's rank is listed on the Occultist table. The base save difficulty against your powers is one quarter of your occultist's level (rounded up) plus 10. Choose a mental ability score as your key ability.

SKILLS

Choose 8 + Intelligence score starting skills (minimum of 1). Occultists gain 8 + Int skill ranks per additional level (minimum of 1).

As an occultist can belong to many varied groups, it is difficult to nail down a single set of skills important to an occultist. Nevertheless, the following skills are almost universally useful to the occultist: Concentration, Craft, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge (linguistics), Knowledge (supernatural), Notice, Research.

FEATS

Choose 4 starting feats from the Adept or General categories. An occultist can also choose a power in place of a feat.

Level	The Occultist					
	Combat Save	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will	Reputation	Power Rank
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	+1	2
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	+1	2
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	+1	3
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	+2	3
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	+2	4
6	+3	+2	+2	+5	+2	4
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	+2	5
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	+3	5
9	+4	+3	+3	+6	+3	6
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	+3	6
11	+5	+3	+3	+7	+3	7
12	+6	+4	+4	+8	+4	7
13	+6	+4	+4	+8	+4	8
14	+7	+4	+4	+9	+4	8
15	+7	+5	+5	+9	+4	9
16	+8	+5	+5	+10	+5	9
17	+8	+5	+5	+10	+5	10
18	+9	+6	+6	+11	+5	10
19	+9	+6	+6	+11	+5	11
20	+10	+6	+6	+12	+6	11

OCCULTIST PATHS

As the occultist role is lesser-powered adept, all adept starting paths would be appropriate for occultists. For those wanting more occultist-focused paths, the following paths are provided.

HERMETIC DISCIPLE

The hermetic disciple learns magic through intense study of occult tomes. Virtually all hermetic disciples belong to an esoteric order or gentleman's club and enjoy the social perks as well.

Key Ability: Intelligence

Starting Skills: Concentration, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge (linguistics), Knowledge (supernatural), Language, Notice, Research

Starting Feats: Ritual Knowledge (Summon Demon), Talented (Knowledge (linguistics) and Research)

OCCULT ALIENIST

Sometimes, a "diseased mind" is simply the result of misunderstood powers. The occult alienist, himself an occultist, understands this well and works to help the afflicted come to terms with their special gifts.

Key Ability: Charisma

Starting Skills: Bluff, Concentration, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge (behavioral sciences), Knowledge (supernatural), Research, Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Heart Reading, Mind Shaping, Mind Touch, Psychic Shield

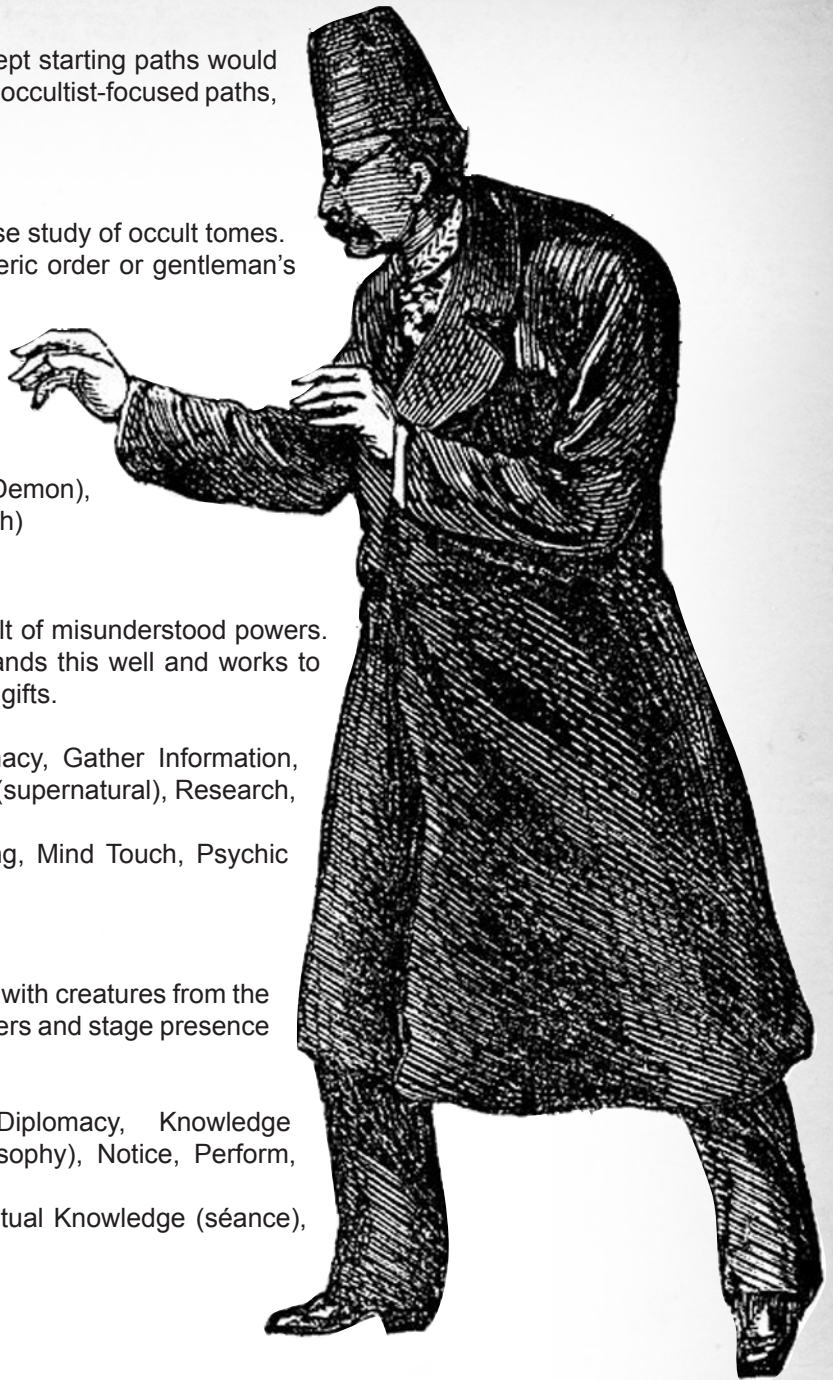
SPIRITUALIST

The spiritualist learns her powers through contact with creatures from the other side. She is also a performer, using her powers and stage presence to draw others to spiritualism.

Key Ability: Charisma

Starting Skills: Bluff, Concentration, Diplomacy, Knowledge (supernatural), Knowledge (theology & philosophy), Notice, Perform, Sense Motive

Starting Feats: Ghost Touch, Mind Touch, Ritual Knowledge (séance), Sense Minds



POWERS

While almost any power could conceivably work in an occult story, the following powers from the *True20 Adepts Handbook* are offered here because they've been cited in this chapter. In addition Elemental Ammunition and Fog Shaping are also presented for their *Imperial Age* flavor.

ELEMENTAL AMMUNITION

Prerequisite: Cold, Earth, Energy, Fire, Water, or Wind Shaping

You can channel elemental energy through your guns, firing blasts of elemental energy rather than bullets or laser beams. This requires a normal ranged attack with a range increment of adept level x 10 feet and a maximum range of 10 increments (adept level x 100 feet).

This elemental ammunition has a damage bonus equal to half your Elemental Ammunition power rank. Water and Wind strikes do nonlethal concussion damage. The Widen Power feat affects Elemental Ammunition in the same way as Elemental Blast, only the blast radius is halved.

Time: Standard action

FOG SHAPING

Maintenance

Fog Sculpting (Difficulty 5): You can alter the shape (but not the volume) of any sort of fog or mist, shaping it into misty images or moving it around at speeds of up to 20 ft.

Raise Fog (Difficulty 10): A bank of fog billows out into an area with a 10ft. radius per caster level from the point you designate. The fog obscures all sight, including darkvision, beyond 5 feet. A creature within 5 feet has partial concealment (attacks miss on a 17 or higher on a d20). Creatures farther away have total concealment (Attacks miss on an 11 or higher on a d20, and the attacker can't use sight to locate the target). A moderate wind (11+ mph) disperses the fog in 4 rounds; a strong wind (21+ mph) disperses the fog in 1 round. This power does not function underwater.

Solid Fog (Difficulty 15): This effect functions like the *raise fog* version of this power, but in addition to obscuring sight, the *solid fog* is so thick that any creature attempting to move through it progresses at a speed of 5 feet, regardless of its normal speed, and it takes a -2 penalty on all melee attack and melee damage rolls. The vapors prevent effective ranged weapon attacks (except for magic rays and the like). A creature or object that falls into *solid fog* is slowed, so that each 10 feet of vapor that it passes through reduces falling damage by 2. A creature cannot take a 5-foot step while in *solid fog*. However, unlike normal fog, only a severe wind (31+ mph) disperses these vapors, and it does so in 1 round.

Fog of Stealth (Difficulty 15): This effect functions like the *raise fog* version of this power, but it fills an area with a radius of 20 ft. per caster level. In addition to obscuring sight, the *fog of stealth* allows creatures moving through it to move at their maximum running speeds without tiring or making a sound. Unlike normal fog, only a severe wind (31+ mph) disperses these vapors, and it does so in 1 round.

Time: Standard Action

PROBABILITY SHAPING

Fatiguing

Fortune: After using this power, your rank in probability shaping becomes the *minimum* result of your next d20 roll or the next die roll of someone you touch. Compare your next d20 roll to your rank in Probability Shaping. If the die comes up with a lower result, use your power rank instead. So, if you have a Probability Shaping rank of 12, your next die roll is ensured a minimum result of 12 on the die, treating any roll of less than 12 as a 12. A 20 on the die acquired through Probability Shaping is not considered a "natural 20."

Jinx: You can affect someone else with bad luck by touch (requiring a successful melee attack roll for an unwilling subject). The target gains a Will saving throw to avoid the effect. If it fails, the subject's next die roll that is below your Probability Shaping rank is treated as a 1. A roll of 1 on the die acquired through Probability Shaping is not considered a "natural 1."

SPEAK WITH DEAD

Fatiguing

Prerequisite: Mind Touch

This power allows you to use your Mind Touch supernatural power on dead creatures or those with the undead creature type. The Difficulty to activate Mind Touch on a dead creature increases by one for every day the target creature has been dead. Once contact has been established, you are able to communicate with the deceased creature's spirit. The spirit is under no compulsion to answer your questions, though the caster can use other powers like Suggestion and Dominate on the spirit as though it were still alive, so long as mental contact is maintained. All the normal modifiers for Mind Touch apply.

SPIRIT SENSE

You can sense spirits normally invisible to humans, such as incorporeal creatures, the dead, or guardian angels. Make a Spirit Sense check to detect spirits in your vicinity or to detect fetters important to a spirit.

Sense Spirit: Whenever a spirit is nearby, the Narrator makes a secret Spirit Sense check for you as a reaction. The base Difficulty is 10 + the spirit's level, and the Difficulty increases by +1 for every 10 feet between you and the spirit. A successful result means you sense a spirit is nearby, you know roughly what direction it is and how far away, and you are able to hear the spirit speaking to you, and you can speak to it in return. If you succeed by 5 or more, you can pinpoint the spirit's location and type (e.g. nature spirit, angel, fiend, the family of the deceased, etc.). If you succeed by 10 or more,

you can identify the spirit by name, if it is known to you. Spirits that have taken visible physical form cannot be detected as spirits with this power; however, if they are using a power to turn invisible while embodied, you *can* sense them.

Sense Possession: You can sense a spirit possessing a person. Make a Spirit Sense check against a Difficulty of 10 + the power rank of the spirit's possession power (e.g. as per the Dominate power for a ghost using *malevolence*). If you win, you realize the victim is being possessed.

Sense Fetter: If you also have the Object Reading power, you can sense a fetter. A fetter is something vitally important to a spirit's essence, such as a ghost's grave or the lamp a genie is bound to. You may make a Spirit Sense check when attempting to identify a spirit's fetter. The base Difficulty is 15 to detect a fetter and 20 to determine when the spirit was last there and the spirit's general nature (e.g. ghost, demon, etc.). It is Difficulty 25 to know exactly which spirit belongs to the fetter. This is a fatiguing use of Spirit Sense.

Retry: No

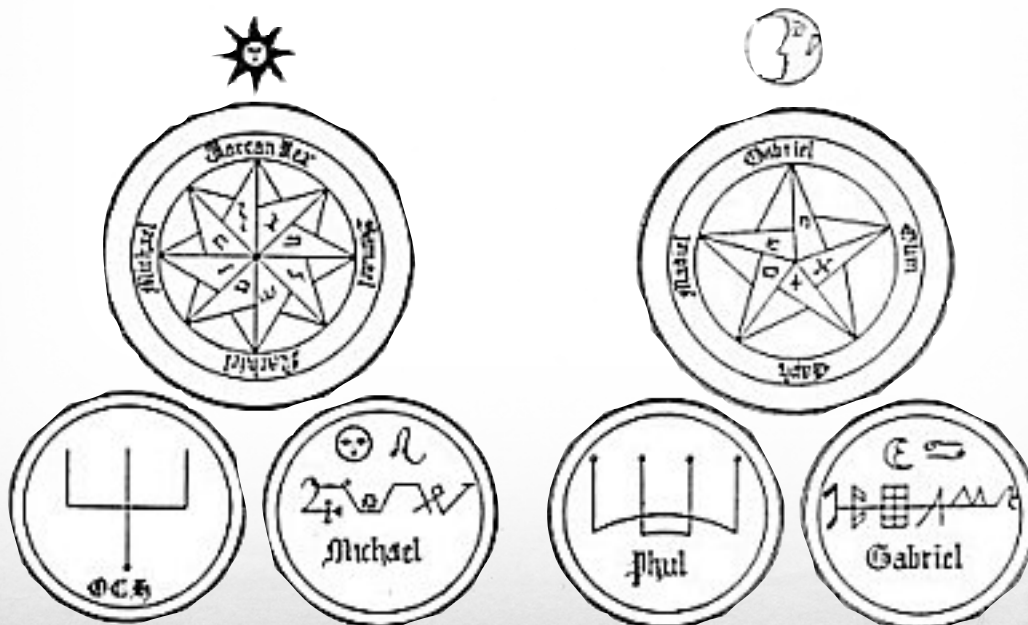
Time: Sensing a spirit or a possession is a reaction. Sensing a fetter requires a full-round action.

RE-FLAVORING MAGICK

As might be expected from "The Law of Names," names are very important in Victorian Magick. Nor is it just a matter of using the names of beings in game. To fully capture the feel of the Imperial Age, powers should be renamed to fit the setting. In most cases this means classical names, biblical names, or references to famous magicians. Use this list below to alter spell names.

FAMOUS PRE-VICTORIAN MAGICIAN NAMES

Name	Use for powers involving:
Edward Kelly	Angels, deception
Faust	Demons
Hermes Trismegistus	Anything
Isaac Newton	Numbers, matter, energy
John Dee	Angels, anything
King Solomon	Demons, nature, abjuration
Merlin	Anything
Nicolas Flamel	Transmutation
Paracelsus	Healing
Pythagoras	Numbers, Divination, Summoning
Saint Germain	Transmutation, divination, illusion
Simon Magus	Money, divination
Taliesin	Sound, enchantment
The Witch of Endor	Necromancy, divination



GREEK AND ROMAN GODS AND GODDESSES

Name	Use for powers involving
Aeolus, Aquilo, Auster, Boreas, Eurus, Favonius, Notus, Zephyr	Wind
Aether	Light
Aphrodite, Anadyomene, Venus	Enchantment
Ares, Mars	War, Battle, Damage
Artemis, Orthia, Phoebe, Diana	Animals
Asklepios, Aesculapius	Healing
Ate, Eris, Discordia	Chaos
Demeter, Ceres	Plants
Dionysus, Lycaeus, Bacchus, Liber	Enchantment
Eos, Aurora, Mater Matuta	Light
Eros, Cupid, Amor	Love
Hades, Polydectes, Pluto	Death, Undead, Precious Metals
Hecate, Trivia	Magic, Darkness
Helios, Sol	Sun, Light, Heat
Hephaestus, Vulcan, Mulciber	Creation, Repair, Enhancement
Hera, Juno	Love, Geas
Hermes, Psychopompus, Mercury	Communication, Movement
Hestia, Vesta	Fertility
Iris	Color Spray, Illusion
Maia, Fauna, Bono Dea, Flora	Plants
Morpheus	Dreams, Divination, Illusion
Nemesis	Spells that harm
Nike, Victoria	Battle, Victory
Pallas Athena, Minerva	Cities, War
Pan, Inuus, Faunus	Animals, Enchantment
Peitha, Suadela	Enchantment
Persephone, Kora, Persipina, Libera	Spring, Necromancy
Phoebus Apollo, Apollo	Sun, Truth, Music, Healing
Phosphor, Lucifer	Light
Pontus, Nereus, Triton	Seas, Sea Monsters
Poseidon, Neptune	Sea, Water, Horses
Selene, Luna	Moon, Light, Guidance
Terminus	Abjuration
Tyche, Fortuna	Luck
Zeus, Jupiter, Jove	Sky, Clouds, Winds, Sonic, Electricity

EGYPTIAN GODS AND GODDESSES

Name:	Use for powers involving:
Amen	Creation
Anubis	Death, the Dead
Bast	Cats, Grace
Bes	Abjuration, Banishment, Good
Chons	Moon
Geb	Earth
Isis	Life, Birth
Ka	Life Energy
Maat	Truth, Good, Justice
Nut	Sky, Wind
Osiris	Plants, Death
Qetesh	Charm
Re	Sun, Light
Selket	Insects
Set	Chaos, Evil
Shu	Air
Sobek	Reptiles
Taweret	Water Mammals
Thoth	Moon, Secrets, Magic
Wepwawet	War

ANGELIC NAMES

Name	Use in powers involving:
Arathon	Alchemy, Transmutation
Azriel	Earth
Chamuel	Enchantment
Gabriel	Strength, Divination, Destruction, Death
Jophiel	Light
Michael	Truth, Abjuration
Moriel	Wind
Phaleg	War
Phul	Water
Raphael	Healing, Fire
Raquel	Mystery, Divination
Remiel	Knowledge
Sachulp	Plants
Uriel	Literature, Music, Transmutation

DEMONIC NAMES

Name	Use for powers involving:
Apollyon (Abaddon)	Anything
Asmodeus (Asmoday)	Anything
Astaroth	Wealth, Power, Influence
Azazel	Anything
Baal	Strength, War
Baalberith	Secrets
Beelzebub (Beelzebuth)	Insects, Anything
Belial	Illusion
Belphegor	Divination
Eurynomus	Undead
Geryon	Abjuration
Jezebeth	Demon of Falsehoods
Kobal	Performance
Lilith	Lust, Deception
Mammon	Greed, Wealth
Mephistopheles	Anything
Moloch	Fire
Murmur	Music
Orias	Divination
Philatanus	Sexuality
Pyro	Deception
Samael	Death, Air
Shalbriri	Darkness
Sonneillon	Hate
Succorbenoth	Jealousy
Thamuz	Guns
Uphir	Medicine, Healing
Verin	Speed
Vetis	Temptation
Zaebros	Animals
Zagan	Deceit

The names listed above and their possible uses are only the beginning. Depending on tradition and background an adept might also use names of saints, mythological heroes or monsters, or even iconic historical figures. Any given power may have a multitude of names, each one unique to a particular adept or tradition. For example, an elemental blast might be called Shots of Thamuz, Phaleg's Sling, Merlin's Missiles, Selket's Stings, Strike of Nemesis, or even David's Sling or Crockett's Musket.

THE LAWS OF MAGICK

There are four Laws of Magick that govern hermetic magick in *The Imperial Age* setting. These laws presume that all powers work on the same principles. That said some types of powers, such as psionics, may not be affected by these laws. On the other hand, if the Laws of Magick are truly universal, then they could work with all powers. Narrators are encouraged to think about how these laws will impact their campaign setting, while players should work to incorporate them into an adept's regular routine.

THE LAW OF NAMES

Names have power. To know someone's name is to understand who and what that being is. Understanding brings control; the more that is known about a subject the easier it is to exercise control over it. Knowing the complete or true name of an object, being, or process gives complete control over it. This works because a name is a definition as well as a link to that being. A being's birth name, the name bestowed upon that individual by parents or other people of authority or that person's legal name provides only a minimal amount of control over the being. Secret names, often chosen or bestowed upon Practitioners in occult orders or certain mystical traditions, reveals something about the being's inner nature and focus. In some cultures secret names are given to children at a certain point in their life to help protect them from evil spells and spirits. Finally, true names are the word or words that define beings of magic such as angels, demons, and fey. These beings closely guard their true names, but may give out fragments of it to favored servants or allies. Typically, ordinary humans do not have true names, but humans with an inhuman heritage may.

A creature's true name is the name that was given to that creature's very essence, or soul, at the time of its creation. You can learn your own true name through a ritual called a Naming Ceremony.

If an adept knows your secret or true name, the supernatural powers they cast on you become more potent, increasing their effective adept level by 1 or 2 respectively for the following powers:

Banishment, Bind Spirit, Binding, Bliss, Calm, Cure Blindness/Deafness, Cure Disease, Cure Poison, Curse, Dominate, Geas, Harm, Heart Reading, Heart Shaping, Imbue Life, Mind Probe, Mind Reading, Mind Touch, Pain, Reincarnate, Scrying, Severance, Sleep, Suggestion, Truth-Reading, Ward.

At the Narrator's discretion, if the adept does not know your birth name, then his effective adept level is decreased by 1 for the above powers.

Knowing someone's true name also provides a +4 bonus to any Knowledge (astrology) skill checks made to discover their birth horoscope. Knowing the true name of a creature that you can summon allows you to call that specific creature to you each time you cast the power, if the caster so desires.

