



THRILLING TALES



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THRILLING TALES



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CHAPTER ONE:

PULP ADVENTURE

The fiendish Manchurian doctor casually kicked over the wicker basket, and three deadly vipers slithered out, winding their way across the marble floor towards the chair where the young woman was bound, helpless to the danger that approached.

“Your time is running out, Ms. Van Meter,” Tsung-Chi Sin said, his voice like a silken strangling cord. “I cannot control my pets once they’ve scented their prey. Tell me: Where is the Green Falcon?”



With a resounding crash, the window shattered as a green-clad figure burst through, twin 45s blazing. The snakes were obliterated in an instant, blown like rubber toys across the floor. “Right here, Doctor Sin,” the Green Falcon laughed. He levelled his guns at the insidious devil of Chinatown.

Suddenly, he felt the sting of a bullet grazing his shoulder, slicing through the green overcoat, and moments later heard the crack of the pistol’s report...from behind him! He spun to see Rita Van Meter, his own girlfriend, standing by the chair, ropes pooled at her feet. In her hands she clutched a smoking revolver, and her eyes were glazed in a vacant stare.

A chilling laugh filled the chamber. “You fool...you forget that I am a master of mesmerism. This entire scene was a trap, played purely for your benefit. Now, you will die at the lovely hand of Ms. Van Meter...or you will be forced to kill her!”

The Green Falcon’s mind raced, as Rita’s finger tightened on the trigger....

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to **THRILLING TALES Second Edition**. In these pages, we convert three years worth of PDF releases in the d20 pulp line published by Adamant Entertainment to the **Savage Worlds** rules system.

The contents of this rulebook, along with a copy of the **Savage Worlds** rulebook published by Pinnacle Entertainment Group, are all that you need to run a pulse-pounding pulp roleplaying game using the **Savage Worlds** system.

So, hang on tight, because the first thing we're going to tell you is that there is no such thing as the "pulp genre."

WHAT IS PULP?

Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as the "pulp genre." Pulp was a medium, a method of delivery, not a genre in and of itself. Saying "pulp genre" makes about as much sense as saying "television genre" (or, for that matter, "cinematic" as a genre, which is another misnamed term used by gamers, but I digress).

The Pulp magazines were the magazines of popular fiction, delivering stories of adventure, action and romance in several genres from their birth in the first years of the twentieth century to their demise in the mid-1950s. They represented the greatest explosion of mass entertainment by way of the written word that had been seen until the creation of the Internet.

There were pulps for every taste. Detective pulps, science-fiction pulps, western pulps, sports pulps, romance pulps and more. There were pulps devoted to the exploits of everyday heroes, and pulps that were spiced with the macabre and unusual. They all had one thing in common: they delivered escapist entertainment, printed on cheap pulp paper sandwiched between slick, gaudy color covers. There was something for everyone.

The pulp magazine was a twentieth century publishing sensation, the roots of the form can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century, with the invention of the dime novel: serial fiction printed on newspaper that was aimed at the middle and lower classes. "Low-brow" entertainment that offered lurid stories full of action, suspense and thrills.

With the birth of the new century, and the growing literacy of the public, the market for serial fiction exploded, leading to the creation of the pulp magazine, with brightly-colored covers designed to lure potential readers in a market that quickly became filled with competitors.

The pulps reached their heyday in the years between World Wars One and Two, especially during the Great Depression of the 1930s. In a world that seemed increasingly hopeless and hard, the pulps offered an escape from the bleakness of everyday life, priced so that anyone could get away

for a few brief hours. Gone were the breadlines and the dust bowl of their hard-scrabble lives, replaced by the thrill of soaring through the clouds with air aces, or travelling to far-off worlds, or galloping after a band of desperadoes, guns blazing.

The most popular of the pulps featured crime fighting heroes.

The average American saw during Prohibition (1920 to 1933) the rise of a powerful criminal class that could flaunt authority as they wished, becoming rich and powerful in the process. They saw government and business become corrupted by these new criminals and their money... and most importantly, the average American felt helpless to stop it.

The lure of the crime-fighter in pulp stories was obvious: a simple wish-fulfilment of fighting back, of taking control of a situation that seemed out of control. It is the same basic human need that later fueled the popularity of superhero comics and even later still, action movies. Putting oneself in the imaginary role of a hero who takes action against those things which you feel helpless to affect.



The pulps, along with radio (which often produced dramatic presentations based on the stories printed in the pulps) became the prime source of entertainment for the American people before the advent of television. Stories which relied upon the audience's own imaginations to envision. In some ways, a purer form than the passive process of watching television or a film.

The pulps didn't last, however. Paper shortages during the Second World War dealt a crippling blow to the form, which limped along for another decade or so after the war had ended, and finally died out, replaced by the television, the comic book and the paperback novel.

So, if there is no such thing as the "pulp genre", then what are we talking about?

PULP GENRES

When gamers speak of the “pulp genre,” what they’re really talking about is an amalgam of several genre elements taken from the various genres of pulp stories, radio shows, cliffhanger film serials and later “post-modern pulps” like the *Indiana Jones* films and *The Rocketeer*.

The following section is a breakdown of the most popular genres from which these elements are lifted. It is not an exhaustive list of every pulp genre—only those that often provide fodder for the RPG interpretations of the pulps. For example, Sports pulps were very popular, but you don’t often see gamers clamoring to play a golf pro in a tense tournament!

CRIMEFIGHTING

By far, the most common and popular genre in the pulps was the crimefighting genre, which itself can be broken down into several distinct sub-genres, the most popular of which were the Detective Mystery and the Hero pulp.

The Detective Mystery has survived into the present day as a staple of the mystery section of every bookstore—A hero or heroine whose purpose is to solve mysteries, usually involving murder.

The formula of these tales usually involves a detective (either private

or official) brought in to puzzle out a baffling crime. The tale progresses with the detective figuring out the answers to the questions of Who, What, Where, Why and How, most likely facing peril of some kind as they get closer and closer to The Truth, which they inevitably do by the end of the tale.

Detective stories of the pulp era usually ended with the criminal brought to justice. It was later that the focus shifted and the unravelling of the mystery became more important than the result.

Hero pulps are the tales that most gamers think of when they hear the word “pulp,” and as such make up the majority of the RPG-created “pulp genre.” They are tales of larger-than-life heroes, proto-superheroes, if you will, facing larger-than-life villains and solving bizarre and unusual crimes. *Doc Savage*, *The Shadow*, *The Spider*, *The Avenger*, all of these are famous examples of the Hero pulp.

Since the hero pulps led directly into the creation of the superhero comic book, it is easy to see the genre as, essentially, low-powered (or no-powered) superheroics. There are, however, major differences. Believability, for one. The Hero pulps, however strange or unusual the topic, held at their core a level of “this could happen.” Superhero comics, with their demi-godlike powers and huge battles, are by their very nature more farfetched. Think of the difference between early James Bond films and more recent

ones--the early films, even with the gadgets, had an air of reality about them, albeit stretched, to be sure. The later films, with orbital heat-rays and spy-car duels have ventured far into the realm of superheroics.

The byword of the Hero pulps was "exotic." Strange crimes, far-off locations, cutting-edge (for the 1930s) technology, etc. The Hero pulps were the pinnacle of escapism, and the more exotic things that they could show the reader, the better. This wasn't limited to pure fiction, either. The writers would be careful to include real elements as well--for example, Walter Gibson, the author of most of *The Shadow* novels was a part-time professional magician, and would often include real magicians tricks in his fictional hero's arsenal. If *Doc Savage* author Lester Dent had recently read some interesting things about the Yukon, you could be sure that Doc and his men would be visiting the Yukon in an upcoming adventure.

As mentioned previously, the Hero pulp provides the largest amount of inspiration to pulp RPGs, and so will form the basis of the Random Adventure Generator which appears in Chapter Ten.

AIR HERO

For readers in the early twentieth century, air travel was a novelty. It was seen during the Depression as a romantic escape from earthbound problems. The pilot was a dashing heroic figure, and the pulps provided many such heroes to thrill readers.

Many of the air heroes of the pulps were World War I flying aces, fighting against the Germans in what at the time was known as "the Great War." These pulps were adventure tales set during wartime, and provided enough actual aeronautical detail to whet the appetite of would-be pilots.

There were tales set in the present as well. The contemporary air heroes flew aircraft at the cutting edge of aviation (and beyond)--the period equivalent of a Tom Clancy technothriller.

Air hero pulps weren't limited to simple adventure tales of the air war, or tales of daredevils touring air



shows, however -- the most popular of the air hero pulps, *G-8 and His Battle Aces*, combined the Air hero formula with the Hero pulp and even Horror, featuring the World War One aces fighting off flying armies of zombies, giant bats, supervillains and more.

FOREIGN ADVENTURE

Similar to the exotic elements of the Hero pulps, but without the focus on crime-fighting, this genre tells tales of action and adventure in distant locations. These tales could be stories of globe-trotting fortune hunters, military adventures of the Foreign Legion, or rough-and-tumble tales of life as a merchant seaman in the South Pacific.

The focus of these stories was always on the location, and the strange things and people that could be found there. By today's standards, a great deal of this genre's tales are not exactly enlightened in their viewpoints--the stories are full of ignorant, animalistic savages, shiftily, untrustworthy foreigners, seductive half-naked women, and the like. The hero is the embodiment of the "civilized white man in a world of danger", and to modern eyes, it can be pretty offensive.

That said, though, the *Indiana Jones* films and *Tomb Raider* games draw heavily on the elements of this genre, so it is more than possible

to remove the insulting elements and retain the heart--adventure and excitement in far-off lands.

ESPIONAGE

The period between the World Wars was rife with intrigue. Some historians have said that the World Wars can be viewed as a single conflict, with an intermission where nations gathered their strength and maneuvered for the next round.

The Espionage pulps were often reluctant to deal with real-life politics, and so usually shrouded their tales behind fictional nations. Bolsheviks from places like "Bulkavia", rather than Russians. Fascist leaders of secret world-spanning empires, rather than Nazi Germany. As the thirties drew to a close, however, and war seemed more and more imminent, the gloves came off and real-world issues appeared on the pulp pages.

Whether they were facing real or fictional menaces, the heroes of the Espionage pulps are a familiar archetype to modern readers. James Bond is their direct descendant, and the usual Espionage pulp could, with very little tinkering, be made into a serviceable 007 adventure.

HORROR

The horror pulp genre has gotten quite a bit of attention in the RPG hobby, due to games based upon one of the most famous horror pulp writers, Howard Phillips Lovecraft.

Not all pulp horror was concerned with mind-shattering nameless things from beyond space and time, however. Even that particular variety (which has been termed Lovecraftian, for obvious reasons), was limited largely to the pages of a single magazine: *Weird Tales*. There were other horror pulps, though: *Terror Tales*, *Strange Stories*, *Ghost Stories*, among others.

The stories ran the usual gamut of horror elements: vampires, ghosts, werewolves, mad killers, voodoo, gothic castles, etc. Tales were usually one-shots with no recurring characters--it's easier to kill off protagonists that way, increasing the scare factor. There were, however, the occasional series of tales that would center around an occult investigator of some sort, who would encounter a supernatural threat and defeat it by the end of the tale, ready to move on to the next. This form of story is ironically much more "game-able" than the Lovecraftian variety, and yet Lovecraft still forms the basis of most pulp-horror gaming.

WEIRD MENACE

Everybody loves a good villain. This was also true of pulp readers, and so it was inevitable that magazines devoted to villainy would start to appear.

Inspired by the gothic romances of the 19th century, and the infamous Grand Guignol theatre of Paris (which shocked audiences with realistic scenes of horror and bloodshed), these pulps were dark reflections of the Hero pulps. The magazine would focus on the exploits of the featured villain, who would always be defeated by the often bland, unremarkable hero, yet would always escape justice at the end, to return in the next issue.

The stories delighted in detailed descriptions of torture and fiendish plots, usually performed on a scantily-clad damsel in distress, or on the hero himself. Mild by today's standards, they were shocking stuff at the time, with stories that flirted with sadism and "adult themes." They were often sold "under the counter", rather than displayed openly, and were definitely part of the reason that pulps began to develop a reputation for salacious thrills.

The villains of these stories were the draw: always brilliant and unredeemably evil, and usually given some sort of weird gimmick, whether a costumed secret identity (*Doctor Satan*) or being inscrutable

and foreign (*Doctor Fu Manchu*, the most famous alumnus of this particular school).

SPICY

Another “under the counter” genre, Spicy pulps were simply tales from any of the other pulp genres with “adult themes” added. Usually this

involved women in various stages of undress (prominently displayed on the cover, naturally), and often threatened with a sado-sexual “fate worse than death.” Again, almost laughably tame to twenty-first century eyes, but scandalous in the thirties.

The “damsel in distress” element of Spicy pulps certainly finds its way



into the other genres, albeit with less of a concentration on whips!

One of the best things about this genre was the magazine titles, which put "Spicy" in the name to let prospective readers know that titillation awaited within. This led to such stalwarts as *Spicy Mystery*, *Spicy Detective*, and *Spicy Western*. Pulp fans have often joked about an imaginary entry into this field, *Spicy Zeppelin Stories!*

JUNGLE STORIES

This genre was made famous by the Tarzan stories of Edgar Rice Burroughs, which first appeared in *All Story Magazine*. There were plenty of imitators, however, and soon the market was flooded with tales of Ki-Gor and Kazar and Sheena, Queen of the Jungle.

Not all Jungle stories were tales of Noble Savages, however. There were tales of intrepid explorers, big game hunters, treasure hunters and more, crossing over with the Foreign Adventure genre. Remember that at the time, there were areas of the globe that were largely unexplored--and many of those were in the tractless interiors of the jungles of Africa, South America, the South Pacific and Asia. These unknown regions were ripe for adventure in the minds of the readers of the Thirties.

The Jungle Story pulps also crossed

over quite a bit with the Lost World genre (q.v.) -- Lost cities and secret civilizations were a common staple of this genre.

SCIENCE FICTION

Science fiction was, essentially, an invention of the pulps. Born of the earlier form, the "scientific romance" of the nineteenth century, the science fiction story (a term coined by pulp publisher Hugo Gernsback in his *Science Wonder Stories* magazine in June of 1929) was tailor-made for the pulp format. Of all of the pulp genres, it is the one that has thrived beyond the medium that created it.

The science fiction stories of the pulps leaned heavily toward spectacle. There weren't a lot of thoughtful examinations of the impact of technology upon human civilization and culture...but there were a lot of rocket ships, alien invasions, two-fisted scientists blazing away at Bug Eyed Monsters with ray-guns, etc. In most cases the science made no sense, but the readers didn't care. If it sounded like it had the ring of science to it, that was good enough!

That is the biggest difference between pulp science fiction and modern variety. Even in the most far-fetched space operas of today, attempts are made at a certain degree of "realism"--perhaps not scientific accuracy, but at the very



least internal consistency of the genre elements. We all know that “Warp drive” is ridiculous, but we also know that there is a consistently stated exposition of how it works within the fictional world. Not so with pulp sci-fi. There was no attempt made to justify anything. The science was often flat-out wrong, but breathlessly described nonetheless. The rocket is powered by “Atomic Radio Turbines” --- what the heck does that mean? Who cares! On to the next exciting chapter!

As with all pulp genres, there was a great deal of cross over. You could see science-fiction meet horror in tales of alien invasion and body-snatching, or thrilling to the exploits of science fiction heroes like *Captain Future*.

WESTERN

Westerns were a popular pulp genre as well, and not just period tales of gunslingers and Indian raiding parties. In one of the stranger creations of the pulp era, the western

magazines would occasionally print contemporary westerns, set in the 1930s.

This strange mix of Cowboys, Indians, Radios and Tommyguns was especially evident in the cliffhanger serial films of the time, and naturally was reflected in print as well. For a jaw-dropping experience, track down a DVD copy of the 1935 Gene Autry serial *The Phantom Empire*, which featured the singing cowboy star fighting the super-science of the underground city of Maurania!

LOST WORLD

The Lost World genre also grew out of the scientific romances of the nineteenth century. These stories usually featured a location that, by virtue of its isolation from the rest of the world, developed separately. Lost Worlds could be found within the hollow earth (reached by caves), in jungles inexplicably found in the middle of the Antarctic (warmed by the presence of active volcanoes), hidden islands in the South Pacific, or deep within primordial African jungles.

Lost Worlds are often populated by remnants of Earth civilizations long past...Ancient Rome, Vikings, Lost African tribes, Sunken Atlantis. Some are populated by creatures whose evolution progressed differently than their more familiar cousins (intelligent, talking species of apes were always a popular choice here). Naturally, Lost Worlds almost always featured dinosaurs, who have survived extinction due to the isolated environment...and, let's be honest: because they're cool.

The stories of Lost Worlds usually involved the adventures of a member of our society upon finding themselves in this strange place, but on occasion (in tales that crossed-over with the Jungle Stories genre), would be tales of Lost World natives.



OTHER GENRES

Other genres from the pulps are also useful for RPG purposes, but usually form the basis of entire games already: Notably the Swords & Sorcery genre, which thrived during the pulp publishing era, and directly led to the creation of the role-playing game hobby in the first place; and the Planetary Romance genre, which forms the basis of another Adamant Entertainment release: **MARS: Savage Worlds Edition**.

CHAPTER TWO:

A TIMELINE OF THE 1930s

The pulps are very much a product of their times, and GMs looking for ways to bring that feeling across in a pulp campaign should try whenever possible to include events that place the adventure in a historical context.

Historical detail can make a setting more “real” to players, and can also provide GMs with inspirations for adventures.

1930

- The Nazi party places second in German elections, but Adolf Hitler is kept from his seat in the Reichstag because he is an Austrian citizen.
- In South Africa, white women can now vote, but blacks are still excluded under the regime that would soon be called apartheid.
- Pluto, the ninth planet, is discovered by astronomers.
- President Herbert Hoover signs the Hawley-Smoot Tariff Act, weakening the already failing global economy.
- Over 1,300 American banks fail and unemployment exceeds 4 million as the Depression sinks lower.
- In Jamaica, Rastafarians proclaim Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie as the new Messiah.
- A Fire in the Ohio State Penitentiary near Columbus kills 320.
- Chicago Tribune journalist Alfred Liddle is shot. Newspapers promise \$55,000 reward for information. Liddle is later found to have had contacts to organized crime
- British Airship R101 crashes in France en-route to India on its maiden voyage.

1931

- The Scottsboro affair begins when nine black men are arrested on false rape charges at a train stop in Paint Rock, Alabama.
- A 34-year-old Baptist preacher named Elijah Poole joins the Nation of Islam and becomes Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Black Muslims.

- Chicago mobster Al Capone is convicted of income tax evasion. Capone is sentenced to 11 years in jail and a \$50,000 fine.
- Unemployed Americans march on the White House, demanding a national program of employment at a minimum wage. They are turned away.
- Japan occupies Manchuria (which they call Manchukuo), beginning a period of Sino-Japanese conflict which doesn't end until Japan's defeat at the end of the Second World War.
- "The Star Spangled Banner," originally written in 1814 by Francis Scott Key, becomes the American national anthem by order of Congress.
- In China, the Yangtze River bursts a dam, causing massive flooding, famine, destruction and death.
- Construction of the Empire State Building is completed in New York City
- In organized crime, the so-called "Castellemare War" ends with the assassination of Joe "The Boss" Masseria, briefly leaving Salvatore Maranzano as *capo di tutti capi* ("boss of all bosses")--undisputed leader of the American Mafia. Maranzano is himself assassinated less than 6 months later, leading to the establishment of the Five Families, a national commission headed by Charlie "Lucky" Luciano.

1932

- Mohandas Gandhi begins fasting to protest British treatment of India's untouchable caste. After just 6 days, he wins concessions.
- Franklin Delano Roosevelt, pledging a "New Deal," is elected president for the first of his four terms.
- Wall Street's Dow Jones Industrial hits its Depression-era low, 41.22.
- Physicists Sir John Douglas Cockcroft and Ernest Walton split the atom for the first time.
- The Great Depression continues to take a heavy toll: in this year alone, 1,161 banks fail, nearly 20,000 business go bankrupt, and 21,000 people commit suicide.
- The son of noted aviator Charles Lindbergh is kidnapped and dies. Richard Bruno Hauptmann is arrested for the crime, beginning the "Trial of the Century."

1933

- Prohibition ends in the United States.
- Adolf Hitler becomes chancellor of Germany. By the end of the year, Hitler has proclaimed the Third Reich, opened the first concentration camp at Dachau, eliminated all

political parties other than National Socialism, and consolidated his dictatorial rule.

- President Franklin Roosevelt begins to record his “fireside chats” for weekly radio broadcast.
- Giuseppe Zangara attempts to assassinate President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt, but instead kills Chicago, Illinois Mayor Anton J. Cermak.
- The federal government passes a flurry of innovative social legislation, as part of Roosevelt’s “New Deal.”
- Fiorella La Guardia elected mayor of New York.
- US airship Akron crashes near New York - 74 dead
- Karl Jansky announces the detection of radio waves from the centre of the galaxy.

1934

- The “Dust Bowl” hits the US Midwest, blowing 300 million tons of topsoil into the Atlantic, devastating farmland in Kansas, Texas, Colorado, and Oklahoma.
- General Lazaro Cardenas, elected president of Mexico, begins a program of agrarian reform, redistributing land and building the power of organized labor.

- The FCC is created to oversee U.S. telephone, telegraph, and radio communications.

- The National Labor Relations Board is created to regulate collective bargaining between labor and management.
- Baseball’s Negro National League pitcher Leroy Robert “Satchel” Paige breaks Dizzy Dean’s 30-game winning streak.
- Bank robbers Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker die in a shower of police bullets near Shreveport, Louisiana.
- Alcatraz becomes a prison.
- Surgeon R.K. Wilson allegedly takes a photograph of the Loch Ness Monster.
- The FBI guns down John Dillinger and Baby-Face Nelson.
- Japan renounces the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 and the London Naval Treaty of 1930.

1935

- The Nuremberg laws, enacted by Germany’s Nazi party, make anti-Semitism the law of the land.
- FBI kills Barker gang, including Ma Barker, in a shootout
- Congress passes the National

Labor Relations Act (the Wagner Act), reasserting workers' right to collective bargaining. Dissidents within the AFL create the CIO.

- Irish Protestants in Belfast riot against Catholics, provoking retaliation from Catholics in the Irish Free State.
- The Social Security Act becomes law in the US.
- America's first public housing projects are established on New York's Lower East Side.
- Italy invades Ethiopia.
- Hitler publicly begins to re-arm Germany, creating the Luftwaffe in violation of the Versailles Treaty.

1936

- The Spanish Civil War begins. Hundreds of Americans volunteer for "Lincoln Brigades" to help fight General Francisco Franco's fascists.
- In India, statesman Jawaharlal Nehru is elected president of the Indian National Congress.
- In violation of the Locarno Pact and the Treaty of Versailles, Germany reoccupies the Rhineland.
- Joseph Stalin begins a "great purge" to liquidate his enemies. By 1939, over 8 million are dead and perhaps 10 million imprisoned.

- Richard Bruno Hauptmann is executed for the kidnapping and death of the Lindbergh baby.

- A major heat wave strikes the Midwestern United States, hundreds of high temperature records are set.
- In baseball, Joe DiMaggio joins the New York Yankees, who win the World Series, 4-2, against the New York Giants.
- Franklin Delano Roosevelt is re-elected president.
- Edward VIII of the United Kingdom abdicates, announcing his intention to marry American divorcee Wallis Simpson. Rumour asserts that he was asked to step down due to his pro-Fascist, pro-Nazi leanings.

1937

- Howard Hughes sets a new air record by flying from Los Angeles to New York City in 7 hours, 28 minutes and 25 seconds.
- After staging a series of sit-down strikes, the United Auto Workers win official recognition from General Motors.
- Pro-Franco German forces attack the Spanish city of Guernica. Pablo Picasso paints his cubist masterpiece as a reflection upon the destruction.
- Amelia Earhart and her aircraft disappear mysteriously over the Pacific.

- The Golden Gate Bridge opens in San Francisco.

- Sino-Japanese War: Japan invades China. Shanghai is occupied. 250,000 civilians and prisoners are slaughtered in the Nanjing Massacre.

1938

- In its most violent display of anti-Semitism yet, German Nazis attack Jewish people and property in Kristallnacht (so named for the sounds of breaking glass).

- The Dies Committee (AKA the House UnAmerican Activities Committee), charged with stamping out Nazi activity in the United States, changes its focus to Communist activity instead.

- In the Halloween radio broadcast "War of the Worlds," Orson Welles panics Americans who believe that Martians are actually invading Earth.

- Under the presidency of Lazaro Cardenas, Mexico nationalizes its petroleum industries.

- Anschluss: Hitler annexes Austria. German troops march into Sudetenland.

- Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs is Walt Disney's first full-length animated film.

- Howard Hughes sets a new record by completing a 91 hour airplane flight around the world.

1939

- Hitler's Germany invades Poland, which falls in a month. France and Great Britain declare war.

- Dictator Francisco Franco conquers Madrid, ending the Spanish Civil War

- Ho Chi Minh creates the Viet Minh party to oppose colonialism in the French colony "Indochina."

- The SS St. Louis, a ship carrying a cargo of 963 Jewish refugees, is denied permission to land in Florida after already having been turned away from Cuba. Forced to return to Europe, most of its passengers later die in Nazi concentration camps.

- Based on recent research, Albert Einstein writes a letter to President Roosevelt regarding the possibility of using uranium to initiate a nuclear chain reaction, the fundamental process behind the atomic bomb.

- In Munich, Adolf Hitler narrowly escapes an assassination attempt while celebrating the 16th anniversary of the Beer Hall Putsch on November 8th.

- *Gone With the Wind*, starring Clark Gable and Vivien Leigh, premieres. *The Wizard of Oz*, another blockbuster of this year, opens before Christmas.

CHAPTER THREE:

CHARACTERS

Characters in **THRILLING TALES** are created using the standard *Savage Worlds* rules. Refer to the *Savage Worlds* rulebook for details.

Characters are the basis for any good pulp story. Two words: Broad strokes. While many other RPGs advise, correctly, that characters be well-rounded and deep, with complex motivations and non-stereotypical personalities, **THRILLING TALES** is founded on strongly archetypal characters. If you cannot define your character in a sentence, preferably a short one, you should trim back some of the fat until you can. Over the course of the game, depth can be added, and the character will develop a rich and colorful cast of friends and enemies, but a starting character should be extremely iconic.

The most successful pulp magazines were the ones that revolved around the adventures of a single hero, often with a cadre of assistants. This can make things problematic in a role-playing setting. Gamers usually prefer to play heroes, not sidekicks.

There are two ways to address this in your game. One way is to go ahead and put together a group of heroes working together. While it is true that you never saw teams

featuring Doc Savage, The Shadow, G-8 and Tarzan teaming up to fight evil together, there were hero groups in the pulps--the Secret Six, for example.

The trick to putting together a group is to ensure that each character is a specialist, with as little cross-over with the other characters as possible. Give everyone something that they can do that the others cannot. If you have one investigative specialist, then don't allow someone else to create a character who focuses on investigation. Give everyone their chance to shine. Specialists also make more sense in a group than a haphazard collection of polymath heroes, each of whom is a brilliant Jack-of-all-Trades (One wonders why such heroes would need to team up at all).

For this method, players should start with Seasoned characters (as described in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook), although Game Masters may find that smaller groups -- four or fewer -- may be comprised of more experienced Veterans.

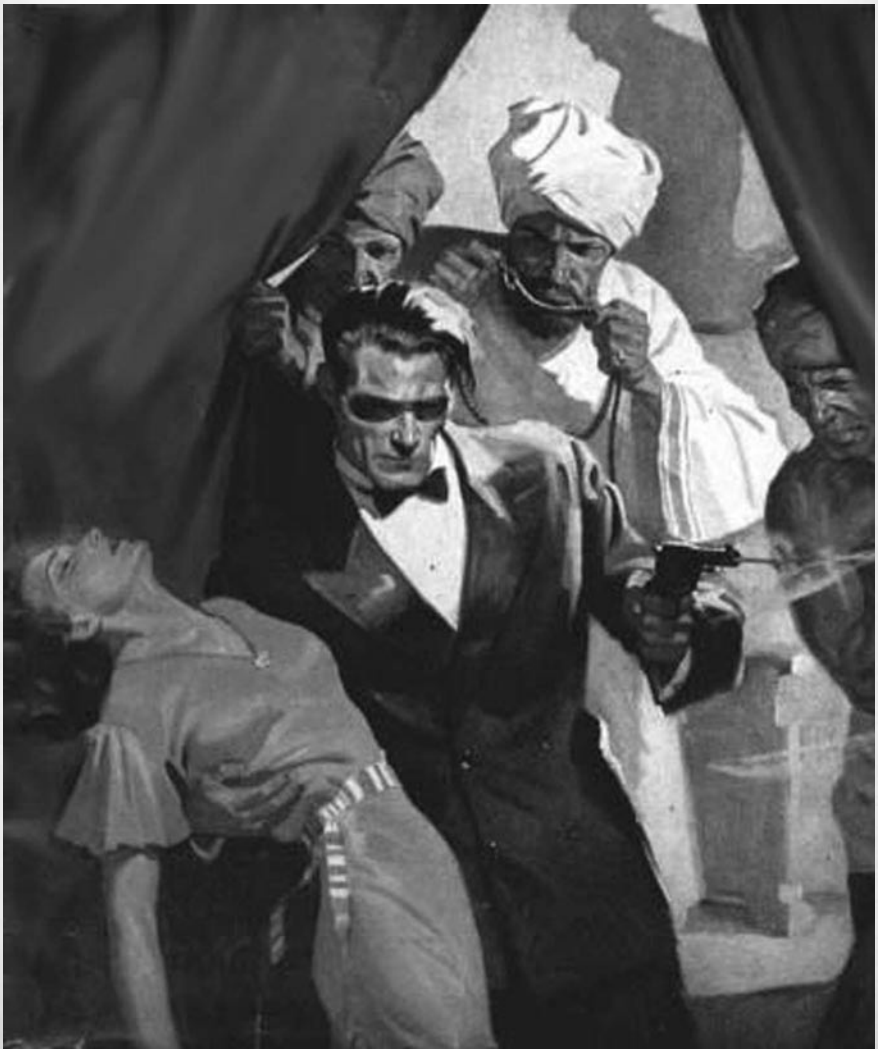
The second method is a bit closer to the source material: run a hero and his assistants. In the Doc Savage stories, Doc's assistants are all experts in their individual fields--

specialists who each are heroes in their own right. The Spider stories often featured his assistants going off on their own--and on more than one occasion saving The Spider himself!

The only difference between this and the group advice given above is that there is one character who is everything the others are, and

more. In this sort of campaign, the "focus hero" should be of Heroic or Legendary level, with the assistants being a group of Seasoned characters.

The players will have to be comfortable with the fact that one character is going to be placed above the others. However, this really isn't that different than playing a game



set in a military hierarchy (whether a World War II game, or a game set on a Starfleet vessel), which gamers do all the time. If the players have no problems with that, just go ahead and do it.

If they bristle slightly at this, another solution is to have every player create an assistant (following the guidelines for groups) and then have the main hero created as a character that is shared--played by all players. The hero is run by a different player in each scene (usually a scene where their regular character is not present).

In a Hero & Sidekicks campaign, the sidekicks should be rewarded, in-game, for behavior that reinforces the common elements of this genre -- for more information on this style of play, see **Chapter Five: Pulp Gaming Rules.**

On the pages that follow, we present common archetypes from the pulps, both heroic and villainous.

Gamemasters and players of **THRILLING TALES** are encouraged to discuss their campaigns in advance of play, to determine the sort of game they wish it to be, and so that the players may create characters of an appropriate nature. This allows the characters to be tailored directly to the game, and will prevent the Gamemaster from having to contend, for example, with a player bringing a Big Game Hunter into Film Noir-influenced mystery campaign!



ACE REPORTER

Penny stared, awed, at the vast fleet of airships hidden within the volcano airbase.

"There's enough firepower here to sink a battleship!" she exclaimed in hushed tones, "Enough to level a small city! I need to take these photos back to the bureau to prove I was right!" She removed the lenscap of her trusty Rolleiflex and lined up the shot. "Pulizter, here I come!" she whispered for luck.

Unfortunately, the flash of the camera caught the attention of a guard. "Look, up on the parapet! She's back! Get her!"

The Ace Reporter is an archetype of the pulp genre. Examples include Lois Lane, Polly Perkins, Buzz Benson, Katie Blayne, Ed Lowery, "Daffy" Dill, Claude Burke, and Daisy Dare.

An Ace Reporter is similar to an Investigator, minus all that tedious lab work and research. Instead, the Ace Reporter follows leads,

sneaks into where she shouldn't, and relentlessly follows the story to its conclusion. In the end, she'll alert the authorities and get that headline.



The Ace Reporter can join in any pulp adventure-- whether the other heroes want her there or not. Part ally and sometimes adversary, the story comes first.

Reporters are smart, charismatic, and-- most of all-- lucky.

It's a tough world out there, and

someone has to get the facts! The public has a right to know, and if it takes a little breaking-and entering, stowing away, or sabotage, then that's what you'll do. Plus Reporters have contacts and allies in even the most remote of places, and can get help at the most surprising of times.

While the Ace Reporter is an able hero in her own right, she also works well standing beside other heroes. In fact, Ace Reporters are naturals when forming a team, since they know (or can find out) just about everything and everyone. And, for



Suggested Skills:

Investigation, Knowledge, Notice, Persuasion, Streetwise, Tracking.

Suggested Edges:

Alertness, Attractive, Charmer*, Investigator, Moxie*, Photographic Memory*

younger players, a Junior Reporter is a dandy sidekick with a special trick or two to help pull their own weight.

Suggested Hindrances:

Curious, Doubting Thomas

Ready to solve the world's mysteries, armed only with a pen, a pistol, and the power of the press? Ace Reporter, get that story!

* Indicates a new Edge or Hindrance which can be found within this book.

AIR ACE

The engine screamed as "Barnstormer" Burton pushed the plane into a power dive. At these speeds, the wings of a lesser aircraft would have been torn off, sending the pilot to his doom, but Burton was confident that his custom work on the Silver Swan would hold up--at least long enough to ditch the two Air Pirates who were currently roaring after him, weapons blazing.

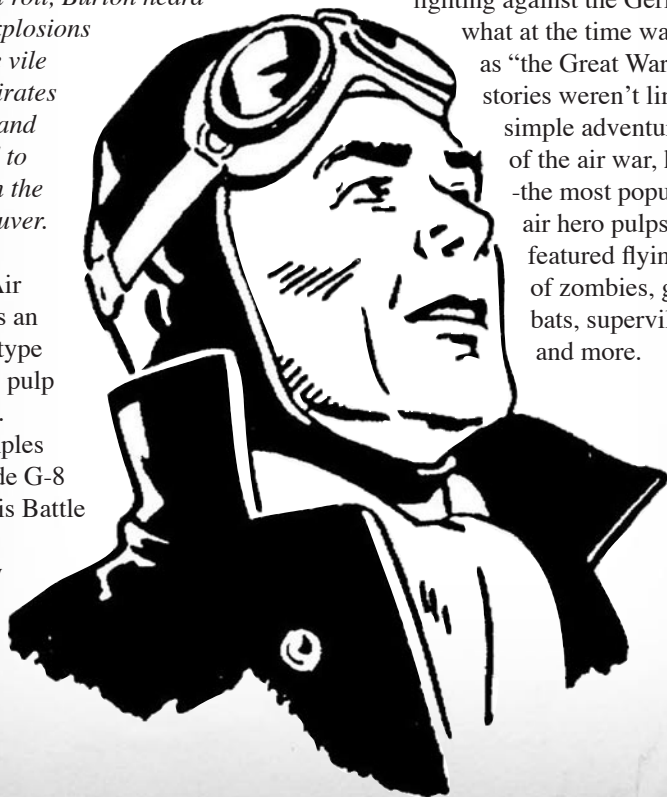
At the last possible second, Burton pulled back hard on the control stick, and the Silver Swan leapt skyward again, at a nearly impossible angle. As he spiralled the plane into a tight barrel roll, Burton heard the explosions as the vile Air Pirates tried and failed to match the maneuver.

The Air Ace is an archetype of the pulp genre. Examples include G-8 and his Battle Aces, Dusty

Ayres, Bill Barnes, and the hero of the film *Sky Captain & The World of Tomorrow*.

The 1930s, the heyday of the pulp magazines, was a time of extreme enthusiasm about aviation--travelling by air had not yet become commonplace, and was seen during the Depression as a romantic escape from earthbound problems. The pilot was seen as a dashing heroic figure, and the pulps provided many such heroes to thrill readers.

Many of the air heroes of the pulps were World War I flying aces, fighting against the Germans in what at the time was known as "the Great War." The stories weren't limited to simple adventure tales of the air war, however--the most popular of the air hero pulps, G-8, featured flying armies of zombies, giant bats, supervillains and more.



The contemporary air heroes flew aircraft at the cutting edge of aviation (and beyond)--in tales that were the period equivalent of near-future Science Fiction.

Air Aces are the daredevil defenders of the skies, and their adventures should focus on aviation-based threats and far-flung travel--everything from dogfights with air pirates to infiltrating the flying fortress of a world-conquering madman.

Suggested

Skills:

Guts, Knowledge (Aeronautics), Piloting, Repair, Shooting,

Suggested

Edges:

Ace, Level-Headed, Quick, Trademark Vehicle*,

Suggested

Hindrances:

Code of Honor, Enemy, Overconfident



* Indicates a new Edge or Hindrance which can be found within this book.