ACQUIRING A SECRET OR TRUE NAME

Most adepts have at least a few names, and magickal beings may have many. A human adept will have been given a birth name through the usual means. In even a moderately historical *Imperial Age* setting this is most likely a Christening name. Next they will have a surface name, often a nickname given in childhood or a pseudonym chosen by the adept to prevent misuse of his birth name. This surface name does not grant any special magickal knowledge, but can be a key to finding out the person's birth name or secret name. Most adepts will also be given a secret, or ritual, name when inducted into an occult society or by a mentor when they first begin to learn the secrets of the art of magick. Others may receive a secret name in a vision or dream. Typically this name reflects some aspect of the adept's inner power and self-knowledge, and is frequently taken from mythology and nature. One might be Artus, another Athena, Corbie, Grendle, Rat's Tooth, Turtle, Agamemnon, or Dracus. Since these names are often either chosen or bestowed, they should say something about the hero's personality, goals, or past.

Humans almost never have true names. Magickal beings always do. For each level the being has, it has one syllable of a true name. These syllables are words or parts of words in the creature's native language and these words are generally descriptive of the being. A simple dryad in Hyde Park might have as her True name "Soft Long Leaf" in the fey tongue, be called Jane Willow if encountered by humans but be known to the other dryads as Willow by Water's Edge. A typical demon would have a fiendish true name that was six syllables long, but one that had risen in the hierarchy of hell might have one that was ten or twelve syllables long. Humans who have the blood of supernatural beings, such as half-fiends or changelings may also have true names. These names are usually shorter than their inhuman kin's, having one syllable of true name for every 4 levels for a thin bloodline or a syllable for every 2 levels where the lineage is stronger.

Being able to speak the language of the creature is not required when employing a true name, but it helps. Practitioners who employ a true name without being able to speak the appropriate language run the risk of misspeaking the name. There is a cumulative 5% chance per syllable that such an event might occur. Should the name be misspoken it could have any of the following results: the spell fails as if miscast; the spell works but affects the wrong creature; or the spell could work and affect the correct creature, but in the case of summoning spells that creature becomes hostile toward the practitioner for the insult of misspeaking its true name.

When someone speaks another creature's true name, they may engage the named being in an opposed Will save in which the named creature suffers a -4 penalty. If the named creature loses, they are unable to make any hostile action against the speaker of their true name for as long as the speaker does not attack them directly.

THE LAW OF FAMILIARITY

The Law of Familiarity, much like the law of names, says that the better a person, place, or thing is known then the easier it is to affect through magick. In this case the knowledge is observational. Most spells assume that the caster can see or otherwise perceive their target, suggesting at least a minimal level of familiarity. However, the better a caster knows something or studies someone, the more likely his spells will succeed.

The Law of Familiarity works as described in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*.

THE LAW OF CONTAGION

The Law of Contagion states that objects or beings in physical contact with each other continue to interact after separation. The more intimate the contact the closer the connection.

Affecting an object that a person or other being has been in close contact with can allow an adept to better affect that person or being when using the item as material components in a spell. The best such materials are those directly taken from the being's body, but objects such as clothes, bed sheets, watches, keys, or other things that would have had close and extended contact with the skin will also work.

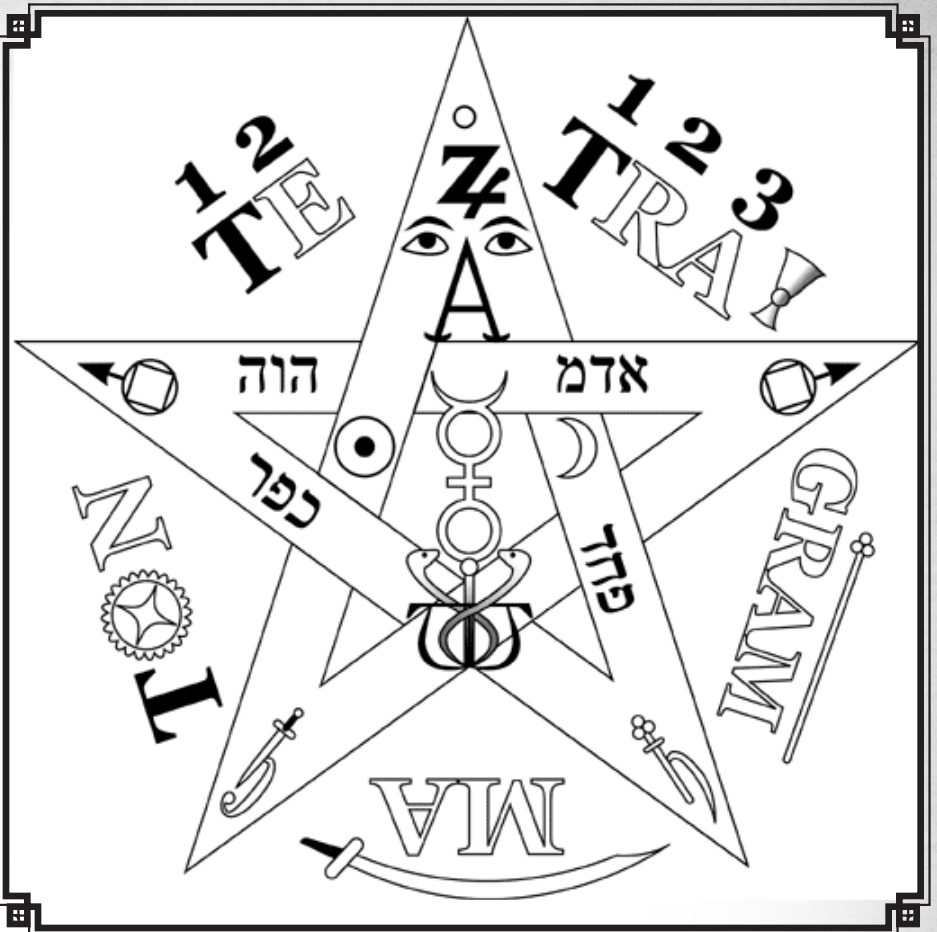
However, objects that have been touched by many people, or only touched infrequently by a subject will not work. That means that coins from someone's pocket or even a book from his or her library would not normally work as a contagion point, but an antique coin that was always carried in his pocket as a mystic focus or his personal copy of his favorite book that he has read a hundred times might.

In most cases a Knowledge (supernatural) check at Difficulty 15 can let an adept determine whether or not an item is suitable to be used as a spell component and its general range of effectiveness. However, the Difficulty could be greater if the Narrator determines that a hero simply does not have enough information about a subject or the object in question to determine the object's usefulness with absolute certainty.

The following chart provides examples of connections of varying strengths, along with the power check modifier. Generally, the connection may only be used for one power check (whether successful or not).

Level of Connection	Examples
Very Strong (+8)	Hair or nail clippings, blood and other bodily fluids, a body part
Strong (+6)	Sheets from the bed the character slept in the night before, clothing or accessories recently worn, personal effects carried everyday
Moderate (+4)	Clothing or personal effects that have not been touched in several days, a cup or plate that has not been cleaned since it was used
Weak (+2)	Personal effects that have not been touched, worn, or used in over a week, a letter addressed to the subject that was read and discarded
Very Weak (+1)	Dirt from the house where the subject grew up, a relatively unused item from the person's home

The Law of Contagion does not apply to any spell that has a range of self or touch.



THE LAW OF SIMILARITY

The Law of Similarity states that things that share an outward physical appearance share a common essence on a mystic level. Further, things that share a common pattern interact through that pattern, and control of the one allows manipulation of the other. Look-alikes are alike and commonality controls.

By default, the Law of Similarity in *the Imperial Age* is flavor text. **True20** powers generally do not require special gestures, power words or materials. If a Narrator wishes to enforce the Law of Similarity (especially for a low-magic campaign), she may insist that an adept describe how he's using the Law when using a power (for example, striking a match before releasing an elemental fire blast).

At the Narrator's discretion, a bonus may be applied to a hero's fatigue check when the player makes extra efforts to apply the Law of Similarity. Something as simple as using a match as a component in a fire based spell might add a +1 to the casting check, while using a sketch of the target might add a +2 bonus and an accurate physical model a +4 bonus. In most cases a +4 bonus for the application of the Law should be the maximum allowed.

OCCULT SOCIETIES

The following is a list of occult societies. Except where noted, all of these groups were real occult organizations during the Imperial Age. In a historical campaign, these are simply secret societies, often a cover for social indulgences such as drinking or gambling. In a fantastical campaign, they would be adept or occultist organizations.

It's worth mentioning that many of these groups held practices and teachings in common. Many had "secret histories" that purported to give a particular society ancient origins or blessings from another order. They traced their histories to Kaballah, King Solomon, the Knights Templar, and, occasionally, each other. A PC hermetic disciple may find himself wandering from order to order, noting little difference between them.

DRUIDIC ORDERS

While witchcraft and neo-paganism are beyond the scope of hermetic magick, druidic orders deserve a special mention because many practitioners of hermetic magick also joined druidic orders. These orders included the Ancient Druidic Order and the Druids of Pontyprydd.

The historical druids were Celtic priests that were largely wiped out during the Roman conquest of France and Britain. Very little of their knowledge and practices have survived. Ironically, the best-known symbol of Druidism, Stonehenge, likely had little to do with Druidism at all. The ancient site was incorporated into Druidism during an 18th century revival that led to a number of "Druidic Orders" throughout the 19th century. Many of these groups were modeled on or inspired by hermetic traditions such as the Freemasons and the Golden Dawn. The works of Edward Williams, a Welsh writer under the pseudonym Iolo Morganwg, laid the foundation for many modern Druidic rituals and practices.

In fantastical campaigns, Narrators may wish to create "purer" Druid societies, perhaps the true heirs of an ancient tradition. Druids can still follow the Laws of Magick found in this chapter. Druids should also have the Perform skill. Narrators that want to tie these Druidic Orders with modern Wicca can incorporate modern Wiccan practices into the earlier Druidic tradition.

FREEMASONRY

While not an occult order, the fraternal Order of Free and Accepted Masons has provided an organizational template that many Hermetic Orders have liberally borrowed from. The current society evolved from medieval stonemason guilds (although some members claim that the society began as far back as ancient Egypt), and began to include "honorary masons" as membership dwindled. The first Grand Lodge was established in England in 1717, and by this point most members were not stonemasons.

Freemasonry has many secret rites and rituals that would be familiar to a hermetic magician. Potential members must be invited by a current member and approved by secret ballot. There are three degrees of initiation in which a candidate must study and interpret symbols. Members also use secret gestures and symbols to identify other members. Meetings are filled with long rituals. Freemasonry's strongest connection with the occult ironically comes from the Roman Catholic Church, which has at times equated Freemasonry with Satanism. This connection has done little to stem membership in Protestant nations, and during the Imperial Age there are many lodges throughout Great Britain, Continental Europe, and North America.

HELL FIRE CLUB

This occult society is notable for being a century removed from the Imperial Age. It is included here because of its connection with Satanism and the fact that a copycat Hell Fire Club would fit right in during the Imperial Age.

The Hell Fire Club was actually called "The Friars of Saint Francis of Wycombe" or similar variations. It was essentially a club for bored gentlemen to engage in drunken revelries and orgies. Prostitutes were often recruited for this purpose. The group also purportedly performed black masses. How much of this is true or exaggerated will never be known.

In the Imperial Age, a new Hell Fire Club could either be another collection of bored aristocrats or a true occult society. Perhaps they really are connected with demons or the Devil himself, and those prostitutes invited to play are never seen again.

HERMETIC BROTHERHOOD OF LUXOR

The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor publicly announced its existence in 1884, but it is likely to have been operating throughout the entire Imperial Age (one of its influences was the short-lived Brotherhood of Eulis, which formed in Tennessee in 1874-75). The Brotherhood acted as a sort of correspondence school. Prospective members would send personal information to the Brotherhood. Upon acceptance, the member would be assigned a mentor and gradually taught the secrets of the order through mail correspondence. The Brotherhood drew from many Western occult traditions at the time, including sexual magic.

The Brotherhood ran afoul of the dominant Theosophical Society. The Brotherhood was alarmed by the Theosophists' incorporation of Eastern magic and symbolism into their rituals, and the Theosophical Society declared the group immoral after the Secretary of the Order, Thomas Burgoyne, was convicted of mail fraud in 1886. This act effectively shut down the English branch of the Brotherhood, while successor organizations started in America and Germany.

One curious offshoot of the Brotherhood of Luxor is the Esoteric Fraternity, founded in New England by Hiram Butler in 1887. While based on Luxor teachings, this occult organization is primarily notable for demanding strict celibacy from its members.

HERMETIC ORDER OF THE GOLDEN DAWN

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn will become one of the principal influences on western occultism in the modern world and would count perhaps the most famous hermetic magician of all time, Aleister Crowley, amongst its membership. During the Imperial Age, however, it is only in its infancy, developed starting in 1886, formally founded in 1888, and announced to the world in 1889. The Order did not initially teach practical magic, initiates had to study occult topics and advance through five ranks until they were judged worthy to leave the Outer Order and join the Inner Order. The first initiates accomplished this in 1892.

The origins of the Order are based on the Cipher Manuscripts obtained by William Wynn Westcott, one of the founders. When decoded, the Manuscripts led him to correspond with Anna Sprengel, a German Rosicrucian. Sprengel gave her blessing to his new Order, which was based on rituals found in the Manuscripts. Sprengel disappeared in 1891. The first lodge of the Order, the Isis-Urania Temple in London, was established in 1888. Unlike most other societies, women were treated as full participants.

Narrators running magical campaigns can, of course, assume that the Inner Order is fully functional in these early years, thus allowing adept heroes to be members of the Order. **Imperial Age** campaigns that extend into the 1890s will see the Order hit its peak, attracting hundreds of members, until it fractured at the end of the century.

KABBALISTS

Most hermetic societies use the teachings of Kabbalah as part of their rites and rituals. Kabbalah, however, is rooted in Jewish mysticism and is only taught and practiced in pure form within Jewish communities.

If hermetic magic works in an **Imperial Age** campaign then it logically follows that Jewish mystics can cast spells. Kabbalists tend to be Orthodox Jews, meaning that practitioners would be strict observers of Jewish laws and traditions. A Kabbalist would never teach his magic to a non-Orthodox Jew or gentile, nor would he use his magic on the Sabbath (Friday at sunset through Saturday sunset). Study, however, is permitted during the Sabbath.

MARTINIST SOCIETIES

These societies were revivals of the teachings of French mystic Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin in the late 18th century. Saint-Martin based his magical ceremonies on the rites of Freemasonry and freemasons throughout Europe continued to study it long after Saint-Martin had abandoned them.

Papus, a French student that had belonged to many occult societies, formed the Martinist Order in 1888. It was the largest of the Martinist groups, and in 1891 Papus would set out to unite them. By the turn of the century, Papus was able to recruit hundreds of Martinists under his banner.

PALLADIAN ORDER

If French author Leo Taxil is to be believed, the Palladian Order was perhaps the greatest occult hoax of all time. The Palladian Order was said to be a Satanic cult within Freemasonry that indulged in every type of sexual depravity imaginable, as well as anything that the Catholic Church would find offensive. Rumors about the Order started in 1884 and would last until 1897, when Taxil sensationally admitted that the whole Order was a hoax.

During the latter part of the Imperial Age, the Palladian Order is the symbol of Satanism. Public fascination and curiosity would lead many people to seek more knowledge about the order. Even freemasons investigated their own society in the hopes of discovering who was part of the Palladian Order. Authors and journalists would add to the mysteries of the Order.

In an *Imperial Age* campaign, of course, the Palladian Order can be real. Perhaps there really is a small group of freemasons participating in black masses and orgies. Perhaps the Palladian Order is the true successor of the Hell Fire Club. In a historical campaign, this is merely a group of hedonists. In a magickal campaign, the Palladian Order can be a society of dark magicians, offering their souls to demons for more power. The Palladian Order can provide an ideal enemy for the Golden Dawn and other occult societies.

ROSIKRUCIANS

Many magickal societies trace their origins to the Rosicrucian Order, a secret occult group that supposedly existed in the early 17th century and traced its origins to an earlier 15th century order. Three Rosicrucian manifestos were published in the 17th century authored by a "Christian Rosenkreuz." Whether or not he existed, many Imperial Age occult groups have seized on this history and declared themselves the true heirs to the Order. These groups have also drawn (perhaps more so) from Masonic tropes. Two such groups included the Fraternitas Rosae Crucis and the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia. The latter society limited their membership to Christian freemasons.

In campaigns set in the early Imperial Age, adept heroes practicing the hermetic tradition will probably be members of one of these Rosicrucian societies. The founders of the Golden Dawn originally belonged to the Societas Rosicruciana. Narrators running magickal campaigns can assume that Rosenkreuz was a true magician and his legacy has been handed down.

SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

Established in 1882, the Society for Psychical Research is a private organization dedicated to studying anything related to the occult and supernatural. The society has headquarters in London and Cambridge. A separate American branch is established in 1885, but is forced to dissolve and reorganize as an official branch of the SPR five years later. The society is most famous for revealing the fabrications of the Theosophical Society in 1884, but it is not necessarily a "debunking" organization. The SPR is simply interested in learning the truth about esoteric topics.

In historical campaigns, the SPR is a thorn in the side of occult societies, constantly challenging members to prove their claims. In magickal campaigns, the SPR may have its own magickal practitioners or mediums and will use them to investigate magickal or spiritual crimes.

SPIRITUALIST SOCIETIES

There are a few Spiritualist organizations in Britain at the dawn of the Imperial Age. The British National Society of Spiritualists in Liverpool spawned the Society for Psychical Research before moving to London and becoming the London Spiritualist Society in 1884. The Marylebone Spiritualist Association (and later, the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain) is a secret group of Spiritualists that meet in various places throughout London.

Spiritualism thrived in America as well. The Spiritual Fraternity, located in the Back Bay of Boston, is part of the Christian Spiritualist movement. Many Spiritualists flock to the New England Spiritualist Campmeeting Association, based in the village of Lake Pleasant in Franklin County, Massachusetts, due to the many notable Spiritualists that come to speak there.

The Cassadaga Lake Free Association, located on the shore of Cassadaga Lake, New York, is one of the oldest Spiritualist groups in the world. Its rural setting of (western New York) makes it a perfect place to meet mediums from all over the USA. American mediums could debate doctrine and hold events away from urban centers. Foreign mediums would also be likely to come here to vacation and rub elbows with their American brethren.

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

The Theosophical Society was founded in New York City in 1875. Originally, it was not very different from other Hermetic groups. Its members organized along Masonic lines, studying western occult topics. Like most occult societies of the time, it maintained a small membership. One of the founders, Helena Blavatsky, claimed to learn secret knowledge from communication with spirits.

Investigators for the Society of Psychical Research searched Blavatsky's home while she was away in India. When she returned in 1884, she was faced with evidence that she'd faked miracles. The scandal made headlines around the world but would do no real harm to Blavatsky or the Theosophical Society. The Society continued to grow until it fractured after Blavatsky's death in 1891.



CHAPTER ELEVEN: STEAM STORIES

"Forward, men!" I shouted as I urged my horse forward towards Mulla Sahibdad. The Gurkhas under my command followed on foot, showing more courage than I'd seen out of many English soldiers. I cursed Ayub Khan as I spat sand from my mouth. We all should have been back in India by now, but this royal upstart had challenged the legitimate King, as so recognized by Her Majesty. Rumor had it that he had Russian support, and so the Great Game continued.

Before we could engage Khan's main force, however, we had to clear the outlying villages. I could already see that taking Mulla Sahibdad would not be easy, as I could see Afghani heads and rifles poking out from behind hastily constructed barricades. I didn't see any artillery, which was rather unusual. All that stood between my men and the village was a stretch of sandy ground. It smelled like a trap. Still, the order had come for us to advance, so advance we would. I led my men in the charge against the first line of defense,

It came without warning; a stream of bullets that cut down twenty men before the rest went scrambling for cover. I was almost thrown from my horse but I managed to regain control. The sound of the bullets was unmistakable; I scanned the village for signs of the Gatling gun. Unable to spot it, I began shouting orders to my men to regroup and move forward.

I heard the shots again. Another infantry charge was cut down by a stream of bullets. This time, however, I realized why I'd failed to spot the machine gun. I'd been looking for a manned gun, not an engine. I felt my heart sink as I saw the steam goliath slowly but methodically stand and step out from behind a building. At twenty feet tall it was an awesome sight and unmistakably Russian in design.

"It's the Cossack!" Someone shouted.

I'd heard tales of the Steam Cossack. Captain Grigori Kreznov was a battlefield legend, his reputation for success matched by his reputation for ruthlessness. Under ordinary circumstances, we were doomed. The Cossack likely thought so as well as the iron beast moved forward, spraying the field with hot lead from the Gatling gun mounted on its shoulder.

Thankfully, we had a surprise of our own.

The Steam Cossack stopped as a stream of bullets fired over the heads of my men and pounded the riveted steel of the Russian monster. The Red Tiger, driven by Sir Daniel Acton, stepped onto the field, its twin Maxim Guns peppering the Steam Cossack.

Having gotten the Russian's attention, the Tiger stopped shooting. For a moment, the two steam goliaths simply stared at each other. Then, without warning, the two beasts charged toward each other, in as much as slow, clumsy engines belching steam could "charge."

"Now's our chance, men!" I shouted, urging my horse forward again. "To the village!"

The Gurkhas pushed forward. We all knew that, once engaged, the steam knights would not turn their attention towards the rest of the battle while one of them still stood. When one did, as was inevitable, I hoped it would be the Tiger.

Steam stories involve fantastic technology far beyond that achieved in the historical Imperial Age. Most fans of science fiction are familiar with Jules Verne's *Nautilus* and H.G. Wells' time machine (or at least the Hollywood versions). Other stories included vehicles capable of travelling through the air (where only balloons were common in the Imperial Age) and outer space, as well as a wheeled house pulled by a steam-powered elephant! Most modern readers are likely also familiar with "steampunk," a science fiction genre that melds the tropes of the cyberpunk genre with the Victorian era.

While attempting to stay within the confines of the possible, most steam stories envision great engines that owe as much to magic as to science. No one worries about how an automaton thinks (or even sees), as long as it is a large steam-driven monstrosity with coal burning in its belly and smoke streaming from its smokestack. Space vehicles are often inadequately protected from the cold depths of space and the occupants may not have to worry about the effects of gravity.

The Narrator will have to determine how prevalent advanced technology is in her campaign and how fantastic it actually is. The following section touches on some themes that will help determine the prevalence and scope of steam-driven wonders.

CRAFTING A STEAM STORY

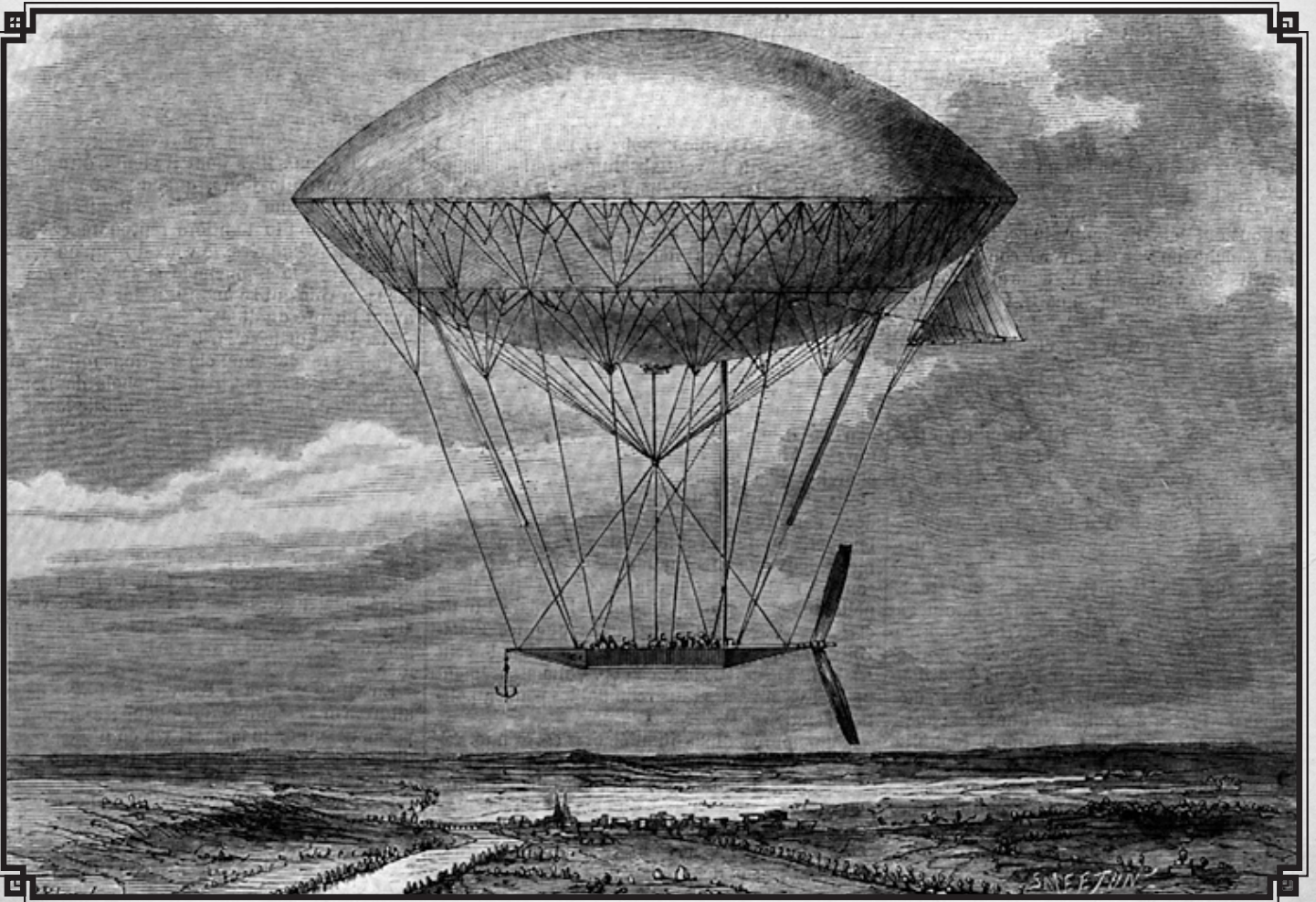
There are a number of ways to tell steam stories, both from Victorian and modern literature. The following are some common themes about steam stories set during or written in the Imperial Age.

HISTORICAL

It is possible to have a steam story without adding advanced technology at all. Calculators, telephones, submersibles, electricity, radio transmissions, motion pictures, underground transportation, and automobiles all actually existed at one point or another in the Imperial Age (see Invention Timeline for precise years). Real world inventions could factor into any number of stories, especially at the dawn of its application.

For example, a criminal enterprise in the early 1890s may be using wireless communication to transmit messages; to those unfamiliar with the new invention, it would seem that a suspect had “magical” knowledge of events happening elsewhere before it was practical to receive a telegram. A detective hero, of course, might know of such an invention. In a horror campaign, a villain may use early motion pictures to scare away the occupants of a remote country home with “phantoms” in the moors.

Even if running a historical campaign, the Narrator is free to “fudge” actual invention times. Taking into account concurrent, separate research, laying claim to others’ work, and prototypes, it’s probable that most inventions were actually created several months to a few years before their “official” invention year.



SCIENTIFIC ROMANCE

In spite of the term, “scientific romance” is not about finding love while travelling in a Victorian airship. In fact, it’s not really about individual people at all. It’s actually an Imperial Age term for what we’d call “science fiction” today; an extrapolation of the future based on the science of the (then) present.

Perhaps the most well-known Imperial Age scientific romance is H.G. Wells’ *The Time Machine*. Here, the emphasis is on the future of humanity; the time traveler isn’t even given a name (Wells would use a similar convention in *War of the Worlds*, which is arguably more a horror story than a scientific romance). Instead, the child-like Eloi and the bestial, subterranean Morlocks represent a commentary (warning?) on the wealthy and working classes of the present. W. Grove’s *The Wreck of a World* posits a future in which North America is overrun by sentient machines (which should sound familiar to modern science fiction buffs).

The scientific romance is difficult to design without resorting to caricature, simply because the modern Narrator and Player know how history plays out in the over a hundred years since the end of the Imperial Age. Setting a campaign in a Victorian vision of 1940 or 2000 simply becomes alternative history with steampunk/pulp elements.

One interesting variant of the scientific romance is the future alternate history. If you’ve previously run an **Imperial Age** campaign in which the heroes have changed history, then it might be fun to run a new campaign in the brave new timeline.

Alien technology can also provide inspiration for future history. What would the opening decades of the twentieth century look like as mankind rebuilds from the Martian invasion and scientists and engineers discover ways to use the technology that the Martians left in their wake? Detective and horror themes could also be worked in, as the heroes investigate the disappearances of whole shanty towns, only to discover that the government or a private agency is responsible, as the “miracles” of the new technology still require fresh human blood!

Another interesting variant is the far future campaign, in which a neo-Victorian culture arises in an Interstellar campaign. Earth becomes the new London as her Imperial grip reaches across the stars and crushes less advanced civilizations (this especially works if Earth is ahead of the rest of the galaxy technologically). Victorian fashions and sensibilities enjoy a resurgence while colonial families struggle to retain the comforts of home in their new alien surroundings.

LUMINIFEROUS AETHER

A common belief amongst physicists in the 19th century was that light waves required a medium through which to travel from the sun to earth. The exact nature of this aether was disputed; some theories held it to be solid matter (albeit malleable enough for the earth to spin through it) while others believed it to be a liquid. This theory was challenged in 1887, when Albert Michelson and Edward Morley conducted an experiment that cast doubt on the existence of luminiferous aether. Albert Einstein would deal aether a fatal blow with his Special Theory of Relativity in 1905.

In a steam campaign, however, the Narrator may decide that the luminiferous aether really exists. Its exact properties will need to be determined; does sound travel through the aether as well? Can a spacecraft sail or burrow through it? Is it possible to breathe in the aether? What is the air pressure like in space? Do living creatures travel through the aether? Depending on how fanciful the Narrator wishes to get, the aether can range from being an excuse for a non-airtight, non-pressurized steam-driven spacecraft to function in outer space to an exotic spacescape of open-air steam space liners coasting past aether-travelling wildlife.

INVENTION FICTION

Invention fiction involves the work of a single inventor. It often involves a prototype, an engine that the world has yet to see. Many of Jules Verne’s works revolve around a single fantastic engine, such as a submersible, a helicopter, and a spaceship. H.G. Wells’ time machine, although also scientific romance, is an example of invention fiction.

Invention fiction makes an excellent background option if there is an engineer hero. Perhaps he has designed a couple of engines a few years ahead of their time or is a prototypical gadgeteer hero, creating new inventions as needed. Invention fiction villains follow a similar format; their inventions have yet to affect the world at large and doing so would be a catastrophe.

Invention fiction marries well with adventure, detective, and horror stories. In adventure stories, fantastic engines could allow heroes to travel to places that they’d normally be unable to reach. On the flip side, adventuring heroes may have to stop a powerful new engine before it wreaks havoc on the world.

In detective stories, a new invention could be involved in a locked-room or other impossible mystery. Narrators should take care that, although the invention may be fanciful, the heroes have a chance to logically solve the crime. Perhaps, for example, the culprit in Edgar Allen Poe’s “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” was not an ape but a malfunctioning automaton

servant or the spectral hound in Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* was created with a new three-dimensional motion picture camera.

Using science in horror is already covered in the Horror Stories chapter. A steam-horror tale would emphasize machinery over chemical horrors. W. Grove's *A Mexican Mystery* posits a hellish self-aware locomotive that terrorizes the countryside (and in the sequel *The Wreck of a World*, crosses over into apocalyptic scientific romance). A mechanical Frankenstein's monster would also fit well in invention fiction.

STEAMPUNK

The term "steampunk" often gets maligned in "sub-genre purist" circles, as critics contend that Victorian-flavored science fiction has little in common with the sub-genre that inspired it, cyberpunk. Interestingly, as time goes on, cyberpunk has slid from "future history" into "alternative history" and perhaps now shares more in common with steampunk than critics would like to admit. In any case, steampunk stories are a modern literary style, absent in Victorian literature (but no less fun!).

Central to both is the concept of a dystopian society. In steampunk, the lower class is the one most likely to be dehumanized through technology, as steam-driven automata make laborers more appealing for hire. There may even be mass unemployment as automata take jobs away from the working classes, necessitating a need to do something with the growing unemployed. The wealthy bourgeoisie exploits the new social order while the privileged upper class turns a blind eye, happy to enjoy the fruits of labor without thinking too hard about what was necessary to reap them.

In addition to the slow, sick decline of humanity is the much quicker parallel in nature. Urban sprawls stretch across countries while coal burning furnaces pump poison into the atmosphere. As real food becomes scarce and a privilege of the upper classes, the poor must make do with the processed slop sold as canned goods.

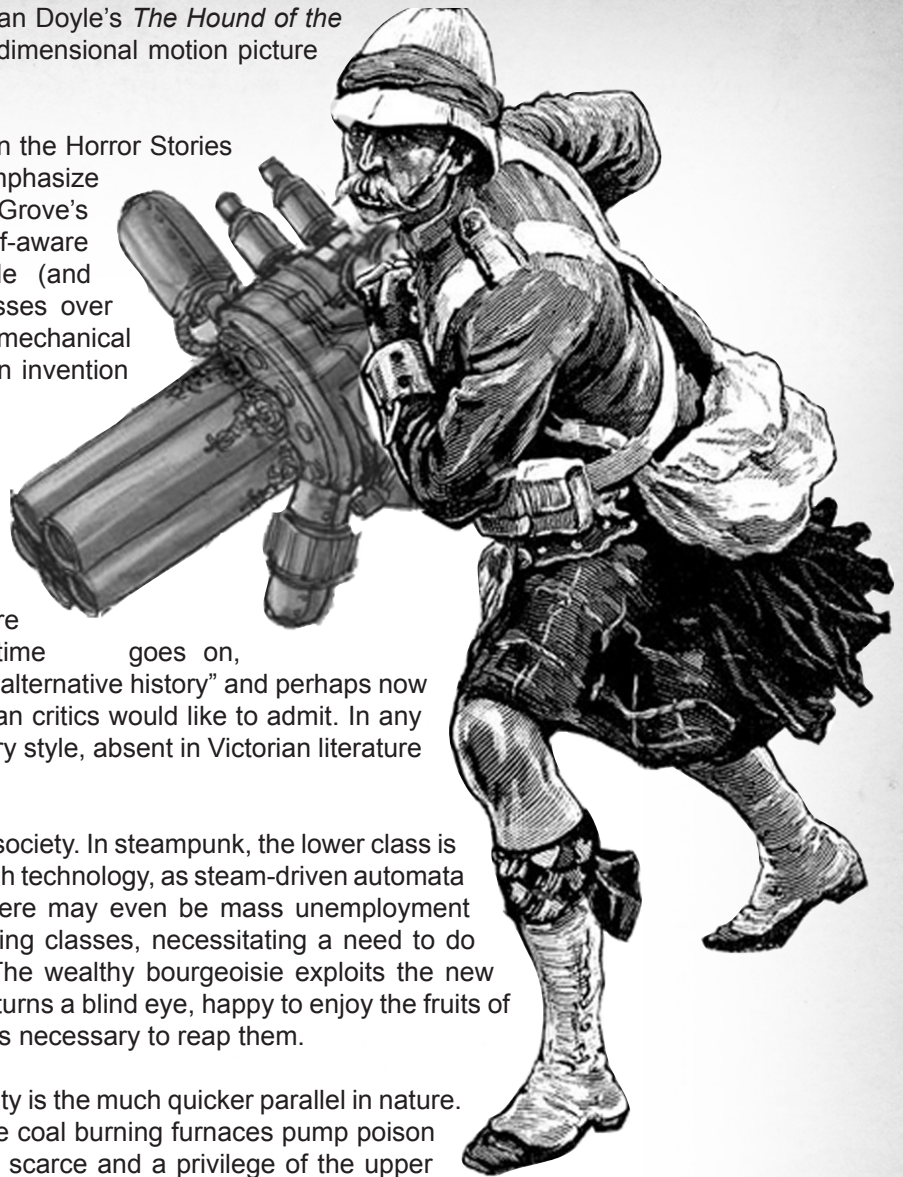
Anarchist and socialist movements should play a big role in steampunk adventures. Marxists would attempt to work within the system, drawing attention to the issues in the hopes that they can reform the government, while anarchists believe that violent action is necessary to overthrow the oppressive regime and replace it with a utopia.

RETRO-FUTURE

There are a number of cyberpunk novels and roleplaying games on the market. It is certainly possible to take the tropes of cyberpunk and "re-skin" them as steampunk. In such a society, chopper gangs (who steal prosthetics from still-living victims) may rule the rookeries, the middle class is disappearing, and the British Empire has completely fragmented into regional states supported by local corporations.

India has thrown off British rule and large Indian corporations have taken Britain's place as the commercial giant of the world. Due to this influence, it has become fashionable in London to wear Indian-inspired clothes and adopt elements of Hinduism. Middle class merchants that wish to do overseas business learn to speak Hindi (while more Indians speak English than Hindi, many wealthy Indians use Hindi as a matter of national pride).

Life is cheap in a retro-future and the players should expect their heroes to live fast and die young. A typical pub brawl often ends with serious injuries and wounds are not uncommon. Technology increases faster than the law can keep up and many lower class characters walk the fog-shrouded streets of London with chain swords and rapid-fire pistols. With increased Asian influences have come the martial arts, and gentleman and criminal alike are learning new ways to beat each other senseless.



The one area that a retro-future re-skin doesn't work well with is the virtual reality internet. Virtual reality hacking simply doesn't translate well in a steam-driven Victorian Britain. Fortunately, virtual reality hacking is the one area that Narrators have problems with when running a cyberpunk campaign, and it generally gets hand-waved or ignored. Thus, it likely won't be missed by a Narrator running a steampunk campaign.

STEAMPULP

Steampulp is a less dystopian version and perhaps more representative of the popular conception of steampunk. Steampulp posits an alternate Imperial Age where airships fill the skies, war veterans are given fully-functional replacement limbs, and fantastic war engines duel on the battlefields.

In steampulp, historical society and culture is largely untouched, although there might be the occasional foray into alternative history. Heroes may be dashing airship captains, charismatic spies, or steam knights. A detective story might take place on an airship flight between Liverpool and Boston, or an adventure story may involve figuring out the weakness in a new German war engine.

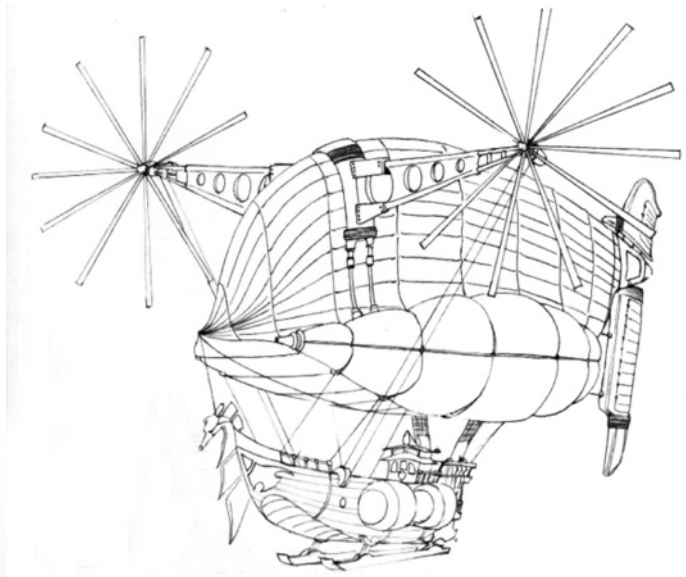
Many "pulp" tropes of the early next century could inspire steampulp tales. Perhaps a group of heroes travel to Venus to claim the planet for the British Empire. Perhaps a Continental power is considering an invasion of England. Perhaps a proliferation of criminal masterminds has necessitated a new type of hero (such as *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*).

ARCANE STEAM

The Imperial Age contains chapters on occult stories as well as steam stories; it's conceivable that a Narrator may wish to marry them together. While this may seem jarring at first, incorporating magic into a steam story actually solves some of the logical problems with engine designs. How can an automaton think? Magic of course! How can such a heavy airship fly? Magic! How can you move a prosthetic leg simply by reacting? Magic! At least on some level, this is the way it's always worked in fantasy, as enchanted arrows and rune swords are merely the fusing of magic with technology.

Of course, some Narrators may opt for an either-or approach. As much as the industrial revolution has created man-vs.-nature arguments, one could argue that science and magic cannot mix. Automata are either steam-driven machines or magical golems; there is no in-between. In such a setting, one may not work well around the other. Perhaps engines are more prone to break down in a natural forest, while magicians in a London club may find it difficult to perform even the simplest of tricks.

An arcane steam setting provides the largest canvas for *Imperial Age* adventures. Heroes have a wide variety of options, and Narrators can create almost any story. The Narrator should take care not to lose too much of the Victorian feel; otherwise, it simply becomes science fantasy.



CRAFTING HEROES FOR STEAM STORIES

While some scientific romances downplayed the role of the individual protagonist, you're going to have a table full of unhappy Players if you don't focus the campaign on their characters. Thankfully, the steam genre provides a number of interesting hero archetypes for Players to base their heroes on.

BACKGROUND

In addition to the usual backgrounds offered in the Hero Creation chapter, a new one, the Intelligent Automaton, is introduced here. Intelligent automata are mechanical constructs that have been given the spark of life or a reasonable facsimile thereof.

INTELLIGENT AUTOMATON

Intelligent automata are steam-driven mechanical constructs of brass, iron, and other materials that are self-aware. This may be the result of a deliberate attempt to create a thinking engine, or it may be an accident or design flaw. In any case, the intelligent automaton may think for itself and join the ranks of heroes.

Society

The Narrator will have to determine how prevalent intelligent automata are in her campaign. Perhaps all automata are unthinking machines and self-aware aberrations either have to hide their intelligence or are treated as the freaks of technology that they are. In some campaigns, intelligent automata may be separated from polite society by being limited to barracks and battlefields; while in others intelligent automata may be servants or bodyguards to wealthy families.

Intelligent automata have a hard time integrating themselves into society. Man is the master of the world, and many have trouble accepting another sentient race as brethren. Even if it can be agreed that an automaton is sentient, most men of society would treat the automaton as he would a small child, a pet, or non-western foreigner. Automata also have a tendency to belch black smoke, which simply wouldn't do at a dinner party. As a result, automata are generally banned

from social gatherings (unless acting as servants). Even when offered an invitation, most intelligent automata feel uncomfortable with social situations and go out of their way to avoid them.

Powers

It is up to the Narrator whether an intelligent automaton can use powers and take adept levels. This should be based on the relationship between magic and technology, as well as the intrinsic nature of the powers, in a particular campaign. For example, a Narrator may rule that magic is an external force and, as such, an intelligent automaton that speaks the proper words and makes the appropriate gestures can use it. Powers of the mind, however, may be barred to them. In a Detective Stories campaign, intelligent automata may be barred from taking adept levels but might be allowed to take the Scientific Detective role, as the powers of that role are based on logic.

Gender

Intelligent automata are sexless. However they do identify with a particular gender based on their original role. An automaton butler or soldier, for example, would be considered male, while an automaton housemaid would be considered female. While an automaton will identify itself according to this tradition, it does not typically "feel" male or female. At the player's discretion, an intelligent automaton might start to identify itself as a particular gender, even to the point of feeling love for other creatures.

Fuel

Intelligent automata are assumed to have "eating habits"



similar to humans. The Narrator should determine how many times an intelligent automaton must replenish its power source. Failure to do so will result in the intelligent automaton shutting down until the power source is replenished.

Size

While it is theoretically possible for an automaton to be of any size, this section assumes that player character automata will be of compatible size with its comrades. Narrators that wish to allow intelligent automata of other sizes than small, medium, or large may use the stat blocks below as models.

These statistics presume a medium-sized intelligent automaton. The hero can select an automaton of larger or smaller size at no additional cost.

Ability Adjustments: Str +1, Dex -1. Intelligent automata have no Constitution score and only receive 5 points to spread amongst their other ability scores.

Bonus Feats: Eidetic Memory, Tough

Favored Feats: Improvised Tools, Skill Mastery

Special: The intelligent automaton has all construct traits. Intelligent automata may not use extra effort.