BIG GAME HUNTER

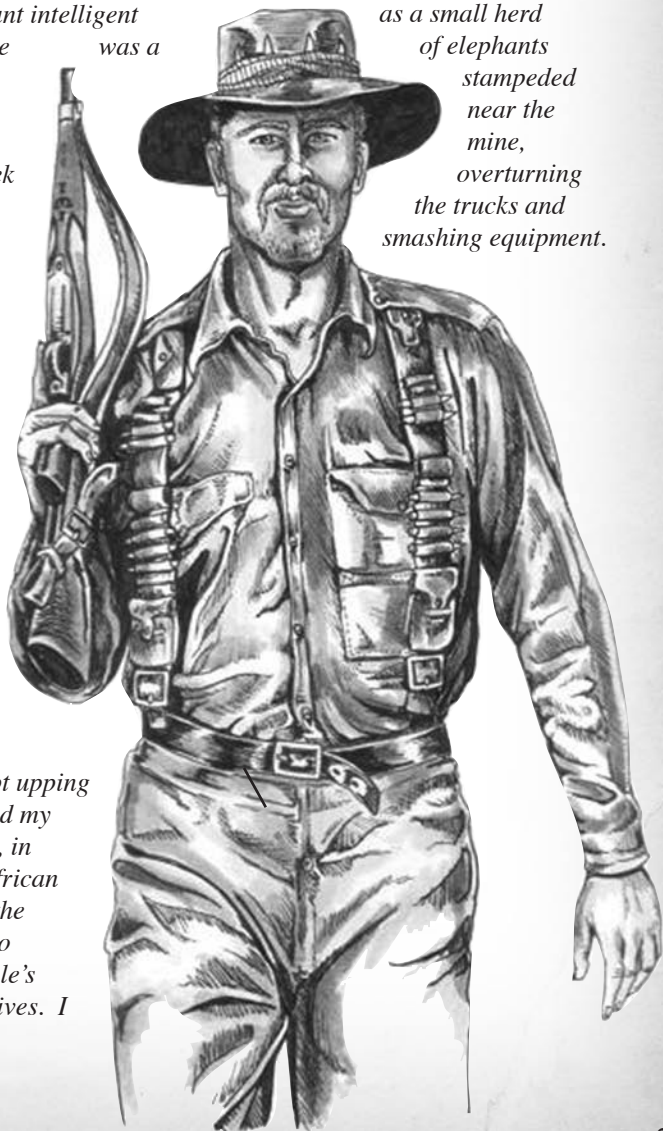
Jeremiah Cole was a very ambitious man and he wasn't about to let some jungle savage ruin his diamond mining operation. That's why he called me in.

Normally, I don't hunt intelligent prey. Closest I came was a giant albino gorilla a few months back, and I still bear a scar across my cheek from a flint knife it fashioned. Heck, I've hunted quite a few exotic animals in my time, usually accompanied by some egghead or archaeologist searching for lost civilizations or hidden treasure. I enjoy the hunt, but I never considered myself a hit man.

Mr. Cole wouldn't take "no" for an answer. He just kept upping the fee until he found my price. So here I am, in the heart of some African jungle, waiting for the jungle protector who was upset at Mr. Cole's treatment of the natives. I don't do politics.

I sat outside one of the newer mines as Mr. Cole's associates kept the natives moving. I remained in the bushes, keeping an eye on the mine. I didn't have to wait long.

The ground shook as a small herd of elephants stampeded near the mine, overturning the trucks and smashing equipment.



Everybody scattered. I stayed put, readying my rifle. My patience paid off, for the one who sent the elephants soon swung into view. My jaw dropped.

I don't know what I was expecting. Mr. Cole had been very vague on details, and now I know why. I was expecting a native warrior, or maybe a colonial who'd gone native. Instead, I was staring at the most stunning woman I'd ever seen, dressed in animal skins that left little to the imagination.

Still, a job's a job, and I regretted having to pull the trigger.

The Big Game Hunter is an archetype of the Pulp genre. He travels to untamed forests and jungles around the world, searching for exotic trophies.

The Big Game Hunter often doubles as a guide, leading others through thick jungles. In the Pulp,

he is often the strong man that accompanies the main hero.

The Big Game Hunter is also often a villain. He is a poacher, disregarding local laws and ignoring local traditions in search of his prey. In this role he represents the unwanted "colonial" interests that pillage the land. This makes him a frequent enemy of the Noble Savage.

Suggested Skills:

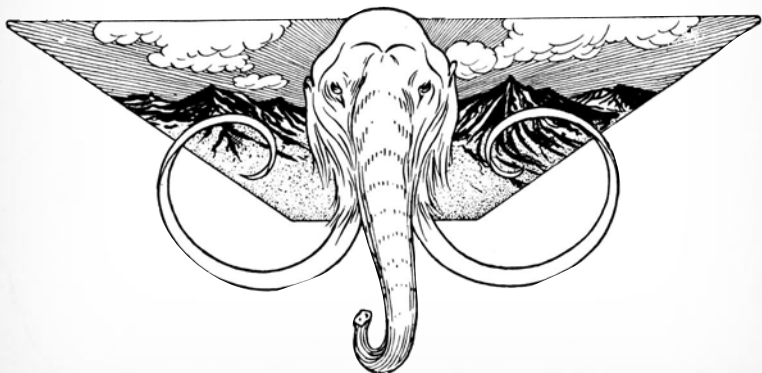
Climbing, Intimidation, Area Knowledge (Jungle), Notice, Shooting, Stealth, Survival, Tracking.

Suggested Edges:

Alertness, Giant Killer, Man Without Fear*, Marksman, No Mercy, Trade-mark Weapon, Woodsman.

Suggested Hindrances:

Arrogant, Bloodthirsty, Greedy,



* Indicates a new Edge or Hindrance which can be found within this book.

BOXER

The four thugs didn't know what they were doing when they stepped in front of Bill McGraw.

They might have been tough guys in Panama City, but Iron Jaw McGraw had been beating punks like them in rings and alleys for years. McGraw had battled for years in boxing matches from New York to New Orleans and up the Pacific coast from Tijuana to Skagway. He had fought in lighted rings, vacant sandlots, and on the decks of ships at sea.

As the thugs closed around him, McGraw cocked his ham-sized fists and said, "Boyo, I don't know what the Jaguar said before sending you out against me, but you're now about to receive a lesson in the fighting arts."

The Boxer is a student of the pugilistic arts, the dominate western style of unarmed combat. A Boxer is dedicated to improving his fighting ability, style, and technique. A Boxer might be working as a dock

worker or cab driver or enforcer while working toward his next fight. Police officers, soldiers, sailors and others might be amateur boxers.

Boxing was a

growing and popular sport during the Pulp era, and although most sporting contests were conducted with gloves under the official Queensberry rules, many organized bareknuckled fights still took place.

Many Pulp characters were skilled boxers. Robert E. Howard was a boxer himself and wrote stories about pugilistic heroes such as Dennis Dorgan, Kirby Karnes, and Mike Brennon.



Suggested Skills:

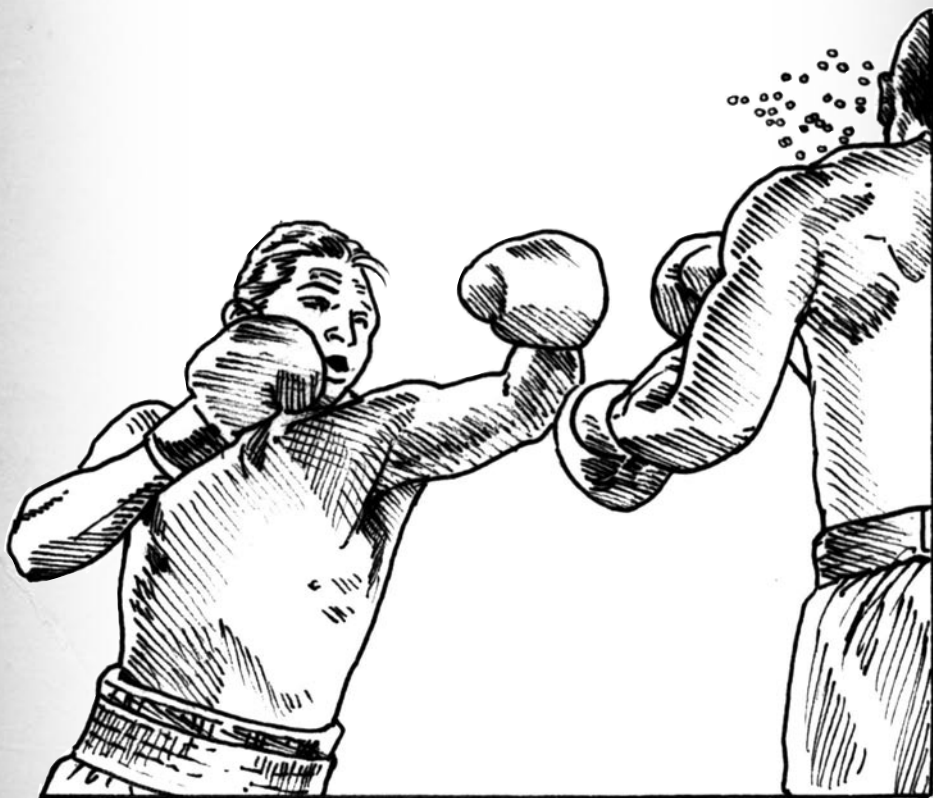
Fighting, Gambling, Guts, Intimidation, Knowledge (Tactics), Street-wise, Taunt.

Suggested Edges:

Ambidextrous, Block, Brawny, Bring It On!*, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Fast Healer, First Strike, Frenzy, Iron Jaw*, Nerves of Steel, Tough as Nails.

Suggested Hindrances:

All Thumbs, Obligations *, Poverty, Ugly



* Indicates a new Edge or Hindrance which can be found within this book.

FEMME FATALE

So there I was, scouting out the Chinese countryside in my trusty P-40, looking for a Communist airfield. It still feels queer playing a mercenary; it wasn't that long ago I was a stunt pilot in a flying circus. Thanks to the Depression, I was out of job when beer became legal. I spent a long time feeling sorry for myself when an old buddy of mine from the Great War said that the Chinese Nationals were looking for some American pilots to help them root out the Communists. Feels good to be in the air again.

The clouds were low as I flew over a number of abandoned farms. The absence of people was a good sign that there was some military activity nearby. I also noticed that the fields were no longer producing crops and the telltale signs of wheel ruts in the ground told me everything I needed. I bet some of the new-looking barns housed airplanes. Jackpot.

I was about to head back when a plane dropped out of the clouds above me. I didn't recognize the model but I was pretty sure it was Russian. I pulled back on the stick and headed into the clouds myself as bullets sprayed past me. I didn't want to stay in the clouds long, so once I felt I put some distance between me and the airfield I dropped down. I breathed a sigh of relief as I headed back to base.

That's when the plane dropped down behind me. I didn't have a chance



as the bullets ripped through my tail and I heard my engine stall. I was going to have to bail. As I prepared to eject myself, the plane pulled alongside me. The pilot removed hat and goggles and I was staring at the most stunningly gorgeous woman I'd ever seen. I'd bet my life it was Brigid Brophy, the Huntress... another mercenary pilot. She blew me a kiss before rolling away, leaving me to my fate. It's funny. I've heard plenty of stories about her ruthlessness and skill, but as I jumped, I found myself wishing I'd see her again.

The Femme Fatale is an archetype of the Pulp genre. From the Nazi Temptress to the Amazon Queen, these women pursue evil goals while stealing the hearts of heroes.

Examples include Catwoman, Sala (from *the Phantom*), and Dr. Elsa Schneider (from *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*).

The Femme Fatale of the pulps is a strong-willed, confident woman who is beautiful and deadly. She is the antithesis of the docile wife and mother. Femmes Fatales crave excitement and adventure, and have often been wronged at some point in the past. It is this injustice that drives their cravings.

There are many types of Femme Fatale. Some are merely hedonistic mercenaries, more playful than destructive. Some are true master criminals, engaging in insidious plots alongside Mad Scientists and Masterminds. Finally, some Femmes Fatales are rulers of an exotic or alien locale.

Most of the Femme Fatale's abilities have no effect on characters not normally attracted to her (mainly other women). While this is potentially a fatal flaw, it fits in perfectly with the pulp genre. While the Femme Fatale is a master at manipulating men, women generally see right through them. Whether these women can convince their male allies otherwise is another matter!

Suggested Skills:

Driving, Persuasion, Stealth, Street-wise, Taunt.

Suggested Edges:

Attractive, Jack-of-all-trades, Charismatic, Charmer*, Connections, Strong Willed

Suggested Hindrances:

Arrogant, Greedy, Overconfident, Vengeful, Wanted.



FORTUNE HUNTER

They said I was crazy. They were wrong.

I'd always maintained that Antarctica was the lost continent of Lemuria, the birthplace of African and Asian civilization. I'd spent hundreds of hours researching every major library in the world, looking for every reference I could find. My colleagues scoffed at me and did everything they could to dissuade others from joining me on the expedition of a lifetime.

Yet here we were, standing at the base of an ancient step pyramid frozen within the ice. After a day of meticulous chipping and melting, I had uncovered a stone block with ancient Dravidian characters on it. What a find! I could hardly contain my enthusiasm as we went to work hollowing out the main entrance. Somewhere deep inside laid a king's treasure. I just knew it.

We broke through the ice wall

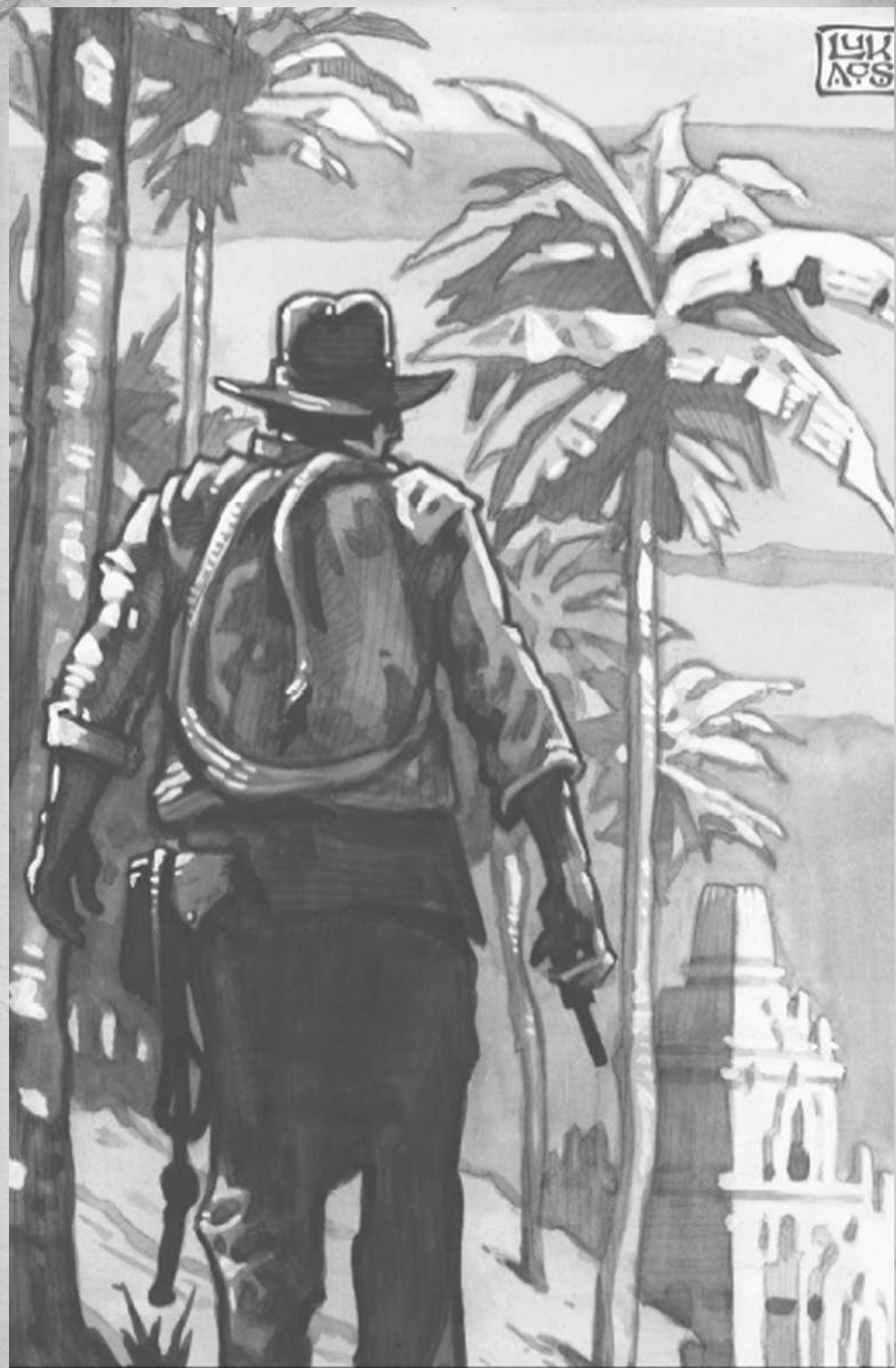
and made our way inside. The walls were covered in Dravidian characters that had a distinctive Egyptian look to them. Robert and I joked about the chicken or the egg argument. I thought I saw a reference to the goddess Kali and decided to have a closer look. Behind my back, Robert noticed an emerald embedded in the wall and started prying it from the wall. I turned around as I heard a thud and a grunt. Robert was dead, his body pinned against the opposite wall by an ancient spear. Apparently, the gods of this temple wanted to be left undisturbed.

After a brief prayer for Robert, I continued inward. I'd be more careful when I found the treasure.

The Fortune Hunter is an archetype of the Pulp genre. He is the explorer of ancient ruins, searching for treasure, whether for the benefit of society or his own



LUK
AGS



gain. Examples include Allan Quatermain, Indiana Jones, and Lara Croft.

The Fortune Hunter is a researcher, archaeologist, and explorer. He is equally at home in the library or an ancient tomb. He is dedicated to seeking out lost treasures and is willing to do most of the heavy work himself. More so than other Pulp archetypes, the Fortune Hunter is a team player, willing to hire experts to help him uncover lost ruins.

Suggested Skills:

Climbing, Guts, Investigation, Knowledge (Archaeology), Knowledge (History), Lockpicking, Notice, Survival.

Suggested Edges:

Connections, Deus Ex Machina*, Font of Information*, Investigator, Scholar



Suggested Hindrances:

Bad Luck, Curious, Glass Jaw*, Greedy, Heroic, Phobia (snakes, anyone?).

* Indicates a new Edge or Hindrance which can be found within this book.

G-MAN

The Chief of Police frantically grabbed for the bullhorn, squinting to block out the flashing red and blue lights that lit up the crime scene like Macy's at Christmas time. Half his precincts were here in full force, and most of the others at half or better. There was a veritable sea of squad cars and paddy wagons surrounding the 5th street library and the psycho holding the entire P.S. 201 class field trip hostage there.

He triggered the bullhorn and opened his mouth to speak, when he was interrupted by a nearby shout.

"He's going again!"

Everyone who heard quickly dropped behind open squad car doors or dove for cover behind the wagons as the BHUDDA-BHUDDA-BHUDDA of a heavy machine gun roared from the roof of the library. Chunks of concrete and squad cars kicked up into the air as the madman behind

the trigger randomly assaulted New York's finest. As the thunder of heavy caliber munitions stopped it was quickly trailed by shaky laughter on the wind. Chief O'Hara sat up and looked around. Twelve hours had passed since they first got word of children held hostage, and no progress had been made.

O'Hara spotted a commotion- two men in hats and coats were speaking with a number of his officers; when the cops nodded and took off running, O'Hara nearly had a fit. He watched as the officers spoke to others, and could not believe it when shortly the entire line of cars began to pull back. O'Hara stormed over to the strangers, who were heading in his

direction.

"What in the name of the Big Apple is going on here?!" he shouted. The two men met his gaze with a



coolness that was unsettling. O'Hara nearly jumped out of his skin when a voice from behind him spoke: "I'm what's going on here." The Police Chief spun on his heel and looked up into a pair of blue eyes that made the strangers seem friendly. A hand holding a badge flashed in front of his eyes, and the newcomer said, "Andrew Franklin, Federal Agent. O'Hara, you've done a miserable job containing the situation- this is my crime scene now."

The G-Man, slang for 'Government Man', is a federal agent typically with the F.B.I. In the world of the pulps the G-Man was known by his trench coat and fedora, traveling in packs and toting Tommy-guns. G-Men were the subject of several entire magazines, and the nation thrilled to their exploits. From breaking up Nazi sympathizers to enforcing Prohibition, the G-Man did whatever his nation called on him to do to keep her safe on her own shores.

Working for the Government has its perks- the G-Man has an enhanced jurisdiction, granting him powers of law enforcement that typically outstrip those of local cops; he also is generally better equipped with the latest in crime-fighting technology. The G-Man starts off as a part of a unit, learning the ropes. As he proves himself and grows in experience, the G-Man will find himself with more and more responsibility, and given more and more sensitive missions.

It's an unfriendly world out there, and it's only getting worse- your Nation is looking for the best and the brightest to come to her aid- will you heed the call?

Suggested Skills:

Driving, Fighting, Guts, Intimidation, Investigation, Knowledge (Law), Notice, Persuasion, Shooting, Streetwise.

Suggested Edges:

Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Command, Connections, Investigator, Strong Willed.

Suggested Hindrances:

Code of Honor, Obligations, Overconfident, Vow.

GUMSHOE

Mack Brolin sloshed gin over two sticky shot glasses and slid half the pair across his desk to the weeping blonde in front of him. He hated this part of his job- hell, he would have to think harder than he wanted too to find a part he did like, lately. Normally he would stay as far away from cheating husband cases as he could and still pay the bills- but Andrea Smith was the leggiest, blondest...healthiest dame who'd come through his door in years, and as close as Mack was to his .38 special, it didn't exactly keep him warm at night.

He'd been in the business long enough to know something was screwy- wives as put together as Mrs. Smith didn't get cheated on very often. He watched her knock back his offered drink and then followed suit. She blew her nose daintily and then refilled their glasses for him, setting down her pocketbook next to the bottle. Her pocketbook with the silver handles. Mack added ten percent to the figure he had in his head.

"Mr. Brolin, Johnny Chin is my dry cleaner- he told me you were very discrete. Can I count on you to be discrete...Mack?"

Mack polished off his second drink and nodded his head. He folded his hands in his lap and leaned back in his chair. "Mrs. Smith, discrete is my middle name. However, before we go into any more particulars about this case, can I ask you to place that cute revolver on the desk, and keep your hands where I can see them?"

Smith's face clouded over as she complied, her hands moving slowly as Mack raised his own, pointing his .38 in her direction. Mack smiled at her frustrated expression.

"I don't keep that big mirror in the corner to look at my pretty mug, Mrs. Smith. Now, why don't you tell me your real reason for coming here tonight?"



Mack felt a bit of alarm as the beauty in front of him smiled just as her features began to blur.

“Clever, Mr. Brolin- Chin told me your were clever too. But he also told me you couldn’t resist blondes or gin. I hope you don’t mind, I added a little something special to yours.”

All the alarms were going off as Mack’s piece fell from his nerveless fingers and he slumped forward. His vision faded out, as did his last thoughts of the evening. “Damn... second time this month...”

The Gumshoe, P.I., Detective; they all refer to the tough-as-nails, rough around the edges, hard boiled investigator of the pulps. A file cabinet filled with cases, a weather-beaten desk, a name on the door and a reputation for getting his man-many times this is all a Gumshoe has to call his own- but while his life is often unglamorous, it is hardly ever boring.

The Gumshoe can be a person’s last hope- when the police don’t seem to care and you haven’t a friend in the world, you can call on him- his door is always open. Just don’t be surprised to see a chalk outline or two on the way up the stairs.

Suggested Skills:

Driving, Fighting, Guts, Investigation, Area Knowledge, Notice, Shooting, Streetwise.

Suggested Edges:

Alertness, Connections, Investigator, Level Headed, Moxie*.

Suggested Hindrances:

Bad Luck, Curious, Enemy, Heroic.

* Indicates a new Edge or Hindrance which can be found within this book.

GUN MOLL

Sally sat in the corner of the speak-easy, trying not to draw attention to herself. Mickey, her booze-running partner and sometimes lover, was nowhere to be seen. He told Sally that he couldn't be with her tonight, that he had a card game with some friends.

Sally knew better; there was a new singer at the night-club across town that Mickey fancied, and he didn't mind wasting his evening

sipping juice and seltzer water to see her.

Sally sighed as she sipped her gin. She remembered an earlier time, when she first met Mickey. He was everything she never wanted in a man, rough, tough and dangerous. She fell for him immediately, convinced that she just had to prove

herself to him. She started by giving him a safe place to sleep and alibis for cops. Later, she helped Mickey and his associates scope out banks and small stores. Eventually, she worked her way up to getaway driver. Mickey was appreciative,

especially at first, but over time he started to see her as just one of the guys.

Don walked over and placed a full glass next to her half empty one. She smiled. The boy was so eager to be in her presence that he

wouldn't even wait until she was ready for another gin. Don was a fresh-faced kid, his mind all jumbled up with romantic notions of booze running, no doubt poisoned by the fantastic stories he heard while serving the booze runners. Yet there was something else.

"I wish you could convince Mickey



to take me on, Miss Sally,” Don said awkwardly. “I wouldn’t be any trouble, and I’m good behind the wheel.”

Sally shook her head. She’d heard this story before. Don was smitten with her, and he wanted Mickey to take him on so that he could be with Sally. She sipped her gin again. He was a cute boy, and after the way Mickey dismissed her tonight for some new songbird Sally wouldn’t mind teaching Don a few things. But she couldn’t do that. Don had a full, respectable life ahead of him if he steered clear of Mickey’s type. If Don had come along a couple years earlier, Sally may have run away with him and the criminal life. But now, it was too late for that. Sally steeled herself and gave Don a cold, hard look.

“You know Mickey’s my man and I’ve got no time for someone else, especially one so wet behind the ears. Now scram before I tell Mickey that you’ve been eyeing his dame.”

Don’s face flushed an embarrassed red as he stammered an apology and scurried away. Sally shrugged and emptied the new glass down her throat. It was all for the best. Really.

In many ways, the Gun Moll is the Mobster’s partner in crime. She is fully aware of and participates in the Mobster’s activities, filling a critical support role. Some women become Gun Molls because they’ve fallen in love with a Mobster. Others become Gun Molls for the sheer thrill of a

life of crime. Well-known historical Gun Molls include Bonnie Parker (of Bonnie and Clyde fame) and Ma Barker.

Historically, Gun Molls were a varied lot. Some were simply paramours of Mobsters, while others took more active roles in the criminal life. In the Pulp, Gun Molls had more thrilling and glamorous lifestyles. It is this literary model on which the Advanced Class is based. While the Mobster represents the tough, tuggish soldier of the underworld, the Gun Moll works behind the scenes, acting as a spy and providing logistical support.

Suggested Skills:

Guts, Knowledge (crime), Lockpicking, Persuasion, Shooting, Stealth, Streetwise.

Suggested Edges:

Attractive, Charismatic, Common Bond, Connections, Thief

Suggested Hindrances:

Greedy, Loyal, Obligations, Wanted.

MAD SCIENTIST

Doctor Schreck threw the main switch, and the infernal machine sparked to life, lights winking on and off in a mad language that only the demented scientist could understand. Great arcs of electric current roped out between giant brass electrodes, filling the air with the distinct odor of ozone.

The hair on the back of the Green Falcon's neck stood on end, not because of the charge in the air, but rather at the realization of the depth of the danger that Schreck posed to New York City.

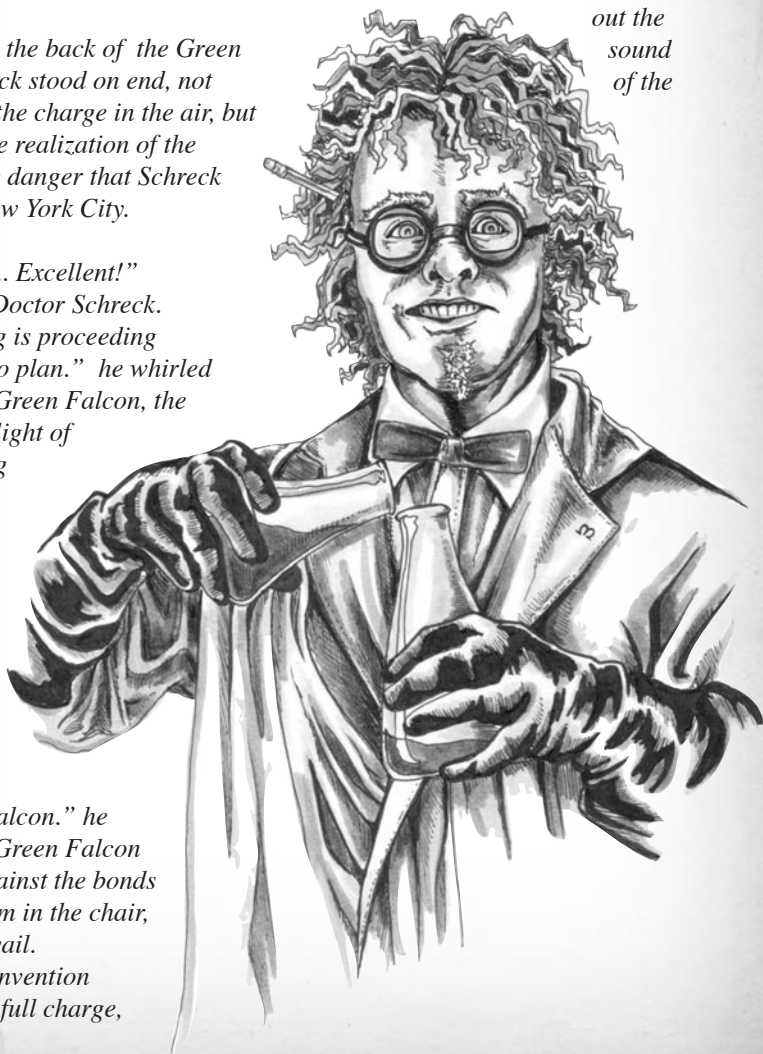
"Excellent... Excellent!" exclaimed Doctor Schreck. "Everything is proceeding according to plan." he whirled to face the Green Falcon, the blue-white light of the sparking machinery matched by the insane gleam in his eyes.

"You were a fool to try and interfere, Falcon." he said. The Green Falcon strained against the bonds that held him in the chair, but to no avail.

"Once my invention reaches it's full charge,

I shall activate the wave generator, and every cretinous moron in this city will become my mindless slave!" He began to laugh then...a ragged, tortured sound that seemingly crawled from somewhere deep within his soul, rising in pitch and intensity until, nearly a hysterical scream, it

almost drowned out the sound of the



buzzing and crackling machinery.

The Green Falcon knew that he needed to act...and SOON.

The Mad Scientist is an archetype of the pulp genre--an insane genius seeking to dominate the world through technological terror. Examples include Doctor Satan, The Scorpion, and dozens of generic madmen with vaguely Prussian or Eastern-European-sounding names.

In many ways, the Mad Scientist is the flip-side of the Paragon. Where the Paragon represents the possibilities of science, the Mad Scientist is the fear of science run rampant over humanity. The Mad

Scientist can range from the sad, deluded individual who has forgotten that science should serve humankind, to the raving lunatic who wants to avenge himself on those who did not appreciate his genius.

Suggested Skills:

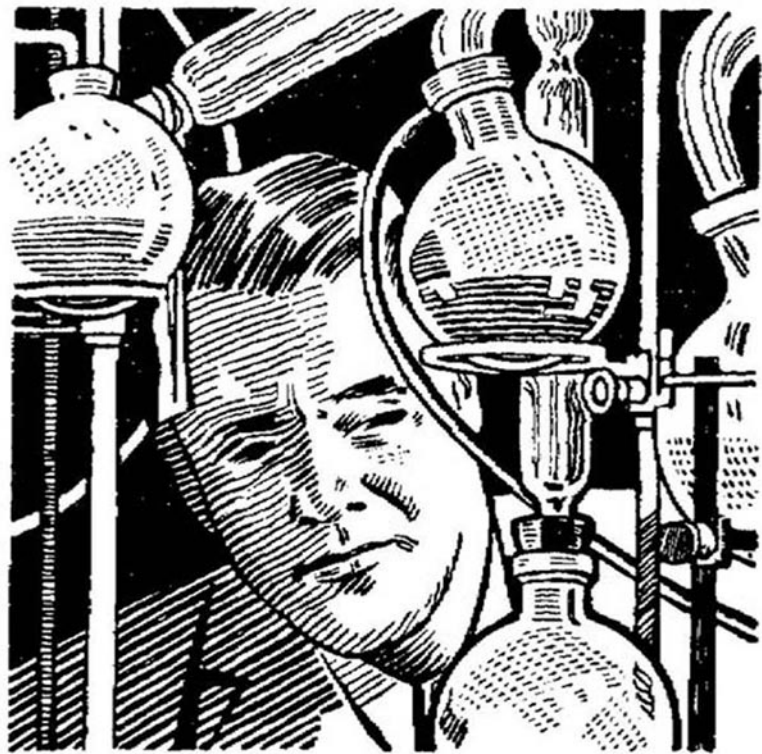
Investigation, Knowledge (science), Knowledge (several other scientific specialties), Repair, Weird Science.

Suggested Edges:

Arcane Background (Weird Science) Deus Ex Machina*, Gadgeteer, Just The Thing*, McGyver, Rich.

Suggested Hindrances:

Arrogant, Big Mouth, Delusional, Overconfident, Vengeful, Wanted.

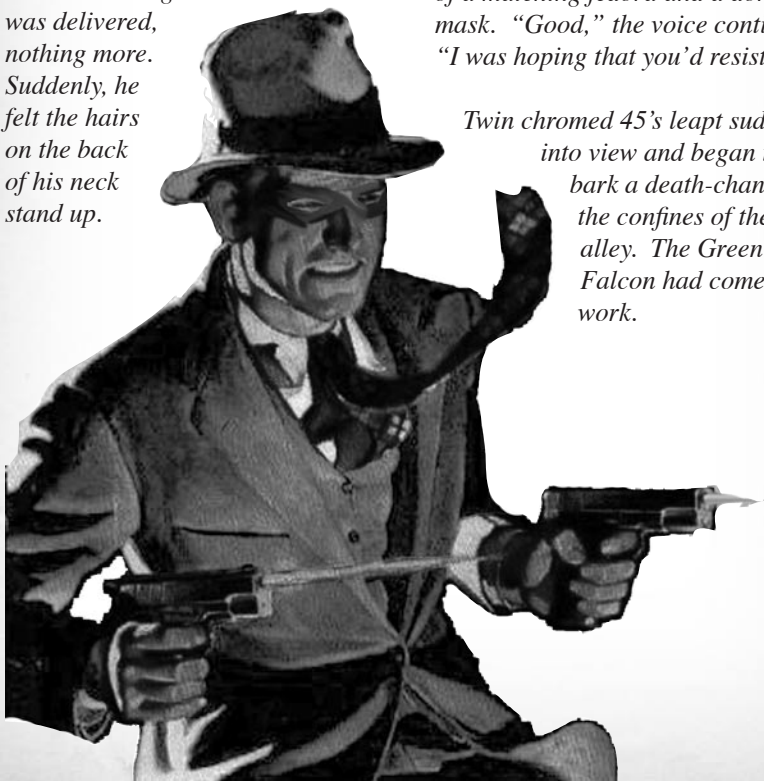


* Indicates a new Edge or Hindrance which can be found within this book.

MAN OF MYSTERY

Vincenzo DiNapoli, better known as "Vinnie the Hook" stood back and watched as his boys went to work on the poor schlub who had decided to testify against the Boss in his upcoming trial. Rocko and Tony were good boys, eager to please and skilled at their work. Their work was hurting people.

They were standing at the back of a blind alley, hidden from the street, where they could beat the Grocery Store owner without interruption. Vincenzo watched with little interest--he was there to make sure the message was delivered, nothing more. Suddenly, he felt the hairs on the back of his neck stand up.



"Let the Grocer go, Vinnie." A voice drifted out of the fog that obscured the other end of the darkened alleyway. Vinnie's heart nearly stopped. He knew that voice.

Rocko and Tony let the Grocer drop to the ground as they drew their guns, searching for the source of the voice. Vinnie tried to warn them--to tell them to drop their guns, but his voice caught in his throat as a figure emerged from the fog. A dark green trenchcoat whirled around the figure like a vampire's cape, and cold grey eyes glittered from beneath the brim of a matching fedora and a domino mask. "Good," the voice continued, "I was hoping that you'd resist."

Twin chromed 45's leapt suddenly into view and began to bark a death-chant in the confines of the alley. The Green Falcon had come to work.

The Man of Mystery is an archetype of the pulp genre. Examples include The Shadow, The Spider, The Phantom, Captain Satan, and a legion of similar ominously-named imitators.

The Man of Mystery is similar in most respects to an Investigator--however the Man of Mystery comes with added doses of strangeness, violence and fear.

Strangeness comes in the subject matter--the mystery men of the pulps didn't solve run-of-the-mill crimes, or even puzzling murder mysteries. They were faced with hidden criminal empires run by hooded madmen, zombies created by evil scientists, occult ritual murders, and more. Not the beat of the average Private Eye.

Men of Mystery were often more violent than their gumshoe cousins--operating as masked vigilantes outside of the law allowed for higher criminal body-counts, which the readers of the pulp magazines relished.

Lastly, the Man of Mystery was cloaked in fear. In every case, the character's main form of attack involved striking fear into the hearts of criminals before bringing them to justice. The Man of Mystery was not content to stop or even kill criminals--they would first make sure that the criminals knew the same kind of fear that they had inflicted upon their own victims. It was fear as karmic justice.

Suggested Skills:

Fighting, Guts, Intimidation, Investigation, Area Knowledge, Notice, Persuasion, Shooting, Stealth, Streetwise, Taunt, Tracking.

Suggested Edges:

Alertness, Ambidextrous, Bring It On!*, Combat Reflexes, Connections, Dodge, Followers, Hard to Kill, Jack-Of-All-Trades, Level Headed, Man Without Fear*, No Mercy, Photographic Memory*, Quick Draw, Strong Willed.

Suggested Hindrances:

Bloodthirsty, Enemy, Heroic, Vengeful, Vow, Wanted.

* Indicates a new Edge or Hindrance which can be found within this book.

MASTERMIND

I felt myself roughly led, half-carried, from the dungeon where my unknown captors had placed me. The air within the black cloth hood that they had forced over my head was close, and I could see nothing. The only sound that I could hear, muffled by the layer of cloth, were the echoing footfalls of my guards as they dragged me towards some unknown destination.

Suddenly, I was forced to my knees on what felt like a stone floor.

"I trust you have not been mistreated?" A voice echoed in the chamber. It was a voice of authority--the silken tones of power.

"I do not wish for my guests to suffer."

"Guests?" I scoffed, my voice sounding uncomfortably feeble to my own ears. "Do you always throw your 'guests' into cells and deny them food and water?"

"On occasion," came the measured reply.

The hood was jerked from my head, flooding my eyes with sudden light. As I blinked to clear my vision, the figure seated before me came into focus.

Green eyes glittered with a wicked intelligence, and a cruel, sensual mouth curled into a horrible, knowing smile. I felt the cold chill of hopelessness engulf me.

I was in the clutches of none other than the fiend known only as The Emperor of Crime.



The Mastermind is an archetype of the pulp genre. Examples include the insidious Dr. Fu Manchu, John Sunlight, Shiwan Khan and Doctor Death.

Every hero needs a good villain. King Arthur had Mordred...Sherlock Holmes had Doctor Moriarty. This Advanced Class fills that need. A Mastermind stands head and shoulders above the average villain- they are the pinnacle of the criminal world. Often possessing abilities equal to or greater than the heroes they oppose, the Mastermind is often only defeated through their own hubris...and often escape to plague the heroes again and again.

In the heyday of the pulps, villains were so popular, that some became the "heroes" of their own magazines!

Suggested Skills:

Guts, Intimidation, Investigation, Knowledge (many specialties), Notice, Persuasion, Stealth, Streetwise, Taunt.

Suggested Edges:

Command, Connections, Fervor, Followers, Font of Information*, Halls of Power*, Hard to Kill, Nine Lives*, No Mercy, Photographic Memory*, Rich/Filthy Rich.

Suggested Hindrances:

Arrogant, Bloodthirsty, Greedy, Outsider, Vengeful, Vow, Wanted.

* Indicates a new Edge or Hindrance which can be found within this book.



MESMERIST

"Look deeply into my eyes..." Morgan the Mystic focused his gaze upon the woman seated in the stark metal chair of the third precinct's interrogation room.

Detective Matt Murphy rolled his eyes and fetched a cigarette out of the pack in his jacket pocket. The dame was guilty, and this was an open-and-shut case. She was found standing over the District Attorney's body, smoking pistol in her well-manicured hand. No motive--there wasn't any indication that a wealthy socialite like Francine Farmer had any interaction with the DA outside of the occasional society fundraiser. Of course, when you're caught literally red-handed, there's not much need for a motive. But still, the Captain thought it necessary to bring in this carnival side-show.

Murphy took a drag on the cigarette as the stage

magician, a long-time friend of his Captain, muttered to the girl, waving his hands theatrically in front of her face. She hadn't said a word since she'd been brought in. First, Murphy thought she was playing dumb...now, though, he was guessing that it was shock--perhaps the realization of what she had done.

Suddenly, the girl's eyes closed, and she slumped in the chair, unconscious. Morgan the Mystic drew himself up to his full height, and turned to face the stocky detective.

"It's just as I suspected, Detective Murphy," the magician said.



“Francine Farmer has already been the subject of an extensive amount of hypnosis. She did kill the District Attorney, but she was used as an unwitting pawn. She no more could control her actions than you could stop your heart from beating. There’s only one man I know of who has that kind of hypnotic power...”

Murphy dropped his cigarette. “You don’t mean--”

“Yes,” replied Morgan. “The insidious Doctor Tsung-chi Sin, the devil of Chinatown.”

The Mesmerist is an archetype of the pulp genre. Examples include the Green Lama, Chandu the magician and Don Diavolo, the Scarlet Wizard.

The Mesmerist is a trained hypnotist and an expert in the use of his own animal magnetism to sway the will of others. A Mesmerist may work as a private counselor or as a stage magician or assist in solving crimes. Some use their abilities to help solve the problems of others. Others seek only to enhance their own wealth and reputation.

The Mesmerist may follow the practices developed by Dr. Franz Anton Mesmer in the 18th Century, some may see it as the science of etheric magnetism, and others may base their abilities on practices from India, classical Greece, or another occult source. Many Mesmerists see their abilities as the result of greater mind influencing a smaller mind. Most firmly believe that a person of loose character cannot become a powerful hypnotist.

Suggested Skills:

Intimidation, Knowledge (hypnosis), Knowledge (psychology), Notice, Persuasion, Psionics.

Suggested Edges:

Arcane Background (Psionics), Arcane Resistance (Psionics), Danger Sense, Mentalist, Soul Drain, Strong Willed

Suggested Hindrances:

Cautious, Glass Jaw*, Pacifist.

* Indicates a new Edge or Hindrance which can be found within this book.

MOBSTER

It was almost nine o'clock when I entered the club, hoping to hear my Betty sing. I had to hand it to Manny; only a few years ago, this place was an unmarked speakeasy in the basement of a hotel. Now, with Prohibition over and the G-Men off his back, Manny really turned this place into a classy joint.

Betty wasn't on stage yet, so I walked over to the bar. Eric eyed me as I approached as he wiped a glass. Without a word, he turned around and grabbed a bottle of scotch off the shelf. I sat on a stool in the corner just as Eric poured a shot in front of me.

"How's business, Joey?" Eric asked half-interested. Eric used to work for me in the good old days, running booze from across the border. Those days were gone now, and I had to let Eric go. Fortunately, Manny needed some extra help expanding his operation.

"Same old story," I lied not-

too-convincingly. With alcohol legal again, all I had to fall back on was my numbers racket. I was never much of a businessman; I used what worked. Now that things didn't work that way anymore, I was lost. Truth be told, I was surviving more on what I'd socked away in the past than in new business. It was almost enough to make me go legitimate. I sighed and emptied my glass. "Manny wanted to see me?"

Eric leaned over the bar a bit, not that anyone hear would care. Eric



was always careful with his words. I appreciated that. "Manny's shipments are becoming more expensive lately. He'd like to know why and you're the best at extracting that kind of information." He poured me another drink.

I gave Eric a small grin. What he was really saying was that someone was disrupting Manny's supply line and trying to extort higher prices from him. Manny apparently had a possible lead, tied up in the back, and he wanted me to extract the information from him. After all, I was still one of the best leg breakers in the city. I downed my second drink.

"Manny's in the back?" I asked. Eric nodded and took back the glass, wiping it down for the next customer. I sighed as I slid off the stool. I once commanded ten men, and now I was going back to my roots. Still, a job is a job and Manny was an old friend. Before I left the club tonight, I would make sure the canary would sing.

It is almost impossible to think about the Pulp Era without thinking about the Mobster. Whether they are used as little more than muscle or gangland intrigue, the Mobster is a critical element in many Pulps. They are the quintessential "bad guys."

Suggested Skills:

Driving, Fighting, Gambling, Guts, Intimidation, Lockpicking, Shooting, Streetwise.

Suggested Edges:

Connections, Halls of Power*, No Mercy, Rock and Roll!, Thief.

Suggested Hindrances:

Bloodthirsty, Enemy, Obligations*, Mean, Vengeful, Wanted.

* Indicates a new Edge or Hindrance which can be found within this book.

NOBLE SAVAGE

Kamba crept silently along the upper branches of the tree, watching the column of men hack their way through the jungle beneath him, machetes clearing a wide swath ahead of them.

The night-birds had cried their alarm at this intrusion, and for once, their agitation was justified. Kamba had discovered the bodies of the Tumutu villagers that these men had tortured to death. The intruders had pried from them the secret of the location of the Lost City.

Kamba did not know the tribe of these intruders, but as they marched through the jungle, each marked by the emblem of a crooked cross, his instinct told him that the secrets of the Lost City could not be allowed to fall into the hands of such men.

He grabbed his spear in both hands, and lept from the branch, bursting through the leafy canopy to land in a fighting crouch directly in front of the column of men. His green eyes flashed dangerously, and a low, animal growl rumbled from deep within him.

The men at the head of the column dropped their machetes, and the hired pack-bearers fled, all shouting "Kamba! Kamba!"

Sturmbannfuehrer Eberhardt, the man in command of the expedition, heard the shouts of the porters, and saw the golden-maned figure

advancing on his men, spear in in hand.

"Gott im Himmel! It is Kamba-- Lion-man of the Congo! "

The order to fire never escaped Eberhardt's lips. He found himself staring, dumbfounded, at a 3-foot length of spear protruding from his chest.

Kamba drew his knife and stalked forward with dire purpose. The secret of the Lost City would die with these men.

The Noble Savage is an archetype of the pulp genre. Examples include Ki-Gor, Ozar the Aztec, Sheena: Queen of the Jungle, and, of course, the forefather of them all, Edgar Rice Burroughs' Tarzan of the Apes, who first appeared in *All-Story Magazine* in October 1912.

The Noble Savage is a person from a "civilized culture" (as defined by late-19th/early 20th century standards) who, though incredible circumstances, was raised by creatures of the animal kingdom--trained to survive in the wilderness and attaining the pinnacle of human physical potential.

Pulp tales featuring the Noble Savage usually involved the character presented as the King of their savage domain, protecting the natural world from the machinations

of some villain or another, although on occasion, the Noble Savage's adventures would taken them to the civilized world, where they would inevitably demonstrate their innate superiority in any environment.

Suggested Skills:

Climbing, Fighting, Guts, Intimidation, Area Knowledge, Notice, Riding, Stealth, Survival, Swimming, Throwing, Tracking.

Suggested Edges:

Acrobat, Alertness, Ambidextrous, Beast Bond, Beast Master, Brawny, Combat Reflexes, First Strike, Fleet-footed, Frenzy, Giant Killer, Hard to Kill, Quick, Strong Willed, Woodsman

Suggested Hindrances:

Heroic, Outsider, Savage*



* Indicates a new Edge or Hindrance which can be found within this book.

PARAGON

I watched in amazement as Erasmus Quinn finished the last delicate adjustments to the device lying on the laboratory bench in front of him. With hands like a surgeon (which, I was later to learn, is one of the many degrees held by the man), he soldered the last connections into place.

“There.” He stood and stretched his back, stiff after the hours of work put into the invention.

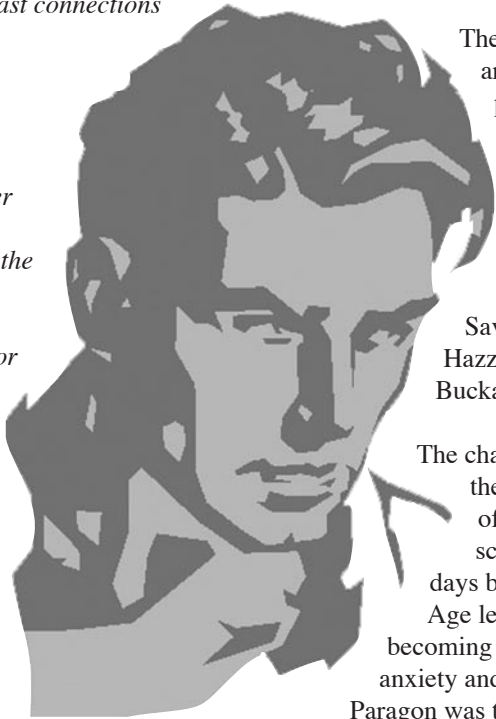
“This projector should fire a strong enough electro magnetic blast to disable Satan’s Robot. We just need to get close enough.”

Quinn scooped up the device and hurried for the door. I nearly ran into him as he stopped suddenly, whirling around to face me. “Wait,” he said. “Do you know how to fly an autogyro?” I responded that I did not.

Quinn pondered the issue for a split-

second, and then his face lit with a realization. “Never mind, Jack,” he said with a broad grin, “I just remembered -- I can.”

..and with that, he rushed out the door.



The Paragon is an archetype of the pulp genre--a two-fisted scientific detective jack-of-all-trades. Examples include Doc Savage, Captain Hazzard and Buckaroo Banzai.

The character embodies the popular view of science and scientists in the days before the Atomic Age led to science becoming a source of anxiety and distrust. The

Paragon was the brilliant embodiment of the American ideal: strong, square-dealing, forthright, morally pure, educated, clever and resourceful.

Paragons should be the focus character of a campaign--usually their stories were adventures of a single hero and a team of expert assistants, all of whom were heroes in their own right, albeit shining less

brightly than the central star.

The tales were often globe-trotting, usually beginning in the comfortable surroundings of the United States before taking readers to far-off, exotic lands. Their adventures were action-packed and fast-paced (as was standard for the hero pulps), and science (or at the very least, some sort of invention) always played a part, whether as the focus of the tale, or as part of the tools used by the Paragon to solve whatever problem was to be faced in that issue.

Suggested Skills:

Fighting, Guts, Healing, Investigation, Knowledge (Science), Knowledge (Medecine), Knowlege (several other specialities), Notice, Piloting, Repair, Shooting, Weird Science.

Suggested Edges:

Arcane Background (Weird Science), Brawny, Combat Reflexes, Command, Followers, Font of Information*, Gadgeteer, Inspire, Jack-Of-All-Trades, Just The Thing*, Level Headed, Natural Leader, Rich/Filthy Rich, Scholar, Sidekick, Two-Fisted

Suggested Hindrances:

Code of Honor, Enemy, Heroic, Overconfident, Vow.

* Indicates a new Edge or Hindrance which can be found within this book.



ROCKET RANGER

"The Moon Men have kidnapped Polly, Ace! They say that they'll shoot down any aircraft that tries to follow them! Holy Socks! What're we gonna do?" Bucky Brown cried, pointing to the receding shape of the Moon Men's Flying Saucer, currently racing away to the hidden location of their invasion base somewhere in the Deserts of Utah.

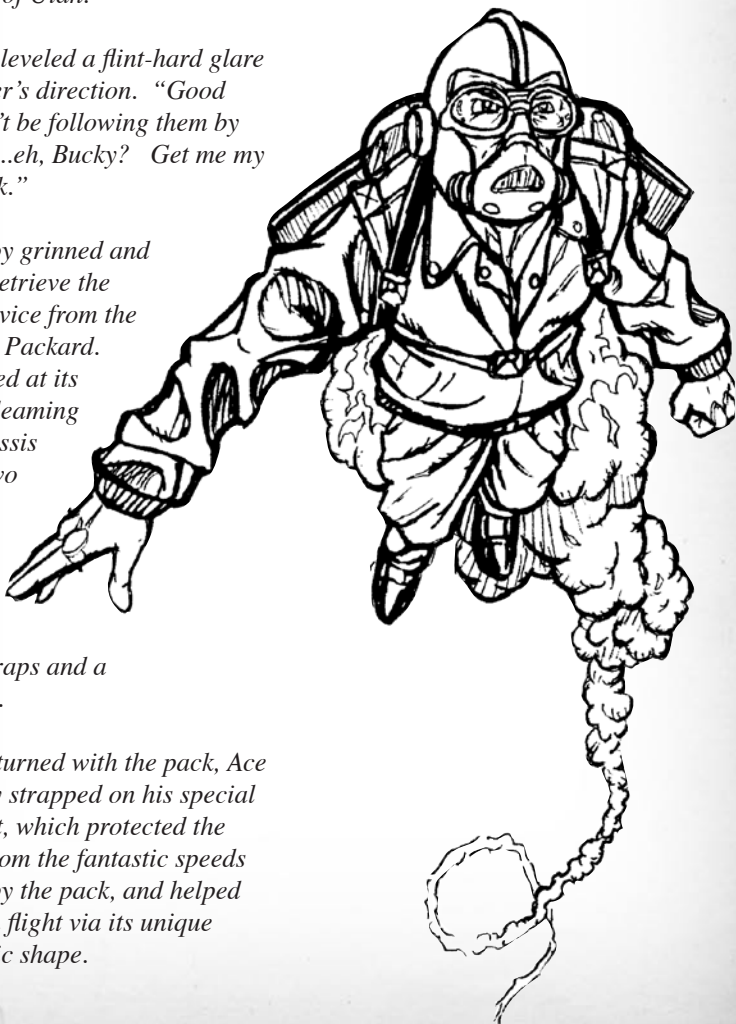
Ace Adams leveled a flint-hard glare in the saucer's direction. "Good thing I won't be following them by plane, then...eh, Bucky? Get me my Rocket Pack."

The newsboy grinned and hurried to retrieve the fantastic device from the trunk of the Packard. He marvelled at its design: a gleaming chrome chassis featuring two powerful rocket-jets, attached to two sturdy leather shoulder straps and a control belt.

When he returned with the pack, Ace had already strapped on his special aero-helmet, which protected the daredevil from the fantastic speeds generated by the pack, and helped him steer in flight via its unique aerodynamic shape.

Ace buckled the pack in place. "Stand back, Bucky---I'm off to rescue Polly. Have lunch ready for us when we get back," he said with a wink.

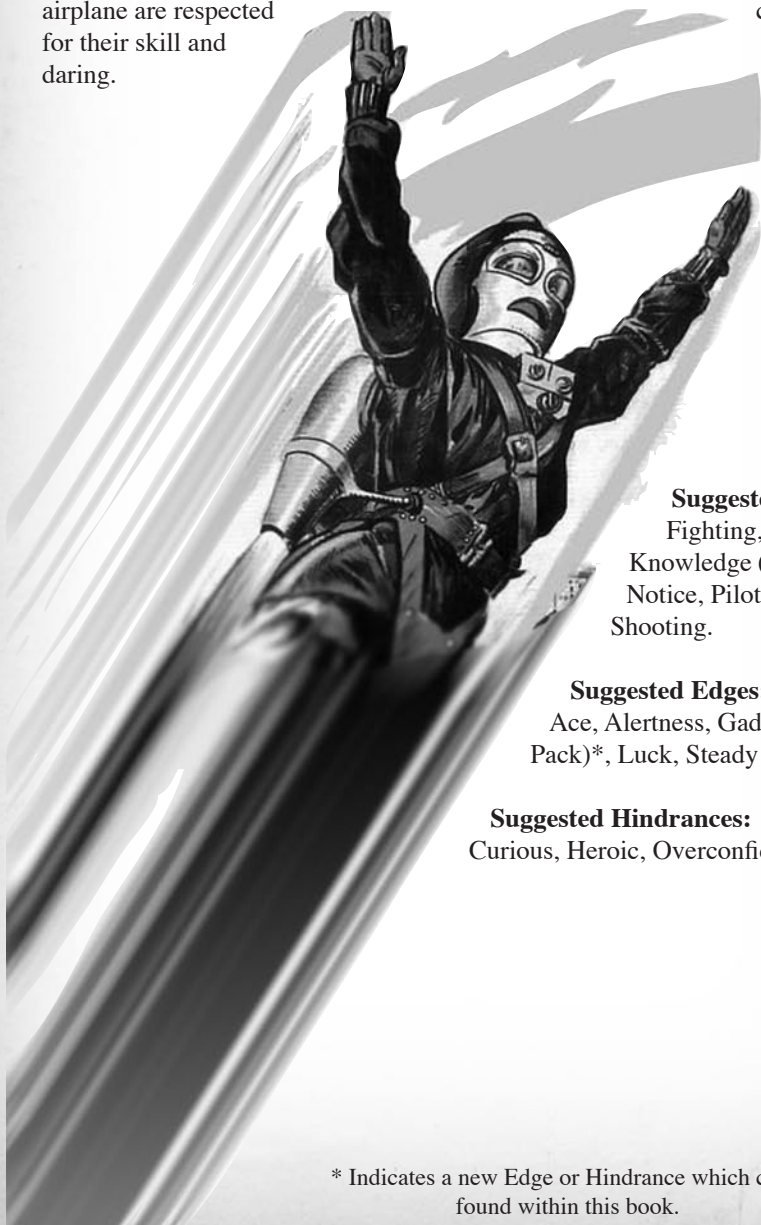
With a quick twist of a control knob on his belt, Ace rocketed into the sky, and was out of sight within seconds.



The life of a Rocket Ranger is one of speed and danger. Harnessing the power of controlled explosions is a difficult science to master, and the risk involved deters all but the most stalwart heroes. The select few who dare to fly without an airplane are respected for their skill and daring.

The Rocket Ranger archetype can be found in many sources, including the classic *Rocket Man* serials of the 1940s, the *Buck Rogers* and *Flash Gordon* comic strips and radio programs of the 1930s, and latter-day homages such as

Dave Stevens' comic book (and later film) *The Rocketeer*.



Suggested Skills:
Fighting, Guts, Knowledge (aeronautics), Notice, Piloting, Repair, Shooting.

Suggested Edges:
Ace, Alertness, Gadget (Rocket Pack)*, Luck, Steady Hands.

Suggested Hindrances:
Curious, Heroic, Overconfident.

* Indicates a new Edge or Hindrance which can be found within this book.

TRUSTED SIDEKICK

So there I was, standing outside with the car in my chauffeur uniform while the Scarlet Avenger was inside the warehouse across the street, doubtless teaching the cretins inside a lesson or two about kidnapping the mayor's daughter. I'd asked to join her, but she insisted that I remain with the car running just in case things went badly. I've served the Scarlet Avenger long enough to know that was a distinct possibility.

My ears perked up as another sedan pulled up near the warehouse. Two ruffians emerged and I feared that might complicate things a bit for the Scarlet Avenger. I put out my pipe and crossed the street, doing my best to appear confused.

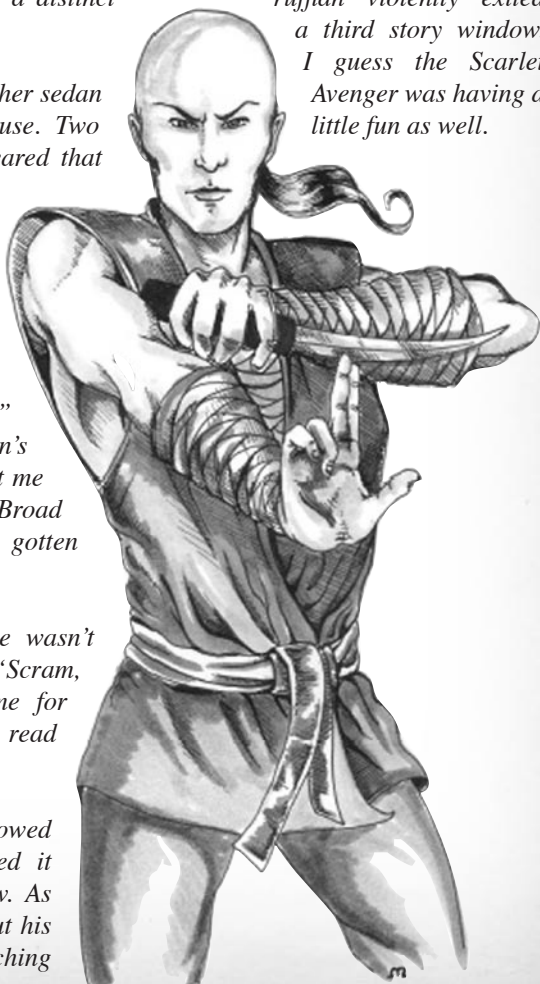
"Excuse me, gentlemen," I asked in the Queen's English, "could you direct me to the Parkview Hotel on Broad Street? I seem to have gotten rather lost!"

The ruffian closest to me wasn't amused. He made a fist. "Scram, limey. We ain't got time for foreigners who can't read directions!"

"My apologies." I bowed politely and then followed it with a right cross to his jaw. As he crumbled, his friend put his hand inside his jacket, reaching

for his pistol. I jumped over his companion and punched him square in the nose. His gun fell out of his limp hand right before he did.

I smiled in satisfaction. Whoever said Queensbury rules couldn't have practical applications? My celebration was interrupted by the sound of shattered glass as a third ruffian violently exited a third story window. I guess the Scarlet Avenger was having a little fun as well.



The Pulp Genre is full of Trusted Sidekicks, men and women who aid the central hero in completing his adventures. Trusted Sidekicks are the butlers, chauffeurs, pilots, and wards of the main hero. They often have abilities helpful to the central hero in his adventures.

Kato, the Green Hornet's driver-Trusted Sidekick, was an incredible martial artist. Magersfontein Lugg, British detective Albert Campion's manservant, was a street tough former burglar. Lothar, Mandrake the Magician's best friend, is considered the strongest man in the world. Many of these sidekicks were foreign-born, adding an exotic element to the Trusted Sidekick.

Suggested Skills:

Driving, Fighting, Guts, Area Knowledge, Notice, Streetwise, Tracking.

Suggested Edges:

Common Bond, Jack-of-All-Trades, Mr. Fix It, Nick of Time*

Suggested Hindrances:

Cautious, Loyal, Outsider.

* Indicates a new Edge or Hindrance which can be found within this book.



MAKING A HERO

You will need a copy of the core **Savage Worlds** rulebook to create a character.

The steps to creating a character for **THRILLING TALES** is exactly the same as that detailed in the core rules :



Step One: Choose a Race (with the odd exception particular to a specific campaign, this race will be Human).

Step Two: Define your characters' Traits (Attributes and Skills) and figure your Derived statistics

Step Three: Pick Edges and Hindrances

Step Four: Choose your Gear.

Using the standard rules for advancement on page 37 of the **Savage Worlds Explorer Edition**, each character will be given a number of Advances, which let a character do one of the following:

- Gain a new Edge.
- Increase a skill that is equal to or greater than its linked attribute by one die type.
- Increase two skills that are lower than their linked attributes by one die type each.
- Buy a new skill at d4.
- Increase one attribute by a die type, once per rank, with a limit of d12.

Player Characters for **THRILLING TALES**, however, have an additional step added to character creation: a starting character begins at higher rank than normal, depending on the structure of the campaign:

Hero Team (4+ members): Seasoned.

Hero Team (2-3 members): Veteran

Hero plus Sidekicks: Legendary shared hero, Seasoned Sidekicks

A starting character in **THRILLING TALES** has the following Advances:

Seasoned: 6 Advances

Veteran: 10 Advances

Legendary: 16 Advances



NEW HINDRANCES

The core hindrances of **Savage Worlds** are used for **THRILLING TALES**, along with the following new options:

COCKY (Minor)

The character is a braggart, and must spend the first round of any combat announcing how great he is, or what he's going to do to any and all opponents. This tendency to boast can be overcome by spending a Bennie.

A villain with this hindrance never delivers a finishing blow to a foe, but instead will always somehow leave the foe the opportunity to escape. (leaving them to die, placing them in a death-trap of some kind, or ordering their minions to handle it, etc.)

GLASS JAW (Major)

You don't handle physical pain and injury well and thus suffer a -2 penalty on all soak rolls

OBLIGATIONS (Minor/Major)

The character has duties which demand a portion of their time and resources. This can range from familial obligations (an elderly relative in your care, for example, or keeping tabs on the family's investments) to sworn allegiance to an organization (FBI agents are obligated, as are Mobsters, but to different groups). Failure to fulfill such obligations will have serious re-

percussions -- the severity of the repercussions determine whether the Hindrance is a minor or major one.

A character with Obligations and Connections to the same organization has a special relationship with the group in question and gains a +2 or +4 bonus to Persuasion rolls (depending upon whether their obligations are minor or major). In essence, the Connection has a vested interest in the character and is more likely to want to see them succeed.

SAVAGE (Major)

The character is unfamiliar with the trappings of the modern world. The character receives a -2 penalty on all Common Knowledge rolls regarding the modern world, and on all rolls involving familiarity with modern technology (Driving, Piloting, etc.)

SHELLSHOCK (MINOR)

The character recovers slowly from the shock and trauma of combat, whether due to a delicate nature or horrible memories of The Great War. The character suffers a -2 penalty to Spirit rolls to recover from being Shaken.

NEW EDGES

BRILLIANT SCIENTIST

(Power)

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Weird Science), Smarts d8+, Repair d8+, Weird Science d8+

The character is one of the brightest minds in his field. Each raise the character gets on his activation roll reduces the cost of the power by 1 Power Point. This edge applies to all inventions created by the character.

BRING IT ON!

(Combat)

Requirements: Seasoned, Fighting d10+

The character is a master of defending against multiple attackers. Opponents get no Gang Up bonus against this character.

CHARMER

(Social)

Requirements: Attractive, Persuasion d8+

The character is stunning, and knows how to get the best out of people by using his or her charms.

This character may use Persuasion as a Test of Will against members of the opposite sex, pitting their looks and charm against a foe's Smarts. The character can add Charisma bonuses to the roll as well. Note that this Edge is more appropriate for villains than heroes.

DEUS EX MACHINA

(Weird)

Requirements: Seasoned

The character can snatch victory from the jaws of defeat. By spending a Bennie, the character can escape probable death by creating an escape route, once per adventure. This escape route can be coincidental, such as a steamship that just happens to be passing by, or simply convenient, like a column that collapses across a molten stream to provide an exit from a crumbling temple.

Any PCs that are with this character can also take advantage of the escape route by spending a Bennie. The fate of NPCs is left up to the GM.

DIRTY FIGHTER

(Combat)

Requirements: Seasoned

The character will do anything it takes to win a fight. Note that this Edge is more appropriate for villains than heroes.

A Dirty Fighter is particularly good at Trick Maneuvers (see **Savage Worlds** section on combat), gaining a +2 bonus with them.

FONT OF INFORMATION

(Professional)

Requirements: Seasoned, Smarts d8+

The character has picked up many odd bits of information during



his travels. The character may make a Common Knowledge roll at +2 to see whether he knows some relevant information about anything -- local notable people, legendary items, or noteworthy places --regardless of how specialized or obscure the knowledge.

FAILSAFE

(Power)

Requirements: Veteran, Arcane Background (Weird Science), Smarts d10+. Repair d10+. Weird Science d10+

The character designs his inventions with failsafes to prevent malfunctions. The devices only ever fail on a critical failure. This edge applies to all inventions created by the character.

GADGET

(Background)

Requirements: Seasoned

The character has the use of a single Weird Science device--as if they had access to the Arcane Background (Weird Science).

The device is designed as per a normal Weird Science gizmo, but utilizes another skill rather than Weird Science for use (for example, Piloting or Shooting).

This edge is for character concepts where the hero has access to a gizmo, but is not the scientist who built it --for example, a down-on-his-luck air circus pilot who finds a high-tech rocket pack.



Photo still taken from Film Serial: *Radar Men From The Moon*, available in mp4 format from Adamant Entertainment at RPGNow.com.

HALLS OF POWER

(Social)

Requirements: Veteran

The character's influence reaches the highest levels of power. The character cannot be found guilty of any crime in a court of law. If brought to trial, the case will be thrown out on a technicality, or an escape will be arranged by contacts within the authorities themselves.

In addition, contacts will inform the character of any actions being taken against them by anyone who shares that information with the authorities.

This edge is intended primarily for Villains, but some GMs may allow it for outlaw heroes like the Man of Mystery who operate with the tacit approval of the police, etc.

IRON JAW

(Combat)

Requirements: Vigor d8+

The character can shrug off the mightiest of blows, receiving a +2 bonus to Soak rolls.

JUST THE THING

(Weird)

Requirements: Wild Card, Luck

Once per session, the character may "suddenly remember" that he has a useful piece of gear on his person. The item must be able to be carried on the character's person, and the GM is the final arbiter of what can be found.

MAN WITHOUT FEAR

(Social)

Requirements: Seasoned, Guts d10+

The character receives a +2 bonus on Guts checks and Tests of Will.

MOXIE

(Background)

Requirements: Spirit d8+

The character is a bundle of determination, spirit and resolve. They never give up in the face of adversity. Whenever you spend a Bennie to re-roll a failed test, you may apply a +2 bonus to the attempt.

NICK OF TIME

(Weird)

Requirements: Seasoned, and a Sidekick or Assistant to a higher-ranked character

The character possesses the uncanny ability to arrive when the Main Hero needs him most. By spending a Bennie, the character can arrive in the scene while there is still time to affect the outcome and rescue the Hero. With each additional Bennie spent, the character may bring along another character to help (the other players may provide those Bennies).

The player creates an explanation for their last-minute arrival, with the approval of the GM, in the finest tradition of the pulps.

NINE LIVES

(Weird)

Requirements: Veteran, Vigor d8+, Villain

The villain (for this edge is limited to villainous use) possesses the ability to return from what was thought to be certain death. If the villain dies, they may 'cash in' their remaining Bennies (minimum of 3, but if they have more, they must spend them all) and survive somehow (thrown clear of the explosion, washing up on a desert island after been thrown overboard, coming to in a hospital when they've already been declared dead, etc.)

Gamemasters will find that they need to use the "Obscure death" method when using this ability--keeping the final fate of the villain a mystery. Whenever possible, the situation should be described in such a way that verification is difficult if not impossible (a villain who is shot can fall out a nearby window, for example).

PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY

(Background)

Requirements: Smarts d10+

The character is able to remember everything they see, hear or read, down to the tiniest detail.

REALLY DIRTY FIGHTER

(Combat)

Requirements: Seasoned, Dirty Fighter

An improved version of the the

Dirty Fighter edge. The character is a master of dirty tricks -- by describing the trick and spending a Benny, the character can automatically get the Drop on any single opponent, allowing the character to be on Hold, and giving a +4 to attack and damage if they choose to strike. This Edge is more appropriate for villains than heroes.

TRADEMARK VEHICLE

(Professional)

Requirements: Seasoned; Driving, Boating or Piloting at d10+, Ace

The character has a vehicle that they are closely associated with -- a vehicle that they know inside and out. While using this vehicle, the character gains a +1 on all rolls to operate the vehicle (Driving, Piloting or Boating, as appropriate), in addition to the bonuses bestowed by the Ace edge.

Additionally, the character also receives a +2 bonus to Shooting rolls made with the vehicles' weapons (if any), and a +2 bonus to all Repair rolls to fix the vehicle.

If the Trademark Vehicle is destroyed, stolen or otherwise removed from the game, the character can designate a replacement as the new Trademark Vehicle, but the vehicle in question must be used for two full adventures before the benefits of the Edge may be used.

CHAPTER FOUR:

EQUIPMENT

This chapter details weapons and vehicles of the pulp era that do not already appear in the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook. Mundane equipment is not covered, as guides to America in the 1930s can be found on many internet sites (for example, at the university of Virginia : <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~1930s/front.html> , and the University of Kansas : <http://vlib.iue.it/history/USA/ERAS/20TH/1930s.html>).

PULP WEAPONS

This section offers a few “classic” guns available during the 1930s that better reflect the pulp genre than those in the core book. GMs can emulate almost any other weapon simply by choosing a similar weapon from the list below and modifying one or more elements (such as

damage or range). Core book weapons (such as the Colt M1911 and the Tommy Gun) are not reproduced here.



Weapon	Range	Damage	RoF	Cost	Weight	Shots	Notes
Astra 400	12/24/48	2d6	1	\$20	4	6	--
Beretta 1935	12/24/48	2d6+1	1	\$50	4	7	AP1
Browning HP 1935	12/24/48	2d6+1	1	\$55	4	8	AP1
Bulldog Revolver	12/24/48	2d6	1	\$20	3	6	--
Colt Detective .38	12/24/48	2d6	1	\$25	4	6	AP1
Luger P-08	12/24/48	2d6	1	\$30	3	8	--
Mauser C96	10/20/40	2d6+1	1	\$45	4	10	--
Nambu Type 14	12/24/48	2d6-1	1	\$25	4	8	--
Smith & Wesson 10	12/24/48	2d6+1	1	\$40	4	6	AP2
Walther PPK	12/24/48	2d6	1	\$40	3	8	AP1
Webley Revolver	12/24/48	2d6+1	1	\$35	4	6	AP2
Arasaka Type 38	24/48/95	2d8	1	\$120	7	6	--
Mauser M32	12/24/48	2d6+1	3	\$100	8	10/20	Auto
MP38	12/24/48	2d6	3	\$100	10	32	Auto
Springfield M1903	24/48/95	2d8	1	\$120	10	5	AP1
Star Si35	12/24/48	2d6	3	\$85	13	30	Auto



Astra 400 Pistol

This Spanish pistol is also used by the French military. It was copied and used in the Spanish Civil War.



Beretta Model 1934 Pistol

This pistol is the standard Italian military sidearm.



Browning High Power Model 1935 Pistol

This Belgian pistol was actually developed by an American. This popular sidearm is destined to be used by both the Axis and the Allies in the coming war.



Luger P-08 Pistol

This well-made pistol is the standard sidearm of the German military. Due to the high quality of its manufacture, all Lugers are considered mastercraft weapons and gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls.



Bulldog Revolver

This pocket pistol was developed by Webley. It was widely exported and uses a larger round than the similar Colt Detective Special.



Mauser C96 Pistol

The Mauser has a very distinctive look, garnering the nickname "Broomhandle" due to the shape of its handle. Although a German weapon, it was also manufactured in China and Spain.



Colt .38 Detective Special Revolver

This snub-nosed revolver is a popular favorite with detectives due to its lighter weight and compact size. It is easy to conceal in one's pocket.



Nambu Type 14

The Japanese-made Nambu Type 14, introduced in 1925, was a common sidearm for officers of both the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy. It suffered from a weak caliber of ammunition and such poor design that it would often backfire or break in combat. On a roll of 1, (snake eyes for a Wild Card), a Type 14 explodes in the user's hand, causing him or her d4 damage.

Smith & Wesson Model 10 Police Revolver

This popular American revolver is used by police and military officers.



Walther PPK Pistol

This pistol is popular with European police forces, and later made famous by a certain British secret agent.



Webley Revolver

This popular British revolver is the standard sidearm of British officers.



Arasaka Type 38 Rifle

This is the standard rifle of the Japanese army.



Mauser M32 Submachine Gun

The first widely used true machine pistol; the 7.62mm M32 is an automatic fire version of the C96. The weapon is nearly impossible to fire without the stock in place -- without the stock, the firer suffers a -4 penalty to hit.



MP38 Submachine Gun

This is a common submachine gun used by German soldiers. It will feature prominently in the 1939 invasion of Poland.



Springfield US M1903 Rifle

This bolt-action rifle was the standard rifle of the American army until 1936, when it was replaced by the M1 Garand.



Star Si35 Submachine Gun

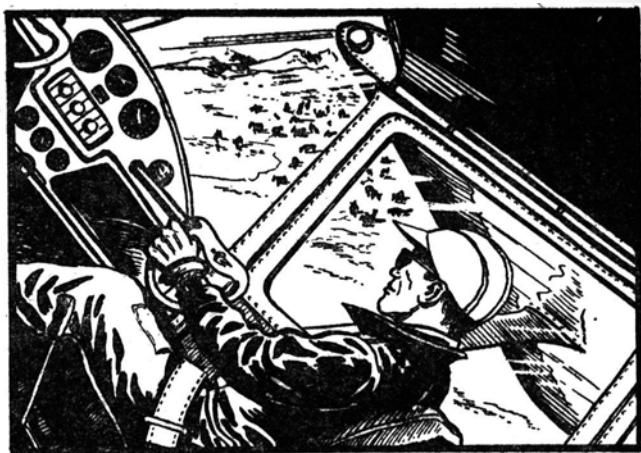
This Spanish submachine gun was developed during the Spanish Civil War. It had an adjustable speed of 300rpm and 700rpm, but switching was considered too unwieldy for combat and would cause both Britain and America to pass on it at the outset of World War II.