PAYING FOR EVERYTHING

Like other heroes, intelligent automata are assumed to learn new skills and increase their ability scores as they increase in level. At the Narrator's option, an intelligent automaton does not gain skill ranks or increase ability scores as they advance levels. Instead, they receive an extra feat per level (which could be used to increase skills or abilities if the Player wishes).

ADEPT

Based on how the Narrator designs her campaign, adepts can be non-existent, the ultimate engineers, or anything in-between. Obviously, in a pure steam campaign there would be little use for an adept. If paranormal powers exist, then the adept's role largely depends on how magic and technology interact (see the Arcane Steam section above).

ARCANE ENGINEER

In some campaigns, magic and science are compatible. The arcane engineer is the modern version of the enchanter, able to fuse magic and science together to create truly amazing engines.

Key Ability: Intelligence

Starting Skills: Concentration, Craft (Mechanical), Knowledge (Supernatural), Knowledge (Technology)

Starting Feats: Imbue Item, Powers 2 (Enhance Vehicle, Fire Shaping), Skill Focus (Craft (mechanical))

INDUSTRIAL GREMLIN

Talented demolition experts, industrial gremlins use magic against engines. Some industrial gremlins have an anti-steam philosophy, while others work against the war engines of enemy nations. A few have even joined the ranks of anarchists.

Key Ability: Intelligence

Starting Skills: Craft (Demolitions), Disable Device, Knowledge (Supernatural), Stealth

Starting Feats: Master Plan, Powers (Cold Shaping, Fire Shaping), Talented (Disable Device and Stealth)

EXPERT

The expert has a crucial role in designing and maintaining steam engines. While most mechanically-inclined experts tend to become steam engineers, prosthetic surgery is a growing field. Some experts, especially self-trained ones, comb the battlefields for useful junk.

PROSTHETIC SURGEON

The prosthetic surgeon is part surgeon, part engineer, and part artist. She tends wounds as best she can before fitting permanently damaged limbs with artificial parts. The best prosthetic surgeons can sculpt limbs that are roughly the same size and shape of the original limb, while most opt for utility and make only token attempts at aesthetics. Still, a bulky, odd-shaped limb is better than no limb at all.

Key Abilities: Intelligence, Wisdom

Starting Skills: Concentration, Craft (Mechanical), Craft (Prosthetics), Diplomacy, Knowledge (life sciences), Knowledge (technology), Medicine, Survival

Starting Feats: Dedicated (saving a life), Improvised Tools, Second Chance (Medicine), Skill Focus (Medicine)

SALVAGER

Salvagers scour battlefields, new and old, for engine scraps that they can sell for profit. Salvagers are common in campaigns with large numbers of steam engines, as unique engines are rarely left to rust (even the enemy tends to claim destroyed engines to reverse-engineer their secrets). Some salvagers are actually military engineers that recover still-usable parts from wrecks during or after a battle.

Key Ability: Intelligence

Starting Skills: Bluff, Craft (mechanical), Diplomacy, Disable Device, Drive (or Pilot), Knowledge (Technology), Notice, Search

Starting Feats: Connected, Contacts, Salvage, Skill Focus (Craft (Mechanical))

STEAM ENGINEER

The steam engineer is a master designer of powerful engines. While most steam engineers are pressed into war service, some prefer to design civilian engines, such as airships for transportation or massive steam locomotives that no longer need tracks.

Key Ability: Intelligence

Starting Skills: Concentration, Craft (Demolitions), Craft (Mechanical), Craft (Structural), Disable Device, Knowledge (Physical Sciences), Knowledge (Technology), Search

Starting Feats: Firearms Training, Improvised Tools, Skill Focus (any Craft), Talented (Craft; choose two)

WARRIOR

While the experts build incredible engines, it takes a warrior to operate them in battle. In addition to engine pilots, many warriors are used in supporting roles. Some man weapons on larger engines, while some warriors are trained to support engines on the battlefield by clearing the area of enemy infantry or artillery.

ENGINE PILOT

The engine pilot is trained to Drive, Handle Animal, or Pilot fantastic engines. They are also trained in using engines on the battlefield.

Key Abilities: Dexterity and Intelligence

Starting Skills: Craft (Mechanical), Drive (or Pilot), Knowledge (Tactics), Notice

Starting Feats: Attack Focus (ranged), Dodge, Firearms Training, Talented (Craft (mechanical) and Drive, Handle Animal, or Pilot), Vehicular Combat

STEAM KNIGHT

The steam knight is a curious site on the battlefield. It is well-known that only titled gentlemen and aristocrats operate these smoke-belching iron giants and they have a particular code of honor. Opposing steam knights often square off against each other in sporting fashion, ignored by the rest of the combatants. Only when the duel is over does the victorious steam knight return his attention to the battlefield, and only then until another worthy opponent can be found and engaged.

Key Abilities: Dexterity and Intelligence

Starting Skills: Craft (Mechanical), Drive, Knowledge (Tactics), Notice

Starting Feats: Benefit (Gentleman's Title), Firearms Training, Giant Automaton Operation, Skill Focus (Drive), Vehicular Combat

STEAM MECHA

The giant humanoid engines of the steam knight are slow and cumbersome, as one would expect a giant steam-driven puppet to be. Because of this, steam knights are essentially vehicle drivers; they can move their engine, fire its weapons, and throw the occasional punch, but they aren't going to be performing the judo throws or karate kicks common in robot anime.

That said there is certainly room for gladiatorial mecha in steam stories, especially in campaigns where the occult can lend a helping hand. Narrators interested in adding such elements should check out *Mecha vs. Kaiju* by **Big Finger Games**. With a little re-skinning, the rules presented there should work seamlessly in *The Imperial Age*. Alternatively, gladiatorial mecha could be created simply by using giant versions of intelligent automata that are controlled by their pilots.

SKILLS

The following additional uses for skills are useful in Steam Stories.

COMPUTERS

Unless your campaign involves extremely complex analytical engines, the use of a difference engine, analytical engine, or any similar device requires the use of Knowledge (Technology). Searching through files (likely on punch cards) requires a Research check (see the Detective Stories chapter for the Research skill).

CRAFT

You can use the Craft skill to appraise and jury-rig items. In addition, you can use it to find weak points in objects you can create.

Check: The following are new uses for the Craft skill.

Appraise: You can appraise common or well-known objects belonging to one of your Craft specialties with a Craft check (Difficulty 10). Failure by 4 or less means that you estimate the value of the item at one more or less than its normal purchase difficulty. Failure by 5 or more means you estimate the value at two more or less than its normal purchase difficulty.

Appraising a rare or exotic item belonging to one of your Craft specialties requires a successful check against Difficulty 15, 20, or higher. If the check succeeds, you estimate the purchase difficulty correctly; failure means you can't estimate the item's value.

Find Weak Point: You can make a Craft check as a standard action to spot a weakness in an item or structure belonging to one of your Craft specialties. You must be within 5 feet of an item or structure to spot a weakness. Make a Craft check (Difficulty equal to the Craft Difficulty to create the item + 10). If you succeed, you spot a weakness that you can exploit in the design of a particular item or structure. The benefits of this knowledge depend upon the item. Weapons with a weak point suffer a -1 penalty to attack rolls against you. Armor and shields suffer a -1 penalty to their Toughness bonus against attacks made by you. Your melee attacks deal double damage to a structure. Items with a weak point are easier to disable via the Disable Device skill. You gain a +2 bonus to Disable Device checks against these items. In addition to the above benefits, you gain a +2 bonus to Sunder and Strength checks to break these items.

Your allies gain the above benefits if you use a standard action to describe the exact nature of the defect and how best to exploit it.

Jury-Rigged Items: You can use this skill to create temporary or crude items. Make a Craft check as normal, but do not make a Wealth check. In addition, it only takes a full-round action to create a Simple item and one minute to create Moderate items. The final item has no sale value, and there is a 10% chance (a roll of 19 or higher on d20) per hour of use that it breaks. You can't jury-rig an item with a purchase difficulty of more than 14. You must provide appropriate raw materials and tools as normal.

Challenges: You can take the following challenges with Craft:

Advanced Rig: By increasing the Difficulty by 10, you can create an Advanced jury-rigged item. It only takes 12 hours or more (at the Narrator's discretion) to create Advanced items. The final item has no sale value, and there is a 30% chance (a roll of 15 or higher on d20) per hour of use that it breaks. There is no limit to the purchase difficulty, though you still need to have the appropriate raw materials and tools as normal.

Careful Crafting: In return for a -5 penalty on your check, your raw materials are only wasted if you fail the check by 10 or more. If you fail your check by 9 or less, you keep the raw materials and do not need to make a new Wealth check.

Complex Rig: By increasing the Difficulty by 5, you can create a Complex jury-rigged item. It only takes one hour to create Complex items. The final item has no sale value, and there is a 20% chance (a roll of 17 or higher on d20) per hour of use that it breaks. You can't jury-rig an item with a purchase difficulty of more than 19.

Durable Rig: By increasing the Difficulty to create a jury-rigged item by 5, you can lower the break chance per hour by 5%.

Durable Item: In return for a -5 penalty to create an item, the item you build gains a +1 bonus to its toughness. You may increase the penalty by another 5 to increase the toughness by 2.

Far Spot: In return for a -5 penalty on your check to find a weak point, you can spot weak points at a distance of up to 30 feet away from the target object.

Try Again: You can't appraise the same object again, regardless of success. You may try again with regards to finding a weak point or jury-rigging items.

Action: Appraising an item takes one minute. Finding weak points is a standard action. Jury-rigging simple items take a full-round action, while moderate items take one minute.

Special: A magnifying glass gives you a +2 circumstance bonus on Craft checks to appraise any small or highly detailed item, such as a gem. A merchant's scale gives you a +2 circumstance bonus on Craft checks to appraise items valued by weight, including anything made of precious metals. These bonuses stack.

CRAFT (DEMOLITIONS)

With this skill, you can set detonators and place or disarm explosives. This skill is only available in campaigns that have access to explosive devices.

Check: Setting a simple explosive to blow up at a certain spot doesn't require a check, but connecting and setting a detonator does. Also, placing an explosive for maximum effect against a structure calls for a check, as does disarming an explosive device.

Set Detonator: Most explosives require a detonator to go off. Connecting a detonator to an explosive requires a Craft (demolitions) check (Difficulty 10). Failure means that the explosive fails to go off as planned. Failure by 10 or more means the explosive goes off as the detonator is being installed.

Careful Disarm: In return for a -5 penalty, you have chosen a method of disarming that makes it more difficult for explosives to detonate while you are disarming them. They only explode if you fail your Craft check by 15 or more.

Action: Setting a detonator is usually a full-round action. Placing an explosive device takes one minute or more, depending on the scope of the job.

Special: You can take 10 when using the Craft (demolitions) skill, but you can't take 20. Without a demolitions toolkit, you take a -4 penalty on Craft (demolitions) checks.

Making an explosive requires the Craft (chemical) skill.

CRAFT (MECHANICAL)

This skill works as-is using the rules in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*. As electronics are in their infancy, the Narrator may use Craft (Mechanics) as the default skill for building any type of engine, prosthetic, or mechanical device, subject to the need for certain feats.

CRAFT (PROSTHETICS)

This skill is slightly misnamed, as the Craft (Mechanical) skill covers the design of a working prosthetic limb. The Craft (Prosthetics) skill is used to sculpt the limb into something resembling the original. The higher the skill check the more realistic the prosthetic limb. Even well-crafted limbs, however, are still obviously artificial.

Result	Reaction
9 or less	Poorly sculpted. The limb doesn't work as well as intended (Narrator's discretion).
10	Serviceable. The limb is bulky and only vaguely resembles what it is replacing.
15	Standard. The limb is slightly bulky but is in the general shape of the replaced limb.
20	Well-made. The limb is shaped well and can be hidden with routine disguises (beneath a cloak, pant leg, or shirt sleeve).
25	Impressive. The limb is a work of art, a metal sculpture of the original.
30	Unique. The limb is so beautifully crafted that the designer's name carries weight in social circles.

DRIVE

For most of the historical Imperial Age, Drive is primarily used for watercraft. Steam locomotives go only where the tracks lead them, and animal-drawn vehicles use the Handle Animal skill. Drive is only used for land vehicles when the first “horseless carriages” appear, starting around the middle of the Imperial Age.

In steam stories, the Drive skill is used for land and water travelling engines. The Drive skill is also used if a flying engine is travelling on land or water. There are no special feats or other prerequisites required.

MEDICINE

Attach Prosthetics (Difficulty 25 for arms and legs, Difficulty 35 otherwise): You can attach prosthetics to a patient. While the Difficulties are quite high, most surgeons Take 20 on checks. Success grants the patient a working prosthetic.

Remove Prosthetics (Difficulty 15 for arms and legs, Difficulty 20 otherwise): You can remove a prosthetic limb. A successful check safely removes the prosthetic. A failure causes +1 lethal damage for every point the check was missed by.

PILOT

On its own, the Pilot skill is even less useful than the Drive skill in the Imperial Age. Rigid airships don't exist until the last year of the Imperial Age (1900), with airplanes arriving three years later.

In steam stories, the Pilot skill is used for any engine that travels in air or space. There are no special feats or other prerequisites required.

FEATS

The following are new feats appropriate for Steam campaigns. There is a new category of feats, prosthetic. Prosthetic feats are like general feats in that anyone can take them. However, while intelligent automata may take as many prosthetic feats as they want, flesh-and-blood heroes will need a reason to take them. In the Imperial Age, people don't willingly hack off limbs for obvious and less efficient replacements, so the hero should have an in-game reason to select the feat. Some feats build off others; for example, a hero with a prosthetic arm may suggest his real arm was crushed in an industrial accident. Later, when he gets an external weapon mount for that limb, he does not need a new excuse.

Whether intelligent automaton or human, you lose one point of Dexterity for every prosthetic feat you have, unless the description says otherwise. Just because an intelligent automaton picks a feat does not make it a prosthetic feat; the feat must be from the prosthetic category.

CREATING DEMAND FOR PROSTHETICS

Unless a character is truly insane, no one would willingly part with perfectly good flesh-and-blood to make room for a clunky steam-driven substitute. Most bearers of prosthetics do so because of permanent injuries. The **True20** combat system does not facilitate this, as damage is dealt with on an abstract level. Outside of GM fiat or player choice, there is little cause for purchasing prosthetics.

One way to create demand is the “dual critical hit” rule. If a character scores a threat and the second roll would also qualify as a threat, then a body part is destroyed (victim or Narrator's choice, based on the circumstances). The character may get the appropriate prosthetic replacement as soon as possible, but uses up the first future feat he has available.

Example: Sir Winston Cranberry is racing across the battlefield when he is attacked by a sniper. The sniper has a critical threat range of 18-20 and scores a 19. On his second roll, he rolls an 18. Both the 18 and 19 were in the critical threat range, so poor Sir Winston loses a body part. After a quick discussion between the player and Narrator, it is determined that Sir Winston's thighbone was shattered. Later, Sir Winston takes the Prosthetic Leg feat. When he attains his next level, he will not be able to get a new feat.

If you'd like something more detailed, the **True20 Warrior's Handbook** offers advanced critical optional rules that provide incentives for prosthetic replacements.

ABILITY BOOST (PROSTHETIC)

You've redesigned or replaced your parts to boost output. You may increase one ability score by +1 (except Constitution). If you choose Dexterity, then this feat does not count as a prosthetic feat for purposes of lowering Dexterity. In fact, this is the only way for you to offset the Dexterity penalty imposed by other prosthetic feats. You can take this feat multiple times.

A human can take this feat, but only to boost Strength or Dexterity. The bonus is limited to tasks capable of being performed using attached prosthetics.

ARMOR (PROSTHETIC)

Your external shell has been fortified against attack. You gain a +1 to Toughness saves. You may increase this to +2 by allowing a flaw in the design. With the flaw, the Armor bonus does not count against a particular type of attack chosen by the Narrator. You can take this feat multiple times.

EXTERNAL WEAPON MOUNT (PROSTHETIC)

Prerequisite: Prosthetic Arm.

A melee or ranged weapon is attached to your prosthetic arm in place of a hand. Attempts to disarm the attached weapon automatically fail, though the weapon can still be attacked (like any other weapon) in an attempt to destroy it. If the weapon is damaged it will need to be repaired. Selecting this feat includes an appropriate melee or ranged weapon with a cost of 16 or less (a more expensive weapon may be selected when this feat is chosen though it must be purchased as described in the **True20** rules). You can take this feat twice (one for each arm); however, unless you take the Prosthetic Hand feat you won't be able to do any kind of fine manipulation.

HEARING AMPLIFICATION (PROSTHETIC)

Your inner ear is augmented by the installation of an aural implant that improves your sense of hearing; your audio sensitivity is dramatically enhanced by the system, granting you a +4 bonus to Notice (listening) checks. The benefit of this feat stacks with other non-prosthetic feats that provide a bonus to Notice (listening) checks.

PROSTHETIC ARM (PROSTHETIC)

A prosthetic arm is an obvious mechanical limb that fully replaces a lost or destroyed biological arm. The prosthetic arm may begin at the shoulder, elbow, or wrist (as determined by your specific needs). The prosthetic arm grants you a +2 bonus to Strength checks for tasks in which you use your prosthetic arm. If you have selected this feat twice then you gain a +3 bonus to Strength checks for tasks in which you use both of your arms. The benefit of this feat stacks with other feats that improve your Strength.

PROSTHETIC HAND (PROSTHETIC)

Prerequisite: External Weapon Mount or see below.

If you have the External Weapon Mount feat then this feat will allow you to have the weapon mount and keep your hand. If you take this feat without the External Weapon Mount and Prosthetic Arm, then only your hand is mechanical. You gain a +2 to Strength checks for tasks in which you use your hand but not your arm (such as punching or crushing, but not lifting).

This feat does not cost a point of Dexterity if it is attached to a prosthetic arm.

PROSTHETIC LEG (PROSTHETIC)

A prosthetic leg is an obvious mechanical limb that fully replaces a lost or destroyed biological leg. The prosthetic leg may begin at the thigh, knee, or ankle (as determined by your specific needs). The prosthetic leg grants you a +2 bonus to Strength checks for tasks in which you use your prosthetic leg (such as kicking in doors and making Jump check). If you have selected this feat twice then you gain a +3 bonus to Strength checks for tasks in which you use both of your legs. Additionally, whether you have one or two prosthetic legs you gain a +5 ft. bonus to your base speed. The benefit of this feat stacks with other feats that improve your Strength.

SALVAGE (GENERAL)

You can salvage parts from destroyed engines. Salvaging a destroyed engine takes time, as noted on the **Salvage** table. At the end of this time, make a Search check. If the check succeeds, you may increase your Wealth score by the amount indicated on the table, either by selling the salvaged parts for scrap or using them to offset the cost of future building projects.

Salvaged Engine's Size	Time Required	Search Check Difficulty	Wealth Increase
Tiny or smaller	10 minutes	15	+1
Small, Medium and Large	30 minutes	20	+2
Huge	1 hour	25	+3
Gargantuan	3 hours	30	+4
Colossal	6 hours	35	+6

Special: A particular engine can be successfully salvaged only once. Any further attempts to salvage the wreckage automatically fail.

VISUAL AMPLIFICATION (PROSTHETIC)

Your eyes are replaced with implants that provide you with improved eyesight, including basic telescoping vision. You get a +4 bonus on all Notice (spotting) checks. The benefit of this feat stacks with other non-prosthetic feats that improve your Notice (spotting) checks.

POWERS

While steam stories tend to focus on scientific heroes, some **Imperial Age** campaigns may include magic or other occult powers. This section includes new powers and applications of existing powers that are relevant to steam stories.

COLD SHAPING

Instant Cool: You can cool the water of an engine so that it needs to be restarted again. The Difficulty for the power check is 20 (the power check is 15 if the adept can actually see the water).

FIRE SHAPING

Adepts with the Fire Shaping power can use it to boil water within the boiler of a steam engine. Because the water usually isn't seen, most Difficulties incorporate a +5 familiarity modifier. If the boiler is transparent or the adept can otherwise actually see the water, reduce all Difficulties by 5.

Increase Pressure: By warming the boiler, you can temporarily boost the engine speed of a vehicle. You can increase the speed of the vehicle by 10% per 2 adept levels for as long as you concentrate on it.

Instant Start: You can start a vehicle immediately regardless of its normal start-up time. The Difficulty is based on how long it normally takes for a cold engine to start.

Difficulty	Normal Start Time
15	1 minute
20	10 minutes
25	1 hour
30	4+ hours

REPROGRAM AUTOMATA

Fatiguing, Concentration

Prerequisite: Fire Shaping

By tapping into the steam that powers them, you can mentally control automata. The target automaton makes a Will saving throw. If the save fails, you control the target construct's actions while you concentrate. You can force the subject to perform any action you wish within the limits of its abilities. Automata with an Intelligence score that are forced to take actions against their natures (such as self-destructing) receive a new saving throw with a bonus of +1 to +4, depending on the nature of the action. A successful save breaks your control and the automaton reprograms itself.

Time: Full Action

ENGINE DESIGN

This section provides detailed rules for constructing engines of all shapes and sizes. A checklist is provided at the beginning of this chapter to provide guidance for the engine creation process. While this list might seem daunting at first, engine creation is a relatively straightforward process that will result in the familiar vehicle stat block found in the core book, along with an appropriate cost.

The most important "pre-step" to engine design is concept. It helps to have an idea of the resulting engine before starting the process of designing it. Fantastical engines are not limited to weight restrictions, equipment slots, or any other hard limitations. A Narrator can design exactly the sort of engine he wants knowing that it will be reflected in the cost. This is in line with the vehicle descriptions in the core book.

BASIC STEPS TO BUILDING AN ENGINE

- Choose Size.
- Choose Power Source.
- Choose Toughness.
- Choose Defense.
- Choose Strength.
- Choose Speed.
- Choose Traits.
- Design Weapons.
- Determine what Skills or Feats are needed to control the engine.
- Use the total number of Engine Points to determine the final cost.

AUTOMATA AS ENGINES

Automata may be built using either the intelligent automata rules or the engine rules. Intelligent automata were designed differently to make them more compatible with regular hero design. For Narrator characters, the Narrator can create automata, especially very large automata, as engines.