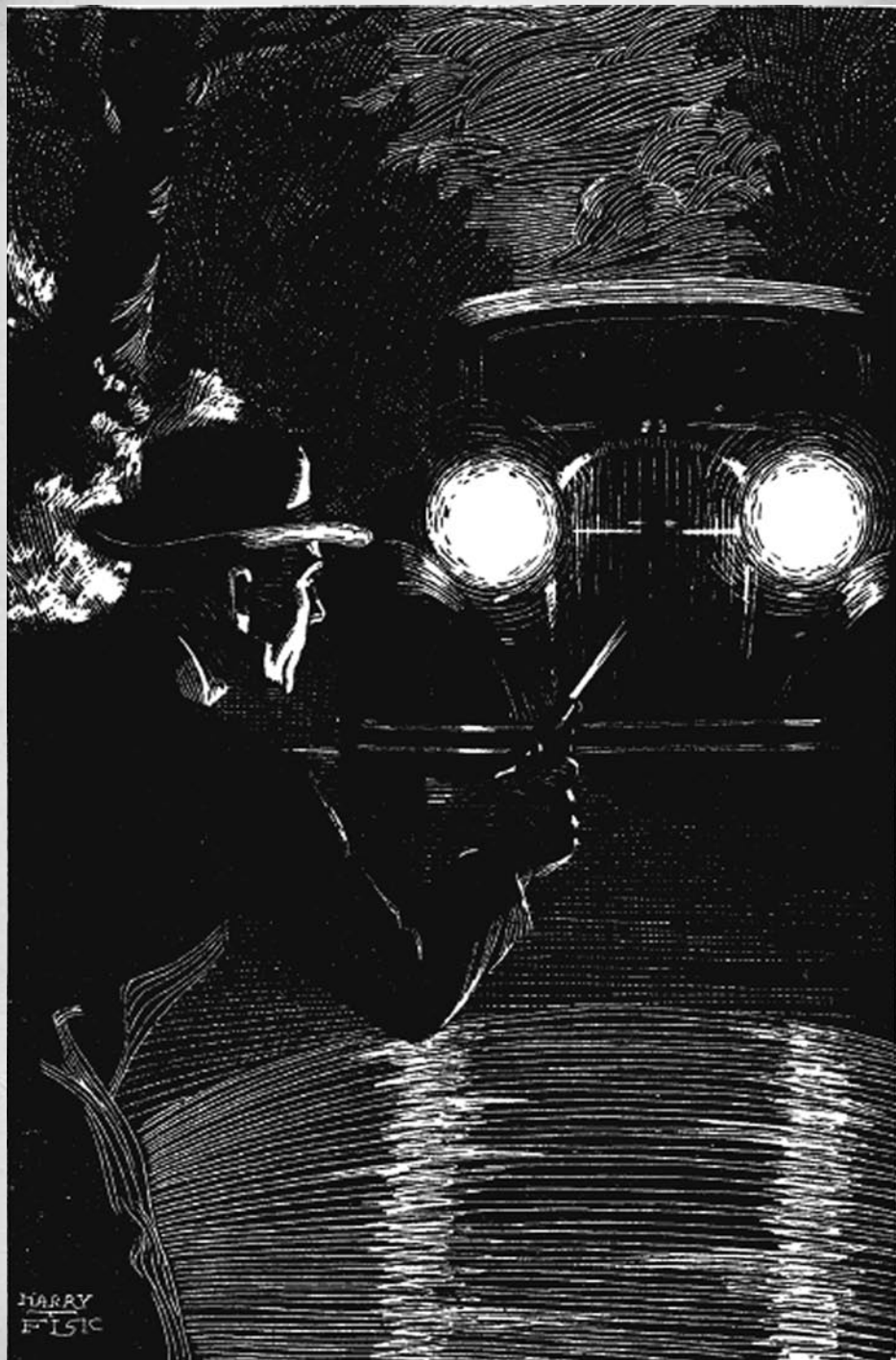


PULP VEHICLES

This section provides a short list of vehicles from the 1920s and 1930s. It is important to note that affordable versions of most vehicles, especially those built before the mid-30s, were ragtops/convertibles and therefore provided less protection from those inside. Pulp vehicles are harder to maneuver than their modern counterparts

due to their steel construction, and this also accounts for their increased Toughness





HARRY
FISIC

Alfa Romeo 6C

This Italian car won the *Mille Miglia* (Thousand Miles) race two years in a row.

Acc/TS 13/52; **Toughness** 10(2)

Crew: 1+1; **Cost** \$3000



Auburn Speedster

True to its name, the Auburn Speedster's design screams "speed." It was guaranteed a top speed of over 100mph. The version statted here is the convertible design, with a low V windshield.

Acc/TS 15/55; **Toughness** 10 (3)

Crew 1+2; **Cost** \$3500



Austin Seven Special

This British automobile was created as an affordable car with a simple design. The Special is a two seater



version designed to be so lightweight that it lacks doors (the body slopes downward to enable easy access).

Acc/TS: 10/40; **Toughness** 8(2)

Crew 1+1; **Cost** \$350

Bentley 8-Litre

Only 100 of these cars were ever made before Bentley was taken over by Rolls-Royce. The Bentley 8-litre is a marvel of its time, ironically designed to compete with Rolls-Royce in the luxury car market.

Acc/TS 10/48; **Toughness** 12 (3)

Crew 1+3; **Cost** \$10,000



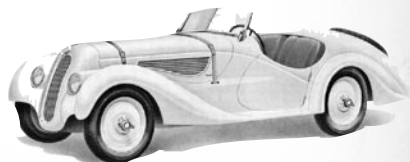
BMW 328

This sports car would eventually win the Mille Miglia in 1940. Its design would be a strong influence on the Jaguar.

Acc/TS 15/55; **Toughness** 10(2)

Crew 1+1 (+2 with rumble seat)

Cost \$3500



Chrysler Airflow

Built to reflect the car of the future, the Chrysler Airflow was so revolutionary that it hurt sales. Its spacious design was tested in a wind tunnel.

Acc/TS 10/40 Toughness 14 (3)
Crew 1+5; Cost \$900



Duesenberg Model J

The most unusual feature of this American luxury car is the trunk, which is quite literally strapped to the back of the car. Its elegant design made it a popular choice for film stars.

Acc/TS 10/48; Toughness 14 (2)
Crew 1+5; Cost \$8000



Cord 810

Built by Auburn, this “coffin-nosed” vehicle caused a sensation at the 1936 New York Auto Show (although orders weren’t filled until 1937). About 3000 of these cars were built before production ceased.

Acc/TS 14/56; Toughness 12 (2)
Crew: 1+3 Cost \$3000



Ford Model A

The successor to the Model T, the Ford Model A was more powerful and boasted four choices of color. The Model A came in many styles. The example presented here is the standard coupe design.

Acc/TS 8/30; Toughness 10 (3)
Crew 1+3 Cost \$350



Ford Model T

The "Tin Lizzie" introduced the concept of the automobile assembly line. For a decade (1915-1925) the Model T was only available in black, but Model Ts of different colors were produced before that and in its last two years of production. Perhaps the most annoying feature of the Model T was its lack of windshield wipers. **Acc/TS 7/28; Toughness 8 (2)**
Crew 1+3 Cost \$25



Hudson Terraplane

The most notable feature of this inexpensive, reliable American car is its ornate wraparound grill design. The Terraplane was one of the first affordable enclosed automobiles on the market. **Acc/TS 10/40; Toughness 12 (3)**
Crew 1+4; Cost \$750



Lincoln Zephyr

The stylish Zephyr inspired the industry to imitate it. Designed as an entry level Lincoln, the Zephyr was conceived as a fast, aerodynamic

vehicle. Unlike the similarly themed Chrysler Airflow, the Zephyr proved to be very popular.

Acc/TS 10/40; Toughness 14(3)
Crew 1+5; Cost \$850



Packard Twelve Victoria

Packard was another top-of-the-line luxury car manufacturer. The Twelve series, with its long hood covering a 12 cylinder engine, was considered to be its finest work. The elegant Victoria was the first convertible model.

Acc/TS 12/50; Toughness 14(3)
Crew 1+5; Cost \$8500



Pierce-Arrow Model 41 LeBaron

Pierce-Arrow automobiles were favored by the elite in Hollywood and around the world. The opulent LeBaron, like the Duesenberg, had a trunk strapped on the rear.

Acc/TS 10/48; Toughness 14(2)
Crew 1+5 Cost \$9000

Rolls-Royce Phantom III

The Phantom III was the final Rolls-Royce developed before World War II, and the last car worked on by Henry Royce himself. It boasted an aluminum V-12 engine and an independent suspension in the front.

Acc/TS 12/50; Toughness 15 (2)

Crew 1+4; Cost \$10,000



Delahaye T165 Roadster

A top-line luxury roadster, designed by Italians for a French manufacturer, only 400 of these were ever made.

Acc/TS 15/55; Toughness 12 (2)

Crew 1+2; Cost \$5000



Studebaker Dictator

The Dictator was designed as a reliable, affordable car. It was the cheapest of the Studebaker line, and popular outside the country (where it was renamed the "Director," as "Dictator" was an obviously unfashionable term in Europe).

Acc/TS: 10/40; Toughness 10(2)

Crew: 1+5; Cost \$700





Autogyro

The precursor of the modern-day helicopter, autogyros used a rotor to generate lift, but otherwise flew like an airplane. They were much more maneuverable than standard aircraft, but were not able to hover or land vertically.

Acc/TS 5/20; **Climb** 10; **Toughness** 10(2); **Crew** 2; **Cost:** \$10,000

Weapons: None

Bellanca Airbus

Also known as the “Flying W”, the distinctive silhouette of the plane is derived from the aerodynamically shaped triangular lifting struts extending down from the bottom of the fuselage and continuing up to a point outboard the main wing.

Acc/TS 18/72; **Climb** 20; **Toughness** 15(2); **Crew** 2+8; **Cost:** \$20,000

Weapons: None



Boeing 247

This passenger airplane counted a flight attendant amongst its crew. It also boasted new features such as autopilot and retractable landing gear.

Acc/TS 15/58; **Climb** 20; **Toughness** 15(2); **Crew** 3+16; **Cost:** \$30,000

Curtiss F9C-2 Sparrowhawk

This small but fast fighter was made exclusively for the Navy's airship program by Curtiss Aeroplane & Motor Company, Buffalo, NY. First delivered in 1932, the Sparrowhawk featured a hook mounted on top of the plane to catch the trapeze beneath the airship. Once suspended, the plane could be raised into the ship's interior. Armament consists of two .30-caliber machine guns fixed on its nose.

Acc/TS 12/48; **Climb** 20; **Toughness** 10 (1); **Crew** 1; **Cost:** Military

Weapons: Twin machineguns (Fixed Forward -- Range: 24/48/96 Damage: 2d8 ROF 3 Weight 25 Ammo 150 Notes: AP 2; Vehicle)



Curtiss P-36

The precursor to the popular World War II P-40, the P-36 was an American military fighter plane that saw extensive use in the British and French armed forces. Armament consists of one .30 caliber machine gun and one .50

caliber machine gun mounted in the front.

Acc/TS 15/52; **Climb** 20; **Toughness** 10 (2); **Crew** 1+1; **Cost:** Military

Weapons: Twin machineguns (Fixed Forward -- Range: 24/48/96 Damage: 2d8 ROF 3 Weight 25 Ammo 150 Notes: AP 2; Vehicle)



Douglas DC-3

The DC-2 was the main competitor to the Boeing 247. Built a year later, it was faster and could accommodate more passengers. The DC-3 was the result of even further improvements, including sleeping berths on some mod-



els and an on-board kitchen. The DC-3 made practical trans-continental flights possible, requiring only one refueling stop.

Acc/TS 18/70;
Climb 20 Toughness 15 (2); **Crew:** 3+20; **Cost:** \$35,000
Weapons: None

Dornier Do-24

The Do-24 is a tri-motor flying boat originally ordered by the Dutch Navy to patrol the islands of the Dutch Indies. The vessel was found in the Dutch and German services, as well as in private stock, among corporations or few extremely wealthy individuals.

Acc/TS 18/70;
Climb 20 Toughness 15 (2); **Crew:** 2+12; **Cost:** \$30,000

Weapons: None



Gee Bee R-1

The distinctive fat racing plane built by the Granville Brothers and made famous to pulp fans by its appearance as Cliff Secord's plane in the comic book and film versions of "The Rocketeer." The Gee Bee is little more than a huge engine with wings, and a cramped cockpit.

Acc/TS 28/110; **Climb 25 Toughness** 10 (2); **Crew:** 1; **Cost:** \$25,000
Weapons: None



Grumman G-21 "Goose" The Grumman Goose is perhaps the world's most famous flying boat. Originally envisioned as a shuttle for Long Island millionaires to fly to Manhattan for business, the Goose rapidly became

the utility plane of choice for several small air companies, as well as a primary rescue plane for the Coast Guard and other agencies. Its amphibious nature, generous interior space, and rugged construction made it a popular choice for independent air merchants in the South Pacific and Caribbean. The Goose is probably best remembered by pulp gamers as the aircraft used by Jake in the short-lived TV series "Tales of the Gold Monkey"



Acc/TS 18/72; **Climb** 20 **Toughness** 15 (2); **Crew:** 2+8; **Cost:** \$25,000
Weapons: None

Ford Trimotor

This popular civil transport airplane was nicknamed the "Tin Goose." It gets its designation from the fact that it has three engines. Ford is an automobile company, and the aircraft engines were built by other companies. Ford Trimotors were sold all over the world.

Acc/TS 15/65;
Climb 20 **Toughness** 13 (2); **Crew:** 3+8; **Cost:** \$25,000
Weapons: None



Junkers JU-52

Nicknamed "Tante Ju" (Auntie Ju) by German troops, the Junkers Ju-52 was the most famous transport of the Third Reich. The Ju-52 served as an airliner for many nations, including the German Lufthansa and eventually entered service as a troop transport for the Reich. The Ju-52 was slow and very lightly armed against fighters, but was used from the 30s right through to the end of the war.

Acc/TS 18/70; **Climb** 20 **Toughness** 20 (2); **Crew:** 3+18; **Cost:** Military
Weapons: Machinegun (dorsal 360)-- **Range:**30/60/120 **Damage:** 2d8 **ROF** 3
Weight 25 **Ammo** 150 **Notes:** AP 2; Vehicle)

Junkers JU-87D Stuka

Stuka is the abbreviation of the German word Sturzkampfflugzeug, which designated all dive bombers. The main fighter/bomber used by the Luftwaffe, the Stuka would play a major role in the Blitzkrieg that swept across Poland, northern Europe and France. In the later years of the war, the Ju 87 had a successful second life as an antitank weapon, striking armor columns from above.

Acc/TS 25/120; **Climb** 25

Toughness 10 (2); **Crew:**2; **Cost:** Military

Weapons:3 machinegun (2 forward, 1 rear-- Range: 30/60/120 Damage: 2d8 ROF 3 Weight 25 Ammo 150 Notes: AP 2; Vehicle), 4 wing-mounted bombs (3d8, Medium Burst Template, AP5, HW), 1 heavy bomb under fuselage (4d8, Medium Burst Template, AP9, HW).



Messerschmitt Bf109

One of the best air superiority fighters ever built, the Messerschmitt was the predator of the skies. The Bf109 was the Luftwaffe's standard single-seat fighter from 1935-1943 and was able to outfight or outrun virtually all opposition. The fighter was used primarily for intercept and bomber escort duties. The Messerschmitt was equipped with two 7.92 mm machine guns and two 20 mm cannons.

Acc/TS 30/130; **Climb** 25 **Toughness** 10 (2); **Crew:**1; **Cost:** Military

Weapons:2 machinegun (2 forward -- Range: 30/60/120 Damage: 2d8 ROF 3 Weight 25 Ammo 150 Notes: AP 2; Vehicle), 2 20mm cannon (forward -- Range: 30/60/120 Damage: 2d10 ROF 3 Weight 35 Ammo 100 Notes: AP4, HW)



Nakajima A1N2

The A1N2 were carrier fighters for the Imperial Japanese Navy. First introduced in 1930, they were biplanes equipped with an arresting-cable hook and two 7.7mm forward-firing machine guns.

Acc/TS 12/48; Climb 20; Toughness 10 (1);

Crew 1; Cost: Military

Weapons: Twin machineguns (Fixed Forward -- Range: 24/48/96 Damage: 2d8 ROF 3 Weight 25 Ammo 150 Notes: AP 2; Vehicle)



Sikorsky S-38

Also known as "The Explorer's Air Yacht," the S-38 was a flying boat fitted with wheels in the pontoons, so that it could land on water or ground. They saw service with Pan American Airways and the U. S. Army. Numerous private individuals bought and flew the S-38 as well, including Howard Hughes (as seen in the film "the Aviator").

Acc/TS 18/70; Climb 20 Toughness 12 (2); Crew: 2+10; Cost: \$30,000

Weapons: None



LZ-129 Hindenberg

The Hindenberg is provided as an example of a 1930s zeppelin. The number of passengers listed is for transatlantic flights; the full complement would be 72. GMs should be aware that the Hindenberg disaster would never have happened if the zeppelin were fueled by helium, as intended. Pulp versions of this airship (especially those designed by Mad Scientists) would probably use helium.

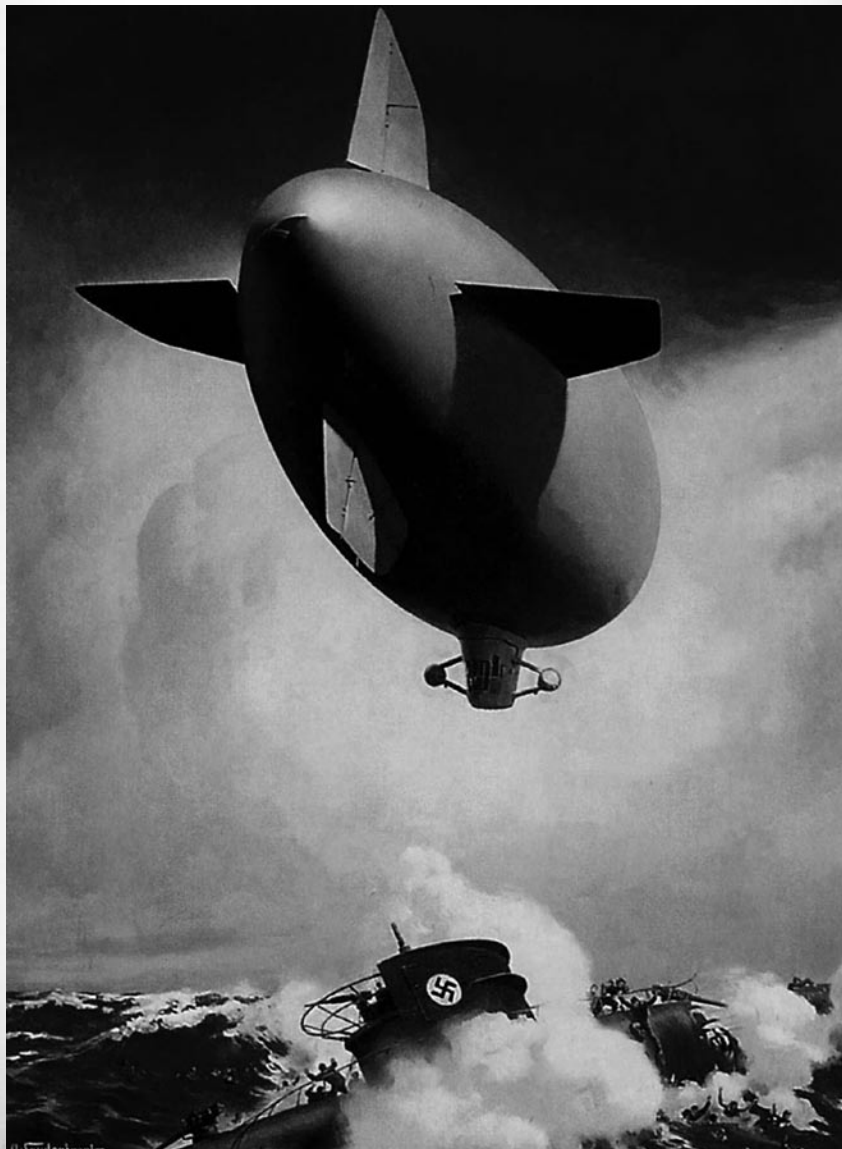
Acc/TS 5/32; Climb 14 Toughness 15 (2); Crew: 50+70; Cost: \$750,000

Weapons: None

Type VII A U-Boat

Another iconic Nazi vehicle, the U-boats traveled the Atlantic in predatory “wolfpacks”, harassed shipping, delivered Nazi spies onto unsuspecting enemy beaches, and carried secret archeological discoveries to hidden island fortresses! There were many types of U-boat -- the statistics provided here correspond to the Type VIIA, provided as an example. This model carried an 88mm deck gun and 11 torpedoes.

Acc/TS 4/12 surface, 2/8 submerged **Toughness** 14 (3); **Crew:** 45; **Cost:** Military. **Weapons:** Deck gun (Range: 50/100/200 Damage: 3d10 ROF 1 Weight 40 Ammo 150 Notes: AP 10; Vehicle), Torpedoes (Range 100/200/300 Damage 4d8 Med Burst Template, AP15, Vehicle)



CHAPTER FIVE:

PULP GAMING RULES

HEROIC SURVIVAL

THRILLING TALES is a pulp setting, and pulps were filled with swashbuckling tales of adventure. The heroes are daring, and their exploits amazing--but for all the action, heroes seldom die, and many of the biggest villains keep coming back.

So in this setting, No matter how they are “killed,” Wild Cards will always survive. To reflect this, the following rules replace the usual **Savage Worlds** rules for Incapacitation. Heroes only ever suffer short-term injuries. At GM discretion, villains injuries can last longer, to be “healed off-screen” to come back another day.

INCAPACITATION

Raise: The victim is stunned. He still has 3 wounds, but is not Incapacitated. He is Shaken and suffers a temporary impairment as well. Roll 2d6 on the Injury Table in the **Savage Worlds** rulebook. The effects are short-term and cease when combat ends.

Success: The victim is unconscious. He regains consciousness with a successful Healing roll or after an hour has passed. Roll 2d6 on the Injury Table. The effects last until all wounds are healed.

Failure: The victim is unconscious. He regains consciousness with a Healing roll at -2 (one roll only) or after 2d6 hours have passed. Roll 2d6 on the Injury Table. The effects go away when all wounds are healed. With nonlethal damage, treat this as a Success except the hero is unconscious for 1d4 hours.

Critical Failure: The victim is in a coma. He regains consciousness with a Healing roll at -4 (one roll only) or after 1d6 days have passed. Roll 2d6 on the Injury Table. The effects go away when all wounds are healed. With nonlethal damage, treat this as a Success except the hero is unconscious for 2d6 hours.

STUNTS

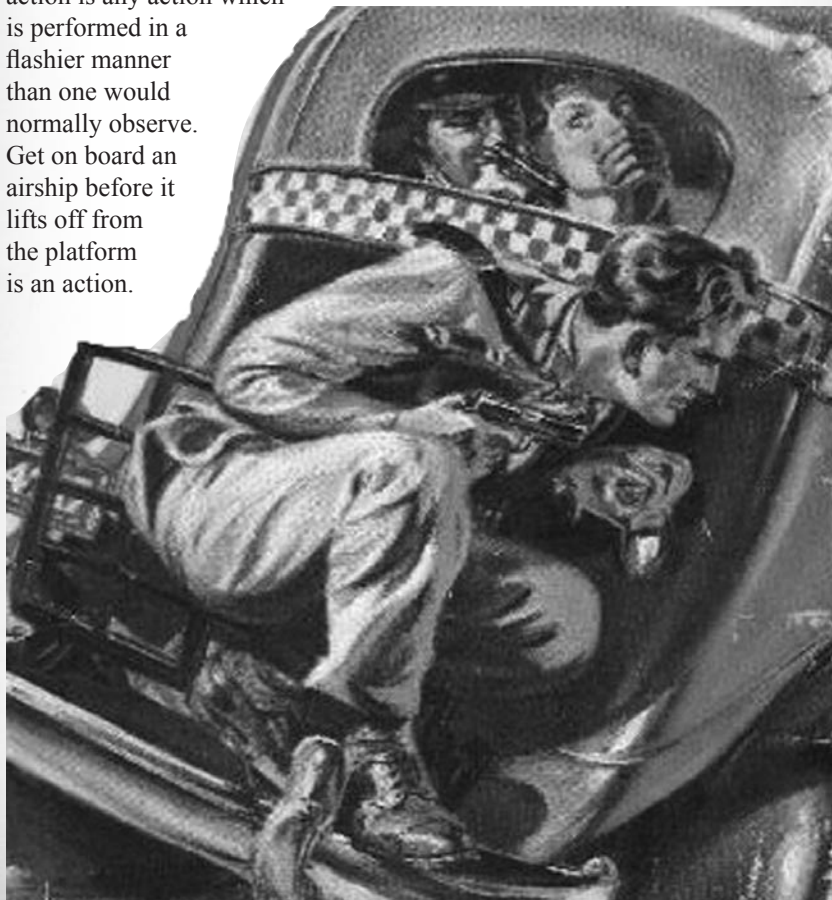
Bennies are a useful part of **Savage Worlds** play, giving players the ability to reroll in dramatic situations. In a **THRILLING TALES** campaign, players should have access to more bennies than they would under the normal rules. This is addressed by stunts.

Any character who attempts a stunt action should be rewarded with a bennie.

What is a stunt action? A stunt action is any action which is performed in a flashier manner than one would normally observe. Get on board an airship before it lifts off from the platform is an action.

Leaping from the sidecar of a speeding motorcycle onto an airship at the last second as it lifts off from the platform -- now *that* is a stunt action, and should be rewarded.

In game terms, a stunt is an action where the player purposefully makes the action more difficult for themselves. In the above example, the player would have had the option to get on board the airship, but instead announced that the character had gotten there too late, and instead described the stunt action. In a way, the player is taking on the role of



the Game Master for a moment, changing the situation for his or her character in such a way that a more difficult solution is required.

A stunt action should always require a roll, at a minimum -2 penalty. The Game Master is the final arbiter of the roll penalty of a particular stunt action. Pulling off nearly impossible stunts (-6 or more to the roll) may even result in the hero earning more than one bennie, at the GM's discretion.

Why do the players need access to more bennies than normal? Read on.

STORY DECLARATIONS

In addition to their normal usage as described in the **Savage Worlds** core rules, bennies can be used in **THRILLING TALES** to make Story Declarations.

A player may spend a benny and declare certain details about the setting and the story. If the Game Master accepts it, it will be true. This gives the player the ability to direct



small things in a story – usually something only the Game Master can do.

Declarations can't be used to drastically change the plot or to win a conflict. Declaring "The Mob Enforcer drops dead of a heart attack" is not only likely to be rejected by the Game Master, but it wouldn't even be that much fun to begin with.

What this can be very useful for is convenient coincidences. For example, you can declare that the contents of a storeroom contain just the right chemicals you need to build a makeshift explosive, or you can declare what's hidden in your pockets or the fact that you know someone in a foreign city. Is there an interesting scene happening

over there that your character might miss? Spend a benny to declare you arrive at a dramatically appropriate moment!

The key limit to Story Declaration is you cannot contradict previously established information... unless you come up with some plausible reason why that information was never true to begin with!

The GM has final say on Story Declaration, but generally, if what you propose makes the game more interesting, odds are in your favor.

If a proposed declaration isn't approved, you keep the benny, and the change doesn't happen.

HENCHMEN & MOOKS

Savage Worlds already features two character types: The Wild Cards (the players, important villains, monsters, etc.) and Extras (everybody else). In keeping with the pulp genre, **THRILLING TALES** adds two additional varieties to this mix: Henchmen and Mooks.

Villains in **THRILLING TALES** should be the equal (and preferably more powerful) than the player characters. They are the big threat, the focus of the adventure. As such, they are created as Wild Cards, as described in the core rules.

However, a villain will typically have one prized Lieutenant (occasionally more, but usually

at least one). In **THRILLING TALES**, we refer to this character as the Henchman. Henchmen are the "level bosses" of the game --they are usually encountered by the heroes long before they ever get to the villain...and often before they even realize that the Villain exists!

Henchmen are a step above your standard Extra, but a step below Wild Cards. They're useful for giving the heroes a tougher opponent, but without all the difficulty of facing another Wild Card. A Henchman is created as a normal Extra, but with the ability to use a Wild Die when rolling.

Mooks are another new type of character for **Savage Worlds**. They are the level below Extras. Mooks are the faceless cannon-fodder who get thrown at the heroes in combat. The villain will throw these at the heroes in an effort to slow their progress, with the off chance that one or more Mooks might get lucky and do some damage.

Mooks are just like Extras, but with the following special rules:

- Every Trait is average (d6).
- They only possess four skills, and each skill is rated at d6.
- They have no edges and no hindrances.
- Mooks are never Shaken. If you equal or exceed their Toughness, they're out of the fight.

Mooks will willingly lay down their lives for the main villain. To reflect this, Any Mook within 1" of a villain becomes a pawn, sacrificing his life so his master can live. Any attack made against the villain is instead made against the Mook, as he leaps into the way of the attack, to protect the life of his master.

Mooks do not have to be limited to only the service of a villain. If a Game Master so desires, she can throw Mooks at the player-characters in any situation where a large-scale combat is called for. They could represent wave after wave of marauding South Sea Pirates, or the gibbering cultists who worship the dark hidden gods of Chaos, or even a criminal gang operating within the campaign city.



QUIPS, SOLILOQUIES & GLOATING

Characters in pulp stories are a talkative bunch. Heroes and villains always seem to have time to banter back and forth, even in the midst of combat! To reflect this, any character may speak during a round as a free action.

In addition, one of the familiar recurring elements of pulp stories is the propensity for villains to spill their guts and tell the hero every detail of their plan, once they think they're in the clear.

To reflect this, any villain who has captured the hero (or otherwise is in a situation where they feel that there is no way that their plan can be stopped) must make a Test of Will (their Smarts vs the hero's Smarts, with the villain receiving a -2 penalty to the roll) to avoid revealing their entire plan. If the Test is made, but the roll was still within 4 points of the hero's, the villain will still reveal some (but not all) of the plan. The temptation to gloat is simply too irresistible.



CHAPTER SIX:

PULP VILLAINS

The pulps were a time of stalwart heroes, larger-than-life characters who would, in time, give birth to the archetype of the modern superhero. It was a time of stark contrasts: Good vs. Evil on a grand scale.

For every hero, there were dozens of villains. The villains were often a never-ending supply of run-of-the-mill gangsters and crooks, ready to be defeated on a monthly basis, sandwiched between lurid, brightly-

colored covers, and sold for a dime. On occasion, however, other villains appeared. Villains as fantastic as the heroes they confounded. Villains that were nearly equal to the heroes in power and in their uniqueness.

These are the villains that we remember. The hordes of cookie-cutter crooks fade into obscurity, but the arch-fiends remain. Sherlock Holmes needs his Moriarty, after all. Doc Savage had his John Sunlight,



and the Shadow had Shivan Khan. Some villains became so popular that they were given their own magazines, where they were the central character: The Insidious Wu Fang....The Octopus...Doctor Death.

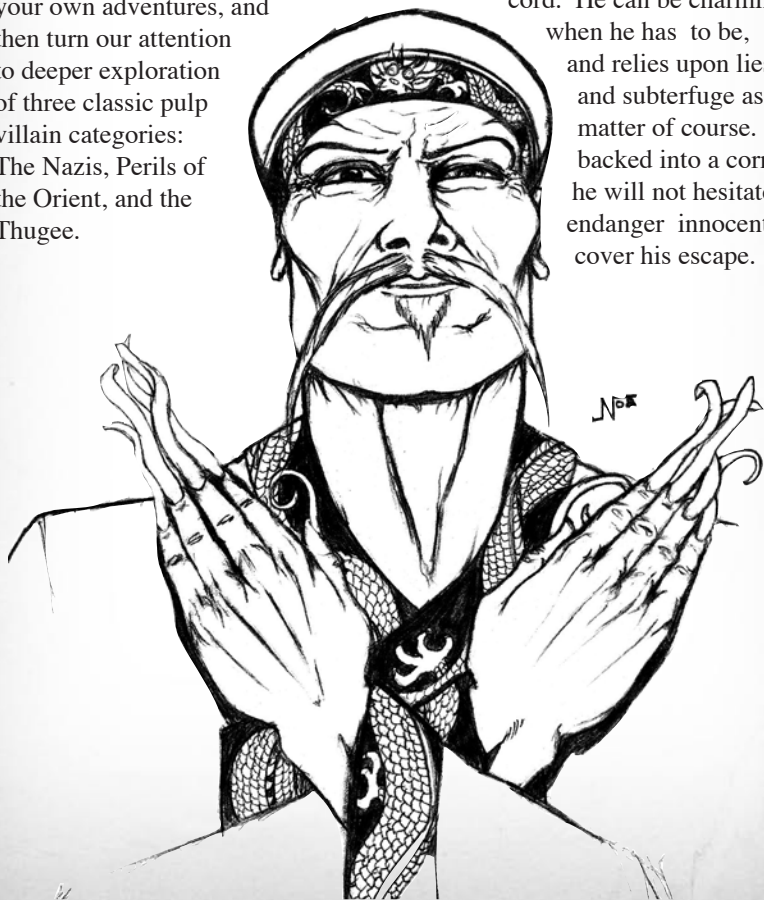
The player-characters in your own pulp-era campaigns should face such threats. Don't give them an enemy to fight...Give them a Nemesis. The villains that appear in these pages will give you a good start, and your players will curse you for it!

In this chapter, we present several sample villains for you to use for your own adventures, and then turn our attention to deeper exploration of three classic pulp villain categories: The Nazis, Perils of the Orient, and the Thugee.

DOCTOR SIN

Doctor Tsung-Chi Sin is known as the Devil of Chinatown. He is notorious for his skill as a Mesmerist and as a poisoner and torturer. He runs a criminal empire centered in the Chinatown district of the player-characters home city, where his influence extends into nearly every criminal enterprise. If it's illegal, and happening in the city, it is said that Doctor Sin has his fingers in it.

Doctor Sin is a cold, ruthless killer, with a voice like a silken strangling cord. He can be charming when he has to be, and relies upon lies and subterfuge as a matter of course. If backed into a corner, he will not hesitate to endanger innocents to cover his escape.



Doctor Sin has a vast army of minions at his disposal. These range from rank-and-file servants who perform mundane duties such as messengers, to specialists who are secretly on the Doctor's payroll. Adventurers who are facing Doctor Sin should never be able to completely trust that the NPCs that they encounter are not part of the Devil of Chinatown's vast empire.

Most feared of all of Doctor Sin's minions are the cadre of fanatical assassins called the *Qing Ri* (pronounced "ching ree"). These are orphans from some of the worst slums on Earth, taken in by Sin as children and trained as the most efficient and remorseless killers the world has ever seen.

A *Qing Ri* can be identified by heavy scarring where most of his right ear used to be: the final test of the assassin's dedication, which occurs during the "graduation ceremony" when the *Qing Ri* is 18, involves the prospective member having their right ear nailed to a ceremonial post. The *Qing Ri* is then handed a knife, with which to free himself. Any one who cries out is killed instantly by his brothers. Those who pass the test become full members of the brotherhood.

DOCTOR SIN

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d12, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Psionics d12, Taunt d10, Throwing d8
Charisma: -3; **Pace:** 6;

Parry:8; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Arrogant, Mean, Overconfident, Stubborn, Vengeful (Major).

Edges: Arcane Background (Psionics), Block, Combat Reflexes, Command, Filthy Rich, Followers, Fervor, Improved Dodge, Improved Level Headed, Mentalist, New Power, Nine Lives, Power Points.

Powers: *Armor* (hard skin), *Barrier* (telekenetic force), *Boost/Lower Trait* (hypnosis), *Deflection* (telekenetic force), *Entangle* (hypnotic paralysis), *Fear* (hypnotic suggestion), *Invisibility* (cloud men's minds), *Puppet* (hypnotic mind control), *Smite* (chi infusion), *Speak Language* (mental attunement), *Telekenesis*, 40 Power Points.

Gear: Varies.

QING RI ASSASSINS

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Lockpicking d8, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Swimming d6, Throwing d8

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6;

Parry: 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Ugly

Edges: Acrobat, Quick Draw, Thief.

Gear: Twin *Qing Ri* swords (Str +d6+2, AP2), Throwing Stars (3/6/12, Str +d4), Smoke Pellets (2/4/8, small burst template, -6 to see or attack through template, lasts 3 rounds).



ADVENTURE HOOKS

- Doctor Sin has decided to expand his operations, allying himself with another force of evil: The Nazis. He has struck an arrangement: He will provide the Nazis with industrial secrets (which his operatives will steal), and in return, the Nazis will allow Sin to smuggle opium from New York to Los Angeles via their zeppelin, *Die Walkuriye*, which is making a promotional world-wide tour. The Nazis believe that helping the Devil of Chinatown spread his drugs throughout the United States will further weaken “a decadent and morally corrupt society”, leaving it ripe for Nazi takeover.

The Player-Characters will first enter the plot by investigating the theft of

plans for a new aircraft. This will lead them to the thieves, and from there, to Doctor Sin and his Nazi accomplices.

- The Devil of Chinatown is using his powers of mesmerism to brainwash innocent people into committing crimes upon his behalf. A rash of crimes committed by normal, upstanding citizens alerts the Player-Characters to the problem. In each case, the perpetrator of the crime has had some connection with one of Doctor Sin’s front businesses (a housewife who has her husband’s suits pressed at a Chinatown laundry, a banker who ate lunch at a nearby Chinese restaurant, etc.) The trail will lead back to Doctor Sin.

- This option is best used after

the Player-Characters have encountered Doctor Sin on at least one other adventure: The insidious Doctor has decided to remove a thorn from his side...and that thorn is the Player-Characters themselves! Doctor Sin orders the *Qing Ri* to assassinate the heroes. In finest pulp fashion, the assassins will not simply walk up to the heroes on the street and shoot them, but will, of course,

use bizarre methods: releasing a venomous snake, scorpion or spider into the character's bedroom; setting elaborate traps that shoot poisoned darts; etc.

If these methods fail, the *Qing Ri* will then make a personal appearance, infiltrating the character's inner sanctum, and striking like shadows in the night!



THE MASTER OF THE WORLD

The villain known only as The Master of the World has his origins shrouded in mystery. He appears to be of European descent, but claims to be one of the Hidden Masters spoken of in Tibetan legend. He rules a vast criminal empire,

centered in a hidden mountain fortress high in the Himalayas. From this impregnable headquarters, he runs most of the opium and white slavery trade in Asia. His operations stretch into every corner of the globe.

He will ally himself with others, if such an alliance suits his needs, but is quick to betray his allies the moment that he detects an advantage in such betrayal.



Characters who face The Master of the World will find him to be a charming sociopath, who will act the consummate host, wining and dining them as he asks for details about current goings-on in the modern world (given his self-imposed solitude in the Himalayas, he misses hearing about the minutiae of modern life: men's fashion, popular music and film, stocks and bonds, etc. His mood can turn abruptly, however, and he is likely to order someone executed by slow torture, for example, if they displease him in any way.

THE MASTER OF THE WORLD

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d12, Intimidation d12, Notice d10, Persuasion d8, Shooting d8, Taunt d10, Throwing d8

Charisma:+2 ; **Pace:** 6;

Parry:6; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Overconfident, Vengeful (Major), Wanted.

Edges: Ambidextrous, Berserk, Charismatic, Combat Reflexes, Command, Fervor, Filthy Rich, Followers, Jack-of-all-Trades, Marksman, Strong-Willed.

Gear: varies.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- The local Chinese Tongks who run criminal operations in the Chinatown of the Player-Characters' home city are being attacked, which is sparking a violent gang war. The action is being taken by The Master of the World and his minions, in an effort to expand his influence into the city and use Chinatown as his center of operations. This is an excellent way to introduce the Master of the World into your campaign.
- The daughter of a wealthy socialite is kidnapped while mountain climbing in the Himalayas. Depending upon the whims of the gamemaster, this situation could result in a straightforward rescue operation, with the Player-Characters tracking her to the mountain fortress of the Master of the World, or perhaps something more complex: The daughter inexplicably returns to America, unable to recall what has happened to her. The Master of the World, however, has used a powder created from a rare Himalayan plant as a mind-control drug, and trained the unsuspecting socialite as a hidden assassin, to strike at any target the Master designates!

VINCENZO "VINNIE FIVE-ANGELS" PENTANGELI

Vincenzo Pentangeli, known on the street as "Vinnie Five-Angels", is a highly-placed enforcer for the local Mafia in your campaign's main city. His primary job for the Mob is as a Troubleshooter -- if there's trouble, Vinnie is sent, and he shoots it. He's very good at what he does, and this has made him a valuable member of the organization, and increased his power within it. He currently is the number two man, behind the Boss -- the old man who is the titular head of the family-- but whispers on the street are starting to say that Five-Angels is the real power behind the throne.

VINCENZO "VINNE FIVE-ANGELS" PENTANGELI

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d10
Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d8, Guts d12, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Streetwise d10, Taunt d8

Charisma:0 ; **Pace:** 6;

Parry:6; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Obligations (Mafia), Wanted.

Edges: Alertness, Command, Connection, Dead Shot, Followers, Rock and Roll.

Gear: Tommy Gun



ADVENTURE HOOKS

- A Mob War rages on the streets of the City, as two (or more) organized crime gangs battle for control of illicit business (smuggling, gambling, prostitution) in the area. Crime is on the rise, and this will naturally draw the attention of the Player Characters. After a few run-ins with mob-related

crime, the PCs will be identified as a threat, and the family that Pentangeli works for will send him out to remove the threat.

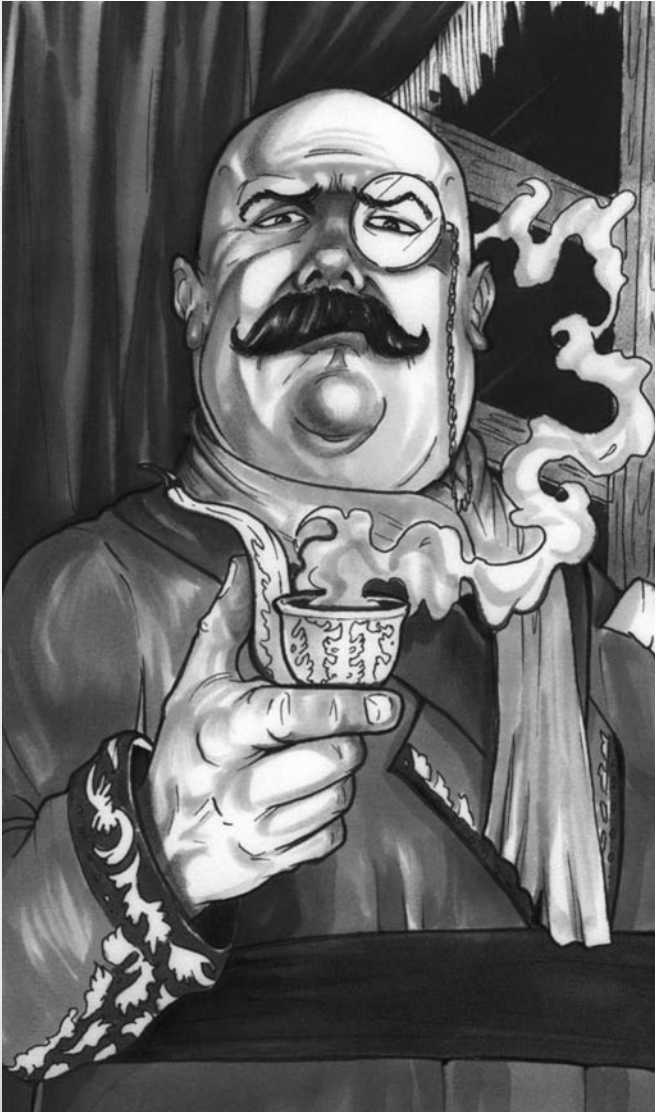
- Criminal power in the city has been consolidated behind a single family-- the one with Vinnie as a member. Now the time has come to make his move. Pentangeli decides to stage a coup and take control of the

Mob, leading to a "civil war" in the city's underworld, with gang bosses declaring their allegiance to one side or the other. Can the Player Characters take down the Mob before the city is torn apart?



OTTO VON ÜBEL

Otto Von Übel represents a surprise to throw at your characters -- a German villain who not only has no connection to the Nazis, but also turns out to be an honest-to-god vampire!



Von Übel was a Prussian noble who was wounded during the Napoleonic Wars, as he lay dying on the battlefield, he fell victim to the predations of a vampire. The vampire, whose name Von Übel never learned, was a weak creature, more content with scavenging

battlefields than in hunting his own prey -- Von Übel used his dying effort to kill the creature, but not before it had worked its terrible magic. Otto Von Übel rose again as a creature of the night.

Von Übel is interested in only one thing -- power and wealth. He rose in power in Germany as an industrialist, but when the Nazi regime began to nationalize industry, the vampire left Germany to pursue his wealth in the Brave New World of America.

He is a businessman without morals or scruples. He is not above blackmail or strong-arm tactics to get what he wants, and his company, International Holdings, Ltd., is weathering the Depression rather well as a result.

Players will most likely assume that Von Übel is one of the "Fat Cat Businessman" villains (those that don't immediately assume that he's a Nazi spy, of course). Von Übel has managed to avoid detection as a vampire for over 130 years so far -- his reputation is as an eccentric recluse. The heroes will certainly be surprised when the truth is revealed!

OTTO VON UBEL

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength d12+3, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d10, Intimidation d12, Notice d10, Shooting d8, Throwing d8

Charisma: 0 ; **Pace:** 6;

Parry: 7; **Toughness:** 10

Hindrances: See Weaknesses

Edges: See Special Abilities

Special Abilities:

- **Change Form:** As an action, Von Übel can change into a wolf or a bat with a Smarts roll at -2. Changing back requires a Smarts roll.
- **Charm:** Von Übel can use the Puppet power on any target using his Smarts as his arcane skill. He can cast and maintain the power indefinitely, but can only effect one target at a time.
- **Children of the Night:** Von Übel can summon and control

wolves and rats. This requires an action and a Smarts roll at -2. If successful, 1d6 wolves or 1d6 swarms of rats come from the surrounding wilds in 1d6+2 rounds.

• **Claws:** Str +d4

• **Improved Frenzy:** Von Übel may make two attacks per round without penalty.

• **Invulnerability:** Von Übel can only be harmed by his weaknesses (q.v.). He may be Shaken by other attacks, but never Wounded.

• **Level Headed:** As per the Edge.

• **Mist:** Von Übel can turn into a mist. This requires an action and a Smarts roll at -2.

• **Sire:** Anyone slain by a vampire has a 50% chance of rising as a vampire themselves in 1d4 days.

• **Undead:** +2 Toughness, +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage (except to the heart -- see weaknesses). No wound penalties.

Weaknesses:

• **Sunlight:** Von Übel catches fire if any part of his skin is exposed to direct sunlight. After that he takes 2d10 damage per round until he is dust. Armor does not protect.

• **Holy Symbol:** A character with a holy symbol may keep Von Übel at bay -- if Von Übel wants to directly attack the character, he must beat the character in an opposed test of Spirits.

• **Holy Water:** Von Übel is fatigued if sprinkled with holy water. If he is submerged, he combusts as if it were direct sunlight.

• **Invitation:** Von Übel cannot

enter a private dwelling without being invited. He can enter public domains as he pleases.

• **Stake Through the Heart:** If Von Übel is hit with a wooden stake and a called shot to the heart (-4), he must make a Vigor roll versus the damage. If successful, he takes damage normally. If he fails, he disintegrates to dust.

Von Übel is served by a group of lesser vampires that he has created. He recognized their use early on, and sends them on errands to procure him victims for feeding, or to do violence against his business opponents (He knows that the chances of them being traced back to him is negligible, as they turn to dust when destroyed!)

For example statistics for one of his minions, use the Young Vampire entry in the **Savage Worlds** core book.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- Von Übel, as a prominent businessman of German descent, has come to the attention of the Nazis, who wish to bend him to their will and use his business as a Fifth Column operation within the United States. When he rebuffed their efforts, they decided to use stronger tactics.

The Player Characters are drawn into events when sabotage attacks occur at several International Holdings businesses. The PCs

will unveil the Nazi plot, but will also begin to discover that the agents that they are uncovering are soon turning up dead, or disappearing under mysterious circumstances. The PCs will be caught between the Vampire and the Reich as the two sides battle each other!

- As a twist on the above, perhaps Von Übel has instead come to the attention of the United States Government...a wealthy German industrialist, with a reputation as a recluse? Sounds like a job for G-Men to investigate. Players expecting to uncover a dastardly Nazi plot instead have to contend with Evil from Beyond the Grave!

- The Player Characters become involved in a murder mystery -- terror has struck a construction site, as several workers have been killed. Each has apparently fallen to his death from the girders of the skyscraper while staying late...but there are oddities surrounding the events. First, each of the men killed was a vocal proponent of unionizing to negotiate better wages from their employers, International Holdings, Inc. Second, despite the trauma of falling from such great heights, there has been no blood found at the scene.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

PULP VILLAINS - THE NAZIS

The Green Falcon hung precariously by his fingers from the metal gantry. Below him, the distant ground was visible through the open maintenance bay of the zeppelin. Above him, the barrel of a gun, held in the leather-clad hands of SS Major Reinhardt Kritzinger.

The Nazi cocked the Luger, ready to fire at the helpless form that dangled below him. "So this is the end of the famous Grünfalke. Pathetic. You will die unknown, unmourned... and a failure. The delivery of the poison gas via this airship is already complete. We will release it, and the prevailing winds will carry it into New York City. The death toll will be tremendous...and the shock of it will completely break the spirit of this mongrel nation."

Kritzinger grinned maniacally as he saw one of the Green Falcon's hands lose its grip and slip off the gantry.

"You're forgetting something." The Green Falcon said calmly. "The poison gas is flammable...and so is hydrogen." His hand came back into view, gripping a chromed .45.

The weapon spat death in the enclosed space, as the Green Falcon let go of the gantry and fell, still firing. Bullets ripped through the gas bags all around the Nazi, and ricocheted off the metal supports, throwing sparks.

The Hindenberg erupted into a huge ball of flame over Lakehurst, New Jersey...and the secret cargo of poison was consumed in the conflagration.

...and what of the Green Falcon?

Well that is another tale....

AN IMPORTANT POINT

This chapter is in no way an effort to downplay the very real evil represented by the Nazi ideology--nor does it intend disrespect to the memory of the millions killed by the Nazi regime. It is simply an examination of two-dimensional villains as portrayed in the pulp genre. Real-life Nazis are a serious subject. Pulp Nazis are scene-chewing Evil Villains. This chapter deals with the latter.

Perhaps no other group makes as perfect a villain for pulp RPG campaigns as the Nazis. They are the embodiment of evil, and suited for any tale, whether it is a straightforward tale of espionage, or a far-fetched story of occult powers and super-science.

Ironically, for much of the run of the pulps themselves, the Nazis weren't featured as villains that often, until late in the thirties when conflict with them began to seem inevitable. The earlier pulps avoided real-world politics, in favor of featuring obviously fascist villains from made-up nations.

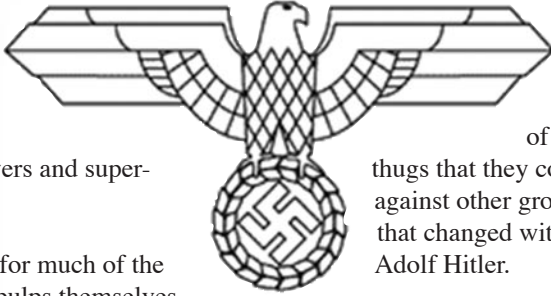
THE RISE OF THE NAZIS

In the years following World War I, Germany was ruled by a democratic Republic. The Weimar Republic was an unstable government, and was constantly under attack from both left-wing and right-wing reactionary political parties, fighting to shape the future of the country and wrest control away from the Republic.

Many of these reactionary organizations were occult societies formed during the previous century. Among these were the New Templars, the Runic Order, and the Thule Society, an occult group obsessed with racial purity,

anti-Semitism, national pride and militarism.

The Thule Society sponsored a miniscule political party, the German Worker's Party -- in reality little more than the strong arm of the Thules, thugs that they could use against other groups. All of that changed with the arrival of Adolf Hitler.



Hitler was born in 1889 in Austria. An undistinguished student, Hitler had several unsuccessful attempts to become a student of art in the Vienna College of Fine Art, and was forced to take several menial jobs performing manual labor.

Jewish citizens were very prominent in the cultivated society of Vienna, and Hitler saw them as blocking his rightful ascendance as a great artist. This anti-Semitism, coupled with a growing fascination with the Aryan ideal of German culture, would shape Hitler's political opinions.

During the First World War, Hitler served as a corporal in the German army. He fought bravely, being awarded the Iron Cross, and was wounded in combat. During his hospitalization, he heard of the German defeat. He believed that Germany had been betrayed from within.

When he was discharged from the

hospital, he found himself, like many of his comrades, unemployed. Like many disaffected veterans, he joined one of the paramilitary, political organizations—the German Workers’ Party.

By 1920, the German Workers’ Party changed its name to the National Socialist German Workingmen’s Party (abbreviated as the Nazi Party). By his skill as a fiery orator and efficient organizer, Hitler became the *Führer* (leader) of the Party in 1921.

The Party adopted an emblem, the swastika -- an ancient symbol used by Buddhists and western occultists. Through the party’s newspaper, Hitler fiercely denounced the Treaty of Versailles and the socialists who had, he believed, delivered a ‘stab in the back’ to Germany in 1918.

Under Hitler, the party which had begun as a strong-arm group to protect the interests of the Thule Society, organized its own strong-arm group -- the *Sturmabteilung* (also known as the S.A., Stormtroopers, or Brownshirts) to protect the Nazi

meetings and disrupt the meetings of other parties, such as the Communists.

In November 1923, Hitler and his S.A., joined by other militant reactionaries, tried to overthrow the Weimar Republic. They carried out a coup d’etat in Munich, but the Bavarian government suppressed them.

In April 1924, Hitler was put on trial and was sentenced to five years’ imprisonment at Landsberg prison, but in a typical display of the leniency the Weimar Republic showed to the right-wing, he was released after serving only 9 months.



While in prison, Hitler laid down the basic ideas behind the Nazi movement in his book, *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle).

Hitler divided mankind into two groups: the Aryans (the master-race) and the non-Aryans (the slave races). The Germans, he asserted, were Aryans, and destined to rule the world. Hitler said that the Jews were the most vicious of the slave races, having caused the German defeat in World War I by encouraging the socialists in the November Revolution in 1918 which overthrew the Kaiser.

Hitler suggested if Germans wanted their nation to be strong again, they had to believe in the *Führer* -- Hitler himself. He would remove the Jews from Germany so that they would not pollute the German blood by intermarriage. Then he would replace the parliamentary government by Nazi rule—the rule of an elite who accepted orders from Hitler alone.

The Nazis would nationalize the big business, provide employment for all workers, implement land reforms for peasants and destroy the chains placed upon the German people by the Jewish capitalists. Hitler claimed that he would make Germany economically self-sufficient. He would abolish the humiliating Treaty of Versailles, bring about the union of all Germans in a single German state (the *Gross-deutschland*) and, in order to provide for additional living space for the nourishment of the future generations (*'Lebensraum'*), Hitler proposed to conquer eastern Europe.

With a party platform which appealed to many Germans, the Nazis took part in the national elections. However, in times of economic prosperity, the Nazis could make little headway.

In the election of May 1924, only 32 Nazis were elected to the Reichstag. In December 1924, the number



dropped to 14. Despite the poor election results, the Nazi Party still showed a sturdy growth in these years. By 1929, the total party membership was 178,000.

The Nazis began to receive financial support from industrialists who saw the Nazis as an anti-socialist and anti-communist tool which could be used to keep the left-wing in check.

Hitler strengthened his control of the party by forming his personal bodyguard, the *Schutzstaffel* ("Defense Unit"), also known as the SS or Blackshirts.

With the Great Depression, the Nazis saw their opportunity. In October 1929, the New York Stock Market suddenly collapsed. American investors recalled their short-term loans from Germany, sending the economy into a tailspin. In early 1931, one of Germany's three largest banks collapsed. The German economy

depended largely on American loans. Without American loans, production dropped drastically, and exports dried up. By 1932, a quarter of the working population of Germany was unemployed.

Faced with economic hardship, the Germans lost any faith they might have in the democratic Republic. It was not surprising that they turned to extreme parties for desperate remedies. In the general election of September 1930, the Nazis won 6.5 million votes, took 107 seats in the Reichstag and became the second largest party in the country. The Communists obtained 4.5 million votes and 77 seats. Although the Social Democrats remained the largest party, it had lost much popularity and support.

The unpopularity of the government was shown in the presidential election of April 1932. The Republican coalition put forward Von Hindenburg. He was re-elected with nineteen million votes. But Hitler, who also entered himself for election, won thirteen and a half million votes.

In the next six months, the government tried to get a Reichstag majority by holding two elections. The first took place in July. In that election, the votes for the Nazis more than doubled. The Nazis won 230 Reichstag seats and became the largest single party in the Reichstag.

Disappointed by the results of the election, the government held

another in November. However, in this election, the Communists made tremendous gains and won 100 seats in the Reichstag. Many influential businessmen and landlords became alarmed at the spectre of a Communist Revolution in Germany, and so the conservative Nationalists decided that their cause could be served by supporting Hitler, a staunch anti-communist.

On January 28, 1933, Von Hindenburg invited Hitler to be the Chancellor of Germany.

It took Hitler only eighteen months to concentrate all of the power into his own hands.

The first thing he did was to arrange for an election so as to secure a pro-Nazi majority in the Reichstag. To prepare for Nazi success in the election, Hitler appointed party member Hermann Goering as Minister of Interior of Prussia and ordered the S.A. and S.S. to launch assaults on the anti-Nazi political parties.

On 27 February, the Reichstag building was burned down and the Communists were falsely accused of using the fire as a signal for Communist insurrection. In the guise of defending the country from an alleged Communist Revolution, Hitler asked for emergency power from President Hindenburg.

In a wave of hysteria over the perceived Communist threat, President Hindenburg signed a decree sus-

pending the civil liberties guaranteed under the Constitution. Henceforth, the German citizens had no personal liberty, no freedom of speech, no freedom of assembly, and no freedom of expression. They were subject to house searches and arrest and could be tried by the special People's Courts. Hitler made use of this presidential emergency power to immediately arrest five thousand Communist officials.

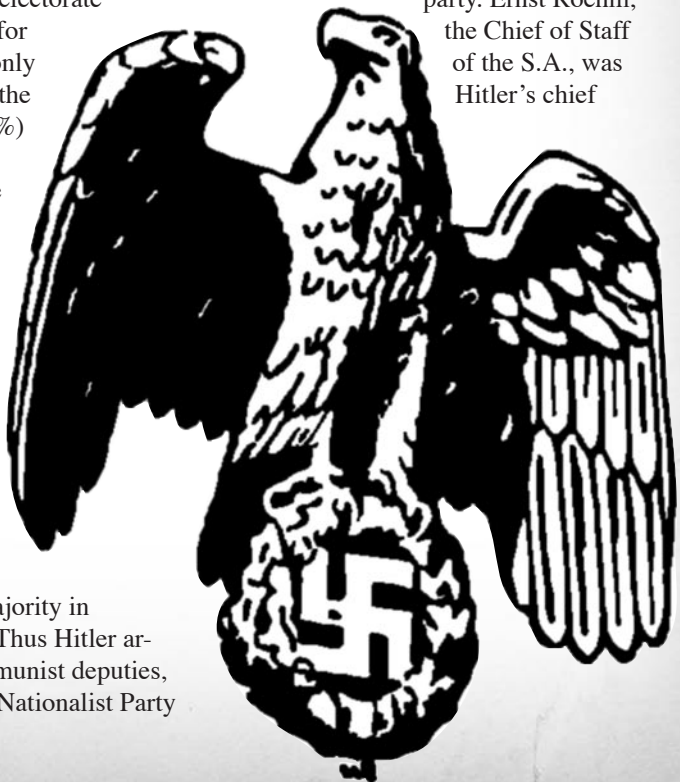
In the Reichstag election that followed, the Nazis banned the Communist and Socialist newspapers. The Nazis also made use of the radio stations to broadcast propaganda. The Stormtroopers marched in the streets in a show of force to influence the election. Still, less than one half of the electorate (43.9%) voted for Hitler, so that only with the aid of the Nationalists (8%) was Hitler able to obtain a bare majority in the Reichstag.

Hitler wanted to transfer all legislative power of the Reichstag to himself, but any change in the Constitution required a two-thirds majority in the Reichstag. Thus Hitler arrested 81 Communist deputies, and bribed the Nationalist Party

and the Centre Party. As a result, in March 1933, the Nazis outvoted the Social Democrats by 444 to 94 and passed the Enabling Bill which gave Hitler unlimited power to draft and pass any laws without the Reichstag. The German Constitution was destroyed.

Hitler wasted no time in consolidating his power. The Law of Reconstruction of the Reich (January 1934) abolished the state legislatures and subordinated them to the central government at Berlin. Trade Union offices were raided by the S.A. and S.S. troops. Soon afterward, all political parties except the Nazi Party were declared illegal.

The time then came for Hitler to deal with his political rivals within the party. Ernst Roehm, the Chief of Staff of the S.A., was Hitler's chief



political rival. Roehm had at his command 2 million Storm-troopers (S.A.). This constituted a great threat to Hitler's political position, since he feared that The S.A. might absorb the smaller German Army, leaving Roehm in command of the nations entire military force. Therefore, Hitler decided to get rid of Roehm and the S.A.

On 29th June, 1934. Hitler, accompanied by the *Schutzstaffel* (SS), personally arrested Ernst Roehm. During the next 24 hours 200 other senior SA officers were arrested. Many were shot as soon as they were captured but Hitler decided that Roehm should be allowed to commit suicide but, when Roehm refused, he was killed by two SS men.

The purge of the SA was kept secret until it was announced by Hitler on 13th July. It was during this speech that Hitler gave the purge its name: Night of the Long Knives.

Hitler claimed that 61 had been executed while 13 had been shot resisting arrest and three had committed suicide. Some historians have argued that as many as 400 people were killed during the purge. In his speech Hitler explained why he had not relied on the courts to deal with the conspirators: "In this hour I was responsible for the fate of the German people, and thereby I become the supreme judge of the German people. I gave the order to shoot the ringleaders in this treason."

When President Von Hindenburg died in August 1934, Hitler announced that he would combine in himself the offices of President and Chancellor. He used a combined title, *Führer und Reichskangler* (Leader and Reich Chancellor and Supreme Commander-in-Chief). Army officers took the oath of allegiance to Hitler personally. Hitler's personal dictatorship was now complete. The Third Reich was officially proclaimed.

THE THIRD REICH

The Nazi control of Germany was absolute. The entire nation was indoctrinated to the Nazi ideology. Those who did not adhere to the new directives found themselves the subjects of state-sponsored harassment, arrest, imprisonment or execution.

Education, from kindergarten to university, was geared towards the total immersion of Germany's youth in the tenets of the Nazi ideology. Boys (10-18 years old) were sent to the Hitler Youth, girls (10-18 years old) to the Hitler Maidens. School textbooks were re-written along Nazi lines and University professors were required to wear swastika and take an oath of allegiance to Hitler.

Dissent within Germany was handled by the secret state police (*Geheime Staatspolizei* - abbreviated to Gestapo), an organization which began as the political department of the Prussian police during the



Weimar Republic. With Hitler's rise to power, Hermann Goering became the interior minister of Prussia, taking over the Prussian political police and naming Rudolf Diels as its executive director.

The suspension of civil liberties following the Reichstag fire in 1933 gave the Gestapo complete freedom to impose "protective custody" (*Schutzhaft*) and to prevent undesirable political activities. When Goering was made Prime Minister of Prussia on 11 April 1933, the Gestapo was separated entirely from the overall police structure.

Heinrich Himmler eventually established SS control over the political police and concentration camps in all Germany, including Prussia, where, as Goering's deputy, he took over the Gestapo on 20 April, 1934.

Although throughout Germany the concentration camps came under the control of the SS, the Gestapo had the power to send its victims to them and could determine the prisoners' fate.

By September 1935, the famous Nuremberg Laws were issued. The Laws, in effect, deprived Jews of German citizenship and forbade them to marry 'Aryans'. Jews were excluded from participation in the German political and cultural life. Severe hardships were inflicted on Jews in their daily life (e.g. the need to sit in a separate part of the bus).

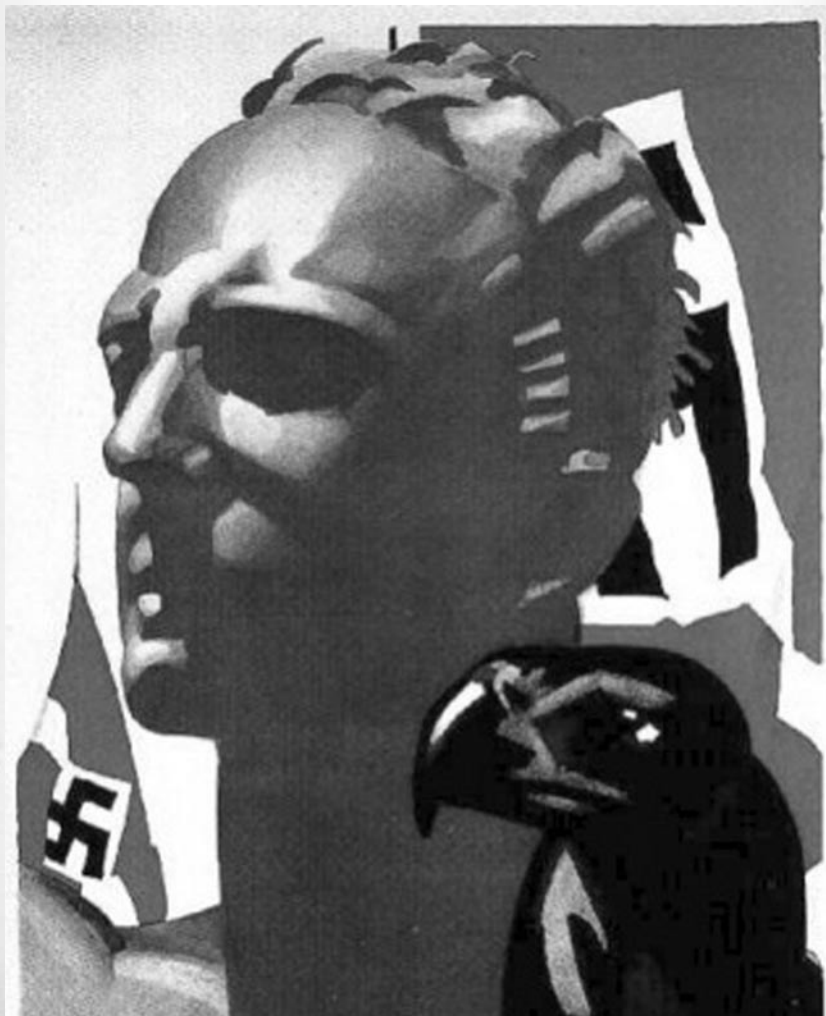
As time went on, the treatment of the Jews became worse and worse. They had their property confiscated, personal liberty deprived and eventually were forcibly relocated to ghettos, where they were confined. The persecution grew exponentially worse, and eventually the ghettos

were emptied into the concentration camps. It is estimated that 6 million Jews perished under Nazi rule during the rule of the Third Reich.

During the mid-thirties, the Nazis began to re-militarize Germany, in anticipation of their planned conquest of Europe. The plan required the nullification of the Treaty of Versailles and the annexation of all German-speaking

countries into the Reich. Hitler then planned to conquer France and Soviet Union before moving on to Britain. Italy would be run as a client state, under the fascist dictator Benito Mussolini.

The first step was to rebuild the German army, which had been kept small by the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. The Nazi industrial machine began to build



aircraft and armor, under cover of supposedly civilian projects like the development of new tractors and the nationalized airline.

Hitler announced that he would add 36 new divisions to Germany's Armed Forces. In 1936, German soldiers marched into the demilitarized Rhineland. The Treaty of Versailles was completely destroyed, as neither France nor Britain lifted a finger to stop the German invasion.

As early as 1933, Hitler had been pushing for the annexation of Austria. The Austrian chancellor, Engelbert Dollfuss, responded by outlawing the Austrian Nazi Party. The party continued to operate illegally, with German support, and on July 25, 1934, Austrian Nazis occupied the Parliament building and murdered Dollfuss.

Dollfuss' successor, Kurt von Schuschnigg, was pressured by the Germans into making concessions, which included lifting the ban on the Austrian Nazi Party and the placement of pro-Nazi ministers in key positions. In one final desperate move on March 9, 1938, Schuschnigg called for a popular vote on Austrian independence. Hitler's response to this was to demand that the vote be postponed and that Schuschnigg resign...and three days later, he sent German troops into Austria.

A Nazi puppet is sworn into office as Austria's Chancellor, and the

new ministry is composed entirely of Nazis. France invited Italy and England to examine the events, but Italy declines stating that they "regard the events in Austria as the outcome of a preexistent state of affairs and as the free expression of the feelings and good will of the Austrian people, unequivocally confirmed by the imposing public demonstrations with which the events were greeted."

On March 15th, delirious crowds greeted Hitler as he paraded triumphantly through Vienna, and on April 10th, Hitler held his own election, and 99 percent of Austrians voted in favor of the annexation (*Anschluss*).

France and Britain protested, but weakly. British Prime Minister Chamberlain claimed that Germany was required to consult with England, France and Italy before acting, but this demand is ignored by Hitler. Realizing the threat that Germany's new position placed upon Czechoslovakia (now nearly surrounded by the Third Reich), Chamberlain assured the Czechs that England would support them.

However, by the fall of 1938, England, France and Italy would force the Czechs into handing territory over to the Germans, and by the close of the decade, the Third Reich's invasion of the rest of Czechoslovakia and invasion of Poland began the Second World War (which brought the pulp era to a close).

NAZI ARCHETYPES

The pages that follow contain NPCs that represent the most common archetypal uses of Nazis as represented in pulp stories, cliffhanger films and modern homages.

NAZI SOLDIER (WEHRMACHT)

The average Nazi rank-and-file goon, ready to goose-step, seig heil and get socked in the jaw by our stalwart heroes.

For the purposes of pulp gaming, the Wehrmacht soldier is essentially the equivalent of an orc in a standard fantasy game. He's there to follow orders, and will fight fiercely against any opposition, only surrendering in the face of overwhelming power.

All Nazi Soldiers are Mooks (see Chapter 5).

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

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Shooting d6

Charisma: +0;

Pace: 6; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: Helmet (+3), MP38 (12/24/48

Damage 2d6 ROF 3 Shots 32), Four grenades (5/10/20, 3d6-2, med. burst template).

NAZI SOLDIER (SS)

The *Schutzstaffel* represent a tougher and more fanatical variety of the Nazi goon. Use these guys when you want to provide more of a challenge to your player-characters.

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

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8

Charisma: -4, **Pace:**6;

Toughness: 7

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Loyal
Edges: Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Rock and Roll

Gear: Helmet (+3), MP38 (12/24/48 Damage 2d6 ROF 3 Shots 32), Four grenades (5/10/20, Damage 3d6-2, med. burst template), Knife (Str+d4)



NAZI OFFICER

Now we're getting to the true pulp villains. Use officers as the main villains for adventures featuring the Third Reich. When your player-characters are more powerful, use a Nazi officer as the henchman of an even more powerful and insidious villain!

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8.
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Tactics) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Taunt d6

Charisma: -2, **Pace:**6;

Parry: 5 **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Loyal, Mean

Edges: Command, Hold the Line, Strong Willed

Gear: Luger P08 (12/24/48 Damage 2d6, ROF 1, Shots 8)



GESTAPO GOON

This instrument of the secret state police should be an omnipresent threat any time that your player-characters travel into areas that lie under the control of the Reich. The heroes should be watched at every step, wondering when the Gestapo will strike suddenly, and whisk them away to a windowless interrogation room...or worse.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Investigation d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6

Charisma: -2, **Pace:**6;

Parry: 5 **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Loyal, Mean

Edges: --

Gear: Luger P08 (12/24/48 Damage 2d6, ROF 1, Shots 8)



NAZI SPY

Another iconic Nazi villain, the Spy operates as a Fifth Column within a target nation, engaging in espionage or sabotage on the orders of his or her superiors. Spies are tasked with stealing military secrets, assassinating political targets and many other dastardly deeds, unless your player-characters can track them down and uncover the hidden menace!

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8.
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Investigation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Streetwise d6
Charisma: +2, **Pace:** 6;
Parry: 5 **Toughness:** 7
Hindrances: Loyal, Obligations
Edges: Charismatic
Gear: Luger P08 (12/24/48 Damage 2d6, ROF 1, Shots 8)

NAZI SCIENTIST

“Nuzzink in ze vurld can schtopp me NOW! Bwah-ha-ha-ha-haaaa!!!”

You know the type. The Nazi scientist is bent on world domination via technological superiority...and, in pulp adventures, that means Giant Killer Robots, Flying Saucers, Secret Mind Control Devices and the ever-present Death Ray.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6.
Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Healing d6, Knowledge (any two sciences) d12, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Repair d10, Shooting d6, Weird Scieenc d12
Charisma: +0, **Pace:** 6;
Parry: 5 **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Arrogant, Delusional
Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), Gadgeteer, Mr. Fix It, McGyver, Power Points, Rapid Recharge.
Gizmos: *Armor* (shield belt), *Bolt*(Death Ray), *Puppet*(hypno-ray), *Stun* (shock gloves), 30 Power Points.



NAZI SORCERER

Hitler's obsession with the occult is a matter of historical record—even the Nazi party itself began as the political arm of an occult society, the Thule Gesellschaft. In 1935, Heinrich Himmler founded the *Studiengesellschaft für Geistesurgeschichte Deutsches Ahnenerbe* (Society for Research into the Spiritual Roots of Germany's Ancestral Heritage), known simply as the Ahnenerbe. The official purpose of the organization was to travel the world searching for evidence of the ancient Aryans. Records exist that indicate that the Ahnenerbe also studied the occult sciences.

The Nazi Sorcerer is an operative of the Ahnenerbe, well-versed in magical practices (most likely based on the Nordic runes or other Germanic sources).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d6.

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d10, Healing d6, Knowledge (occult) d12, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Spellcasting d12, Taunt d10

Charisma: -3, **Pace:** 6;

Parry: 5 **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Mean, Overconfident, Stubborn, Vengeful.

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), Command, Fervor, Level Headed, New Power, Power Points, Wizard

Powers: *Armor, Bolt, Deflection, Entangle, Fly, Obscure, Puppet, Smite* 40 Power Points



NAZI TEMPTRESS

One of the stranger archetypes to develop during the pulp era, and which continues to the present day (for example, in *The Last Crusade* and *Hellboy*), is that of the Nazi Temptress: an evil agent of the Third Reich who uses her feminine wiles in an attempt to seduce our stalwart hero. The archetype in the pulps was often simply an excuse to engage in some blatant dominatrix-themed titillation.

Occasionally, the Temptress is irredeemably evil, serving as an example of Beauty actually being the Beast. In these cases, the allure of the character is set in stark contrast to her horrible acts. In other cases, however, she can be swayed (naturally, having never met the “right guy”) and convinced to betray the Nazi cause at a suitably dramatic moment in the adventure.



Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6.
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Shooting d6, Taunt d8
Charisma: +4, **Pace:** 6;
Parry: 5 **Toughness:** 7
Hindrances: Quirk (Sadist)
Edges: Charmer, Very Attractive
Gear: Luger P08 (12/24/048 Damage 2d6, ROF 1, Shots 8), Riding Crop (Str+d4)

TAKE THAT, FRITZ! (NAZI PLOT IDEAS)

The Nazis make excellent villains for use in your pulp campaign adventures, largely because of the expectations of the players. You say “pulp” to the average gamer, and you can be sure that he or she is anticipating landing a solid right hook on the jaw of a vile Nazi, while saving New York City from certain destruction.

You should be careful not to over-use the Third Reich, however. They lose their effectiveness as villains if the players start to suffer from “Nazi Fatigue.”