QUICK AND DIRTY ENGINE DESIGN

While this section is designed to be relatively quick and painless, there are times when the Narrator may wish to resort to a quicker method, especially if the engine is simply window dressing for the main story. In this case, you may simply wish to use an existing vehicle and give it a Victorian steam gloss. Steam versions tend to be coal and steam-driven, bulkier, less efficient, and more ornate than their real-world counterparts (although the last factor is of minimal concern unless you plan to draw the vehicle for your players).

For example, if you want to create a steam-driven automobile, then you could simply take the Compact Car statistics from *True20 Adventure Roleplaying* and modify it. Give it a speed of 40mph (twice as fast as a horse galloping at full speed!), adjust its size to Huge (with the appropriate modifications to Strength, Defense, and Toughness), and readjust the price to reflect its availability (a good rule of thumb is +10, which would increase the cost to 36). You now have a steam-driven automobile that can comfortably seat two people.



ENGINE SIZE

The first step is to determine the actual size of the engine. Engines that require an operator must be at least one category larger than the operator if the engine will encase him. If the wearer will ride on the engine, then it can be up to two sizes smaller.

Specify its dimensions (tall) or (long). Specify the engine's longest dimension (height if tall, length if long) and empty weight, choosing from within the available ranges given on the Size and Weight chart.

Size and Weight Chart				
Size	Example	Modifier	Dimensions	Empty Weight
Fine	Coin	+8	up to 1"	up to 1/2 lb.
Diminutive	Pocket Watch	+4	1-6"	1/4 to 10 lbs.
Tiny	Doll	+2	6"-1'	5 to 50 lbs.
Small	Wheelbarrow	+1	1-4'	25 to 250 lbs.
Medium	Bicycle, Personal Armor	+0	4-8'	100 lbs. to 1 ton
Large	Hansom	-1	8-16'	1/2 to 4 tons
Huge	Coach	-2	16-32'	2 to 40 tons
Gargantuan	Heavy tank	-4	32-64'	10 to 400 tons
Colossal	Zeppelin	-8	64'+	50+ tons

The modifier is the size modifier of the engine. A good way to estimate weight for a very large engine: weight in tons = (longest dimension x longest dimension x longest dimension) divided by 1,000.

SIZE AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

While the engines of Victorian science fiction tend to be slow and bulky compared to their modern counterparts, there is nothing in these rules stopping someone from making a small, fast vehicle. At the same time, some Victorian-themed anime and literature clearly allows for streamlined, fast vehicles.

The stop-gap, of course is the Narrator. As a general rule, the Narrator should make Imperial Age engines bigger and less efficient than their modern counterparts, but if the Narrator wants to allow for more fantastical designs than that is okay too. It's your game.

POWER SOURCE

All engines must have a power source. This could be steam, clockwork, wind, electricity, or anything else that the Narrator can imagine. Narrators running very fantastical campaigns could have necromantic, crystal, or even psychically powered engines. Power source is a matter of style and costs no engine points. An engine is assumed to be very noisy (+20 on an opponent's Notice check) and run for a few hours (usually 2) before needing refueling.

TOUGHNESS

The engine's Toughness rating measures the damage an engine can sustain before being knocked out of action. The "base" column lists the default values.

Engine Toughness	
Size	Toughness
Tiny	+1
Small	+3
Medium	+5
Large	+7
Huge	+9
Gargantuan	+11
Colossal	+13

Each extra level of Toughness costs 5 engine points.

DEFENSE

Determine the engine's actual Defense (Def) number using this formula: **10 + size modifier**. Defense can be increased by the pilot's Dex bonus and any class abilities or Feats that increase engine Defense.

STRENGTH

All engines have a strength score. By default, an engine gains +5 to Strength for every size category above medium, or -5 Strength for every category below medium. An engine must have arms in order to use Strength offensively.

Extra Strength can be bought at a cost of 6 per point of Strength.

SPEED

There are six types of speed: Land, Air, Water, Underwater, Burrowing, and Space (in an Engines campaign, space travel is usually limited to the inner solar system). An engine can have ratings for some or all of them. An engine's speed (except for space) is measured in miles per hour.

LAND SPEED

Land speed is the maximum speed the engine can move on solid ground. An engine will have a land speed statistic if it is capable of sustained movement and maneuver on the ground. This usually means it has legs, wheels, tracks, or a combination, or perhaps even a snake-like body.

Land speed is unnecessary if the engine, such as an airship or a boat, cannot move on land or only does so as a short takeoff or landing (e.g. an airplane). Select the land speed in mph. Then calculate its combat speed. Some examples of land speeds:

- 10 mph is typical of bulldozers or lumbering steam-powered engine.
- 45 mph is the top speed of the Ford Model T, which is still over two decades away.

Engine Point Cost: 5 per 10 mph of land speed.

BURROWING SPEED

An engine given a burrowing speed can move earth and/or tunnel underground. Top speed assumes the engine is going through sand or packed earth. Tunneling through solid rock is 1/10 speed. The tunnel it leaves behind can be either permanent or collapse after it — specify which when the engine is created. Select burrowing speed in mph, and then calculate combat speed.

Engine Point Cost: 1 if fine, 2 if diminutive, 3 if tiny, 5 if small, 10 if medium, 20 if large, 30 if huge, 40 if gargantuan, or 50 if colossal size per 2 mph of burrowing speed.

WATER (AND UNDERWATER) SPEED

This is the maximum speed the engine can move in or under water. Select the engine's water speed in mph, and then calculate its combat speed. If the engine can move underwater, select an underwater speed and a surface speed that is the same or higher than the underwater speed.

Some examples of water speeds:

- 5 mph is typical of slower sailing craft or rowboats.
- 10 mph is typical of faster sailing craft or galleys.
- 20 mph is typical of early submersibles.

If the engine can dive and travel underwater, select its maximum dive depth in feet. Historically, the first 19th-century submarines could dive no deeper than 50 feet. Steampunk engines may be far more capable than that.

Engine Point Cost: 5 per 5 mph. Double the cost for underwater movement. If the engine can travel underwater but has a faster surface speed, buy the underwater speed, and pay normal cost for each extra 5 mph over the underwater speed.

Each 50 feet of diving depth costs 5 Engine Points, or 10 Points if the engine is of colossal size.

AIR SPEED

Some engines can fly through the air. If the engine can fly, decide how: propellers, rotors, rockets, flapping wings, hot air, magic, etc. Then select air speed and ceiling.

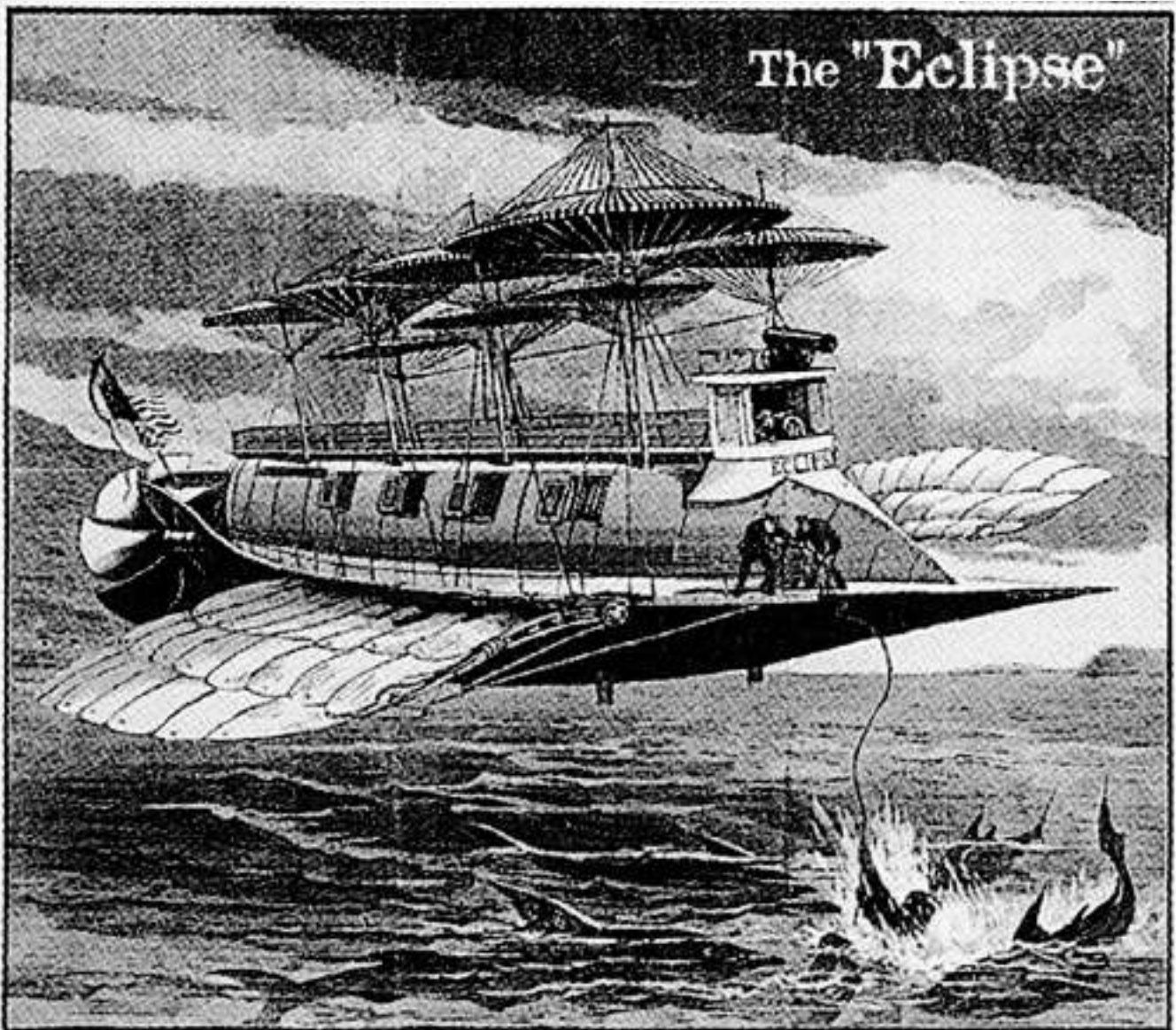
Select the engine's flight ceiling in feet. This is the highest altitude it can reach. The base ceiling is 500'. A higher ceiling can be selected; typical ceilings are 8,000-12,000' for airships, 9,000'-15,000' for autogyros and 10,000-40,000' for propeller aircraft.

Choose the air speed that the engine can attain. Most balloons should take a low speed and the Wind Powered Negative trait.

Examples of air speeds:

- 20 mph is a good balloon speed.
- 55 mph is the maximum horizontal speed of a peregrine falcon, the fastest bird.
- 150 mph is typical of light propeller aircraft.
- 17,000 mph is the speed required to reach orbit
- 25,000 mph is Earth's escape velocity, enough to escape its gravity into deep space.

Engine Point Cost: 10 for a ceiling of up to 500'; for a higher ceiling, +1 per 1,000' (300 m). Each 10 mph of air speed costs 5 points.



SPACE FLIGHT

The engine can propel itself in space. Choose the craft's thrust. This is how fast the spacecraft can increase its velocity or change its course — both are the same thing. It is measured in gravities, or G: a thrust of 1G is an acceleration equal to Earth's gravity, roughly 9.8 m per second. If the engine stops accelerating, it will continue moving at its listed speed. It can decelerate instead of accelerating, reducing its speed by its thrust rating (thus, -100' for 0.1 G or -6,000' for 6G).

The engine can accelerate constantly for as long as it has power. The top speed is limited only by its endurance (see Negative traits) or any physics-based considerations the Narrator wishes to impose, like the speed of light.

Engine Point Cost: $(1 + \text{thrust in G}) \times 50$. Treat thrust less than 1/20 G as 1/20 G.

POSITIVE TRAITS

These are innate capabilities that an engine may possess. They are all optional — no engine is required to have any of the traits described in this section.

ACCESSORIES

These are additional features for the engine, which provide useful but mundane non-combat-related advantages. Any upper class owner would have a few accessories installed.

Examples of Accessories include: airlock, emergency siren, loudspeaker, luxurious decor, tow cable, or wet bar.

An engine need not acquire accessories that are implied by its other capabilities or which are ubiquitous (like chairs in a passenger airship).

Engine Point Cost: 1 per Accessory.

ARM

An engine with at least one arm can use it to attack and deal Strength damage (extra attacks, such as claws or entangle, should be bought as weapons).

An arm is assumed to have a claw or other manipulator; otherwise, it should be built as a blunt melee weapon.

Engine Point Cost: Each arm costs $5 + \text{the Strength the engine possesses (round down)}$. For example, an engine with Str +5 and three arms would pay 30 Engine Points.

AUTOMATIC PROGRAMMING

The engine can operate automatically, but has no self-initiative. It can be given orders or programmed with directives, but obeys in a slavish, unimaginative fashion. The engine has no emotions or desires.

An engine with automatic programming can have Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma abilities. These ability scores are only used for purposes of the Skill quality. Strength is built as per engine strength and Dexterity is based on the lower of initiative or maneuverability.

Engine Point Cost: Each ability score costs $50 + (10 \times \text{ability score})$

EJECTION SEAT

This escape system allows the crew to eject from a damaged engine. As a free action, the hero sitting in an ejector seat may eject at any time. Any canopy or rooftop is blasted clear by explosive bolts, and the seat launched at least 100' into the air by some contrivance. If the user ejected in an atmosphere, on the next round a parachute unfolds, carrying the occupant down to Earth. The ejectee may make a Pilot Skill check (Difficulty 20) to guide the parachute to a specific place within 300' of the engine. If the occupant has no Pilot Skill, or fails, the Narrator randomly determines where he or she lands. Make a Reflex save (Difficulty 10, or Difficulty 15 if landing in woods, mountain, or urban areas; add 5 to the Difficulty if dropping from orbit) to avoid falling damage.

Usually, ejection seats are controlled by the person that is seated in them, but some vehicles (for example, as a theft precaution) may have seats that are controlled by the driver or another crewman. These may omit a parachute.

Engine Point Cost: 3 per ejection seat.

ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS

Engines may be equipped with climate control (allowing the crew to be comfortable in a wide variety of temperatures) or life support. Life support includes climate control as well as its own oxygen supply and is useful if the engine is submerged or at high altitudes.

Engine Point Cost: For Climate Control: 1 if medium or smaller, 2 if large, 3 if huge, 4 if gargantuan, 5 if colossal. Multiply cost by 4 for life support.

FEATS

An engine may have abilities that emulate a feat. Feats may only be taken with a Narrator's permission.

Engine Point Cost: 80 engine points per feat.

FIRING PORTS

The engine has one or more firing ports sufficient to let passengers fire out of the engine with their own ranged weapons. The firing ports provide 9/10 cover (equivalent to arrow slits).

Engine Point Cost: +1 per firing port

HANGAR

Any portion of an engine's cargo capacity can be designated as a hangar bay for storage of other (smaller) engines. These engines may be launched as a standard action. The Narrator should use his discretion when determining how many smaller engines can fit inside a larger one.

Engines can carry as ordinary cargo (without the Hanger trait) cannot be effectively launched into battle, refueled, etc. while in the cargo bay. It takes several rounds (or possibly much longer) to unload carried engines.

Engine Point Cost: The hangar cost is equal to the largest size of engine that can fit through the bay's opening: 1 if fine, 3 if diminutive, 5 if tiny, 10 if small, 15 if medium, 20 if large, 25 if huge, 30 if gargantuan, or 100 if colossal.

HEADLIGHTS OR SEARCHLIGHT

The engine has either headlights equivalent to those of a modern automobile, allowing it to drive at night (range 500'), or a longer-ranged searchlight (5,000').

Engine Point Cost: 1 Point for headlights, 2 for searchlight.

INCREASED ENDURANCE

By default, an engine only has enough power to run for a few hours before it needs refueling (the exact time should be determined by the Narrator, but usually 2 hours). This ability allows the engine to operate for longer periods of time without refueling. Refueling must require at least a few minutes of inactivity.

Some Engines might never need refueling. A sailing ship needs only wind and water. A submersible might be designed to convert water into energy.

Engine Point Cost: 1 point per extra hour. 30 points is effectively unlimited power.

PAYING FOR CONVENIENCE

Refueling engines is realistic but can create bookkeeping headaches. Heroes with prosthetic limbs may feel persecuted if the Narrator is constantly making them run out of power during an extended adventure.

To address these concerns, the Narrator could effectively waive refueling requirements, assuming that engines have enough fuel on hand for the adventure. In this case, simply add 30 engine points to the cost of all engines.

JUMPING

The engine can make very high, unaided vertical jumps, but not actually fly. It may use jets, powerful leg muscles, etc. Assign the engine a jump multiplier from x2 to x10.

Engine Point Cost: Jump multiplier x.25 (round up) if tiny or smaller, x.5 (round up) if small, x1 if medium size, x2 if large, x3 if huge, x4 if gargantuan, or x5 if colossal.

LAUNCH CATAPULT

This system uses steam to accelerate other engines, boosting them to top speed. This allows flyers to take off in a much shorter distance. If launching into battle, the catapult also provides a +1 initiative bonus on the first round of combat.

Engine Point Cost: This is determined by the size of the catapult, which sets the maximum size of engine that can be launched: 1 (small or smaller), 2 (medium), 4 (large), 8 (huge), 16 (gargantuan), 32 (colossal).

NAVIGATION AIDS

Appropriate basic navigation is free in most cases. Superior navigation capabilities are also available. Modifiers are not cumulative. Having accurate positional data is very useful for accurate indirect fire.

Basic Navigation: maps, compass, lodestones, etc. +2 bonus to Survival checks for navigation.

Inertial Navigation System: A gyroscopic system that provides a +3 bonus on Survival checks for navigation.

Engine Point Cost: 1 for basic navigation, 2 for an inertial navigation system.

NON-VOLATILE

An engine with this trait will not explode.

Normally, fuel, a boiler, or ammunition may explode if the engine is disabled or destroyed. Treat a Dying result as Dead. If the engine is Disabled, then the engine must immediately make another Toughness check at -2. If the result is Dying or Dead, the engine explodes.

Engine Point Cost: 2 per point of Toughness the engine has.

POWER

The engine can emulate a power. You must pay for an effective caster level beyond first. If the power is fatiguing, then you must pay for the number of uses per day (if not fatiguing, then the power may be used an unlimited number of times). If the power requires concentration, then the operator must maintain concentration.

The Computer Link power can be used to connect engines to each other. Normally, this requires a wire.

Engine Point Cost: 80 x caster level x number of uses per day.

QUIET

Engines in the Imperial Age tend to be very noisy, especially steam-driven ones. Generally, if an engine approaches a target, the target gets a +20 bonus to his Notice check to hear it.

Some engines are designed to muffle noise, which could reduce or eliminate the Notice check bonus.

Engine Point Cost: 1 point for every point deducted. (an engine that only allows a +16 bonus costs 4 points). The Notice check bonus cannot be reduced below +0.



ROOMS (VEHICLE ONLY)

Colossal vehicles may have specialized internal rooms.

Kitchen: Meals may be prepared aboard the engine, providing room for two cooks to work (buy multiple kitchens for larger facilities). 1 Engine Point

Conference Room: Meetings are held in this room. 1 Engine Point

Science Lab: This fully equipped science lab gives a +2 bonus to any relevant scientific Skill check. Two scientists can work at a time; for larger facilities, buy multiple labs. 5 Engine Points

Sick Bay: A fully equipped sick bay has surgical and diagnostic features and allows 2 people to be treated at a time. For hospital facilities, buy multiple sick bays. 5 Engine Points

Workshop: This fully equipped machine shop includes a variety of specialized tools and spare parts. It allows a hero to make Craft checks without penalty. 5 Engine Points

SENSORS

Engines may be equipped with various instruments and electronics to enhance their ability to detect objects at a distance.

Sensors are usually used to make Notice checks. Instead of the normal penalty of -1 per 10', the penalty is -2 per 1,000' times the range in miles. The maximum range is 10 increments.

Sensors noted as useful for targeting can be used when aiming attacks or navigating in the dark, bad weather, etc.; this negates the effects of darkness or concealment through which the sensor can see. Not all sensors are useful for targeting.

Infrared Sensors detect targets in a single direction — usually in a cone-shaped direction. A sensor can be specified as “global” (seeing in all directions) for double cost. Sensors include:

Infrared (IR): The engine has infrared sensors like modern main battle tanks or attack helicopters. These give its crew the ability to see in the dark (in monochrome) as if it were day; this is effectively Darkvision, except that the range is much greater. Infrared cannot see through solid objects. It can pick out heat shapes, see through ordinary darkness, smoke or fog, and detect people hiding in trees or bushes. It is useless underwater, but very effective in space. In space, range is 100 times greater. The sensor cannot see over the horizon. It can target opponents.

Optics: These are telescopes. Unlike other sensors, they do not provide any ability to see through concealment, but simply increase the range at which objects can be visually Noticed. They can be used for targeting.

Sonar: The engine has sonar sensors, similar to that used by a submarine or dolphin for detecting objects underwater. It may use passive sonar to “listen” for moving or noisy objects or use active sonar to resolve the object's exact range and shape, or detect objects that aren't making noise, search the sea floor for wrecks, etc. If active sonar is used, passive sonar on other engines can detect it at longer distances: add the range of the active sonar to their passive sonar detection range. Sonar does not work in space, and gets only 1% of its normal range if used in air. Active sonar can target opponents.

Engine Point Cost: 1.5 per mile of range if optics; 3 per mile of range if Sonar; 5 per mile if Infrared. Global Sensors are x2 cost.

SKILLS (AUTOMATIC PROGRAMMING ONLY)

Engines with automatic programming may be hardwired with skills. Domestic servants, for example, may be hardwired with Profession (servant) and Search. An automaton butler may have Bluff and Diplomacy skills. The Narrator should determine what skills are available to an engine and the skill rank ceiling.

Engine Point Cost: 40 Engine Points per skill rank.

SKILL BONUS

This is a catchall quality for skills not covered by other engine stats or qualities. This quality adds a bonus to the user's skill check.