Remember that during the 1930s, the Reich was involved in a build-up to war readiness. Nazi operations should be largely covert... Gamemasters shouldn't have Nazi troops travelling via rocket-pack to invade the United States, unless you're intending for your campaign to veer in alternate history...which is not to say that there isn't fun to be had with that sort of campaign. Just be sure that your players are aware that's what you're going for. After all, the baseline pulp campaign is assumed to take place in at least a close approximation of the real world. Don't stretch your player's suspension of disbelief unless you've been up front about your intentions from the beginning.

ESPIONAGE ADVENTURES

The style of adventure that keeps its feet most firmly in the real-world soil, espionage adventures either pit your player characters against the secret machinations of Nazi agents within another nation, or conversely send the player-characters in to infiltrate the Reich itself.

The most time-honored of these plot ideas is where the heroes must stop Nazi spies. The plot line usually goes along these lines: Nazi agents have stolen the plans for some super-secret military technology (it always seems to be either plans for a prototype aircraft or a bomb-sight for some reason), and the player-characters must catch the spies before they can successfully smuggle the technology out of the country.

A variation on this is the discovery that a Nazi agent is operating in a position of power. The player-characters are armed with the knowledge that the agent exists, but are unaware of the agent's identity. The adventure focuses on uncovering the spy. This sort of adventure is more suited to campaigns that are less fantastic and more realistic in feel.

Espionage adventures can be set within the Reich as well, with player-characters sent in to steal secret plans themselves (turning the standard plot described above on its ear). Adventures within the Reich should be fraught with the danger of discovery -- player-characters should be hunted by agents of the Gestapo

every step of the way.

Another iteration of the infiltration plot has the player-characters travelling into the Reich to rescue someone from the grip of the Nazis. Perhaps a Jewish scientist held against his will and forced to work on a doomsday weapon, or an American spy who has been captured by the Gestapo...either way the player-characters must find their way into Germany, avoid capture themselves, and participate in a break-out.

Enjoyably, these sorts of missions almost always seem to feature the prisoner being held in some Bavarian castle, which provides the Gamemaster with the perfect opportunity to run the pulp RPG equivalent of a standard "dungeon-crawl" adventure!

MILITARY ADVENTURES

Generally speaking, open conflict with the Nazis doesn't really occur until the start of the Second World War, which marks the end of the pulp era. Given that, there isn't much opportunity for adventures featuring military action against the Reich.

Pulp magazines of the time got around this by cooking up wars with thinly-veiled fictional fascists, or by setting military action during the First World War (for example, *G-8 and His Flying Aces*).

However, there is nothing preventing Gamemasters from engaging in

secret military escapades: after all, the Flying Tigers engaged in war with Japan long before the United States officially followed suit. A campaign featuring the player-characters as a private mercenary unit fighting on the side of freedom and right (something along the line of *Sky Captain's* Flying Legion) could easily engage the Nazis. Combat could occur on secret island bases, military expeditions deep in the jungle...anywhere were a "little war" could be fought without attracting the attention of the rest of the world.

FANTASTIC ADVENTURES

Most pulp campaigns, however, are going to contain elements of the fantastic. It's fun, after all, and one of the things that attracts gamers to the style of play. Primarily, there are two directions that a GM can take when adding elements of the fantastic: Science Fiction and the Supernatural (although enterprising GMs can combine the two for some truly mind-boggling concepts!)

Science Fictional elements usually take the form of technological advances (either already in the possession of the Nazis, under development by Nazi mad scientists, or the subject of Nazi theft).

Historically, the Nazis spent a great deal of time and money investigating and developing new technologies (the V-1 and V-2 Rockets, for example), so the introduction of fantastic technology is not as far a stretch as it would be otherwise. It is a



relatively small leap from the V-2 to Nazi spacecraft, after all.

German atomic research is another great idea to spring upon player-characters, since they have the benefit of historical hindsight to know how close the Reich was to developing nuclear weapons, and what would have happened had they done so before the U.S.

Even more fantastic, yet still based in historical fact, is the idea of a German heat ray. After the end of World War II, American investigators found papers discussing the possibility of deploying a solar mirror in orbit, which could focus the sun's rays upon ground targets like a child cooking ants with a magnifying glass. Discovering secret Nazi plans to build such a device, and destroying it, would make a suitably exciting adventure for any hero.

The Nazi fascination with Antarctica also can provide Gamemasters with

fodder for adventures. Claimed by Germany in the 1930s, and christened *Neuschwabenland* (New Swabia), the South Pole has long been the subject of conspiracy theories about the Reich's activities there. Perhaps your player-characters can discover Nazi efforts to find the long-rumored entrance into the Hollow Earth, where representatives of the Third Reich hope to form an alliance with the subterranean empire that rules the World Below. Can your heroes stop the alliance before dinosaur-mounted troops come spilling out of the New York City subways?

The Reich was equally interested in Tibet, believing it to be one of the homes of the original Aryans. Ernst Schäffer, a German hunter and biologist, participated in two expeditions to Tibet, in 1934 and 1936. The Ahnenerbe sponsored him to lead a third expedition in 1938.

Their mission was to make contact with the Aryan forefathers in

Shambhala and Agharti (two hidden subterranean cities said to exist beneath the Himalayas). The cities were said to be the guardians of secret occult powers and super-science, and the missions sought their aid in harnessing those powers for the Nazi cause.

According to the stories, groups of Tibetans purportedly came back to Germany and started lodges known as "the Society of Green Men." It doesn't take much effort on the part of the Gamemaster to work these rumors into plots involving super-science, the occult, or both.

The plot ideas even get juicier when you take into account that of the two hidden cities, Shambhalla (also known as Shangri-la) was associated with higher cosmic powers, while Agharti was associated with more primal energies. It's easy to place them in the roles of a "good" hidden city and an "evil" one. Perhaps the Society of Green Men are Agharti Adepts aiding the Reich, and the player-characters have to discover the hidden city of Shambhalla and ask for their assistance in combating their ancient rivals.

Of course, today's gamers are more than familiar with the concept of the Nazis looking for supernatural assistance, thanks to the Indiana Jones films.

Whereas the search for the Ark of the Covenant never was an actual Nazi archaeological project, the Reich did actively search for the

Holy Grail and acquired the Spear of Destiny.

The Holy Grail, the cup supposedly used at the Last Supper, and which is said to have caught Christ's blood as it fell from the cross, was the subject of a search by Nazi archaeologist Otto Rahn. Rahn believed that the Grail had been carried to the South of France by the Cathars in the 13th century. Rahn received a commission in the SS from Himmler himself, and searched for the Grail, before inexplicably resigning his commission in 1939 and disappearing. What had he discovered, and what happened to him?

The Spear of Destiny is the spear of the Roman centurion Cassius Longinus, who is said to have used it to pierce the side of Christ. Legend has it that the Spear made whomever possessed it invincible. Stories are told of it passing down through history, in the possession of such men as Louis IX of France, Charlemagne and Napoleon. A spear, either the actual Spear of Destiny or a false relic (depending upon who you listen to), was on display at the Vienna Hofmuseum, and was confiscated by the Nazis after their annexation of Austria.

It was shipped via an armored SS train to Nuremberg on October 13th, 1938, where it remained for six years in St. Catherine's Church before being moved to an underground vault for protection. Some stories say that the Spear was taken to the

SS Castle at Wewelsberg.

During the final days of the war in Europe, the United States 7th Army took possession of the Spear in the name of the United States government. Within 90 minutes of the United States capturing the Spear, Adolf Hitler committed suicide. The Spear was returned to the Royal House of Hapsburg shortly thereafter, where it now rests, once again, in the Vienna Hofmuseum. (Although rumors persist that the Spear is a copy, with the true Spear either being kept by the United States, or perhaps by agents of the Reich).

Gamemasters looking to play on this particular theme can have Ahnenerbe-sponsored archaeological expeditions to the far corners of the globe: Egypt, Africa, South America; searching for anything from occult artifacts to Lost Cities. This allows adventures which cross the lines into standard pulp genres like jungle stories, fortune hunting, or Lost Worlds.

Which leaves us with another standard Nazi adventure plot, wherein the forces of the Third Reich dabble in Things That Man Was Not Meant to Know.

Obviously, the Nazi Sorcerer is the best archetype to use for such adventures, but an occult angle can be added to almost any other variety of plot. Perhaps Nazi agents are looking to steal the copy of the *Necronomicon* held in the library

collection of a small New England university. Or perhaps a Nazi scientific experiment causes some kind of dimensional rift, and Things Even Worse Than Nazis come through.

Plots involving the Nazis meddling with this sort of power should be marked by an unbelieving arrogance. At no point should a Nazi villain ever assume that he is in over his head. The firm belief in their status as the Master Race should be the villain's achilles heel in these situations (and, in some cases, the very cause of the danger in the first place!).

Gamemasters can also mix the Nazis with traditional supernatural pulp elements, such as mummies, werewolves, ghosts and vampires. See the *Hellboy* graphic novel series (and film) for suggestions on methods for doing this. The sudden realization that the SS officer whom they've been facing is actually a sorcerous vampire should be enough to put pause to even the most headstrong hero!

CHAPTER EIGHT:

PULP VILLAINS - THUGEE

INTRODUCTION

They strangle unsuspecting travelers on dark country roads. They glide through New York's glittering streets clinging to shadows, carrying fear and death in their yellow scarves. They dance and debauch, brutal thugs masking their villainy behind a façade of ancient mysticism.

They are the Thugee, a cult of murders whose history and myth stretch back to the time of Herodotus. They terrorized India's roadways for at least six hundred years. Each year they killed travelers by the tens of thousands. Eventually a single man stood up to them, ferreted them out of the dark places, and hung them high for all to see.



The British Empire hung thousands of Thuggee in the period between 1830 and 1850. Thousands more fled rather than pay for their crimes. By the end of the 19th century the terrible cult vanished from India. In the fictional world of the pulps, though, the cult persisted into the modern world. Charismatic conmen use its rituals to disguise their sinister schemes. Remnants of the original Thuggee continue their murderous rites. Rebels and terrorists hide their very modern ambitions under the strangling cord and the pick-axe.

Do you dare oppose them? Or will you too fall to a cunning smile and a swiftly applied yellow strangling cord?

THE THUGGEE

The historic Thuggee's saga reads like something out of an adventure novel. It has shining heroes, villains so vile they barely qualify as human, and a nasty intersection between religious fervor and material interest. Its sensational and scandalous nature inspired several best sellers, not to mention a judicial campaign reaching into India's darkest shadows.

In many ways, the Thuggee provided the model writers used to create cults in pulp fiction. They organized themselves into hereditary gangs. These gangs operated in secret and communicated among themselves using an indecipherable cant. When not engaged in their murderous

deeds Thuggee lived ordinary lives, had families, and contributed to their communities. In other words, they were everything we imagine a secret society to be: lethal, organized, and completely invisible to the outside world.

In the real world it took a man of remarkable dedication to bring them down. In the world of the pulps it will take more than that: it will take courage, determination, and a fistful of bullets.

The English word "thug" comes from the Hindu word *thag*, meaning a cheater or a thief. In general use a thug is a ruffian, a tough who does what his betters tell him. Gangsters employ thugs to beat people to a pulp. Smarmy business men with connections to gangsters hire these slope-browed simians to intimidate weak-willed customers.

Originally, though, the word described something far more dangerous than a class of criminal bottom feeders. Thugs terrorized India for centuries, murdering travelers and stealing the property. Thuggee, their system of beliefs and practices, organized a network of assassins, informers, merchants, and politicians unrivaled in human history. This network turned religious murder into a profitable enterprise, capable of literally mustering an army and ignoring authorities until one man finally brought them to justice.

This chapter starts by describing the historical Thuggee cult and its grizzly end. It then goes on to describe three different fictional versions of the Thuggee. The first outlines a loosely organized group of psychotic killers under the command of a criminal mastermind. The second suggests a possible continuation of the original Thuggee cult, assuming their goddess actually interceded to protect a her followers. The third outlines a hybrid between these two approaches, describing a rebel fascist organization structured using the ideas of the original Thuggee cult.

THE HISTORICAL THUGGEE

The Indian “thugs” came to the attention of the East India Company during the 1820s through Captain William Sleeman’s Herculean efforts. This young British captain boldly assaulted a centuries old institution of murder and robbery without consent from the local authorities. Ignoring centuries of Company policy he interfered in local affairs, hunted down bandits, and eventually changed life for Indians throughout the sub-continent.

The organization Captain Sleeman destroyed operated throughout India.

Princes and kings gave it tacit assistance in return for vast wealth. Its members, both Hindu and Muslim, engaged in wholesale murder during the summer months then returned to their ordinary lives. They passed the cult’s wealth and its terrible secrets to their children, indoctrinating their sons in murder before their eighteenth birthday.

Herodotus mentioned a people known for strangling their victims in his Histories, written in the fifth century BCE. Nineteen hundred years later, in the 14th century CE, a “Thug” financed a mercenary army to repel an Afghani invasion in northern India. Four hundred years after that, the British suddenly took an interest in the unexplained disappearance of 40,000 people every year from India’s roads. They found, to their horror, a loosely organized group capable of murdering everyone in



a caravan or plucking one traveler out of a crowd and killing him. The thugs participated in a cult called "Thugee". In theory the cult worshiped Kali in her aspect as goddess of destruction. Hindus and Muslim's participated in the cult, despite the obvious religious conflict between monotheistic beliefs and Kali worship.

Practically speaking, though, Thugee and the thugs were a family business. Fathers and uncles inducted young men into the practice early then passed on their positions as they retired. They disposed of their ill-gotten gains through centuries old channels, funding kingdoms and armies throughout the sub-continent.

Thugs lived ordinary lives during most of the year; many became respected members of their communities. They practiced trades, ran businesses, raised families: all of the things expected of normal citizens. However, they also took long "trips" into India every year. For three or more months they stalked the countryside in search of the proper targets.

Selecting a target required careful consultation of omens and proper ritual practice. It also involved an element of practical assessment. The thugs rarely moved unless they outnumbered their target by at least three to one. Reliable accounts describe them murdering caravans of 100 or more, so they obviously traveled in groups of at least 300 at times.

Thugs did not attack their foes in screaming waves, waving knives and shooting guns. Instead they joined their victims as fellow travelers. They could journey with a potential victim for months, usually posing as guards or entertainers, before finding the perfect moment to strike. When that moment came they attacked on a pre-arranged signal. Two thugs held the target, kicking him repeatedly in the genitals as a distraction, while a senior thug strangled him with a yellow scarf.

After completing their rituals and burying the bodies in unmarked graves, the thugs disposed of the victims' possessions by selling them to established governments. This influx of wealth supported several of the larger central Indian states, giving the thugs somewhere to hide while they prepared to resume their ordinary lives.

Among themselves the thugs spoke a secret language. Although clearly of Hindi origin, this language differed from its root language enough to prevent casual interception. Even so, they did not speak it in public, reserving it instead for their planning sessions and communications within the cult while not out seeking victims.

The Thugee cult continued almost unopposed until 1820. In that year a captain in the British Army, one William Sleeman, discovered their existence. For the next twenty years he hunted down thugs wherever he could find them. He might not have

succeeded, but early in his operation he captured several cult leaders. The kind of person willing to casually murder hundreds of innocents also, to the good captain's benefit, will also usually turn on his compatriots in return for considerations. These leaders helped Captain Sleeman round up and hang thousands of their fellow thugs despite sometimes stiff local opposition.

For all practical purposes the cult ceased to exist by 1840, though the East India Company continued to issue regulations about them into the middle of the 19th century. Captain Sleeman's exploits and the confessions of several Thuggee leaders became best-selling novels after suffering various degrees of fictionalization. The real events were, after all, almost too much for an educated readership to believe.

CHARACTERS

Any campaign involving the historical Thuggee cult should touch upon at least the following characters:

AMEER ALI

Ameer Ali, a Thuggee member and leader, confessed to over six hundred killings during his years as a cult member. His recorded, then fictionalized, confessions became the basis for "The Confessions of a Thug", an instant best-seller in 19th century Britain. Charming, sophisticated, and intelligent, his complete lack of moral compunctions about murder or betrayal fascinated readers

for almost one hundred years. Characters might encounter him in any one of a number of disguises or meet him after his capture in their quest to destroy the Thuggee.

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Lockpicking d8, Notice d10, Shooting d8, Stealth d12, Swimming d6, Throwing d10.

Charisma +0; **Pace** 8

Parry: 7; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Obligations (Thuggee)

Edges: Block, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Fleet Footed, Level Headed, Quick Draw, Thief.

Gear: Knife (Str +d4), Yellow Strangling Scarf (after successful strike Str +d6 every round unless victim makes opposed Str roll)

CAPTAIN WILLIAM SLEEMAN

Sleeman came to India as a police officer and left a Major-General after a twenty year campaign against the Thuggee. At the start of his career he is a well-built, intelligent young man fired by high ideals and a sense of righteousness. By the end he suffers from the debilitating effects of living in a tropical environment for two decades, though he still carries himself with great dignity.

Characters who encounter him early in his career will find him accessible and charming as he tries to recruit them to his cause. Later in his career Mr. Sleeman's wife smoothes over his hard edges and occasional bouts

of temper as he nears the end of his long quest.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Investigation d10, Notice d12, Shooting d8, Streetwise d8, Survival d8

Charisma +0; **Pace** 6

Parry: 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Curious, Doubting Thomas, Enemy (Thugee Cult)

Edges: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Level Headed, Man Without Fear.

Gear: Webley Service Pistol (12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1 ROF 1 Shots 6 AP2)

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The historical Thugee might appear in any number of stories:

- 1) Characters in a historical campaign could become involved with Captain Sleeman during his early days as a policeman. His fanatical devotion to changing India will put him at odds with the Company executives, the local authorities, and the Thugee themselves.
- 2) In the later part of his campaign Sleeman becomes a very public and important figure. The characters may find themselves assigned to protect him as the Thugee, practiced deceivers and assassins, make a final effort to remove their opponent.
- 3) Indian characters may take on the role of Thugee defending their ancient and honorable calling from interference by the colonial powers. In between bouts of murder they will have to defend their leaders, mislead the authorities, and perhaps even assassinate the meddling Englishman who brought all of this about.

THE THUGEE CULT OF PERSONALITY

After the destruction of the historical thugs English and Indian conmen began to use its rituals and traditions as a cover. They took popular accounts of the Thuggee, mixed it with their own agendas, and produced an amalgam of East and West even more terrifying than the original.

The “Thuggee” use popular fear of their name and outright murder to bully people into handing over their material wealth. They have a highly decentralized structure in which each leader only knows one other leader. The “Grand Priest” knows all of the cells but none of their leaders know him by his real name or face.

In 1892 Duncan Turnbull went to the bar in London for the third time. The charges of criminal misconduct, fraud, and murder were enough to insure his speedy removal from society. Then, in a daring move assisted by three accomplices, he escaped from prison on the date of his sentencing. On the run and beyond the law he cooked up a grand scheme.

After leaving his accomplices where the authorities could find them Duncan vanished. A year later, rumors circulated though the underworld of coves showing up in shadowed alleyways. Though dead bodies, especially those of young men, appeared daily, something

about these new murders caught people’s attention. Each young man had a yellow scarf wrapped around his neck. Each one also had his head smashed in by something big, heavy, and sharp.

At first the authorities ignored the threat. After all, dozens of madmen and anarchists used the yellow scarves every year in a vain hope to confuse investigations. Two years into the crime spree, though, a group of constables turned up dead. Their strangled and mutilated bodies, posed in mockery of some ancient Indian sexual text, incited public outrage and belated official action.

Scotland Yard took four weeks to track down and apprehend the criminals. The investigation lead them though sordid opium dens, the Thames warehouses, and into London’s darkest heart. In a stunning raid they captured twelve men and a vast assortment of Indian paraphernalia. Under interrogation the men claimed descent from the original Thuggee cult, long though exterminated. They even produced papers proving the claim, though these papers later proved to be forgeries.

The investigators closed the case after the raid and confessions. They filed it away as a bit of left over business from the British Empire’s early years. A month later, rumors again surfaced of more men and women murdered by strangulation. Close investigation, though, revealed no foundation to the accusations.



A decade later, in New York, the cult surfaced again. This time the aggressive New York Police Department had its hands full with gang wars, turf battles between political factions, and the constant pressure of new immigrants from Europe and Asia. Since it looked like one group of odd-colored men murder other odd-colored men, their captains decided to ignore it.

The streets of New York proved a fertile place for the burgeoning cult. It recruited men from the lowest rungs of society, gave them wealth, and taught them to kill. Eventually cells began to grow in other cities, some as far west as Chicago.

The new Thuggee came into being when Duncan Turnbull vanished.

He decided, at the spur of the moment, to re-invent himself. Using his skills as a confidence man and actor, along with things he learned reading trashy novels in jail, he created a new persona "Mr. William Sleeman, Importer." In order to finance this change he contracted a number of down and out Indian criminals. To make his story more believable he provided the men with false documents "proving" their descent from the ancient Thuggee

families.

Upon this flimsy foundation "William Sleeman" built an international criminal empire. Independently organized cells of thugs murdered travelers, tourists, and immigrants in vast numbers. They would travel to a new city or burrough each season, murder and rob, then return home to their cover-lives as upright citizens. All of the stolen goods moved through Sleeman's import business, effectively laundering them while simultaneously tying the enterprise into the local business community.

When Sleeman lost the first cell he relocated from the familiar environs of London to New York City. There

he found a seething immigrant population, an inattentive police force, and lax import/export laws. In short, nearly perfect ground for his efforts. Disaffected men, cut off from their traditional moral and ethical authorities, happily signed on with his "thugs" in an attempt to make something of themselves.

CULT MEMBERS

The cult recruits members exclusively from the lowest of the low. Cell leaders seek out the unenfranchised, the newly arrived, and those who have potential but cannot quite make it on their own. They set these men up with legitimate, if low earning, businesses. They give them language training. They help them to put their children into schools and schedule medical care for those who need it.

In return the cell inducts them into the business. The new members learn a secret language made of up "Indian sounding" words that has no real rhyme or reason. One week every three months they go on a trip to an out of town location where they watch older cult members stalk, strangle, and rob anyone who looks like a good target. Once they have participated in enough murders the cult leader inducts them into the society.

No cult member knows much about the other cells. The cell leader, an appointed position, only sees their leader once per year and then on a day chosen by the "Grand Leader".

Loot is left in large blind drops, from which it mysteriously vanishes within a few days.

When not actively engaged in their murderous trade the cult members live ordinary lives. Most own small shops specializing in the garment trade or groceries. None acknowledge other cult members on the street, though they meet once a month to perform stylized rituals to the Dark Goddess Kali.

Unlike the real Thuggee this cult does not select its targets though an elaborate system of omen-reading. Instead they use purely pragmatic criteria for selecting victims. Their newfound faith and techniques cannot cover over their lowly origins.

CULT ENCOUNTERS

Though it would be convenient cult members do not wander around in Indian turbans with necklaces of human skulls around their necks. They dress conservatively, either in the well-tended clothes of a factory worker or the middle of the road shirt and jacket of successful businessmen. They present a friendly, even cooperative, face until they lull the target.

When the target feels perfectly safe they strike. One member attempts a choking attack from the rear while at least one other distracts the target by pummeling him. If the target breaks free the thugs flee by the fastest possible route.

CHARACTERS

Any campaign involving the Thugee cult of personality might encounter the following character:

DUNCAN TURNBULL AKA 'WILLIAM SLEEMAN'

Mr. Sleeman openly immigrated to the United States in 1896, bringing with him an active import business specializing in fine artifacts from around the world. His constant supply and cheap prices made him an instant favorite with the cash conscious but status climbing upper-middle class and criminal elements. The more established old money families continued to use their own dealers. Within a year he built up four cells, and has since established another dozen scattered throughout the states. He then hires pawn-brokers and locals to pick up the stolen goods and sells the loot in cities far away from where they were first nicked.

In person Duncan's almost hypnotic voice and aura of confidence lure people into a hazy daze from which they emerge after several hours. His flashing dark eyes and sardonic wit put even the most hardened investigators at ease, even when he directs his mockery towards them. Connections in the upper reaches of government and society prevent any serious investigation of his activities, even if he were revealed as a Thugee strangler.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d6.
Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8.

Charisma: +2, **Pace:** 6;

Parry: 5 **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Overconfident, Vengeful.

Edges: Charismatic, Charmer, Command, Connections, Fervor, Halls of Power, Level Headed, No Mercy.

Gear: Luger P08 (12/24/048 Damage 2d6, ROF 1, Shots 8), Yellow Strangling Scarf (after successful strike Str +d6 every round unless victim makes opposed Str roll)

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The cult of personality could easily become a main campaign villain. Cleaning out a cell could take an entire adventure; defeating Duncan himself would tax even the most psychopathic adventurers.

1. The characters encounter a Thugee group while traveling between two other adventure sites. The Thugee attack them in the middle of the night, leaving one or more of the character's in critical condition. This brutal introduction to the Thugee could spark a long (or short) set of adventures in which our heroes search out their foes, only to discover

they have vanished back into the darkness.

2. One of the character's long-standing friends dies while on a business trip. Some time later, in another part of the US, the character's see a signature item (e.g. a unique engraved pen or brooch) for sale in a pawn shop window. The shop owner is not a cult member but he bought the item in a lot from Sleeman Imports.
3. The characters begin to do business with Mr. Sleeman or one of his representatives, selling items of dubious providence to the importer in return for good cash. Eventually a crusading police officer comes to speak with them, inquiring about their activities. The officer's investigation, though brushing up against the characters' activities, really focuses on Sleeman's import/export business and its connection to a small ring of murderers the policeman uncovered.

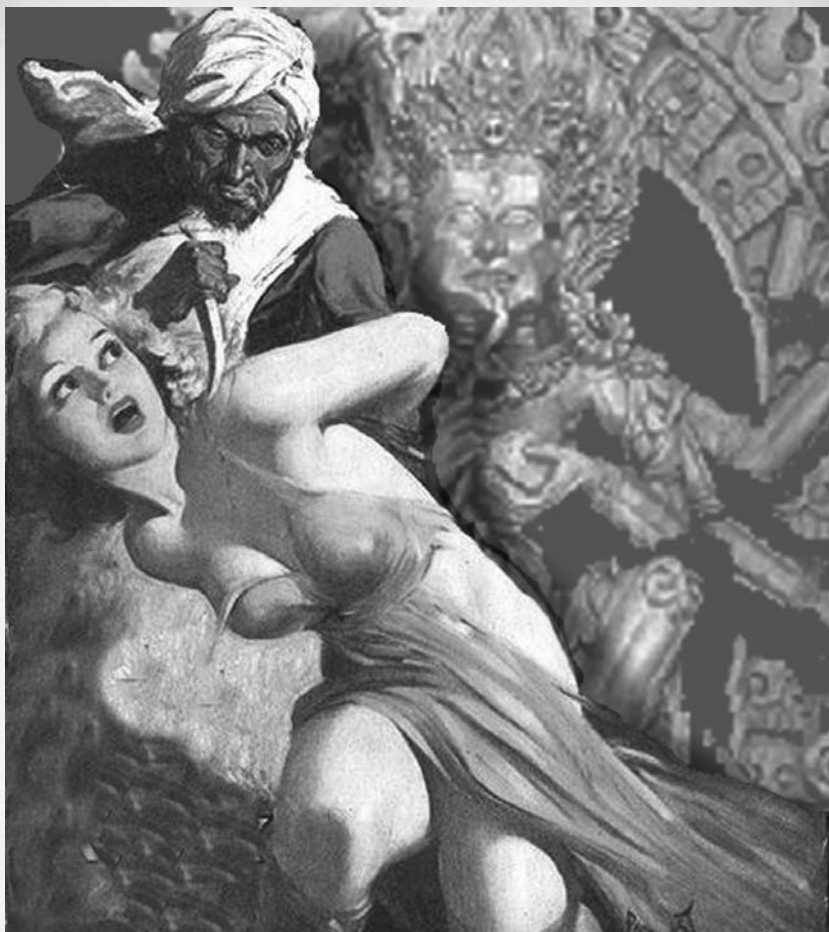
THE THUGEE: ANCIENT SURVIVORS

In the beginning Black Kali chose from among the people those who could worship her as she desired. To these men she taught the art of reading omens, the skills of the strangling cord, and the words which none other could hear. Her chosen children did as their goddess commanded and all was good.

Over thousands of years, though, her children lost their way. Many fell into decadent practices, murdering without recourse to the proper rituals. They lost the knowledge of true omens, instead taking every turn of a leaf or sudden shower as a sign from the goddess herself. Some became no better than common thieves, killing for their own glory rather than the goddesses.

Eventually Black Kali stretched forth her hands. With one taloned fist she grasped a an Englishman's heart. With another she smote the pretender's minds, making them blind to their oaths of loyalty. With a third she opened the eyes of the last remaining man of faith. To this last man she gave a list of names; the names of Thugee who might be brought to see the light.

As the Englishman slaughtered his way though the false Thugee, the faithful man (named Dhuliji Lahiri) raced ahead to save those who the goddess named. He drew the faithful into the deep jungle where



they lived in a small village while the fires burned out.

The Thuggee emerged from seclusion once the British turned their attention to other matters. Mr. Lahiri caused them to scatter throughout the country under an injunction to commit no crimes for the next decade. They established new identities, business, and families. Some emigrated to Europe; others stayed in their homeland or went east to the Americas.

In 1860 the Thuggee resumed their murderous ways. Quietly, in groups of no more than thirty, they gathered to hear Lahiri's instructions. Once properly motivated they stalked the roadways, selecting targets using the ancient omens and murdering them in the old ways.

Three generations of strangers have come into the business since those fateful first days. The group maintains its emotional fervor and discipline, though some of the fourth generation may fall to greed's

temptation. After all, each strangler group possesses the accumulated wealth of thousands of victims; a fat target for an ambitious man.

In order to avoid the failure of the first cults, the High Priest maintains iron control over group activities. He declares the hunts, disposes of the loot, and determines who will advance or fall from grace. The later sentence carries with it deadly repercussions. After all, those who turn against the goddess cannot be allowed to live.

The Thugee communicate among themselves using a variation on the language spoken by the fallen cult. They also send messages, even telegrams, in this elaborate code.

CULT MEMBERS

All members of the ancient survivors come from the families who survived Sleeman's purge. Each proudly traces their lineage back to a single man chosen by the goddess herself for deliverance.

In the intervening decades the cult's spread from its mountain fastness has necessitated some thinning of the chosen bloodlines. Once a thug moves out into the world the High Priest expects him to marry local and raise his family as a part of the growing cult. Females must petition the High Priest for permission to marry; males may marry whomever their father selects for them.

The High Priest also chooses and sends a local group's leader from

among the members of his family. This allows him to retain central control and maintains orthodoxy. It also angers many of the younger thugs, especially those who live in the United States or Europe.

CULT ENVIRONS

Cult members do not jeopardize their cover by storing cult materials in their homes. A home invasion or legitimate search of such a place will turn up nothing of importance.

However, the local cult members all pay to support a small, secluded shrine to Kali. The shrine will always be at least thirty miles from any cult member's home. Here they gather once a season to receive messages from the grand temple and the High Priest, to perform their secret rituals, and to bask in Kali's glory. Failure to attend a meeting results in the local leader disciplining the member either by verbal reprimand or by killing one of his family members.

The local shrines communicate with the main shrine in India via special couriers. These couriers carry messages to the shrines, leaving them at times when no cult member is in attendance. Each courier receives extensive training in subterfuge and conditioning to resist questioning. Should he be captured he will try to destroy his messages before ending his own life.

The Thugee built their primary temple on the site of the village Kali revealed to them. Isolated by jungle

and mountains, it functions as an impenetrable fortress for them to retreat into in times of need. The lavish temple itself houses almost one hundred thugs; the village supports another three hundred. The couriers and local leaders come from the families living in the temple, so as to insure their loyalty to the higher cause.

CULT ENCOUNTERS

The ancient survivors engage in ritual murder rather than wholesale banditry. They use the same tactics as the historical Thuggee (strangulation and mass attacks from surprise) and make liberal use of their ability to bluff and confuse targets.

CHARACTERS

Any campaign involving the ancient survivors should include some or all of the following characters:

DHULIJI LAHIRI

The now ancient Dhuliji Lahiri still presides over the reformed Thuggee cult from the jungle-bound temple in India. He communes with his goddess daily, though he does not always share the results of his visions. His withered frame and lank white hair speak to the decades of his service to his goddess. The immense strength with which he can turn a strangling cord manifestly demonstrates her favor. The other thugs worship him almost as much as they do their goddess.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12,

Spirit d12, Strength d6, Vigor d6.

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Occult) d10, Notice d8, Shooting d6.

Charisma: +2, **Pace:**5;

Parry: 5 **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Delusional (communes with Kali) Elderly, Vow (to Kali)

Edges: Charismatic, Command, Fervor, Frenzy

Gear:Strangling cord (after successful strike Str +d6 every round unless victim makes opposed Str roll)

JAMES SINHA

James grew up in New York City. He played with men who now make their livings as gangsters, confidence men, shop keepers, and factory workers as a boy. As a man, the contract between their growing wealth and his cult mandated simple lifestyle galls him. Why should a strapping young man like himself, blessed with good looks and the wits God gave a man, live in poverty while sending riches to some old man back in the old country? His questions resonate with the new generation of Thuggee even as their elders try to teach them the ways of the cord and pick-axe.

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

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d10, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Streetwise d10

Charisma: +2, **Pace:**6;

Parry: 7 **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Arrogant, Obligations (to Thuggee), Greedy

Edges: Attractive, Brawny, Combat

Reflexes, First Strike, Nerves of Steel.

Gear: Strangling cord (after successful strike Str +d6 every round unless victim makes opposed Str roll), Colt .45 (12/24/48 Damage 2d6+1 ROF 1 Shots 7 AP1)

AJITA LAHIRI

Even though mocha-skinned Ajita comes from the direct line of the High Priest she cannot inherit a position of power in the cult. By tradition she should have married, settled down, and built a cover identity for some local cult leader. Instead the smoky-eyed beauty talked her father into making her a courier. So she travels the world, amusing her self with the businessmen she meets, and delivers messages to out of the way towns where she cannot show her face. Fortunately her skills as disguise and deception match her arresting looks and charm.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Stealth d8, Shooting d6, Taunt d8

Charisma: +4, **Pace:** 6;

Parry: 5 **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Obligations (Thugee)

Edges: Charmer, Very Attractive

Gear: Strangling cord (after successful strike Str +d6 every round unless victim makes opposed Str roll)

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The ancient survivors might become a major campaign villain but they work best as a shadowy threat.

Characters encountering them might not even realize they are anything more than a slightly exotic street gang. Only later, when the cult plays its hand, should they begin to realize it might be even more sinister than they initially imagined.

Some examples of this kind of story include:

1. Low level characters operating in New York (or another large city) might encounter James Sinha as he breaks away from the main Thugee cult. His group of young, dissatisfied thugs apply their murderous methods to local crime. Just as the characters close in on them, the elder thugs remove the younger entirely, leaving behind their strangled bodies and a vast sum of money as reparation.
2. One of the male characters might encounter Ajita during her travels. Their interlude together at first seems like a throw-away scene. A little later, the character finds himself under attack by assassins of Indian descent. It turns out the High Priest is well aware of his daughters activities and prefers to

“silence” men she spends time with.

3. In a game with some occult overtones the characters may become involved with one of the ritual murders. After all, the Thugee murder as a form of worship, an act which could call forth dark powers. Occult investigators might be dragged from murder site to murder site until they eventually uncover the cult's methods of operations.
4. The cult kidnaps one of the characters' close friends or family members (usually a beautiful woman or girl) as a special sacrifice. In order to get her back the characters can race the kidnappers, fail to catch them at a port, and then travel to India in order to save her before the time of sacrifice. Eventually they wind up trekking through the jungle and storming the main temple.

THE THUGEE: INSURGENT FIGHTERS

Historically the Thugee avoid direct interference in politics. However, the British intrusion of their morality into Indian affairs inevitably lead to a backlash against them. In this case, even though the Thugee themselves vanished a number of patriotic men recreated the cult with the expressed purpose of driving the British from the sub-continent.

These thugs us the old methods of deception and strangulation to rid their homeland of the oppressive outsiders. Their carefully target murders serve to destabilize and terrify the foreign population. The British respond by increasing their security and applying even more pressure, leading to an ever escalating cycle of violence from which neither side will back down.

Mr. Sleeman unleashed a tide of change when he destroyed the Thugee. His obsession catalyzed a shift in British policy from accommodation and trade to outright political and military domination. The Indian Rajah responded in a typically incoherent fashion. Some capitulated, others accommodated, a rare few resisted but quickly fell to the superior coordination and firepower brought to bear on them.

The duty of resistance therefore fell to the common men. Indians of many castes decried their domination

by outsiders with no respect for their ancient ways. Most simply complained. A few took up arms, leading doomed rebellions. The smartest reached back into recent history for inspiration.

This inspiration came in the form of several popular novels released in Britain during and after Mr. Sleeman's efforts. They detailed a complicated, dangerous secret cult with brutally effective methods.

These murderers slaughtered Indians by the thousands for centuries without being discovered. Their methods, properly updated, would undoubtedly work just as well in the modern world.

From this initial idea sprang one of the most effective resistance and terrorist organizations ever imagined. Operatives working in coordinated teams began a wholesale slaughter of British officials and foreign civilians. The murders used the strangling cords and spoke in gibberish, but only as a smoke screen to cover the modern methods of mayhem they espoused. Many openly admitted their membership, using the terror inspired by the



popular history to force otherwise unwilling collaborators into the fold. By the turn of the century this highly organized society of killers works on a steady agenda. They assault government officials, civilian contractors, and travelers in large numbers. Captured operatives are murdered in their prison cells, left dangling from the ceiling on yellow silk scarves. Local community members who talk to the authorities usually vanish, or suffer in anguish as some beloved family member vanishes in their place.

The thuggee network fuels its efforts with robbery and murder for hire. The surprisingly public contacts flaunt their affiliations, selling stolen good almost openly though away

from the British Rajah's military force. Most of these public contacts truly know little of the organization; they receive their funds and pass messages though dead drops of various sorts.

CULT MEMBERS

The modern insurgency gets its members from those who wish to overthrow the British rule of India. Anarchists, communist, patriots, and psychotics all find a place among them. They come from many castes and places, bound together in common cause.