Engine Point Cost: 1 engine point for a +2 bonus, 2 engine points for a +3 bonus, 4 engine points for a +4 bonus, and 8 engine points for a +5 bonus. Skill bonuses of +6 or higher are extremely rare; continue doubling the cost.

TARGETING BONUS

An engine may have a targeting bonus as a result of a built-in sighting system. A targeting bonus must be bought individually for each weapon. Each purchase grants a +1 for that system.

Engine Point Cost: 5 per weapon

WALLCRAWLING

The engine can use spikes, grappling hooks, or some other means to climb walls and ceilings as if it were an insect. The engine must have a land speed to use this ability. It gets +8 on all Climb checks, and may take 10 while climbing, even if threatened or distracted.

Engine Point Cost: 10 Points

NEGATIVE TRAITS

These are traits that affect the workings of the engine. Negative traits reduce the Engine Point cost. Negative Traits cannot reduce the Engine Point Cost of an engine below 1 Point. If this happens, treat the engine as costing 1 Engine Point.

FLAMMABLE

The engine's structure is made of wood or similar flammable material. Saves against fire are made at a -4 penalty.

Engine Point Cost: -5 Points

GLIDER

Glider can be taken by an engine that can fly and does not have the Wind-Powered Negative traits. It means the engine can only take off if launched from a fast-moving vehicle or high place, and can only gain speed by diving or gain altitude by riding thermals. Assume a glider has a glide ratio of about 60:1 if average maneuverability, 30:1 if poor maneuverability, or 20:1 if clumsy. A 60:1 glide ratio means (for example) that if dropped from a height of 1 mile, it could glide for 60 miles before landing. A Pilot check at Difficulty 10 can extend glide ratio by 10% for every point by which the check succeeded.

Engine Point Cost: -2 per 10 mph of air speed.

HANGAR QUEEN

The engine requires extra careful maintenance to work properly. If this is not available, the Narrator should feel free to impose breakdowns of various systems whenever seems dramatically appropriate. The engine spends much of its time in a garage, shop, port, etc. undergoing repairs. For every hour it was used, it should be given at least an hour of maintenance.

Engine Point Cost: -10

HIGH GROUND PRESSURE

This Negative trait can only be taken if the engine has a land speed. It means that the contact area of its wheels, legs, or tracks is slight compared to the engine's weight. Consequently, it tends to sink into the ground. Most wheeled vehicles possess this negative trait while specialized all-terrain engines would not. Most tanks do not have a high ground pressure due to the width of their tracks, but a two-legged giant automaton may have this problem unless it has very large feet.

The engine will bog down in any swamp, deep snow, or mud (no movement). It moves at 1/2 speed when crossing sand, light snow, or soggy ground. This is cumulative with the penalties for Road Vehicle.

Engine Point Cost: -1 per 10 mph of land speed.

OPEN

The engine provides little or no protection to its occupants. This is common for engines like galleys, steam bicycles, gliders, or mechanical horses. The engine provides 1/2 cover, or no cover if the engine is the same size or smaller than the rider. Open engines can never have the Poor Visibility negative trait. Engines that are solely operated by automatic programming cannot have this negative trait.

Engine Point Cost: -10 points.

POOR VISIBILITY

The engine has very poor visibility, due to small or no windows and a lack of compensating sensors, or other problems. The only way to get unrestricted vision is to actually stick one's head out a hatch or window (leaving one with only half cover, as per the Open negative trait). Otherwise, attempts to spot something from inside are at -2 if looking directly forward and -4 if looking in any other direction. Engines with the Open Negative trait cannot have this Negative trait.

Engine Point Cost: -5 points

RESTRICTED PATH

For one reason or another, the engine cannot leave a narrowly restricted area. This may represent a railway train, a cable car that cannot leave its track, or a towed trailer/carriage.

Another way to interpret this is an engine that is attached to an external refueling source. The engine can operate normally unless it is detached from its refueling source (and immediately becomes Disabled unless reconnected).

Decide if it is a long path (like a railway line) or a short path (like a tether or a building interior)

Engine Point Cost: -1 fine, -3 diminutive, -5 tiny, -10 small, -15 if medium, -20 if large, -25 if huge, -30 if gargantuan, or -50 if colossal; x2 if a short path.

ROAD VEHICLE

The engine performs poorly on uneven ground. The engine attains full land speed only on a smooth flat surface such as a cobblestone path. Its land speed is cut in half in other circumstances, such as on a dirt road, off-road, etc.

Engine Point Cost: -1 per 10 mph of land speed.

STALL SPEED

This can only be taken by an engine that has a ceiling and air speed. If the engine has a stall speed, it must always fly faster than the stall speed to remain in controlled flight. If it does not, it will go out of control.

Ordinary airplanes will have a stall speed. Engines that use flapping wings, such as an ornithopter, may have a low stall speed or none at all if they can hover like a hummingbird. Other types of flying engines (such as autogyros) will not have a stall speed.

A typical stall speed is about 10-25% of air speed. Decide on the speed in mph, and also determine the combat stall speed (see Combat Speed).

Engine Point Cost: -5 per 10 mph of stall speed

START-UP TIME

If the engine is shut down, a hero cannot just climb into it and turn it on. For example, it might be a complicated personal armor suit that takes a few minutes to put on or an engine that takes time to warm up (early steam automobiles could take a half hour to warm up). Start-Up Time should only be taken for engines that have Reduced Endurance of a day or less, as the time is trivial if the engine runs constantly.

Engine Point Cost: -2 if 1 minute (10 rounds), -4 if 10 minutes, -8 if an hour, -16 if 4+ hours.

WEAK POINT

Due to a flaw in the design, there is a weak point in the engine. Normally, engines are immune to critical hits. This negative trait enables the engine to be critically hit normally.

Engine Point Cost: -5. Increasing the threat range adds an additional -5 per point (so a critical threat range of 19-20 costs -10 points, while a threat range of 18-20 costs -15 points).

WINDOWS

The engine has large windows (like an automobile or airship) or canopy that does not protect against attacks aimed through them. This may not be taken in conjunction with the Open Negative trait.

If an engine's occupants are attacked, they can only claim three-quarters cover. Occupants that lean out of windows (for example, to shoot) will get only one-half cover. An attack can deliberately target an occupant through a window at a -4 penalty.

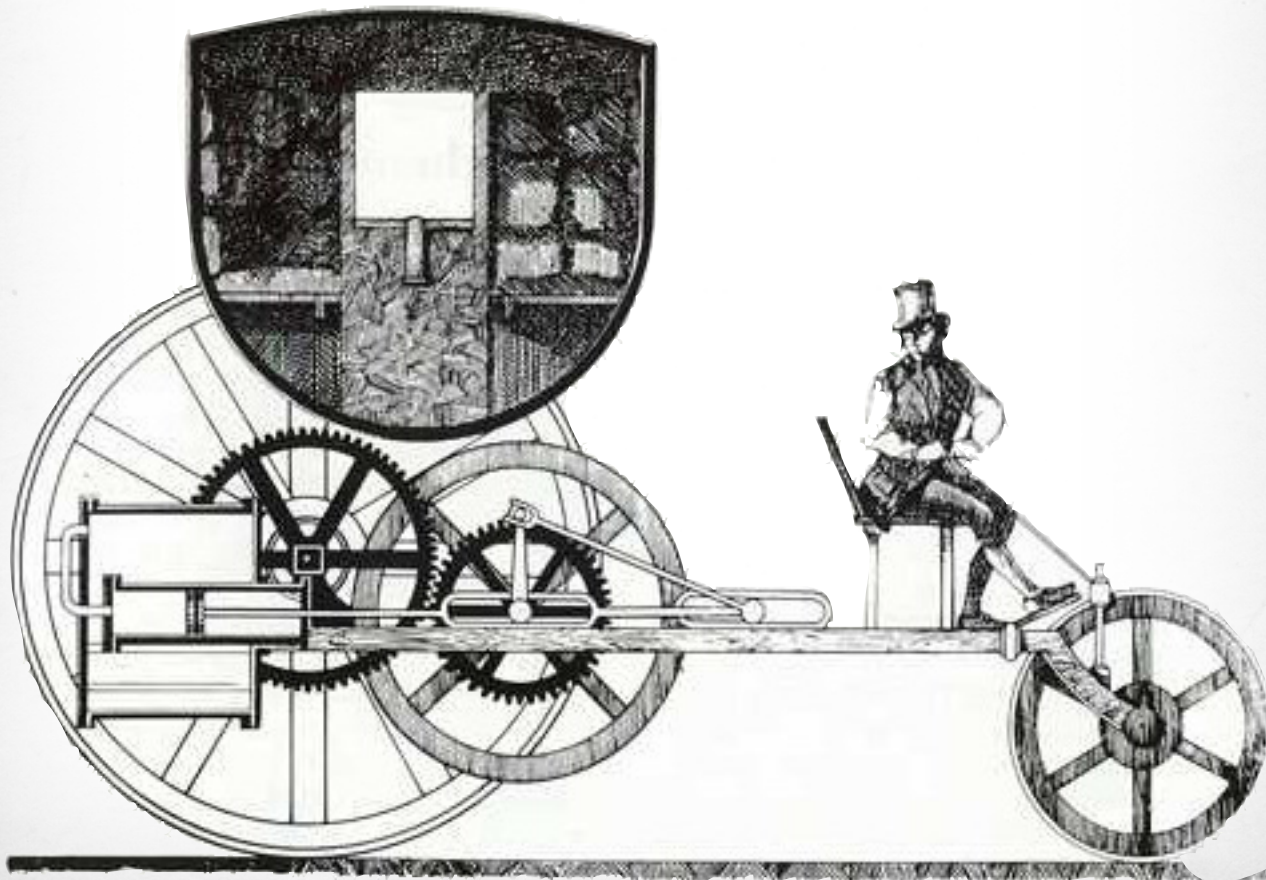
Engine Point Cost: -1 per extra level of Toughness purchased. Otherwise, there is no cost.

WIND-POWERED (VEHICLE-ONLY)

The engine is a sailing craft, powered by the wind. Its top speed will never exceed the present velocity of the wind, and it cannot move against the wind (it can tack upwind, but cannot move directly against the direction from which the wind is blowing).

This is most appropriate for engines with Water Speed, though wind-powered land or air vehicles are possible. It's usually inappropriate for engines with top speeds over 30 mph. This cannot be taken in conjunction with the Glider Negative trait.

Engine Point Cost: -1 if large or smaller, -2 if huge, -3 if gargantuan, -5 if colossal.



WEAPONS

Engines don't need to be armed, but may possess an array of impressive weapons. Building weapons is covered in the next section.

An engine with arms can inflict damage even if it has no weapons. Base damage is +0 if tiny or small, +1 if medium, +3 if large, +4 if huge, +6 if gargantuan, and +8 if colossal, plus strength modifiers. More potent attacks — including bite or claw attacks — should be built using the engine weapon creation rules.

If the engine has multiple weapons, design each one individually. If the pilot can make multiple attacks, several weapons may be used each round. The same holds true for multiple crew aboard an engine assigned as gunners. If you want one weapon to have multiple ammo choices, take the Alternate Ammo option. A "weapon" does not necessarily mean a single gun or missile. A set of multiple missiles on rails or pods is best treated as a single weapon (with several shots). A ship-of-the-line's broadside of dozens of cannons facing in the same direction is best handled as 1-3 weapons with extra damage and qualities such as Volley.

FINAL COST

Once the engine is designed, it is important to determine how much it will cost. Use the following formula for the cost of a "factory model":

(Square root of Engine Point Cost) + 16, rounded to nearest whole number

The cost of an engine may be modified if it is rare, restricted, capable of unusual motion (such as flight or burrowing), or a custom invention. Some examples:

- Add +4 to the cost if the engine was built for the government or military.
- Add +5 to the cost if the engine, while in production, is still relatively rare.
- Add +7 to the cost if the engine can fly, burrow, go underwater, or space travel.
- Add +10 to the cost if the engine is custom-built or a prototype.

These costs can be cumulative. Using the sample modifiers, a military airship would add +11 to the cost, or +21 if it is a prototype.

Narrators should feel free to adjust the cost to encourage or discourage purchases, especially if the final cost seems too high or low. Engines will be much cheaper in a heavy steampunk campaign than in a realistic historical campaign.

BUILDING ENGINES

Engineers are more likely to build engines than purchase them outright. This requires two skill checks, a design check and a materials check.

The design check is the most appropriate Craft check (usually mechanical). The Difficulty is equal to the (Square root of Engine Point Cost) + 20, rounded to nearest whole number. If the hero succeeds, then he may build his invention once he acquires the materials. If the hero is building a pre-existing engine (either from plans or having studied an existing example), then he only needs to make a design check at a 15 Difficulty.

If two or more Craft checks are applicable (such as electric and mechanical), then the hero uses the lower of the two skill ranks for his design check.

The materials check is a Wealth check. The Difficulty is equal to the (Square root of Engine Point Cost) + 4, rounded to nearest whole number. The Narrator may adjust this if certain materials are particularly difficult to purchase.

WEAPON DESIGN

While a huge armored engine driving down the Strand is eye-catching, that same huge armored engine belching fire and spitting bullets is frightening. This section allows you to design weapons for your engines.

While the assumption in this section is that Narrators will use this section to design weapons for their engines, these rules can also be used on their own to create fantastic handheld weapons. As with engines, weapons are built with engine points and the cost is derived from that.

Take the following steps when designing a weapon:

- **Name Weapon**
- **Determine the Type of Damage**
- **Determine Damage Amount.**
- **Determine Critical Threat Range**
- **Determine Rate of Fire**
- **Determine Range Increments**
- **Determine Magazine Capacity**
- **Determine Weapon Qualities**
- **Determine Weapon Restrictions**
- **Determine Other Considerations**
- **Calculate Total Engine Point Cost**

WEAPON NAME

Before designing a weapon, the Narrator should have an idea of what he wants the weapon to do. This will often suggest a name. In the Imperial Age, many inventors follow the convention of giving elaborately descriptive or evocative names to their weaponry, such as the “steam-powered ballistic projectile cannon” or the “electric discharge generator.”

TYPE OF DAMAGE

What makes a weapon a weapon is the damage it causes. This is usually, but not always, implicit in the name. A large cannon probably fires ballistic projectiles, but a “Dragon’s Breath Cannon” might emit a ballistic projectile, a flamethrower, compressed steam, or even a firebomb. Type of damage is important because some engine hardness or creatures may be resistant or immune to certain types of damage.

Types of damage are generally ballistic (bullets and other high-velocity projectiles), piercing (pointed thrusting or ranged weapons like spears, arrows, etc.), slashing (swords, whips, etc.), bludgeoning (clubs, fists, tails, etc.), energy (of a specific type: fire, electricity), or blast (explosions).

DAMAGE AMOUNT

Once the type of damage is determined, the next obvious question is the amount of damage it causes. Most weapons will inflict a certain damage bonus. The Narrator simply sets this as desired.

Some attacks do not deliver ordinary damage, but instead, have other effects: Flare, Nerve Gas, Riot Gas, Smoke, or Tangle. These special attacks are treated as ranged touch attacks. The Narrator should assign each special attack a modifier (usually 1 to 20), which applies to Difficulties and determines the weapon cost.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flare: If hit (or in the radius of a Blast-effect or Emanation-effect) the target may be blinded. Everyone looking in the direction of the flash when the attack strikes must make a Fortitude save with a Difficulty of 15 plus the Flare modifier or be blinded for 5 rounds.

Smoke: The attack produces an obscuring smoke cloud. Smoke gives a miss chance of 11 or higher. The smoke remains for a number of rounds equal to the Smoke modifier. If the attack is assigned the Emanation quality then the base duration doubles (or the area of effect may double; see Emanation rules).

Tangle: The attack projects a web or net. This is treated as a Web spell except it requires an attack roll; if combined with Blast it will affect everyone in the area; if combined with Emanation, it is sticky, and will affect anyone who moves into the area as well. The DC to break free is (20 plus the Tangle modifier).

CRITICAL THREAT RANGE

A weapon's normal critical threat rating is 20. Adding the Increased Threat Quality (see below) will expand the threat rating.

RATE OF FIRE

The default ranged weapon rate of fire is one shot per round. Weapons may have faster or slower rates of fire as a result of their chosen qualities or restrictions (see below).

RANGE INCREMENT

A weapon's base range increment is 50' for a special attack. If the attack inflicts damage though, the range increment is determined on the Range Increment Table. The table shows the base increment for up to +6 damage. Squares are given for easy reference when using miniatures. Add 10 feet (or two squares) for each damage bonus point above +6.

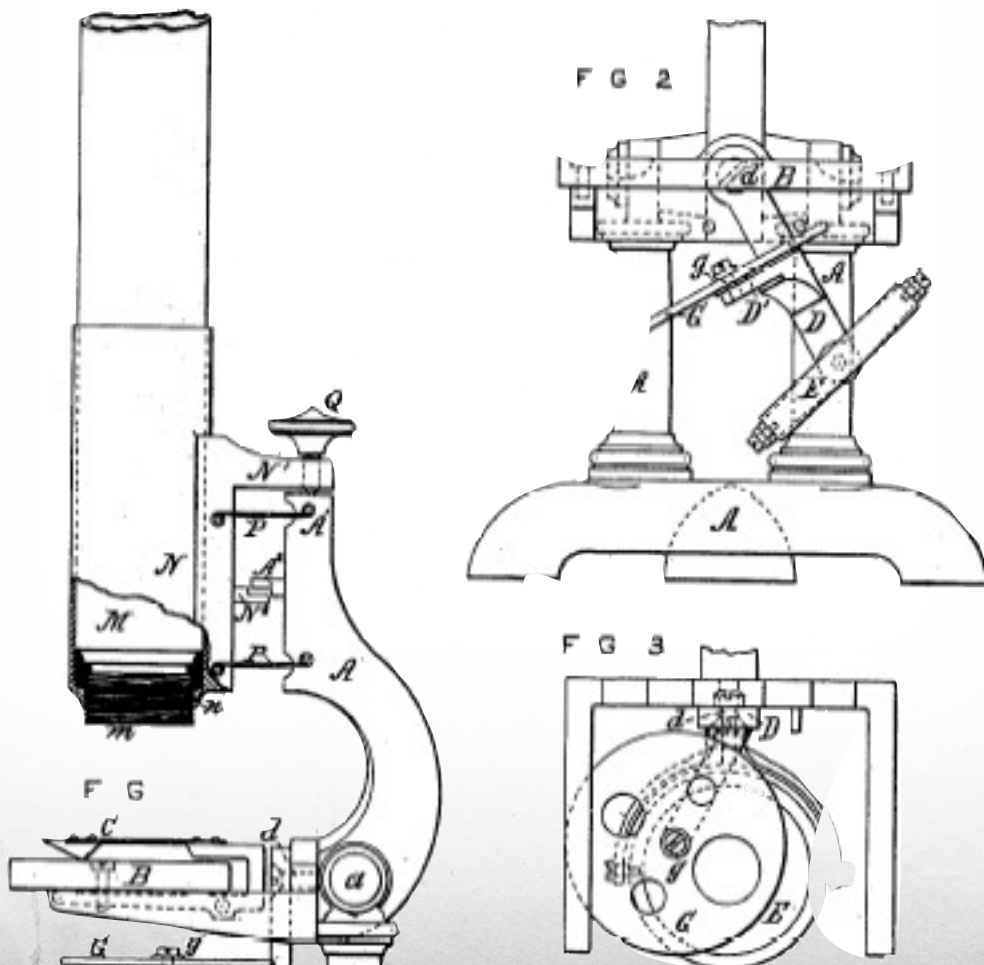
Range Increment Table								
Damage Bonus	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	Special
Increment (Feet)	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	50
Increment (Squares)	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	10

The actual increment can be modified by taking weapon qualities or restrictions. Each level of Long Range may up to double range; each level of Short Range may up to halve it.

MAGAZINE

A weapon has an ammo capacity (magazine) of 17-30 shots before running out of projectiles or power. This may be modified via the Extra Ammo quality or the Low Ammo restriction.

Note that "magazine" does not necessarily mean that a weapon has an actual box or belt feed. Weapons that must be loaded manually should take the Slow-Firing restriction.



WEAPON QUALITIES

Some weapons have additional capabilities beyond simply inflicting damage. These are known as weapon qualities. Weapon qualities can increase or decrease the default values above (larger magazine, increased range increment) or provide entirely new abilities (armor-penetrating rounds, concealment). Qualities marked with an asterisk (*) can only be used with attacks that have a damage bonus.

Most weapon qualities count as a single unit for engine point cost purposes. A few qualities are especially powerful, and hence count as two or even three qualities. Each quality may only be taken once unless specifically permitted.

AUTOFIRE*

Autofire weapons fire a burst or stream of shots as long as the trigger is held down (until they run out of ammunition). They may use the Autofire rules in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*.

BLAST

The attack affects not only the target but also anyone adjacent, such as an explosive warhead or plasma blast. The radius of effect is 10 feet. Blast can be taken multiple times. Each time it is taken, double the radius of the blast. Thus, taking it 4 times gives an 80 foot blast radius (the Narrator can use the closest increment if he wishes to model an explosive that falls between radii; dynamite, for example, has a blast radius of 50 feet. Since 40 feet is closer to 50 than 80 feet, the quality is treated as 40 and costs 3 times).

When a target is hit, everyone caught in the blast (other than the target directly hit) may make a Reflex save (engine drivers/pilots roll for their engine) against a Difficulty of 15 to halve damage. The target of the attack, if hit, takes full damage — no Reflex save is allowed. Alternatively, an attacker may fire a Blast weapon at the ground next to a target (treat as Defense 10), rather than the target itself. This is a ranged touch attack. This can have a better chance of hitting, but has the disadvantage of always granting a Reflex save. This tactic is not possible against a flying or space target unless the attack has the Guided quality.

BURNING*

This represents flaming liquid, acid, or similar weapons that deliver continuing damage. If the initial attack hits, the target takes continuous damage each round, for the next 5 rounds, or until somehow neutralized (Narrator call: it should depend on the type of attack).

It can be taken multiple times; each extra time doubles the duration. The first level of Burning counts as two qualities.

CONCEALED

An engine's weapons are normally obvious, at least to someone who knows where to look for the gun barrel, missile port, or laser lens. Take this quality to install a disguised or retractable weapon in a craft that looks like it would be unarmed, such as an ordinary-appearing carriage.

It takes an action to "pop up" a hidden weapon so that it can be used in battle.

CONE

A cone attack shoots away from the weapon in the direction he or she designates. A cone starts in a square adjacent to the engine and widens out as it goes. A cone's width, at a given distance, equals its current range — a cone is 50' wide when 50' away from the attacking engine. At its far end, a cone is as wide as the effect is long.

A cone attack's maximum range is 1 range increment; cone attacks have very short range.

A cone attack is not resolved as an ordinary attack. It automatically hits everything in the target area, but targets get a Reflex save at Difficulty 20. Success means they suffer half damage, failure means they take full damage. Cover will give a bonus to the Reflex save, and if the cover is sufficient (such as a slit trench, building, etc.) a success means the targets dove or moved behind the cover. These targets would take no damage rather than half damage (Narrator discretion).

Cone counts as three qualities.

EXTRA AMMO

This increases the weapon's total shots from the default up to 50. It can be taken multiple times: twice gives up to 200 shots; three times is 1,000 shots.

FLEXIBLE*

This represents long, flexible, or extendible attacks like a whip or similar weapon. A flexible attack can be used like a giant whip to disarm or trip any opponents of equal or smaller size than the weapon's size; for example, a huge whip can trip or disarm opponents up to huge size. A hero can make a trip attack with a flexible weapon by succeeding at a ranged touch attack. The hero does not provoke an attack of opportunity when using a flexible weapon in this way.

A flexible weapon also gives a +2 bonus on Disarm attempts.

If this quality is chosen for a weapon, the Melee Weapon restriction must also be taken. A flexible weapon can reach out farther than normal, however: 15 feet for a medium weapon, doubled for each successive size class.

HARDPOINT OR HAND-HELD

A "Hardpoint" weapon is mounted on a hardpoint, pod, or pylon. It can be traded in a later mission for any weapon of the same size and same or lower Engine Point value, subject to its availability. It takes about 10 minutes to remove and replace a Hardpoint weapon with another weapon. A hero may buy "spare" weapons at 1/20th their Engine Point value that are kept at base for replacement in this way, or may swap weapons with other engine of similar size and type.

A "Hand-held" weapon is carried in the hand. It is treated as a hardpoint weapon except that it is vulnerable to being disarmed, lost, dropped, etc., but can be exchanged in only one round. An engine cannot have more Hand-Held weapons ready to use than it has hands.

INCREASED THREAT

Most weapons have a threat of 20. This quality increases the threat range by 1 (for example, to 19-20). It can be taken multiple times, further increasing the threat range.

INDIRECT FIRE

The weapon can fire shots in a high ballistic arc, like a grenade launcher, ballistic missile, or Howitzer. This lets the gunner shoot at targets hidden behind buildings, hills, or other obstacles (or shoot over the horizon, if the range is long enough).

If it is used to make an indirect fire shot, the attacker must be able to see the target, or someone else must spot it and communicate its position to the attacker. This will usually require a Notice check. In most cases, indirect fire involves using weapons with the Blast quality to attack an area. If a creature or engine, rather than area of ground is attacked, it is treated as having full concealment (50% miss chance).

A weapon can fire indirectly at 10 times the usual number of increments (100 increments for most weapons). Note that the actual range increment is not increased: thus, Long Range fire will be rather inaccurate.

If the attack misses, an observer can note where the attack hit and send a correction (or the attacker can correct by his or her self, if the target is in sight). Each correction gives a +2 bonus to hit, only to cancel any range increment penalties. It takes a full action for a distant observer to transmit a correction via communicator.

A weapon with Indirect Fire quality can be used normally at no penalty. It cannot be Melee, Cone, or Stream.

LONG RANGE

This quality increases the range increment. Long Range can also be taken multiple times; each time it is taken, double the increment. The base increment is suitable for machine guns, short-range rockets, and light cannons. Taking one level of Long Range is good for tank guns and guided missiles. Taking two levels is good for long-range missiles and spacecraft weaponry.

A lower increase can be specified if the Narrator desires — for example, Long Range could also be used to multiply the increment by 1.1 to 1.99 rather than 2. This is useful if trying to duplicate a real weapon.

MUSCLE-POWERED

This lets the engine add its Str bonus to damage if this weapon is used as a one-handed Melee weapon, or 1.5 times Str bonus if used as a two-handed Melee weapon, or half Str bonus if the weapon is Thrown.

A Muscle-Powered weapon can make any number of attacks unless it has the Thrown weapon restriction (in which case it can make another attack only after the Thrown weapon is recovered...).

A weapon can only be Muscle-Powered if it has the Melee or Thrown Weapon restriction.

MULTIPLE SHOTS

This quality allows a character to use a weapon multiple times in one round if he has feats that allow him to do so. In other words, if the character just needs to pull the trigger to fire, then the weapon needs this quality.

This quality may only be taken for weapons with a loading mechanism, such as multiple barrels, a clip, or belt feed.

STREAM

The effect of a Stream weapon is similar to a cone, except that the weapon's effect is narrow and linear (affecting everyone in a stream 5'/1.5 m wide). Otherwise, use the rules for Cone, including the reduction of the range, with the exception that a successful save always negates damage rather than halves it.

Stream counts as two qualities.

STUN

The attack only inflicts nonlethal damage.

TRAP

This weapon lays a minefield, spikes, or some other similar device. The projectile "sits and waits" until someone triggers it. If someone walks into the target area, they get a Reflex Save at Difficulty 15 to avoid it. Trap can be taken with the Melee restriction to simulate a booby trap placed by hand or released from the engine. Without these weapon restrictions, it can be deployed at range — a successful ranged touch attack against a Defense of 10 means the Trap was fired into the correct area.

VOLLEY

An attack with the Volley quality fires a large volley of poorly guided projectiles, such as a salvo of unguided rockets or a broadside of cannon balls from multiple guns. The attacker may fire a number of shots up to the weapon's entire magazine capacity. He or she does not add a Base Attack Bonus or Dexterity Bonus but does add +1 per projectile fired.

The maximum number of shots that can hit is the number fired. On a critical hit, rather than increasing damage, double the number of shots that hit (up to the maximum).

If firing against a group, the attacker determines how many shots to aim at each target. Separate attack rolls are made for each target. Determine how far the furthest two targets are from one another. The attacks are made as for volley fire against one target, but for each 30 feet or part thereof that separates the furthest two targets, all the attack rolls suffer a -1 penalty.

Volley Hits per Attack

Attack Succeeded by	Number of Hits
0-4	1 hit
5-9	2 hits
10-14	4 hits
15+	6 hits

WEAPON RESTRICTIONS

Few weapons do everything well and many have various disadvantages. These are known as weapon restrictions. As with weapon qualities, a single restriction can only be taken once unless specifically permitted. Some restrictions are especially onerous and so count as two or even three restrictions (some even require the purchase of another restriction).

CREW-SERVED (VEHICLE ONLY)

The weapon requires two or more people to operate it — usually the gunner and one or more loaders. This restriction must be taken in conjunction with the Slow-Firing restriction; it can be taken multiple times. Each time, double the number of crew required to load the weapon; they must all perform full actions to do so. Thus, a cannon that requires a crew of 8 to operate is a x3 restriction.

DROPPED

The weapon is a bomb, mine, etc. that must be dropped from a flying engine that is approaching the target. Instead of the usual 10 range increments, the dropped weapon can reach a base 1 range increment per 1,000' (300 m) of the sum of altitude and speed of the releasing engine. Bombs take a -4 instead of -2 penalty per range increment. This cannot be used with Cone, Stream, Melee, or Thrown.

EXPOSED (VEHICLE ONLY)

The gunner must be outside the engine's Armor on the round the weapon fires (and stay exposed until his or her next action in the following round). An exposed hero can be fired at with no Armor protection. An example of this weapon restriction would be a machine gun mounted on a bracket atop a tank whose gunner must lean out the hatch to use. It cannot be taken if the engine already has the Open Negative trait.

FIXED ARC OF FIRE (VEHICLE AND AUTOMATON ONLY)

The weapon has a very limited arc of fire and must be aimed by pointing the engine. For example, a set of fixed forward-firing guns on a fighter plane, or a ramming prow. The weapon can only be fired at targets in the specified arc that may require a successful Pilot Skill check (which can be opposed by the pilot of a target engine).

Specify the arc of fire: Front, Rear, Left, Right, or Top. Engine that can fly or move underwater can also specify a Bottom arc.

LESS AMMO

The weapon is only good for a few rounds of firing, and then runs out of ammunition or power, or burns out. This restriction can be taken up to 5 times. If the weapon is Slow-Firing, number of shots refers to the total ammunition aboard the engine, not in the magazine.

Taking this restriction once means the weapon has 9-16 shots; twice limits it to 5-8 shots; three times to 3-4 shots; four times to 2 shots, five times to 1 shot.

MELEE

The weapon can only be used as a melee weapon. It can be used to attack or parry within the engine's natural reach. Specify the weapon's size class (normally within one size of the engine that will wield it) and whether it is bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing. It is usual to take this restriction in conjunction with the Muscle-Powered quality.

Melee counts as two restrictions.

ONLY IN (SPECIFIED ENVIRONMENT)

The attack or weapon can only target objects that are on or in a particular limited environment, for example, "only in water" (representing a torpedo) or "only in space" (representing a powerful weapon that requires a vacuum to work). The environment should not be one that is ubiquitous in the campaign (for example, "only in air" is not valid unless a lot of the game action will take place in airless environments). If the environment is very rare in the campaign, the Narrator may allow this to count as two restrictions.

SHORT RANGE

This restriction halves the range increment (round down). It can be taken twice if desired, to get 1/4 range. An even lower increment can be specified if the Narrator desires, but there's usually no extra cost benefit.

Short range may not be taken if the weapon has Melee or Thrown restriction.

SLOW-FIRING

The weapon has a restriction that reduces its rate of fire, such as requiring a full action (to aim, charge, or load the weapon) before making each attack. Perhaps the attack generates heat that must be dissipated before it can again fire safely. Consequently, the weapon fires every other round. The weapon cannot be used to attack multiple times in a round, nor can a different hero fire it on the round it is being loaded.

This cannot be used with Autofire or Multiple Shots.

Record a rate of fire of 1.

This can be taken multiple times; each time it is taken, loading requires an extra round's full action.

Slow-Firing counts as two restrictions.

STATIC

The weapon cannot be fired while the engine is moving under its own power; perhaps it is too bulky, requires precise aim, or drains too much power, or maybe the engine's fire control system is not advanced enough to compensate for movement. This does not prevent firing while drifting, coasting, etc.

This restriction is commonly taken for artillery-type weapons (especially in conjunction with Indirect Fire).

THROWN

This restriction means it is a thrown weapon. Once thrown, it is useless until retrieved. Specify the weapon's size class and whether it is bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing. The weapon's range increment is divided by 10 (if the base is 500', it will drop to 50') and the weapon can be thrown a maximum of 5 increments.

It may not be taken in conjunction with the Melee or Slow-Firing restriction. It is often taken in conjunction with the Muscle-Powered quality.

Record a rate of fire of 1, reflecting the fact that the weapon must be reloaded or charged after each shot.

Thrown Weapon counts as two restrictions.

UNRELIABLE

The attack tends to jam. Any time the hero makes an attack and rolls a "natural" 1, the weapon failed to fire and jammed, over-heated, or otherwise malfunctioned. It will not work until repaired. Clearing a jammed weapon requires a full action and a successful Dex check against a Difficulty of 10. Note: a hero cannot attempt to clear a jammed weapon if he or she is using the weapon untrained. If unsuccessful, the hero can try again next round. A natural "1" indicates the jam is severe and cannot be cleared without an hour's work and a successful Craft (engine) Skill check against a DC of 20.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to special qualities and restrictions, a weapon may have other considerations, as noted below. These considerations may affect the final cost.

MULTIPLE WEAPONS ON AN ENGINE

A single crewman on an engine can only attack with a single weapon at a time, no matter how many are built into the engine. Exception: If he or she has multiple attacks, and uses a full attack action, these extra attacks can be made with the same weapon (unless it has a Single Shot or Slow-Firing Rate of Fire) or they may use a different Alternate Weapon (or Ammo).

ALTERNATE WEAPONS (OR AMMO)

If the engine's operator has access to multiple different attacks, each secondary weapon costs less. This is because he or she can only use one weapon per round. For 1/10 the original cost (minimum 1 Point), an engine can be given another weapon that is of the same or lower Point cost than the engine's first weapon. This can represent either a new weapon or the same one with alternate ammo.

DIFFERENT GUNNERS

Weapons are normally designed to be used by the Pilot. If the engine has multiple crewmen, however, some may have their own weapons, allowing each to fire. If a weapon is in this category, note it as requiring a "different gunner" and pay for it at full cost. After it is acquired, additional alternate weapons may also be bought for that extra gunner, at the reduced cost given above. Note: Two heroes may not fire the same weapon in a round, however, even if using multiple attacks.

HAND-HELD WEAPONS

It is assumed that weapons are attached to the engine, but they may, instead, be designated as Hand-Held. A Hand-Held weapon can be lost or grabbed by an enemy, and the engine must have arms to hold it. Engines can, however, swap Hand-Held weapons with other engines. To do this both weapons must be the same size so that handgrips and such are compatible. Hand-held weapons can never be assigned to different gunners; they must be fired by the Engine Pilot.

MULTIPLE ATTACKS WITH HAND-HELD WEAPONS

The wearer of personal armor or pilot of an automaton may use the normal rules for multiple attacks with two weapons if his or her engine has a weapon in each hand.

WEAPON COST

If the attack delivers damage, use the following formula to determine the engine point cost:

$$\text{Engine Point cost} = (\text{Damage Bonus} \times 2) + 3$$

Example: A large cannon has a +8 damage bonus. Its engine point cost is $(8 \times 2) + 3$ or 19.

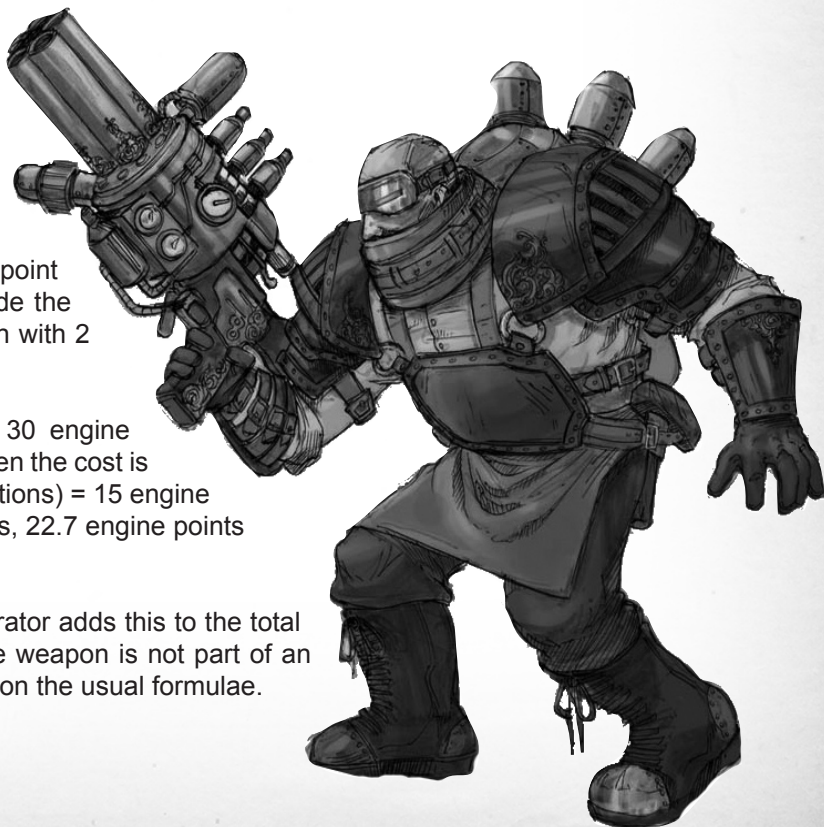
If a special attack, the cost is equal to the (modifier + 10) multiplied by 1 if smoke, 2 if flare, hot smoke, riot gas, or tangle, and 3 if nerve gas. Thus a +5 nerve gas attack costs $(10 + 5) \times 3 = 45$ Engine Points.

Weapon qualities or restrictions will also affect the Engine Point cost of the weapon. If the weapon has one quality multiply the engine point cost by 1.5. If it has two or more qualities, multiply the engine point cost by the number of qualities. Thus, a weapon with 3 qualities would cost three times as much in engine points.

If the weapon has a restriction, divide the engine point cost by 1.5. If it has two or more restrictions, divide the cost by the number of restrictions. Thus, a weapon with 2 restrictions would cost one-half as much.

Example: A weapon has an unmodified cost of 30 engine points. If it has one quality and three restrictions, then the cost is 30 times 1.5 (the quality) divided by 3 (three restrictions) = 15 engine points. If a cost is fractional, drop all fractions. Thus, 22.7 engine points is rounded down to 22 engine points.

Once the engine point cost is determined, the Narrator adds this to the total cost of the engine that houses the weapon. If the weapon is not part of an engine, then the Narrator can assign a cost based on the usual formulae.



SAMPLE ENGINES

The following engines were built according to engine rules in the previous sections. Costs assume that the engines are factory models unless otherwise stated.

ANALYTICAL ENGINES

Detective Engine: This large device sits in Scotland Yard. While the engine cannot do any actual detecting on its own, it can analyze clues and information to determine whether a detective's theory is viable. This engine is a prototype.

Strength +15, Speed 0, Defense -4, Toughness +11, Size G, Traits: Automatic Programming (Int +3), Skill Bonus (Knowledge (behavioral sciences) +5, Research +5), Cost 40, Design Cost 30, Materials Cost 14.

Instant Phonogram: A variation of the telegram, this device allows one to transmit her voice across a telegraph wire and embed the message on a phonograph record at the destination. A messenger would then deliver the record to the intended recipient, who can play back the message on a gramophone. Because of the machinery required, instant phonogram recorders are more commonly found in middle and upper class households. Most people simply go to the telegraph station (telegrams are still popular when expediency is required) and record their message in a booth. If the recipient is at the receiving station, the telegraph operator may play the record for her at the station before giving her the record. Recipients who receive the record at home but do not have a gramophone may take the record to the nearest telegraph station and Notice to the recording for a Cost of 5.

Strength +15, Speed 0, Defense -4, Toughness +11, Size G, Traits: Power (computer link), Cost 25. Design Cost 26, Materials Cost 13.

Library Engine: A few cities around the globe have installed a colossal library engine in their city libraries. The engine has an automatic card catalogue that can be accessed at a station. Once the appropriate book is found, the librarian need only punch in the key code of the book (based on the new Dewey Decimal System) and the engine rings a bell and displays the code to an "engine librarian" in the appropriate section of the library. This engine librarian plucks the book off the shelf and puts it on a conveyor belt that sends the book to the front desk (or research room).

Strength +15, Speed 0, Defense -4, Toughness +11, Size G, Traits: Automatic Programming (Int +3), skill bonus (Research +10), Cost 38. Design Cost 28, Materials Cost 22.

Tactical Engine: This engine allows the military to better monitor troop movements. An officer using a tactical engine gains a +5 bonus when making a Knowledge (tactics) check.

Strength +15, Speed 0, Defense -4, Toughness +11, Size G, Traits: Skill bonus (Knowledge (tactics) +5), Cost 23, Design Cost 23, Materials Cost 7.

VEHICLES

The following vehicles are examples of engines created with the system presented in this chapter. Historical vehicles are given only appropriate modifiers (military +4, flight +7). Fantastic steam-driven vehicles are given an extra +5 for rarity. If you want to make some engines prototypes, just add +10 to the total cost. The Icarus already factors this bonus in.

Three costs are given. The first is the purchase Difficulty. Second is the Craft Difficulty to design the engine. Finally, the cost in materials is given if the designed engine is built from scratch.

Airship, Cargo: Cargo airships carry heavy loads that would be extremely difficult to ship via land or sea. The load an airship can carry is limited only by the size of its airbag. Cargo airships usually have larger boilers (which are more noisy) than passenger airships and are less maneuverable. The cargo capacity of these airships, of course, is the best in their class.

Strength +20, Speed 50 mph (10,000 mi ceiling), Defense 2, Toughness +15, Size C, Traits: Quiet (+10), Navigation Aid (basic), Searchlight, Cost 31, Design Cost 28, Materials Cost 12.

Airship, Passenger: Essentially a long cabin or gondola slung underneath a steam-heated canopy of lighter-than-air gas, airships provide unparalleled service to transport cargo across any form of terrain. Among the most luxurious forms of transportation available are the passenger airships that provide amenities rivaling any of the great ocean liners. Note that the cost does not include a service crew.

Strength +20, Speed 50 mph (10,000 mi ceiling), Defense 2, Toughness +15, Size C, Traits: Accessories (luxurious interior), Quiet (+10), Rooms (Kitchen, Sickbay), Navigation Aid (basic), Searchlight, Windows, Cost 31, Design Cost 28, Materials Cost 12.

Airship, Warship: When it comes to warfare, air power can be essential to victory. The warship class of airships fills the role of air support admirably, serving as a well-armed firing platform that is extremely mobile and that has the advantage of height. Turrets with cannons are built on platforms that surround the heated airbag, and some warships are known to carry armed autogyros to provide even more firepower. The great cargo capacity of warships makes them ideal for ferrying supplies and troops to the front lines of any conflict.

Strength +20, Speed 50 mph (10,000 mi ceiling), Defense 2, Toughness +20, Size C, Traits: Quiet (+10), Rooms (Conference Room, Kitchen, Sickbay), Navigation Aid (basic), Searchlight. Weapons: Cannon (6): Damage Bonus +8, crew-served, fixed arc of fire, slow-firing, Cost 38, Design Cost 31, Materials Cost 15.