The insurgency members never engage in their crimes near their own homes. Taking a page from the thugs old techniques, they always travel a considerable distance before executing a mission. This distance helps to shield them from detection, as well as making it more difficult to trace them if they somehow get caught.

When home they maintain a façade of normal activity. Almost all of the "cultists" work as seasonal laborers, giving them an excuse to travel frequently and maintain a low-profile lifestyle suitable to their needs. Most do not have families, as the risks they take exacts a heavy toll on their time and livelihoods.

The insurgency leadership works at a fever pitch. Most have abandoned their ordinary lives, instead choosing to live in secluded jungle villages. From these locations they send out tactical leaders who "activate" a

local group then lead it to its target.

CULT ENVIRONS

The cult can strike anywhere. Unlike the real Thuggee, they engage in mass assaults and direct attacks, though they also use the tried and true ruses that made the Thuggee so famous.

The individual members live simply, usually in single room huts in the slums surrounding large cities. The command lives just as meanly but stays in isolated jungle villages where the authorities rarely venture. These villages hold no more than forty men and a handful of women kept on for their services.

CULT ENCOUNTERS

Characters can encounter this group in one of three ways: as a screaming horde of insurgents, as traditional thuggee, and as assassins in the night.

The insurgent thuggee operations involve large groups of semi-literate Indians whipped into a pseudo-religious frenzy. A single thuggee leader uses religious iconography and hokey rituals to convince a large group of angry men that they are Kali's chosen. After a suitable period the leader unleashes this mob in an orgy of violence directed at any foreigners in the area. He then vanishes back into the jungles until he reappears somewhere else to start the cycle all over again.

Traditional thuggee thievery supports this cycle with both funds and

materials. Bands of operatives wander India's lonely back-country roads looking for travelers to waylay. They prefer to target Europeans but will happily murder natives as well. These operatives use the traditional methods but supplement them with firearms, chemical weapons, and explosives.

The assassins also adopt modern methods but with a far more lethal intent. These thuggee come out of the jungle and usually strike under the cover of a screaming horde. As the authorities try to deal with the chaos caused by a sudden uprising the assassins sneak in and strike with surgical skill. They murder leaders, plant false documents, destroy hardened targets, and generally wreak havoc in the government infrastructure. These thuggee also take responsibility for murdering any captured operatives and will commit suicide rather than accept capture.

CHARACTERS

Encounters with the modern insurgents could involve any one of the following characters:

DEVENDARA PATTANAYAK

By day ebon-skinned Devendara works in a stone quarry, cutting out stone blocks that will eventually become tables and sculptures for the British authorities. At night he engages in wrestling matches and other sports in an attempt to work out his frustrations. He also attends meetings of an ancient society, the cult of the Thuggee, where a masked

priest leads the congregation in chanting and prayers to the goddess Kali. When the time comes he will take up the strangler's noose and help set things right. Fortunately the time will come soon.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d6, Knowledge (occult) d4, Stealth d8, Shooting d6, Taunt d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6;

Parry: 6 **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Delusional (True Believer) Obligations (Thuggee)

Edges: Brawny

Gear: Strangling cord (after successful strike Str +d6 every round unless victim makes opposed Str roll)

BOLI VERMA

Soft spoken and intense, Boli easily passes himself off as a deal in rare goods and occasional middleman for individuals in search of an elegant beauty for the evening. His soft voice becomes strident, even commanding, when it issues from behind the elaborate mask he wears at the secret meetings. There he allows his oratory skills free reign, cajoling and inflaming the simple men who come to hear him speak. When the time is right he will unleash his hounds then disappear back into the jungle from whence he came.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8,

Notice d6, Knowledge (occult) d8, Persuasion d6, Stealth d8, Shooting d6

Charisma: +2; **Pace:**6;

Parry: 6 **Toughness:**7

Hindrances: Delusional (True Believer) Obligations (Thuggee)

Edges:Charismatic

Gear: Strangling cord (after successful strike Str +d6 every round unless victim makes opposed Str roll)

HIDHAN NAGCHAUDHURI

Working as a house servant, especially one skilled in the fine art of being unobtrusive, allows Hidhan to scout out his targets long before the covering riots begin. His precise English and gentle manners put the targets at their ease while his keen mind plans out the details of their demise. His only weakness is his addiction to challenge; he cannot resist a little extra fun while on the way out from an assignment.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Notice d6, Knowledge (English society) d6, Stealth d8, Shooting d6

Charisma:+2 ; **Pace:**6;

Parry: 6 **Toughness:**7

Hindrances: Delusional (True Believer) Obligations (Thuggee)

Edges: Charming, Connections (servants in many households)

Gear: Strangling cord (after successful strike Str +d6 every round unless victim makes opposed Str roll)

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Although masquerading as a religious organization the modern insurgents are nothing more than anarchists and provocateurs. Characters might encounter them in any of the following ways:

1. They could simply stumble across one of the meetings or a hidden village. The thugs immediately respond with lethal force, even before the characters discover anything, leading to an escalating series of dramatic encounters culminating in the destruction of one or both groups.
2. The characters take a contract to protect a British magistrate as he travels from one Indian province to another. Naturally the thugs attack, leading to a long chase sequence through jungles and mountains and a dramatic last minute rescue.
3. Characters engaged in other business wake up to find the city burning down with them in it. Mobs screaming "Kali, Kali" race around, dragging foreigners out of their beds and strangling them in public. The characters can choose to cower like beaten dogs or attempt to stop the madness.

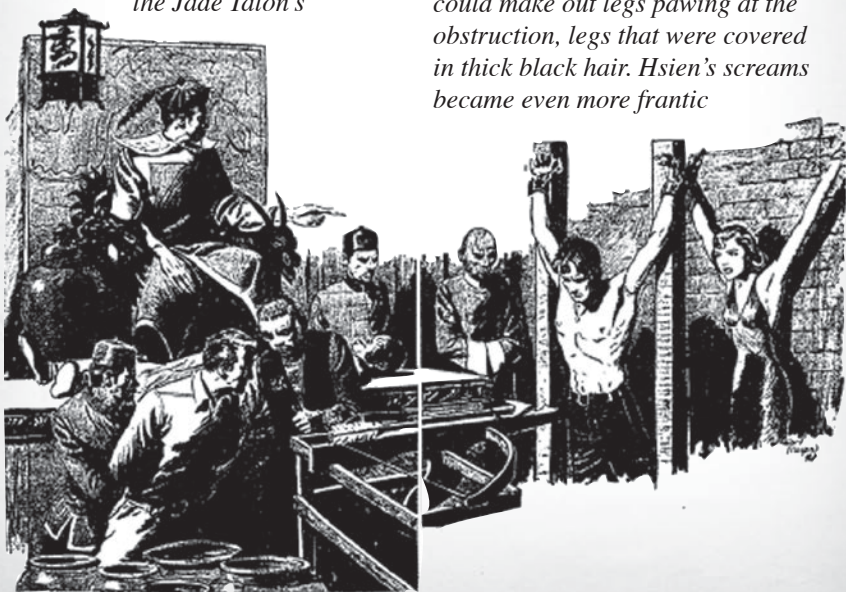
CHAPTER NINE:

PULP VILLAINS - PERILS OF THE ORIENT

The pit was twenty feet deep, its stone walls smoothed to an almost glass-like consistency. The bottom was littered with bits of bone and strange clumps of what looked like dirty cotton. Hsien was in the centre of the pit, crumpled in a ball, his legs broken in the fall, screaming like a banshee. Brandon looked up to find the exotic Chinese woman and Wu Sin standing on the far side of the pit, both of them staring down at Hsien. The woman's face was a mixture of disgust and expectancy, the Jade Talon's

was pulled into a leer of eager anticipation.

Something moved along the wall of the pit, crawling out from a burrow gouged in the floor. Brandon leaned forward, his curiosity overcoming even the horror of the situation. It was some kind of animal, but he couldn't decide what. A rat? Some kind of dog? Maybe some kind of Chinese jaguar? He could see the thing pushing aside the bones that partially covered its hole, could make out legs pawing at the obstruction, legs that were covered in thick black hair. Hsien's screams became even more frantic



as the slaver saw the movement. He crawled desperately toward the smooth walls, dragging his broken limbs behind him.

Brandon cringed away as the thing emerged fully from its burrow. Disbelief caused his mind to recoil from what he had seen, disgust boiled within his stomach. It was impossible, it couldn't have been what he thought it was!

'Detective Brandon, does my pet offend your delicate western sensibilities?' the Jade Talon mocked him. Brandon fought down his revulsion, forcing himself to look back at the spectacle unfolding in the pit. He hadn't imagined it, the hideous thing was still there, slowly, remorselessly scuttling across the floor toward Hsien. As big as a boar, its legs as thick and long as a man's arm, its fangs the size of daggers, its loathsome body covered in coarse black hair, the thing was a gigantic tarantula. Hsien's hands pawed hopelessly at the smooth walls, trying to pull himself up from the spider's lair.

'Few western eyes have seen what you are seeing now, Detective Brandon,' Wu Sin told him. Now that he had forced himself to look, Brandon found himself unable to tear his eyes away from the hideous spectacle. 'These spiders are found only in a few mountain valleys deep in the hinterlands of Mongolia.' A note of pride insinuated itself into the Jade Talon's voice. 'Of course, they don't grow as big as my pet.

I used my humble skill with the sciences of chemistry and electro-magnetism to, shall we say, unlock its full potential.'

Hsien's screams rose to an impossible pitch as the spider finally reached him. The sight of the spider's fangs stabbing down into the man's abdomen finally broke the terrible fascination that had taken hold of Brandon. He looked up from the pit, staring into Wu Sin's cruel eyes.

'You're a madman!' the detective spat.

The Jade Talon smiled at Brandon's outburst. 'Perhaps, Detective Brandon, but very soon I will be in control of this entire city, from the lowest street beggar to the most decadent socialite. This city, and every thing in it will live or die by the will of Wu Sin.'

Brandon tried to pull free from his guards, to seize the smirking Chinaman and throw him into his own spider pit. One of the dacoits that had been holding Liu Hsien smashed a fist into Brandon's head, stunning him and quieting his struggles. The skeletal Celestial nodded as he watched his guards subdue the unruly detective.

'Unfortunately, my spider will be eating with Brother Hsien for several weeks,' the Jade Talon apologized. 'I am afraid that we will need to make different accommodations for you, Detective Brandon.' Wu Sin paused

as the woman standing beside him touched his arm. He nodded again.

'It appears my sister has taken an interest in you, Detective Brandon,' the Jade Talon hissed. Brandon did not like the grim humour he saw on Wu Sin's thin face. 'After a few hours in her tender care, you will come to wish I had another spider.'

INTRODUCTION

From the exotic, mysterious East they come to menace western civilization, to challenge all that decent, God-fearing men hold virtuous. With hatchet and knife, pistol and poison, they strike from the shadows. All the cruelty and ruthlessness of ancient races lurks behind their sallow faces and almond eyes.

Like a creeping scourge they slither into the great cities of the world, to plot and plan their insidious schemes. Some seek only to plunder the people of the West, to slake their greed with the dark rewards of crime. Others come to steal not wealth but knowledge, stopping at nothing to take the secrets of the world's great thinkers and intellects and carry that wisdom back with them into the East. The worst, however, have still more nefarious goals in mind: nothing less than the destruction of western civilization, to cast down the old order and rebuild it in the image of the Orient's imperial dynasties.

These are the Perils of the Orient, the sinister villains who swarmed across the pages of pulp magazines from the very beginning in the late 1800's to the very end in the 1950's. They worked their evil in the cinemas of the day and even radio was not free from their twisted machinations. They would carry on into the successors of the pulp magazines – comic books – and would even bring their particular brand of villainy to an upstart medium called television well beyond the hey-day of the pulps that spawned them.

It was called the 'Yellow Peril' and it was a staple of popular fiction by the 1930's. The formula changed depending upon the medium and the capabilities of the creator. At its most base, a Yellow Peril story was one that preyed upon and exploited the fears and ignorance of its audience, playing upon racial stereotypes of the time as a way of enhancing its own impact.

Such stories were often rife with their own ignorance, penned by men who perhaps had never even seen a Chinese, much less been farther east than St Louis. Yet, with only the slightest of research, perhaps limited to consultation of a few magazine articles, an experienced pulpster could bluff his way through an entire novella, depending upon the greater ignorance of his audience to get away with his own. The exotic aura of the almost mythical Orient, combined with the oft-times racist fears of the day, served to create a great demand for Yellow Peril



stories, and their popularity ensured that virtually every great pulp hero of the day would find himself running against some inscrutable villain dressed in a mandarin's garb.

Some authors, however, treated their subject with a great deal more care and dignity, though today these stories are almost universally lumped together with their cruder imitators. Certainly the greatest writer associated with Yellow Peril fiction was Sax Rohmer, who penned his first novel about his famous creation, the insidious Dr Fu Manchu, in 1913 with *The Mystery of Dr Fu-Manchu* and concluding only in 1959 with *Emperor Fu Manchu* and Rohmer's death.

Fu Manchu certainly shared in the villainous qualities that were the trademark of his predecessors and countless descendents, but combined with a depth of character that made him every bit as three-dimensional and unique as a Sherlock Holmes or a Captain Nemo. Fu Manchu wasn't the standard cackling megalomaniac that populated most Yellow Peril fiction, but rather was in many ways a flawed hero, but for one thing he'd have been on the side of the angels rather than civilization's mortal adversary.

In Fu Manchu's case, the thing that drove him to villainy was not his own ambition, but those of the European powers. In the time that the first Fu Manchu stories were written, much of the Orient was controlled by European nations.

The French had made a colony of Vietnam, for instance, while the British were defacto rulers of Burma and the Dutch held what is now Indonesia. Fu Manchu was driven to his grandiose plans for conquest and empire-building as a reaction to this unrestrained Western imperialism.

Rohmer used him not merely to evoke the fears of his audience, their distrust of the 'inscrutable Oriental' but to also shine a light at what the 'White Peril' was doing to the cultures and people of the Orient. As Rohmer often pointed out in his books, and as many of his detractors fail to understand, what Fu Manchu was trying to do in Europe and America was no different than what Europeans and Americans were already doing in places like Hong Kong and the Philippines. Far from being a one-dimensional racist heavy, in the hands of Rohmer, the Yellow Peril became a mirror to show the ugly reflection of colonialism and cultural imperialism. Rohmer, who was an Orientologist and had studied quite exhaustively the cultures of the East, always took care to maintain a degree of moral relativism with Fu Manchu. He is not so much the villain because he is evil, but because he is 'on the other team'.

Other Yellow Perils stood somewhere between the stereotypical menaces of Poverty Row serials and the multi-faceted Dr Fu Manchu, with his underlying social and political symbolism. These were exotic villains who, while still



certainly Oriental, provided their menace out of good old fashioned bad guy motivation – greed, megalomania and revenge. These characters were handled without the racist overtones of their less cultured counterparts, what made them evil was not their culture or background, but their own individual failings – just like any other villain. A good example of this would be the many Oriental villains that came against The Shadow, especially when Walter B Gibson was behind the Maxwell Grant pseudonym. While lurking in the back alleys of Chinatown,

employing hatchets instead of gats and adorning their hideouts with expensive rugs and jade sculpture, at their core these characters were often little different than the gangsters and mad scientists The Shadow also had to contend with. The great Shiwan Khan, one of The Shadow's arch-rivals, was evil because of who he himself was, not due to some wicked quality inherent in the Mongolian race, as a less sensitive Yellow Peril purveyor would no doubt have suggested. To further illustrate the point, oftentimes The Shadow would find Chinese allies to contend with

his Oriental foes, rallying tongs to oppose some nefarious crime lord operating in their midst.

Game Masters will no doubt want to include Oriental villains at some point or another in their campaign, if for no reason than for the same reason they appeared every few months in the pages of *The Shadow* – to break up the monotony of mobsters and mad scientists. GMs more familiar with the pulp era will want to include them simply because of how large a part the ‘Yellow Peril’ played in the fiction of the day. And, of course, there is the simple fact that even today the East is still an exotic land of mystery and adventure to those living in the West, and by utilizing characters from the East, a GM can evoke some of that mystery and wonder. As has hopefully been illustrated, there is nothing inherently racist in presenting Oriental foes in a campaign. Every people and culture will produce its bad apples, and the ancient cultures of the East are no exception. It is when the theme is over-simplified, playing into stereotypes, when it is extended to such a degree that it seems every Chinese in New York is an agent of the Black Dragon Tong, that the GM is straying into the excesses that made much of this sort of fiction reprehensible.

Perils of the Orient walks a fine line between the historical excesses of Yellow Peril fiction and the more respectable appreciation for the cultures of China and Japan that a more enlightened and informed

society has embraced. In these pages will be presented some of the most common themes that were evoked in the pulps – from Mongol warriors dreaming of a new empire to sinister Tibetan monks with terrible powers of mysticism and mesmerism, all the usual suspects have been rounded up and presented for your consideration.

The reader may feel, at times, that the fine line between excess and understanding has been crossed, but it should be borne in mind that the characters presented here are not representative of their entire culture, any more than a murderous Thug is indicative of India’s vast population or a jack-booted Nazi represents the entire German ethnic group. A game centred around the themes of heroics and adventure will, by definition, focus upon the unusual and the extraordinary – and you will find the **Perils of the Orient** to be both.

THE MASTERMIND REVISITED

Any discussion of pulp Oriental villains begins with the Mastermind, the criminal fiend who manipulates both the faceless legions of his minions and the stalwart heroes arrayed against him like pieces on some vast chessboard. He is the heart of the beast, the great intellect behind the campaign of robberies, murders and kidnappings that has gripped the city in fear. The Mastermind is representative of villains like Fu Manchu, Yen Sin, Wu Fang and Shiwan Khan.

Presented properly, a Mastermind can become the focus of an entire campaign, as the players try to thwart his machinations. But to do so, the GM should carefully consider the Mastermind's motives, methods and assets.

No two Masterminds are alike, and even within the bottommost dregs of the pulps, there were wild (and often ridiculous) variations upon the basic theme. Generally speaking, however, there are two main types of Mastermind. The first is the simple criminal. Certainly his ambitions – and his greed – are far in excess of the common mobster or tong boss, but still, at the end of the day, the Mastermind is focused upon gathering more wealth and extending his criminal empire.

The second sort of Mastermind is an entirely different creature. While certainly not above using the criminal scum of the underworld to achieve his ends, this sort of Mastermind is an idealist who does not see himself as a criminal. The idealist Mastermind will have a much less mundane objective than his criminal counterpart. He might see

himself as a patriot trying to expand the prestige and power of his homeland (under his own brilliant guidance, naturally) or he might be the fanatical agent of some strange Eastern sect, sent to avenge some slight against his temple. Such Masterminds will often be extremely principled men, which again makes them distinct from the usual mobster and madman.

Regardless of motive, regardless even of their cultural and social backgrounds, Oriental Masterminds in pulp stories shared several distinct character traits. Perhaps the most dramatic was a blood chilling nonchalance toward human life and suffering. Masterminds would regularly remonstrate their underlings with hideous mutilations for the slightest infraction, with a swift and brutal death being the



price for anything more severe. Torture, something mobsters would use infrequently, is a staple of the Mastermind and where the methods of the average gangster would be limited to brass knuckles and a blow torch, the tortures employed by a Mastermind would be elaborate affairs, as ingenious as they were insidious.

Another quality shared by almost all Oriental Masterminds was an extreme sense of honour. A Mastermind will be very reluctant to give his word, but when he can be forced to give it, he will keep it. Of course, such agreements are kept to the letter rather than to the spirit and a GM should pay particular attention to whatever oath his players might exact from a Mastermind. Insisting that they be released from the Mastermind's Mongolian dungeons, for example, might result in the heroes being deposited in the middle of the Gobi desert without food or water – the Mastermind has kept his word, after all. So long as the letter of any agreement is kept, a Mastermind's honour will be satisfied.

Oriental Masterminds, regardless of their motivations, will always use at least one exotic method of dealing death to their enemies. From a covey of Ninja assassins, to special Cambodian snake venom, to deadly Indonesian tarantulas, an Oriental Mastermind will always have some unique way of killing those who stand in his way. The more resourceful Masterminds will

have an entire array of exotic ways of committing murder, perhaps even several of their own creation if they are given a few levels in the Mad Scientist advanced class. This is, perhaps, the most important habit of the Mastermind to develop since it will often be the first sign to the heroes that their unseen adversary is something more than the usual criminal.

Doctor Sin, who appeared in Chapter 6, is a reasonable approximation of an Oriental Mastermind.

EAST MEETS WEST

When gold was discovered in California, one of the largest migrations from the East began. Waves of immigrants from China and Japan began to arrive in the cities of the western coast of the United States. Trying to find a better life, to make their fortune in the gold fields, most of these immigrants found instead back-breaking toil, crushing poverty and racism every bit as extreme as the rigid class systems of their homelands.

Chinese immigrants in particular became a common fixture in the American landscape of the late 1800's, providing a source of cheap labour that was ruthlessly exploited by big business, especially the railroad industry. For their efforts, these immigrants faced racial segregation and intolerance far in excess of even what was inflicted upon the former slaves of the South. Chinese immigrants

were subject to 'Exclusion Acts' which prevented them from voting or becoming citizens, extra taxes simply for being Chinese, and ruthless oppression at nearly every level. The 'importation' of Chinese, Japanese and Mongolian women was outlawed in many states, ostensibly to combat prostitution but with the overall intention to prevent the Oriental population from increasing. Throughout it all, the Chinese bore the injustice imposed on them by the American government with all the stoicism dictated by their Confucian philosophy, trying their best to succeed even in a land that made it clear they were not wanted.

One of the effects of the segregation policies implemented across America and in many European nations was the creation of Chinatowns in many cities. Chinese and other Oriental immigrants were severely restricted by law as to where they could settle and purchase property. Much like the 'Red Light' districts of the day, the intention was to confine these 'undesirable' elements within one part of the city, and the borders of these Chinese districts were often brutally enforced, if not by the official law-keepers then by vigilante mobs. This forced segregation resulted in neighbourhoods that reflected the architecture and culture of China or Japan rather than America. Signs in shop windows would be written Cantonese more often than English and the tones of Oriental languages would echo through the streets.

Due to the severe restrictions placed upon them, Chinatowns quickly found they had no more room to grow. Despite attempts to outlaw immigration from China, the flow of Chinese into America continued almost unabated. Forced to live in specific neighbourhoods, Chinatowns became exceedingly crowded and overpopulated. One way in which the enterprising early residents of these areas attempted to alleviate the cramped condition was to expand their neighbourhoods in the only way segregation laws allowed.

Almost every Chinatown developed a complex and vast network of tunnels beneath them, complete with their own shops and businesses. Some of these tunnels even extended beyond the surface confines of Chinatown, something that was taken advantage of by all manner of smugglers and criminals. This underground activity, combined with the xenophobic prejudices of the general population, gave Chinatowns a particularly unsavoury and sinister reputation. Many became renowned as lawless pits of vice and wickedness, rife with bordellos and opium dens, ruled by murderous tongs.

This attitude towards Chinatowns lasted for decades, it was not until 1943 and WWII that the 'Chinese Exclusion Act' was repealed, and Chinatowns from New York to LA were often the setting for tales of murder and intrigue in the pages of the pulps. Chinatowns (and the

more infrequent Japantowns) made valuable bases of operation for Oriental Masterminds, allowing them to blend into the local population and providing them with a ready source of foot soldiers to further their nefarious plans. While historical tongs were secret societies created by Chinese immigrants for mutual security and assistance, the tongs in the pulps were almost always presented as organized criminal fraternities, something like Chinese versions of the Mafia. Their activities would normally be restricted to the boundaries of Chinatown, but a particularly troublesome hero could sometimes cause a tong to venture beyond their own territory.

Although historically, the tongs in most American Chinatowns were becoming much more mellow in the 1930's, curbing the murder and mayhem that had characterized the tong wars that raged in Californian Chinatowns for sixty years, the tongs that appeared in the pages of the pulps were particularly vicious and bloodthirsty, ready to kill at the drop of a hat. Usually while maintaining the serene smile of a Celestial.

Tong members, as presented in the pulps, tend to be very savage and uncompromising, while at the same time displaying a marked cowardly streak. Once things go bad, the thugs of a tong will quickly disperse, scurrying back to their underground tunnels and disappearing into the Oriental populace of Chinatown. They will more often be equipped

with knives, blackjacks and garottes than they will pistols or other firearms. It is a rare tong indeed that has the resources and modernization in place to outfit its enforcers with Tommy guns and other automatic weapons. One weapon that pulp tongs seemed to have a particular place for was the hatchet, a small hand axe used by tong assassins to brutally eliminate those who had earned the ire of their organization. An Oriental mastermind operating out of a Chinatown will often take over one or more tongs, then try to eliminate or unite any other gangs operating out of the district. These masterminds need not be the 'threat to civilization' variety, as often as not the sort of mastermind who controls and uses tongs has a much more 'western' mindset and much less grandiose objectives – often content with 'merely' establishing a city-wide criminal empire.

TONG SOLDIER

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8.
Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Knowledge (Chinatown) d8, Stealth d8, Shooting d6, Throwing d6
Charisma: -4; **Pace:**6;
Parry: 6 **Toughness:**6
Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Obligations (Tong)
Edges: Acrobat, Quick Draw
Gear: Fu Hatchet (Str +d6)

VETERAN TONG SOLDIER

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Knowledge (Chinatown) d8, Stealth d12, Shooting d6, Streetwise d10, Throwing d10

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 8;

Parry: 7 **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Obligations (Tong)

Edges: Acrobat, Block, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Fleet Footed, Level Headed, Quick Draw

Gear: Hatchet (Str +d6), Two Peacemaker revolvers (12/24/48 Damage 2d6+1, ROF 1 Shots 6)

TONG ASSASSIN

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8.

Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Lockpicking d10, Notice d10, Knowledge (Chinatown) d12, Spellcasting d8, Stealth d12, Shooting d8, Streetwise d10, Throwing d10

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 8;

Parry: 7 **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Obligations (Tong)

Edges: Acrobat, Arcane Background (Magic), Block, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Fleet Footed, Level Headed, Quick Draw

Gear: Hatchet (Str +d6), Do (Chinese Sword) Str +d8

Powers: The Tong Assassin have 15 Power Points and now the following powers: *boost trait* (mental discipline), *deflection* (iron hand block), *fly* (wire fu), *quickness* (kung fu) *smite* (chi infusion), and *speed* (super speed).

THE DRAGON LADY

The Femme Fatale is excellent for representing another fixture of pulp stories – the sensuous Asian crime boss commonly described as ‘the Dragon Lady’.

While it is true that most Oriental cultures at the time placed severe restrictions on the role women could play in society, there were some women who were too independent and too resourceful to quietly accept the place society had allowed for them. The Dowager Empress of China is one example of a Chinese woman who wielded extreme power during her reign, manipulating both Chinese and Western elements within her empire to her own benefit, most notoriously during the so-called ‘Boxer Rebellion’ of the 1890’s.

China Mary, a historical character who operated out of Tombstone, Arizona during the town’s heyday in the 1880’s is another example of a powerful, female Chinese. China Mary essentially ran Tombstone’s Hoptown, operating bordellos, opium dens and even some legitimate businesses such as restaurants and laundries. Such was her power in Hoptown, that no Chinese could be hired or paid without the arrangement going through China Mary. She was a very impulsive and headstrong woman, once running off with a blacksmith to Tuscon only to be brought back to her husband by a bounty hunter.

In fiction, the Dragon Lady had much in common with fiendish masterminds like Dr Fu Manchu or Wu Fang. She could be expected to be merciless, intelligent and resourceful. Even more than her male counterparts, a Dragon Lady would also be quick to anger and exceedingly vindictive, even to the

point of breaking any agreements or promises previously made. Henchmen of a Dragon Lady were even more prone to feeling the lash, and even petty failures might result in mutilation or death on the order of their mistress. One thing guaranteed to earn a Dragon Lady's murderous attentions was anything approaching



insubordination. Perhaps because of the male-dominated cultural background, a Dragon Lady would be very quick to eliminate any challenge to her authority.

Dragon Ladies were uniformly attractive, and were quite skilled at using their sensuous, exotic looks to best effect. Many a pulp hero felt himself drawn toward temptation in the arms of a Dragon Lady. A Dragon Lady's affections might be feigned, and often were, in order to gain some useful service from a man who could not be bought – for money that is. However, a Dragon Lady was equally prone toward irrational attractions, usually with a pulp hero working toward the destruction of her organization. The object of a Dragon Lady's genuine affection would be safe from harm, even when sparing the hero was at odds with the best interest of the Dragon Lady's plans. But woe to any other woman in the hero's life, for a Dragon Lady would be exceptionally inventive in removing such rivals.

DRAGON LADY

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Knowledge (Chinatown) d10, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Shooting d6, Taunt d8

Charisma: +4, **Pace:** 6;

Parry: 5 **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Overconfident

Edges: Charmer, Very Attractive

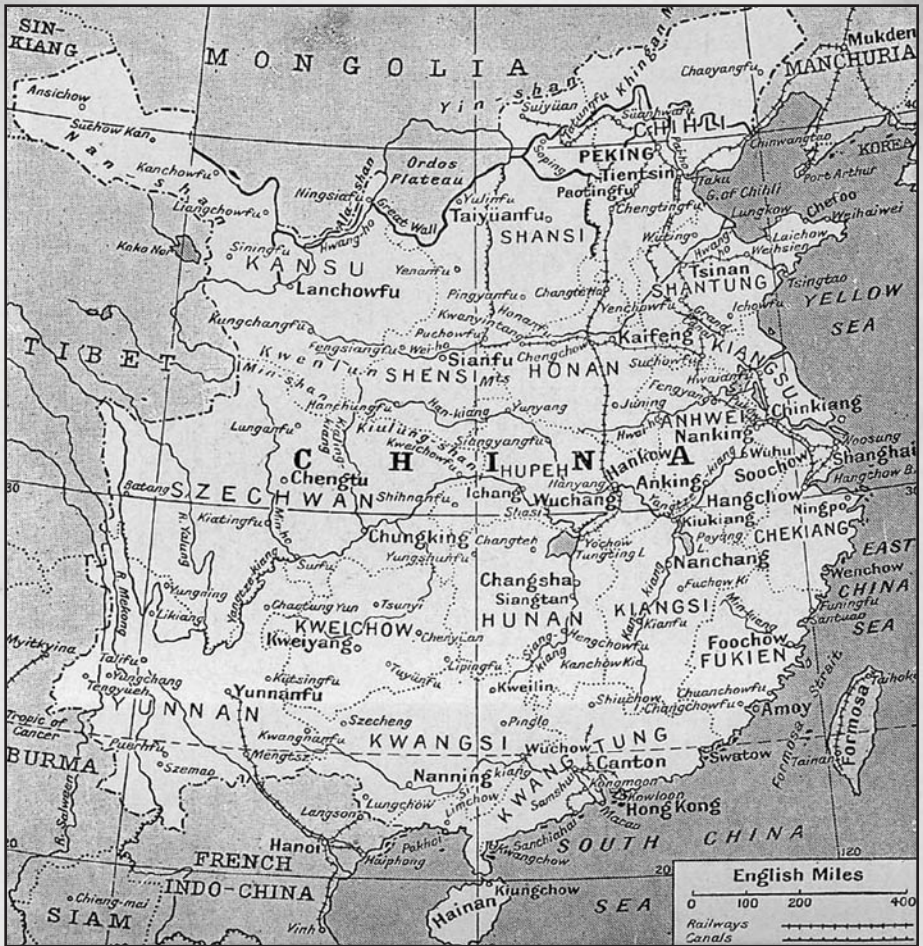
Gear: Varies.

THE MYSTERIOUS ORIENT

The lands of the Orient were places of mystery and adventure in the pages of the pulps. Here were vast, uncharted regions where lost civilizations and hidden cities might yet be found. The ancient civilizations of the East had developed into exotic and inscrutable cultures that no Westerner could ever hope to truly understand. Fortunes could be made in these strange lands, but danger was never far behind.

Historically, the 1930's was a time of great change and turmoil in the Orient. Western powers governed large portions of Asia. The British Empire encompassed Burma and Malaya, as well as the Chinese port city of Hong Kong. Vietnam was ruled as French Indo-China by France. The Dutch Republic had possessions in Java and the other islands which constituted its colony of the Dutch East Indies. Following the Spanish-American War, the United States adopted the Philippines as a territory.

China herself was a land of anarchy and strife. Following the destruction of the Imperial dynasty, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists maintained official control over China, but beyond the great cities, real dominion over the land rested in the hands of military warlords. The problem of maintaining control over the remote regions of China would only



grow worse as Mao Tse-Tung's communists grew in number and power in the north of the country, incited into rebellion by Soviet support. Manchuria, one of China's most ancient provinces was invaded by Japan in 1932, initiating a conflict in Asia that would only really end with the close of WWII. Renaming the region 'Manchuko' and placing Emperor Pyui as their puppet governor of the conquered realm, the Japanese would use Manchuria as a spring board for their ambitions elsewhere.

Mongolia, the land that had given birth to the mighty Mongol Empire, an empire that had stretched from China to the Nile, was undergoing its violent entry into the modern world. The echoes of Genghis Khan which carried on in the god-kings who had ruled Mongolia for centuries were being swept away by the new Soviet-backed communist government. Even with the Soviet army marching freely through the wastes of Mongolia, the land was still a breeding ground for bandits and robber princes of every description.

In far flung corners, the followers of god-kings such as Seng Chen Gegen and Bodgo Gegen could still be found, adhering to the old ways in defiance of their communist rulers.

Forbidden Tibet, a mysterious mountain world of ice and snow, ruled by its priest-lords was even more an enigma than any of the other lands of the East. Here was the domain of the lamas and their strange eastern mysticism. Here was the lost world where no Westerner was permitted to walk. Tales of the Abominable Snowman had already reached Europeans, and the strange world of Tibet seemed the logical hiding place of such a sinister creature. It would not be until the German Ahnenerbe SS mounted an expedition to this mountain kingdom that Western eyes would behold its ancient splendours.

Of all the nations of the Orient, it is Japan that exists as a stable and independent society. The Japanese Empire has rapidly modernized, boasting an impressive navy and a well-equipped and highly trained army. By the 1930's, in addition to the Pacific possessions lost by Germany in WWI, Japan's Empire includes Korea and Manchuria, lands that will provide the raw resources for the even greater expansions envisioned by the militarist faction within the Japanese Diet.

In the pages of the pulps, Oriental villains operating in the West would often bring minions and henchmen with them from their homelands,

supplementing the crude abilities of westernized Orientals with the more specialized skills of their ancient traditions. Pulp writers were often quite free with the nature of the followers an Oriental mastermind might gather to himself. A Chinese mastermind, for instance, might include Mongolian warriors and Burmese Dacoits among his retinue, while a Japanese spy master might make use of savage jungle natives or even Indian stranglers. The only hard and fast rule was that these characterful killers be exotic and evocative of the public perception of the 'mysterious Orient'.

ENEMIES FROM THE EAST

What follows are profiles and descriptions of some of the more common Oriental villains that featured in the pages of the pulps. They can be used as a sampling of the sort of exotic 'specialists' a criminal mastermind might employ. It is a good idea to develop at least one type of 'specialist' when designing a mastermind as this will create a 'signature' henchman type, allowing players to quickly recognize the hand of their Oriental nemesis without ever setting eyes on the villain himself. More powerful and resourceful masterminds might include several types of 'specialists', Dr Fu Manchu for example was often portrayed as drawing his agents from across the globe and might include any number of different nationalities among his men, however there should always

be a prevalent type of minion, one that is employed more often than any other. Again, drawing examples from literature of the time, Dr Fu Manchu commonly employed Dacoits while Shiwan Khan would use Mongol warriors.

DACOITS

Real Dacoits are armed robbers, a class of bandits in India who are characterized by the ferocity of their attacks (no doubt hoping to scare their victims into submission and eliminate the need to use the weapons they carry). In the pages of the pulps, however, Dacoits were quite different. Due no doubt to the influence of Sax Rohmer, Dacoits were more often from Burma rather than India. While still fierce and armed, Dacoits also became masters of stealth and acrobatics, able to sneak into homes and infiltrate government buildings without making a sound. Pulp Dacoits will

often be equipped with grapples or climbing claws to facilitate entry into upper floor windows and may go barefoot to increase their agility while climbing. The weapons favoured by a pulp Dacoit will almost always be knives, especially throwing knives, though they will sometimes employ strangler's cords as well. A pulp Dacoit is characterized by unswerving loyalty as well, thinking nothing of sacrificing his life if there is a chance of furthering his master's plans.

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Lockpicking d8, Notice d10, Shooting d8, Stealth d12, Swimming d6, Throwing d10.

Charisma -4; **Pace** 8

Parry: 7; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty

Edges: Block, Combat Reflexes,

Dodge, Fleet Footed, Level Headed, Quick Draw, Thief.

Gear: Knife (Str +d4), Strangling Cord (after successful strike Str +d6 every round unless victim makes opposed Str roll)



MONGOLIAN WARRIORS

In the era of the pulps, the last vestiges of the ancient Mongolian culture would sometimes be brought into the cities of the Western world. The prospect of a new Genghis Khan ascending from the fragmented lands of the Orient to forge a new Mongol Empire was a theme repeated often in pulp stories, serials and films. Among the most potent weapons such a would-be god-king might command were Mongolian warriors.

The Mongolian warrior of the pulps was a powerful, strong soldier, steeped in the military traditions of the ancient past. Sword and spear, bow and arrow, these were the weapons the Mongolian warrior would use to serve his master and destroy those who would oppose his rise to power. Often dressed in lacquered armour, armed with his medieval weapons, a Mongolian warrior created a very vivid and memorable minion for any mastermind he served. Although skilled at shadowing a target, a Mongolian warrior showed little patience for tactics in general, almost always taking the most direct route to eliminate an enemy. Even more fiercely loyal than a Dacoit, a Mongolian warrior would rather die than fail his divine master.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d10
Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d10, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Throwing d10.
Charisma -4; **Pace** 6

Parry: 7; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty

Edges: Block, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Hard to Kill, Level Headed, No Mercy

Gear: Sword (Str +d8), Spear (Str +d6), Bow (12/24/48 Damage 2d6, ROF 1).

NINJA

Although almost unknown in the era of the pulps, Ninja have become a fixture of many modern 'neo-pulp' story dealing with Oriental themes. Ninja are assassin-spies from Japan, experts at stealth and murder. The origins of the ninja stretch back into the misty past of feudal Japan when peasant farmers found it necessary to protect themselves from roving bands of bandits and samurai.