Autogyro: A personal-transportation aircraft, autogyros are quite popular with amateur pilots and those that want the convenience of air travel. Usually, an autogyro seats only one or two people and carries little cargo, its main body suspended underneath a whirling propeller blade. Autogyros are incredibly agile, able to hover in place and take off or land almost anywhere. Many police agencies and journalists utilize autogyros to reach sites of special interest either in the city or country without having to worry about street traffic.

Strength 0, Speed 40 mph (10,000 mi ceiling), Defense 10, Toughness +5, Size M, Traits: Open, Cost 29, Design Cost 26, Materials Cost 10.

Autogyro, War: This variant of the autogyro simply mounts a machine gun on the front of it.

Strength 0, Speed 40 mph, Defense 10, Toughness +5, Size M, Traits: Open, Weapon: Maxim Gun, Cost 34, Design Cost 27, Materials Cost 11.

Bicycle: This two-wheeled vehicle runs on energy produced by its user (pedal-power). During the Imperial Age, most bicycles were of the "penny-farthing" type. These bicycles had one wheel that was much larger than the other. The driver sits atop the large wheel.

Strength +0, Speed 10 mph, Defense 10, Toughness +5, Size M, Traits: Non-Volatile, Quiet (+0), Open, Cost 21, Design Cost 15, Materials Cost 9.

Coach: This is a four-wheeled horse-drawn carriage. It comfortably seats two drivers and up to four passengers. Upper middle class households consider the coach a status symbol.

Strength +10, Speed 0, Defense 8, Toughness +9, Size H, Traits: Non-Volatile, Quiet (+0), High Ground Pressure, Road Vehicle, Cost 24, Design Cost 15, Materials Cost 12.

Dragon: This infantry war machine looks like an armored giant. It is notorious for its horrific effects, including tearing things apart with its claws and burning infantry and cavalry with its flamethrower. The Dragon needs coal every 3 hours.

Strength +8, Speed 2 mph, Defense 9, Toughness +10, Size L, Traits: Arms (2), Quiet (+10), Poor Visibility. Weapons: Flamethrower, Damage bonus +6, burning, stream, fixed area, Claws (2), Damage bonus +12, muscle-powered, melee, Cost 30, Design Cost 30, Materials Cost 14.

Hansom: This two-wheeled horse-drawn carriage is operated by a driver sitting above it. The carriage is open in the front, although some models have a door covering the legs.

Strength +5, Speed 0, Defense 9, Toughness +7, Size L, Traits: Non-Volatile, Quiet (+0), High Ground Pressure, Open, Road Vehicle, Cost 23, Design Cost 15, Materials Cost 11.

Icarus: This amazing vehicle can actually launch a crew into space in order to explore the moon. On Earth, the Icarus is propelled into space by a giant cannon. It is presumed that the Icarus will use its less-powerful engine to free itself from the moon. It will then use steam jets and a glider to return safely to Earth.

Strength +10, Speed 0.5 G, Defense 8, Toughness +15, Size H, Traits: Environmental Systems (life support), Increased Endurance (a week), Navigational Aids (inertial), Searchlight, Sensors (Optical, 2 miles), Restricted Path (Earth to Moon and back), Cost 44, Design Cost 31, Materials Cost 15.

Ironclad: This steel, steam-powered monstrosity marks the end of the sailing ship's dominance of the high seas. It is a low, blocky, unwieldy vessel with a metal hull propelled by a powerful steam engine. A pair of powerful cannons mounted in a rotating turret gives the ironclad warship tremendous firepower.

Strength +10, Speed 15 mph, Defense 8, Toughness +15, Size H, Traits: Quiet (+10), Rooms (kitchen, sick bay), Searchlight, Poor Visibility. Weapons: Heavy Cannon (2), Damage bonus +8, blast (60 feet), long range, crew served, Cost 33, Design Cost 33, Materials Cost 17.

Iron Horse: This experimental cavalry engine is shaped like a horse. The frame also houses the engine (it is slightly awkward for the wearer to refuel himself). Controls are placed at the front of the harness, allowing the wearer to manually control the legs. The engine smokestack is placed at the rear.

Strength +5, Speed 10 mph, Defense 9, Toughness +12, Size L, Trait: Open, Quiet (+10), Cost 32, Design Cost 26, Materials Cost 10.

Kali: Originally called the Spider, British soldiers in India re-christened this experimental hexapod artillery war machine after the multi-armed Hindu goddess of death. True to its namesake, the Kali carries two machine guns and a flamethrower on its back. It requires fresh coal every 2 hours.

Strength +10, Speed 4 mph, Defense 8, Toughness +15, Size H, Traits: Poor Visibility, Weapons: Flamethrower, Damage bonus +6, burning, stream, machine guns (2), Damage bonus +5, autofire, extra ammo (200), Cost 43, Design Cost 33, Materials Cost 17.

Land Ironclad: A land ironclad is the steam version of the modern tank bristling with weaponry and rolling across terrain that would frustrate lesser conveyances with ease on steel-spoked wheels or rubberized tracks. Land ironclads are incredibly heavy and somewhat ponderous on the battlefield, but their firepower and armored hulls more than make up for their sluggish handling. Cannons are the most common weapons found onboard a land ironclad, and some even carry detachments of infantry inside the steel shell to deploy before, during, or after a battle for scouting and other purposes.

Strength +10, Speed 12 mph, Defense 8, Toughness +12, Size H, Traits: Firing ports (6), Poor Visibility. Weapons: Cannon, Damage Bonus +8, blast, crew-served, slow-firing, Cost 30, Design Cost xx, Materials Cost xx.

Steam Automobile: The popular "horseless carriage" is one of the most common forms of steam-powered transportation available. Many models are normally constructed to fit various roles. Sturdy, dependable, and requiring only a portion of coal to operate, versions of the steam carriage can be seen in use in nearly all areas of a society. This is the "realistic version," so it carries an experimental cost.

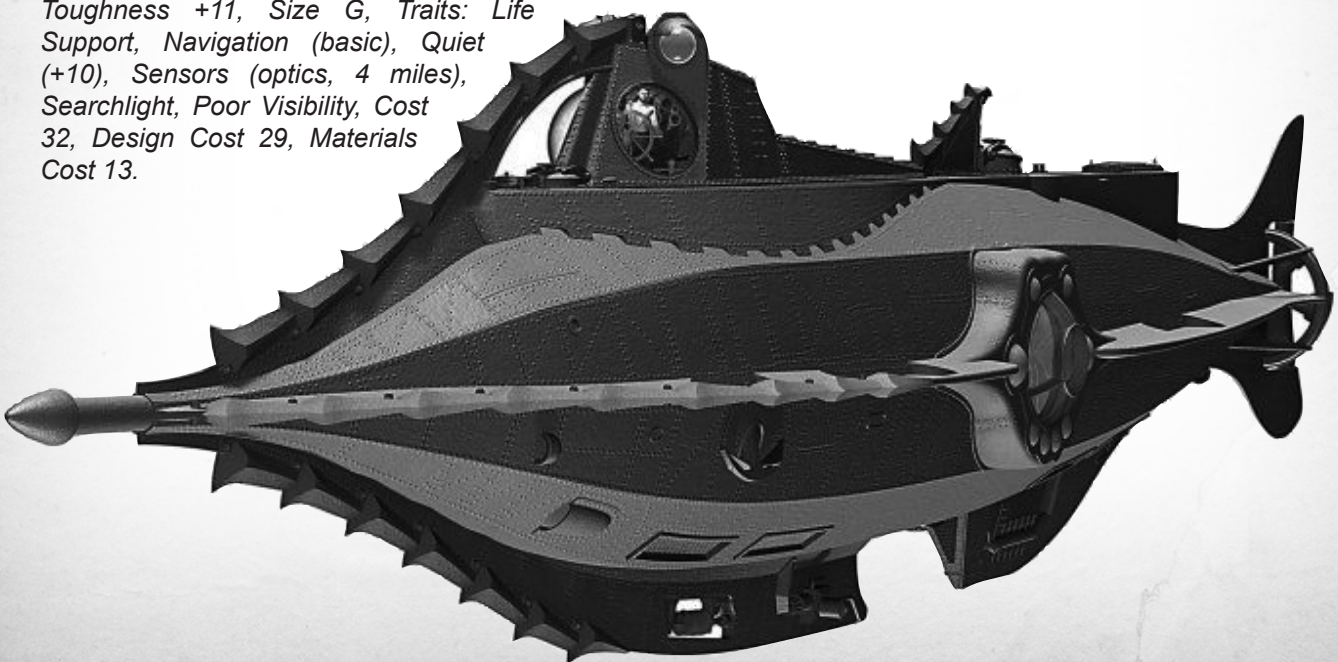
Strength +10, Speed 40 mph, Defense 8, Toughness +9, Size H, Traits: Headlights, Increased Endurance (+2 hours), High Ground Pressure, Quiet (+10), Road Vehicle, Start-Up Time (10 minutes), Windows, Cost 29, Design Cost 29, Materials Cost 7.

Steam Bicycle: The steam bicycle has gained a reputation for speed and mobility unparalleled among steam-powered ground transportation. The steam bicycle requires only a handful of coal to operate and can fit into the average horse stall. The steam bicycle is experimental.

Strength 0, Speed 40 mph, Defense 10, Toughness +5, Size M, Traits: Headlight, Open, Start-up Time (10 minutes), Cost 27, Design Cost 21, Materials Cost 5.

Submersible: A submersible is a cigar or teardrop-shaped canister, within which lie the steam boilers that power the screws and the brave crew who pilot such the vessel. Serving onboard a submersible is no easy task, and the rigors of undersea travel take their toll on these fragile conveyances, but they nonetheless remain exquisite examples of steam engineering. The engine must be refueled every 3 hours. Some military versions exist with various forms of weaponry, including a ramming prow, torpedoes and depth charges.

Strength +15, Speed 30 mph, Defense 6, Toughness +11, Size G, Traits: Life Support, Navigation (basic), Quiet (+10), Sensors (optics, 4 miles), Searchlight, Poor Visibility, Cost 32, Design Cost 29, Materials Cost 13.



ENGINE COMBAT

This section lists some general guidelines you can use when dealing with engines in combat, leaving the specifics up to the Narrator and common sense.

DRIVERS AND PILOTS

There are three skills for operating engines: Drive, Handle Animal, and Pilot. Drive is used for operating ground and water vehicles. Handle Animal is used for operating animal-drawn vehicles. Pilot is used for operating air and space vehicles (an argument can be made for using Ride if the character is sitting on an animal-shaped automaton).

Since "Engine Pilot" is a heroic path, we used "Pilot" as the default. If the text is being applied to drivers, substitute Drive or Handle Animal as appropriate.

ACTIONS

Actions in engine combat are very much like actions on the character scale (*True20*, **Chapter Six**, under **Action Types**), except engine combat differentiates between actions taken by the engine pilot, and those taken by other characters on-board the engine, designated as "passengers."

PILOT ACTIONS

The engine pilot must take a move action each round to handle and direct the engine. The pilot can also take a standard action each round, but he suffers a -4 to any maneuver check that round when doing so.

PASSENGER ACTIONS

Passengers in an engine (anyone not piloting) suffer a -2 penalty to attack rolls while the Engine is in motion. The Narrator may require Acrobatics checks for characters to maintain their balance in fast-moving engines.

ENGINE SPEED

An engine's maximum speed is expressed in mph, miles per hour. This represents its all-out movement. Each engine also has an accelerated speed equal to half its all-out speed and a normal speed equal to half its accelerated speed (or 1/4 its all-out speed). To convert from mph to feet per round, multiply by ten.

Engine Speed

Engine Speed	Dodge Bonus
0-10 mph	+0
11-100 mph	+2
Over 100 mph	+4

DECLARING SPEED

At the beginning of his action, a pilot must declare his speed category for the round. The pilot can choose to travel up to one category faster or slower than the engine's speed category at the end of the previous round. He can slow to an even lower speed category or come to a complete stop by making a piloting check as appropriate. The Difficulty is 10 if stopping from accelerated speed or 15 for stopping from all-out speed. Usually, only land and water engines (but not horse-drawn carriages) can go in reverse, and most cannot go faster than their normal speed in reverse.

Turning and Speed

Engines can turn at different rates based on their speed category.

Engine Speed and Turning Rate

Speed Category	Turn Rate
All-Out Speed	45°/10 ft
Accelerated Speed	45°/5 ft
Normal Speed	90°/5 ft
Stationary	--
Reverse	90°/5 ft

FALLING FROM AN ENGINE

Falling from an engine inflicts damage as if the character fell from a height equal to half the distance in feet the engine moved during its last move action, to a maximum of +20 damage, or based on the distance fallen (whichever is greater). It is treated like falling damage in all other respects.

ENGINE COMBAT ACTIONS

Actions during engine combat are handled the same way as actions during personal combat. In general, a character can take two move actions, one move action and one standard action, or one full-round action in a round. Free actions can be performed normally, in conjunction with other actions. If not specified otherwise, actions take the same time in engines as outside of them.

Free Actions: Communicating and ducking down behind a door are examples of free actions. Characters can perform as many free actions in a single round as the Narrator permits.

Move Actions: Changing position within an engine is usually a move action, especially if the character has to trade places with another character. If the character's movement is short and unobstructed, the character can do it as the equivalent of a 5-foot step. Otherwise, it requires a move action.

Standard actions: Anyone aboard an engine can make an attack with a personal weapon, and drivers and gunners can make attacks with any engine-mounted weapons controlled from their positions.

Full-Round Actions: Since the driver must use a move action to control the engine, he can't take a full-round action unless starting it in one round and completing it on the next turn.

ATTACKING ENGINES

Attacking an engine is just like attacking a character. Engines generally have an applicable size modifier included in their Defense, and they tend to be easier to hit than characters.

The engine pilot can take a standard action for "evasive maneuvers" during a round. If so, substitute the result of the character's relevant skill check (Drive, Handle Animal, or Pilot), modified by the engine's size, for the engine's normal Defense that round.

Just as in melee combat, one can also "fight defensively" while driving an engine, which grants a +2 dodge bonus to the Engine's Defense and applies a -4 penalty on attack rolls made by any occupants of the engine.

TARGETING OCCUPANTS

You make an attack against an engine occupant like any other attack. Remember, however, that a character in an engine gains bonuses to Defense from both the Engine's speed and any cover it provides. The speed bonus to Defense does not apply to attackers moving at the same or greater relative speed to the engine.

ENGINE DAMAGE

Just as engines have a Toughness save like characters do, engines can also receive damage conditions similar to that of characters. Engines always take lethal damage and receive damage conditions normally. The actual effects of each condition are outlined below.

Some conditions make distinctions between volatile and non-volatile engines. All engines are considered volatile unless they have the non-volatile trait.

WOUNDED

A "wounded" engine suffers the normal -1 penalty to Toughness saves per injured result, plus either a -1 penalty to checks involving the Engine or the loss of a feature.

DISABLED

A disabled engine can only take a single move or attack action each turn (not both); it cannot take any full-round actions. If its weapon systems are used to attack while moving, it attempts to escape at accelerated or all-out speed, or it performs any other action that would strain its systems, it suffers +5 damage after completing the act.

If a volatile engine is Disabled, then the engine must immediately make another Toughness check at -2. If the result is Dying or Dead, the engine explodes.

DYING

A volatile “dying” engine explodes, dealing damage equal to its base Toughness bonus due to size to any crew left onboard. The engine is completely destroyed.

A non-volatile “dying” engine is beginning to break apart. The Engine is immobilized, decreasing one speed category per round until it stops. The driver cannot attempt any maneuvers except a 45-degree turn. It is helpless and beyond repair. While an engine is dying, its crew may attempt to evacuate. The engine suffers +5 damage each round. Armor does not protect against this damage. A disabled water engine may begin to sink slowly.

DEAD

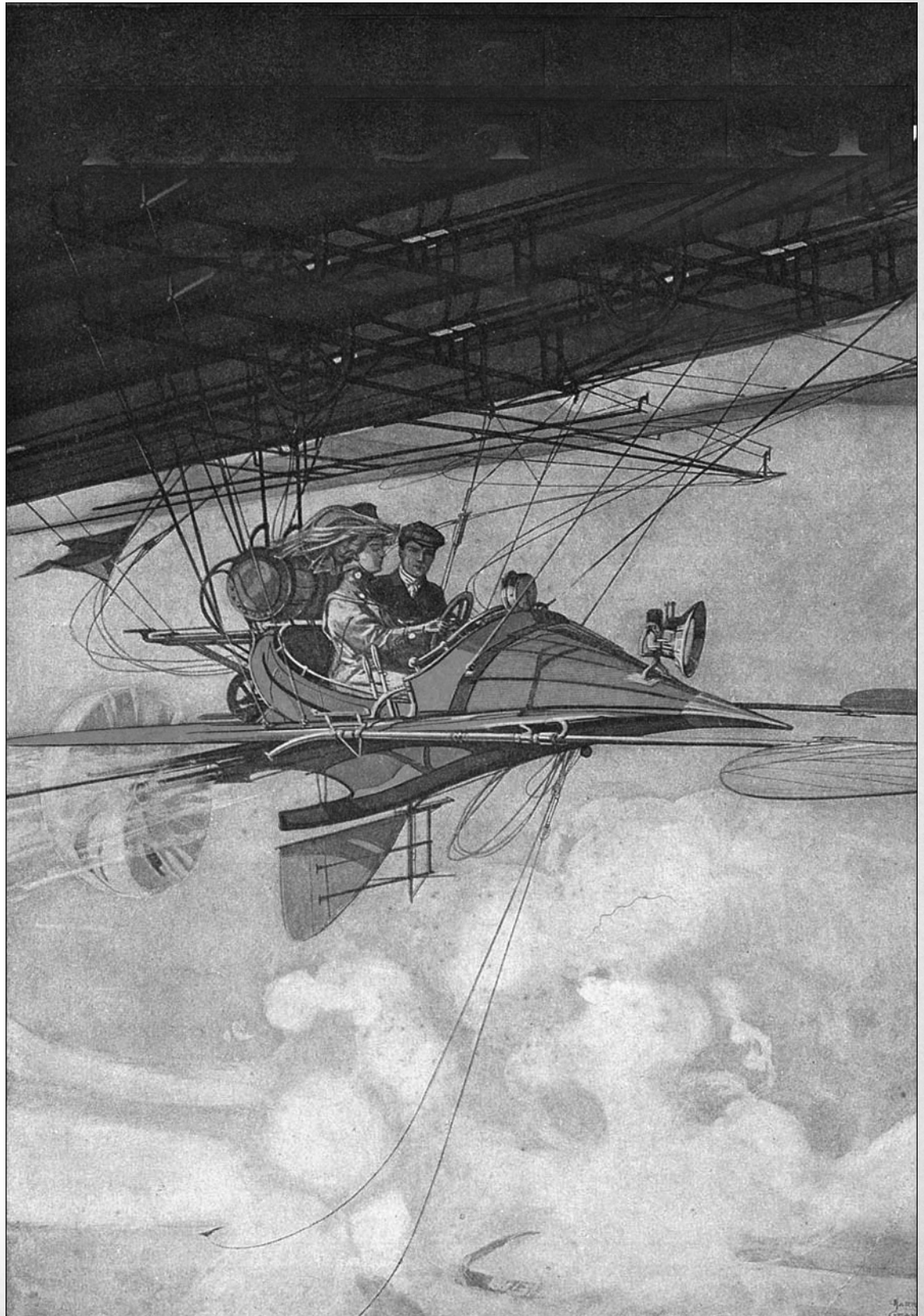
A “dead” engine explodes, dealing damage equal to its base Toughness bonus due to size to any crew left onboard. The engine is completely destroyed.

REPAIRING

ENGINES

Repairing engine damage requires the proper tools and a garage, hangar, or similar facility. A character without the proper tools suffers a -4 penalty on the Craft (mechanical) skill check, as usual.

Repairing a hurt or wounded result is a simple Craft check (Difficulty 15, one hour), and repairing a disabled result is an extended Craft check (Difficulty 25, one day). Destroyed engines cannot be repaired; they must be rebuilt from scratch.



CRASH CHECKS

Crash checks are required when a maneuver calls for a crash check or the engine suffers damage that causes a crash check. For example, crash checks may be called for if there are obstacles that the engine may crash into when it takes damage. A disabled or worse result in tricky terrain or while pulling off a particularly difficult maneuver could call for a crash check. Likewise, if an engine pilot is dazed or worse while negotiating tough terrain or performing a tough maneuver, the Narrator may call for a crash check.

The crash check is a maneuver check, with Difficulty 15 for ground and water engines and Difficulty 10 for air and space engines. You make only one crash check per round per engine, even if more than one is called for. Every additional crash check required increases the check Difficulty by +5. Open terrain is -5 Difficulty, tight terrain is +5 Difficulty, and close terrain is at the normal Difficulty. See **Terrain** in the **Pursuit** section of the **Fisticuffs, Swordplay, and Pursuit** Chapter for more details on terrain.

On a failed check, the engine crashes into an obstacle (or another engine, if a maneuver specifies). The engine and the obstacle (and any occupants of either) suffer damage equal to one-tenth of either the object's toughness or engine's Strength, multiplied by the collision speed modifier (see **Collision Speed Table**), rounded down.

Collision Speed	
Relative Speed*	Modifier to Damage
10 mph or less	x1/4
11-20 mph	x1/2
21-40 mph	x1
41-60 mph	x2
61-80 mph	x4
81-100 mph	x6
101-120 mph	x8
121 mph or more	x10

* This is determined by comparing the relative speeds of both Engines (or Engine and target). For example, during a chase scene, a truck going 60 MPH rams a car going 40 MPH from the rear. The relative speed of the ram is 20 MPH. If the ram took place from the side, the relative speed would be 60 MPH. On the other hand, if it had been a head on collision, then the relative speed would be 100 MPH.

Occupants can make Reflex saves (Difficulty equal to the Difficulty of the crash check) to suffer half damage from the crash.

If there is no hard terrain or other obstacle for an air or space engine to crash into, the engine may stall instead. The pilot can restart the engine with a successful Craft (mechanical) check (Difficulty equal to the crash check).

A failed crash check for a character is the same as for an engine: the character collides with an obstacle and suffers damage. A character that fails the Reflex save against crash damage falls prone after the collision.

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