Unable to compete on an equal footing with well-armed bandits and well-trained samurai, the peasants employed guerrilla tactics to defend their villages and farms. Over the centuries, such skills were honed to an amazing degree and incorporated unique martial arts techniques. Because ninja were peasants, and therefore not bound by the strict code of honour the samurai lived by, Japanese lords often used them for espionage, infiltration and assassination, all duties that were beneath the dignity of a samurai. A ninja in a pulp setting will be used for similar duties by the mastermind he or she serves.

Ninja, while extremely professional, will not display the suicidal kind of loyalty shown by Dacoits or

Mongolian warriors. If things go bad, a ninja's first thoughts will be of escape, though he might return at a more opportune time to avenge the dishonour of being routed by his enemies. The main thing to bear in mind is that a ninja will always strike when circumstances are most in his favour.

Ninja in fiction will typically wear all black suits with a head covering that leaves only the eyes exposed. They employ a wide variety of tools and weapons in carrying out their assignments, from smoke bombs, grappling claws, throwing stars and the shinobigatana sword to caltrops and firecrackers. Anything that might help confuse, disorient and impair an enemy can be expected to find its way into a ninja's bag of tricks. Under no circumstances will a ninja even consider fighting fair.

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Lockpicking d8, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Swimming d6, Throwing d8

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6;

Parry: 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: --

Edges: Acrobat, Quick Draw, Thief.

Gear: Shinobigatana (Str +d6, AP2), Shuriken (3/6/12, Str +d4), Smoke Pellets (2/4/8, small burst template, -6 to see or attack through template, lasts 3 rounds).

MARTIAL ARTIST

In the days of the pulps, the exotic unarmed combat techniques developed in the Orient were still things of wonder and mystery, with all sorts of wild and imaginative attributes assigned to them by a largely ignorant western world. At this time, almost superhuman abilities such as dodging bullets and killing a man with a sinister 'death touch' were held as common elements of these strange and sinister fighting styles practised in the East. Of the numerous schools of the martial arts, only Japanese karate and judo were widely known in the East. Indeed, many pulpsters would refer to Chinese martial artists as 'judo masters' as a way of conveying and explaining the extraordinary abilities they employed. It would not be until well after WWII and the exposure of western soldiers to Oriental cultures that a greater understanding of these remarkable arts would become more common, leading directly into the Kung-Fu phenomenon of the 1960's and '70's.

Any Oriental Mastermind worth his salt will probably have at least one Martial Artist in his entourage, perhaps as a valued lieutenant or a deceptively unimposing bodyguard. A Martial Artist can also fulfil the role assassin or spy, using his unique skills to confound the conventions of western authorities. The below profile depicts an experienced and talented Martial Artist who could serve as a ranking member of a mastermind's organization.

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8.

Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Lockpicking d10, Notice d10, Spellcasting d8, Stealth d12, Shooting d8, Streetwise d10, Throwing d10

Charisma: -2; **Pace:**8;

Parry: 7 **Toughness:**6

Hindrances: Outsider

Edges: Acrobat, Arcane Background (Magic), Block, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Fleet Footed, Level Headed, Quick Draw

Gear: 2 Nunchaku (Str +d6)

Powers: The Martial Artist has 15 Power Points and now the following powers: *boost trait* (mental discipline), *deflection* (iron hand block), *fly* (wire fu), *quickness* (kung fu) *smite* (chi infusion), and *speed* (super speed).

JUNGLE TRIBESMEN

While many of the civilizations in the Orient boast centuries of culture and history, philosophical and scientific development, there also exist, even today, isolated societies that continue to subsist at almost stone age levels. These isolated tribes linger in some of the most remote and unforgiving lands it is possible to imagine: the festering swamps of New Guinea, the fever-ridden jungles of Vietnam, the sweltering hill-country of Burma's remote interior. These are lands that test a man every day, demanding his every effort be devoted to the simple task of staying alive. There is no time for poetry and invention in

the jungle, only the brutal struggle between man and unforgiving nature. The people who dwell in these places are rugged and hard, survivors who have become as primeval as the land they inhabit.

Tales of headhunters and wild men never failed to captivate western audiences, and when such savages were depicted in the misty lands of the Orient, the captivation was made all the more enthralling. One of the earliest of these 'primitives' to appear in popular fiction was the character of Tonga in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Sign of Four*, one of the earliest of the Sherlock Holmes stories. Tonga was depicted as hailing from the Andaman Islands, a sharp-toothed pygmy killer who employed a blowgun in his murders. The example of Tonga carried on for decades, filling the pages of the pulps with innumerable imitators. Everyone from the Shadow to Doc Savage would have their wits and courage tested by these savage throwbacks to a more primordial age. Perhaps the best known of the pulp-age savages are the Tcho-Tcho people created by horror writer H. P. Lovecraft. Presented as diminutive, barely-human cannibals, the Tcho-Tcho exemplified the bestial ferocity of an earlier epoch, an atavistic reminder of mankind's repulsive past.

A Mastermind who makes use of Jungle Tribesmen often presents himself as a god, or at least an instrument of a god's will. Superstition and fear are the only

things that can bind such primitives to the command of an outsider. Their uses are limited, clearly their ability to understand or interact with the modern world is limited at best. However, for brutal, merciless killers, it is hard to imagine anything more horrible than the snarling visage of a dwarfish cannibal as he scurries silently up the side of a fire-escape. Normally, a Mastermind will tend to have only a single Tribesman in his entourage, but more ambitious ones could conceivably have spirited an entire clan from their jungle homes. A wise Mastermind employs these fiends with caution, however. Any sign of weakness on his part could get the Tribesmen wondering about his claims of divinity...

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8.
Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Knowledge (Jungle) d8, Stealth d8, Shooting d6, Throwing d6
Charisma: -4; **Pace:** 6;
Parry: 6 **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Savage
Edges: Acrobat, First Strike
Gear: Spear (Str +d6)

BLACK MONK

The mystics of Tibet and Nepal were source many pulp writers plundered when in need of a 'scientific' explanation for magical effects in a story. Yoga, Buddhism, and even Confucian philosophy were laced with exotic, almost arcane, trappings in the pages of the pulps. The extraordinary feats described in travellers' tales brought back by those who had visited the Orient were expanded upon until the Buddhist monasteries high in the Himalayas became synonymous with astral projection, levitation, telepathy and even stranger accomplishments of mental awareness and spiritual discipline.

Naturally, the pulps made ready use of public perceptions of the arcane arts of the East. The Shadow's amazing abilities to 'cloud men's minds' was attributed to studying under Tibetan monks. More often, however, the mystic arts developed in the hermitages of Mongolia and Nepal were depicted in a more sinister light. The Shadow's nemesis, Shiwan Khan, for example, was a master of these exotic techniques of hypnosis and telepathy.

In the fiction of Robert E Howard, renowned creator of Conan of Cimmeria, an entire black order of evil Buddhist monks was based in the remote wastes of Mongolia, a twisted society of depraved minds that had unlocked secrets mankind was never meant to know, capable even of torturing the physical body into new and horrible shapes,



transforming one trespasser into their domain into a living werewolf.

In the occult works of the time, two mystical kingdoms were held to be hidden within the vastness of the Himalayas: Shambhalah and Agharti. While Shambhalah was presented as a utopian ideal of morality and good, Agharti was a sinister and wicked place where sorcerers delved into the lost wisdom of vanquished civilizations in their quest to dominate the entire world. These adepts of Agharti would sometimes venture in the outer world, spying on the lands they plotted against.

Black Monks represent these nefarious mystics from the forbidden East. Masters of mental disciplines and powers far beyond anything known in the West, a Black Monk presents a truly formidable challenge. While appropriate to be used as a master criminal in his own right, a Black Monk might find himself as an ally or agent of another

villain. To really give heroes a workout, perhaps several Black Monks have journeyed from their hidden monasteries to plague the civilized world.

The important thing for the GM to bear in mind is the motivation behind a Black Monk's excursion into the western world. Black Monks have forsaken the needs and desires of common men, and they have little to share in the base motives of lesser criminals. Fulfilling prophecy, seeking to reclaim lost relics, or revenge against the defilers of ancient tombs are just some of the purposes that can drive a Black Monk.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d12, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Psionics d10, Stealth d8, Shooting d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6;

Parry: 9 **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Outsider, Vow

Edges: Arcane Background (Psionics), Improved Block, Improved Dodge, Jack-of-all-Trades, Mentalist, New Power, Power Points, Scholar

Gear: Nangun (Str +d4)

Powers: *Deflection* (super block), *Environmental Protection* (mind over matter), *Healing* (internal medicine), *Invisibility* (cloud men's minds), *Quickness* (reflexes), *Speed* (martial training), *Stun* (nerve points). 25 Power Points.

ORIENTAL ARMORY

Do – The Do is a straight sword used in China, roughly the same size and shape as the western broadsword.
Damage: Str +d8

Fu – The Fu is a Chinese combat axe. It is used one-handed and a skilled practitioner will typically employ one in either hand. The Fu is the preferred weapon of Tong assassins, though most are forced to employ the hatchets that are more common in western cities.
Damage: Str +d6

Gou – The Gou is another Chinese sword. Unlike the Do, it is not a straight sword, but has a hooked blade that is designed to slash enemies.
Damage: Str +d6+2

Katana – The Katana is the famed sword of the samurai of Japan. With the increasing militarization of Japan, the Katana is once again being seen as a status symbol and Japanese officers will carry hastily made, mass produced Katanas with them into the coming world war. The Katana is a slashing weapon honed to an incredible fine edge, more akin to a giant razor than a sword.
Damage: Str +d6+2 AP2

Katar – The Katar is a punch dagger used by thieves and assassins in India, Burma and Indonesia. These weapons are small and designed for concealment, delivering a deadly surprise when hidden within a clenched fist. The Katar is one of

several weapons associated with Dacoits in the pulps.
Damage: Str +d6

Keris – The wavy-bladed Keris is a large knife used by the people of the Phillipines, Java and Thailand. It is a stabbing rather than slashing weapon and hideously lethal in the hands of a skilled fighter.
Damage: Str +d6

Naginata – The Naginata is a Japanese spear with a curved steel blade. It is a slashing rather than stabbing weapon and historically was used by infantry to defend against mounted samurai in a fashion similar to the European pike.
Damage: Str +d8

Nangun – The Nangun is a Chinese combat staff made from wax wood. The weapon can deliver brutal, bone-shattering strikes that can quickly subdue an adversary.
Damage: Str +d4

Nunchaku – Developed by Okinawan and Japanese peasant farmers as a way of getting around laws that prohibited the possession of edged weapons, the Nunchaku consists of a pair of sticks attached at one end by a length of chain or rope. In the hands of a skilled practitioner, Nunchaku can be used to deliver a rapid and disorienting flurry of strikes and even overcome the reach of adversaries with swords and spears.
Damage: Str +d6, Ignores Parry & Cover bonus

Qiang – In China, the spear is held as the ‘king of weapons’. The Qiang consists of a leaf-shaped steel blade fitted to a seven foot long wooden shaft. A tassel of horse-hair is attached just beneath the blade, both to disorient an enemy and to soak up blood once the weapon is stabbed into the body of an opponent.
Damage: Str +d8

Sai – Typically Sais will be used as a pair, one held in either hand. The weapon is a blunt dagger that originates in Okinawa. It is a largely defensive weapon, used to disarm enemies by means of catching an attacker’s blade with one of the blunt projections that frame the central blade of the Sai. They are sometimes depicted as being used in more offensive styles.
Damage: Str +d4, Parry +1

Shinobigatana – Shorter than the Katana used by samurai, the Shinobigatana is a razor-edged sword employed by Ninja, typically constructed with baser materials and less craftsmanship than the elaborate artistry involved in fabrication of a Katana.
Damage: Str +d6 AP2

Shuriken – Coming in a wide variety of shapes, sizes and materials, Shuriken are small blades that can be thrown at enemies or used in hand-to-hand combat. Traditionally they were fabricated from household materials such as needles and coins. Typical shapes include nail-like spikes, bladed stars and razor-edged discs.
Range 3/6/12, Damage Str +d4

Tulwar – Although a weapon originating in India and which spread west into Afghanistan and Persia rather than east into Burma and Thailand, the curved Tulwar nevertheless was frequently found in use by ceremonial guards in the lair of many a fiendish Oriental Mastermind. Although the curved blade is designed for slashing an enemy, the sharp point of the weapon can also be used for stabbing.
Damage: Str +d10

HORRORS OF THE ORIENT

The villains of the East did not come alone when they turned their cruel eyes on the West. The fiendish nightmares of an entire continent and thousands of years of civilization and culture came with them. No Oriental villain worth his salt did not have some hideous and revolting creature lurking within his lair, ready to deliver a horrible death to those unfortunates who earned the villain’s ire. Poisonous vermin of every description slithered and crawled through the pages of a Yellow Peril story, from venomous lizards to enormous centipedes and spiders. An Oriental villain was often quite inventive when employing such inhuman assassins, designing cages that would slowly lower a victim into a pit of snakes or a pungent perfume that would draw a giant scorpion across half a city in search of its odorous target.

Sometimes the inhuman agents of an Oriental villain were even more bizarre. Trained crocodiles, intelligent apes, gigantic lizards, nothing was too strange or wild for the pages of the pulps to present to readers. Indeed, the stranger the better was often the rule of the day.

Below are a few unusual creatures from the Orient that will fit in quite well even in a campaign that is running with a restrained element of the fantastic.

ALLGHOI KHORKHOI

The infamous 'Mongolian Death Worm' is a feared inhabitant of the Gobi Desert. Despite its name, the creature is not actually a worm at all, but a highly venomous primitive viper. Small, nearly blind, and quite sluggish, the Allghoi Khorkhoi relies upon its uncanny camouflaged scales and deadly venom to subdue prey and protect itself from predators. In the Gobi, they prey upon insects and small lizards, lurking just beneath the sand until the snake detects the vibrations of the creature's approach. It then launches itself from the sand, stabbing its poisonous fangs into the prey. Because the snake hunts by vibrations in the sand rather than sight or smell, it will often attack animals much too large for it to devour, including human beings. It is this propensity to attack anything that comes close to it that has made the Allghoi Khorkhoi such a menace to the inhabitants of the Gobi. Fortunately, the serpents are extremely rare and seldom

encountered.

Some of the mystics and god-kings of Mongolia have captured these snakes in the past and used them as deadly guardians within treasure vaults and tombs. The floor of the chamber in which the snakes are placed is covered with a thin layer of sand. Since the snakes move by burrowing through the sand, and since their scales blend in perfectly, the lethal vipers are all but invisible to someone who does not know what to look for. Less scrupulous individuals sometimes use the Allghoi Khorkhoi as a method for terror, the superstitious dread with which the Mongolians regard this snake cannot be understated. A fierce warrior who would happily wade into machine gun fire can be reduced to a whimpering child simply with the threat of the Allghoi Khorkhoi.

The Allghoi Khorkhoi is a good representative of the type of poisonous creatures an Oriental villain might keep as pets, guardians, or executioners.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d12, Stealth d12

Pace: 6, **Parry:** 6, **Toughness:** 2

Natural Tools: Bite (str)

Special Abilities:

- **Poison:** The Mongolian Deathworm's bite is poisonous. A character bitten must make a Vigor roll. With success, the bite area swells and becomes numb. The

Victim becomes Exhausted until healed. With a failure, the victim becomes Incapacitated and must make a second Vigor roll or die in 2d6 minutes.

• **Vibration Sense:** The Mongolian deathworm doesn't need to see or smell to attack. They can sense their prey by vibrations.

• **Quick:** The snake is fast, able to discard action cards of 5 or lower and draw another.

• **Size -2:** The Mongolian Deathworm is 3 to 4 feet in length, but only a few inches thick.

• **Small:** Anyone attacking a Mongolian Deathworm must subtract 2 from their attack rolls.

BURU

The Buru is a large semi-aquatic lizard that hails from the remote valleys of the Himalayas. It is blue-black in colour, fading to an off-white along the belly. The scales are small and fine except along the back, which is covered in a layer of tougher, plate-like scales. The lizards grow to over 15' in length, sporting long, whip-like tails and enormous clawed feet. While its body resembles that of monitor lizards such as the Komodo dragon, the Buru's head is narrower and sharper, its powerful jaws filled with flat molars rather than sharp fangs. A herbivore, the Buru dwells in swamps and marshland, spending much of its time in the water except when sunning itself in the early morning. Much of the Buru's habitat has been destroyed by the native

populations of the valleys, reclaimed from the swamps for use as rice fields. As a result, the lizards have become extinct in many of their former territories.

The Buru is a throwback to the time of the great reptiles and just the sort of unusual creature a hero might find haunting the lair of an Oriental villain. While normally inoffensive to humans, the lizards can be 'trained' after a fashion to act as guards for a villain who is patient and resourceful enough to accommodate them. The intelligence of a Buru is quite limited, the reptiles are pure instinct. They can be tricked into a heightened state of alertness by the simple expedient of aggravating their keen sense of smell. By feeding the Burus a diet of specific pungent variety, a villain can cause the lizards to associate the smell with food. Treating a corridor or chamber so that it exudes this food smell will aggravate any hungry Burus placed in it, causing them to become increasingly aggressive and agitated. Especially brutal villains might also douse a captive in the scent of a Buru's normal diet, then loose the lizards to hunt down the unfortunate. By the time the slow-witted Burus realise that what they have tracked down isn't a tasty melon but a stringy G-man, it will be much too late to do the victim much good.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice

d6, Swim d8

Pace: 3; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +2:** Thick skins.
- **Aquatic:** Pace 5
- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Size +3:** A Buru is 15' long

ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN

The mysterious creature that reputedly haunts the Himalayas first came to the attention of Western civilization in 1925 with reports from a British mountaineering expedition. Some of the Sherpa guides pointed out a strange object climbing down the lower slopes. Although it was hard to make out details, the shape was undeniably bipedal and the movement distinctly unnatural and inhuman. The story was soon carried in newspapers across the world, the Tibetan word *yeti* mistranslated by the British press as 'Abominable Snowman'. The fascinating enigma would grip the imagination of the world and ignite a controversy that continues to fuel both derision and speculation.

The Yeti is a huge, ape-like biped, standing between 8 and 12 feet in height and weighing perhaps as much as 1,000 pounds. It walks upright, like a man, and leaves behind enormous footprints in the ice and snow. Although popular culture has since depicted the Yeti as possessing white fur, actual sightings and tradition depicts the creature as brown, black, or more

rarely a dirty grey. The creature's immense strength and endurance are renowned, it is capable of carrying off livestock and, in tradition, Tibetan women. While the Tibetan traditions blur the line between the Yeti's existence as a real animal or a demon of the mountains, scientific speculation has sometimes pointed toward *Gigantopithecus* a giant ape that inhabited China in prehistoric times.

The Abominable Snowman was a fixture of popular media during the pulp period. The Yeti menaced explorers in the pages of pulp magazines such as *Weird Tales* and even *Doc Savage* as well as adventurers in radio programs such as 'Escape'. The creature was depicted as savage and ferocious, echoing the 'killer ape' popularized on the silver screen, but also presented as something more than merely an animal. The Yeti is a creature with intelligence and the ability to reason, not a simple brute governed by instinct and natural cunning. It is this intelligence that some Eastern mystics can exploit to gain control over a Yeti, bringing the horror down from the high mountains and into the shadows of civilization.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (1)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +1:** Thick fur

- **Claws:** Str +d6
- **Camouflage:** Yeti add +4 to Stealth rolls in snowy terrain.
- **Immunity (Cold):** Yeti suffer no damage from cold weather or cold-based attacks.
- **Size +1:** Yeti are larger and brawnier than humans.



ADVENTURE SEEDS

The following are adventure seed ideas using Perils of the Orient:

- A cabal of Black Monks, from the hidden city of Agharti, have come to the Player Characters home city, in order to recover priceless Tibetan mystical artifacts which have been brought back from the Himalayas by an unwitting explorer, under the mistaken impression that the artifacts are merely curios and works of art.

The Black Monks try first to locate the items by kidnapping the explorer from a reception at the Geographic Society Club, but the items have already been sent to the museum. The Player Characters will have to uncover the plot, defend the explorer, and prevent the Monks from getting their hands on the artifacts.

- A number of prominent citizens are discovered murdered in hideous and bizarre fashion. Investigation by the Player-Characters will reveal that all of the victims are shareholders in a railroad company. Further investigation will reveal that the victims were the sons and daughters of the original founders of the company, and that the company was responsible for the deaths of a great many Chinese workers during the construction of its rail lines in the West.

An Oriental Mastermind, who views himself as the heir to Mandate of Heaven, is taking revenge for the ill treatment of his race at the hands of the westerners, as the first part of his plan to consolidate support among the Chinese community worldwide...and then to form a World Empire, with himself on the throne.

CHAPTER TEN:

ADVENTURE GENERATOR

The pages that follow feature a series of tables which can be used by a GM to randomly generate the outline of an adventure, from plot, to locations, to action scenes, and more. It is based on a Master Plot Formula that was used by Lester Dent, the creator of Doc Savage. The italicized sections are quotations directly from Dent's formula.

Dent advocated the division of a pulp story into four sections, which we'll call Acts. He then broke each Act down into the elements that he felt were necessary to feature within that section.

Our random adventure generator will work the same way. For each section, there will be

a number of variables which a GM can

determine via the tables presented, and when completed, the generator will create a full outline of the adventure, ready to be fleshed out with statted NPCs, and waiting for victims....er...I mean eager players.

Here's how it starts:

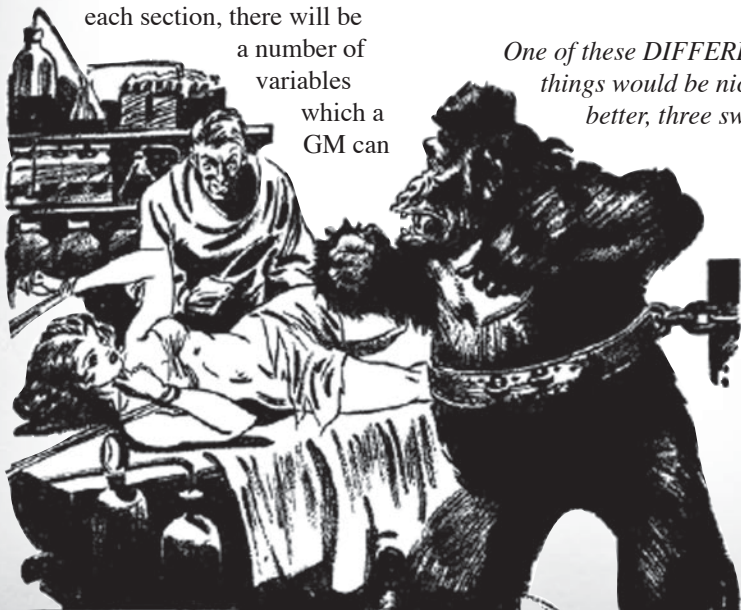
1. A DIFFERENT MURDER METHOD FOR VILLAIN TO USE

2. A DIFFERENT THING FOR VILLAIN TO BE SEEKING

3. A DIFFERENT LOCALE

4. A MENACE WHICH IS TO HANG LIKE A CLOUD OVER HERO

One of these DIFFERENT things would be nice, two better, three swell.



We'll combine these suggestions into three elements, which are determined before you start laying out the adventure itself. The three elements are:

- 1) The Villain (who is it?)
- 2) The Fiendish Plot (what is the Villain doing?)
- 3) The main Location. (Where does this occur?)

Each element is arrived at by rolling on the tables that follow.



TABLE I: THE VILLAIN

D% Roll	Result
01-04	Gangster
05-09	Occultist
10-13	Murderer
14-17	Supernatural Threat
18-21	Communist
22-25	Cult Leader
26-29	Ruler of Lost Civilization
30-33	Mad Scientist
34-37	Wicked Foreigner
38-41	Thief
42-45	Assassin
46-49	Femme Fatale
50-53	Crooked Cop
54-57	Dictator
58-61	Nazi
62-65	Business Magnate
66-69	Crime Lord
70-73	Pirate
74-77	Anarchist
78-81	Society Swell
82-85	Crooked Politician
86-88	Alien Invader
89-93	Mastermind
94-97	Nemesis
98-00	Roll Twice and Combine

Gangster: One of the many members of organized crime gangs that plagued the period.

Occultist: A villain with an interest or skill in Occult matters (whether magic is real or fake is up to the GM).

Murderer: Someone who has killed another person--this individual may not have been a "Villain" prior to this event, and may not fit the classical villain modes--best used in murder mystery adventures.

Supernatural Threat: A ghost, a mummy, a vampire, etc. (The GM will have to determine whether or not the supernatural exists, or whether this is a "scooby doo" mystery)

Communist: Used almost interchangeably with Nazis in latter pulps. An

evil member of the International Communist Conspiracy, looking to subvert and conquer freedom-loving countries.

Cult Leader: The mad leader of a group of fanatics.

Ruler of Lost Civilization: Anything ranging from a descendant of Genghis Khan trying to re-assert the Mongol Horde, to a Witch Doctor who rules a hidden African Tribe.

Mad Scientist: "They called me Mad at the University!" They were right.

Wicked Foreigner: Historically speaking, these were almost always Oriental (q.v. *Fu Manchu*), but any foreign culture will do.

Thief: A villain who specializes in burglary and other forms of theft.

Assassin: An individual whose business is killing. Not a simple murderer, but a professional.

Femme Fatale: You knew she was trouble when you got a look at those gams....

Crooked Cop: A man who has turned his back on his oath to uphold the law.

Dictator: The power-hungry despotic ruler of a nation.

Nazi: Evil Fascist. The classic pulp villain. I hate these guys.

Business Magnate: Capitalist gone wrong.

Crime Lord: The ruler of a vast criminal empire, not necessarily connected to "classical" organized crime.

Pirate: One who steals from (and using) vehicles, whether on sea, land, or in the air.

Anarchist: Madman dedicated to the overthrow of civilization.

Society Swell: A member of the upper class, including the rich and famous.

Crooked Politician: Power-mad and sticking it to the little guy.

Alien Invader: Either the actual invaders themselves, or their earth-bound servant trying to bring about the invasion.

Mastermind: The pinnacle of the criminal class.

Nemesis: If the main hero (or team if there is no main hero) has a nemesis, they re-appear. If none exists, create one--a dark reflection of the the hero, Moriarty to Holmes...The Joker to Batman.

Roll Twice and Combine: GMs can either combine both rolls in a single villain, or feature more than one villain.

**TABLE 2:
THE FIENDISH PLOT, PART 1**

D% Roll	Result
01-04	Manipulate
05-09	Sell
10-13	Acquire
14-17	Kill
18-21	Control
22-25	Steal
26-29	Create
30-33	Hunt
34-37	Terrorize
38-41	Infiltrate
42-45	Overthrow
46-49	Obliterate
50-53	Ransom
54-57	Blackmail
58-61	Hijack
62-65	Bomb
66-69	Smuggle
70-73	Murder
74-77	Rob
78-81	Attack
82-85	Rule
86-88	Take
89-93	Destroy
94-97	Extort
98-00	Roll Twice and Combine

**TABLE 3:
THE FIENDISH PLOT, PART 2**

D% Roll	Result
01-04	Monster
05-09	Building
10-13	People
14-17	A Country
18-21	Treasure
22-25	An Enemy
26-29	An Object
30-33	An Invention
34-37	A Woman
38-41	A Man
42-45	The Hero (or team)
46-49	Money
50-53	A City
54-57	The World
58-61	A Vehicle
62-65	A Business
66-69	A Lost World
70-73	Jewels
74-77	A Ruler
78-81	Someone famous
82-85	A rival
86-88	The Law
89-93	Innocent Victims
94-97	Hero's Friends or Family
98-00	Roll Twice and Combine

To determine the Fiendish Plot, roll once on Table 2 and once on Table 3, and combine the results. A result of 98-00 on either table can be interpreted as either a second roll on both tables, or just one, as the GM sees fit.

For example: A roll of 16 and 44 would yield the result: "Kill The Hero." The villain has decided that his plans would work much better without the hero in the way. A roll of 48 and 67 would generate: "Obliterate A Lost World." The villain has

decided to destroy a hidden island or secret city. Why?

On occasion, the rolls may not make sense. ("Bomb Jewels," for example) The GM is encouraged to think the result through anyway. The pulps, after all, were known for bizarre stories. Perhaps the villain plans to build a bomb using diamonds, the hardest substance known to man? What for?

**TABLE 4:
MAIN LOCATION**

D% Roll	Result
01-04	City: The Docks
05-09	Far-off Jungle
10-13	Asian Country
14-17	European Country
18-21	Third-World Country
22-25	City: slums
26-29	City: Chinatown
30-33	Desert
34-37	At Sea
38-41	Lost City
42-45	Secret Base
46-49	City: Entertainment District
50-53	City: Warehouses
54-57	In the Air
58-61	City: Tenderloin District
62-65	Farmland
66-69	Forest
70-73	Another City
74-77	Cross-country (train, etc)
78-81	City: University
82-85	City: Government
86-88	City: Museums
89-93	City: Skyscrapers
94-97	Arctic/Antarctic
98-00	Roll Twice and Combine

The assumption made on this table is that the GM is playing a generic Hero Pulp campaign, where the PCs are based in a big city (usually New York). Pulp campaigns set elsewhere (Lost Worlds, etc.) should have locations determined by the GM.

EXAMPLE OF ADVENTURE SET-UP:

Rolling for all three elements, I get:

- **63:** Business Magnate
- **87, 16:** Take A Country
- **38:** Lost City.

Thinking about it for a moment, I come up with an idea for a William Randolph Hearst-style tycoon, who is trying to take over a small, oil-rich desert nation, looking for an artifact in a Lost City in the desert sands to do it! He's looking for the fabled Scimitar of Al-Azif, and if he finds it, he will have a legitimate claim to the throne of Qurania! If he gains control over the country, its people are doomed to a life of slavery...can the heroes stop him?

ANOTHER EXAMPLE:

Rolling for all three elements, I get:

- **00:** Roll Twice and Combine. I get a 85, 22, which gives me Crooked Politician and Cult Leader, which I decide to combine into a single villain.
- **63, 81:** Bomb Someone Famous
- **47:** City: Entertainment District

Wow--this is a juicy one! This one unfolds in my mind, giving me the idea of a District Attorney who is secretly the head of a Cult called the Red Hand. The Red Hand has decided that America's troubles are due to their worship of false idols, and so have decided to plant a bomb at the gala premiere of a movie--which will wipe out most of the screen stars of the time, who will be in attendance.

THE FIRST ACT

Now that you've got the set-up, we move to the first act of the adventure. Let's see what Lester Dent has to say about the first act:

First line, or as near thereto as possible, introduce the hero and swat him with a fistful of trouble.

We'll call this the hook--what gets the PCs involved. We'll have a table for that.

Introduce ALL the other characters as soon as possible. Bring them on in action.

For this, we'll move to another table which will give us the supporting characters that will feature in the adventure.

Hero's endeavours land him in an actual physical conflict

Now we get to the good stuff. We'll create the first action sequence, using a table designed specifically for that.

Near the end of first 1500 words, there is a complete surprise twist in the plot development.

And to mark the end of the act, we add a twist in the plot which spins us into the second act. You guessed it, we've got a plot twist table.

**TABLE 5:
THE HOOK**

D% Roll	Result
01-11	Solicitation
12-20	Dead Body
21-30	Disaster
31-42	Attack
43-56	Bizarre Occurance
57-65	News
66-77	Friend in Need
78-90	Up To Our Necks
91-96	Roll Twice
97-00	Other

Solicitation: The simplest of plot hooks--an NPC (unknown to the characters) comes to the characters and asks for their help.

Dead Body: The characters encounter a corpse, which has some clue on it regarding the Fiendish Plot.

Disaster: A horrible disaster occurs, somehow related to the Fiendish Plot, and draws the character's attention.

Attack: An attack occurs (on someone other than the characters), somehow related to the Fiendish Plot.

Bizarre Occurance: A strange, inexplicable event happens, somehow related to the Fiendish Plot. In the tradition of the pulps, the more outlandish and bizarre, the better--an early test of the Villain's new ray cannon, for example, turns the

sky over the city a brilliant green for 10 minutes at Noon.

News: The characters read a story in the paper, or hear a story on the radio, that is related to the Fiendish Plot.

Friend in Need: Similar to the Solicitation hook, except that the NPC is a friend of the characters. The NPC comes to the characters for help.

Up To Our Necks: In media res: The characters are involved in the plot from the starting gun. They are attacked, or implicated in a crime, or the victim of a theft, or somehow made to suffer in a manner that is directly related to the Fiendish Plot.

Roll Twice: Roll twice on the Hook Table, and combine the results.

Other: A Hook not represented on this table, created by the GM.

TABLE 6: SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

D% Roll	Descriptor	Descriptor	Type
01-04	Big	Neat	Entertainer
05-09	Ugly	Unlucky	Pilot
10-13	Shifty	Menacing	Soldier
14-17	Secretive	Weak-willed	Politician
18-21	Strong	Foreign	Contact
22-25	Small	Rich	Business Owner
26-29	Trustworthy	Small-time	Guide
30-33	Helpless	Ambitious	Servant
34-37	Quirky	Skilled	Socialite
38-41	Troublesome	Helpful	Scientist
42-45	Smart	Feisty	Doctor
46-49	Charming	Wild	Criminal
50-53	Strong-willed	All-American	Investigator
54-57	Famous	Hard-boiled	Spouse
58-61	Sloppy	Distinctive	Expert
62-65	Dense	Professional	Informant
66-69	Cold	Young	Vehicle Operator
70-73	Impulsive	Violent	Thug
74-77	Clumsy	Urban	Fanatic
78-81	Lucky	Amateur	Academician
82-85	Dangerous	Old	Assistant
86-88	Agile	Native	Worker
89-93	Beautiful	Evil	Henchman
94-97	Weak	Odd	Occultist
98-00	Talented	Ordinary	Kid

The previous table gives you the featured supporting characters for the adventure. Note that unless otherwise specified, featured characters are always Wild Card characters, rather than Extras.

First roll 2d4 for the number of featured supporting characters that will appear in the adventure. Then, for each character, roll three times on Table 6. This will give you two descriptors and a type, which will give you a concept for the NPC. Then, using the standard Savage Worlds rules, generate the NPC's stats.

EXAMPLES:

I need the featured supporting characters for an adventure. I roll for the number of supporting characters and get a 3.

For the first Supporting Character, I roll three percentile rolls, and get: **58, 94, 61**, which gives me a "Sloppy, Odd Expert." I envision an unkempt inventor of strange devices...someone who can help the characters, if they can get past his strangeness.

For the second Supporting Character, I roll a **00, 72, and 06**, which gives me a "Talented, Violent Pilot." Even though this does not specify that this character is the villain's henchman, I decide that the idea of a bloodthirsty air ace is just too perfect a henchman to ignore.

For the last Supporting Character, I roll a **18, 52, and 66**, which results

in a "Strong, All-American Vehicle Operator," who I decide will be a pilot and owner of a small cargo airline, who is being victimized by the villain and his henchman.



**TABLE 7:
ACTION SEQUENCE TYPE**

D20 Roll	Result
1-4	Chase, foot or mount
5-10	Chase, vehicle
11-14	Fight, unarmed
15-20	Fight, Armed

**TABLE 8:
ACTION SEQUENCE
PARTICIPANTS**

D20 Roll	Result
1-6	Few (1-2 per PC)
7-15	Some (3-4 per PC)
16-20	Lots (5+ per PC)

Every action sequence is comprised of four elements: Type, Participants, Setting, and Complications. Using the provided tables, roll a d20, check the result, and assemble your action sequence!

**TABLE 10:
COMPLICATIONS**

D20 Roll	Result
1-5	Bystanders
6-10	Environment
11-15	Props
16-20	New Sequence

**TABLE 9:
ACTION SEQUENCE SETTING**

D20 Roll	Result
1	Nautical setting (ship, docks, etc.)
2	Natural Setting (park , jungle, etc.)
3	Rooftops
4	City Street
5	Residential Setting
6	Entertainment Setting (theatre, stadium, nightclub, etc.)
7	Church/temple/other religious
8	Business Setting (office, factory, warehouse, market, etc.)
9	Transportational Setting (airport, train station, trains or planes)
10	Educational (museum, college, etc.)
11	Civic setting (post office, city hall)
12	Slum or Rough neighborhood
13	"Middle of Nowhere"
14	Secret/hidden location
15	Headquarters (PCs or others)
16	Military setting (base, etc.)
17	Restaurant
18	Laboratory
19	Landmark
20	Unusual setting (underwater, in space, underground, etc.)

The results are fairly self-explanatory, with the exception of the Complications:

Bystanders: The action sequence will feature non-participants who will get in the way.

Environment: The environment in which the sequence occurs causes difficulties (examples include rain, dangerous surroundings, hazardous conditions). All combatants should be taking penalties on their actions due to this.

Props: The sequence features elements of the setting which can be used by the participants during the sequence (examples would include metal rods at a foundry, or trash cans in a street chase, etc.).

New Sequence: The original action sequence will lead immediately into another sequence--re-roll this new sequence from the beginning. It is possible to have a linked chain of multiple sequences!

EXAMPLES:

Rolling on the Action Sequence Tables, I get: 9, 15, 13, 13. This gives me "Chase, vehicle", "Some Participants," "Middle of Nowhere" and "Props." Mulling it over, I decide that the characters are going to be chased by three carloads of the villain's minions along deserted back-country roads. There are numerous obstacles which will appear during the chase, which can be used to try to force the other drivers into crashing (fallen trees, slow-moving wagons, etc.).

Giving it another try, I roll 17, 6, 18, 10: "Fight, armed," "Few Participants," "Laboratory" and "Environment." I decide that the PCs are going to be attacked by the Henchman and a handful of minions, while in an inventor's lab. The place is filled with sparking electrical machinery, which will cause electrical damage to anyone falling into it!

For our last example, I roll 15, 17, 15, 20: "Fight, armed," "Lots of Participants," "Headquarters" and "New Sequence." Rolling for the new sequence, I get 3, 7, 3, 6: "Chase, foot or mounted," "Some participants," "Rooftops" and "Environment." This one looks like a corker! How about this: A horde of the villain's minions attach the PC's own headquarters, eventually leading to a rain-slicked rooftop chase as either the minions or the PCs are trying to beat a hasty retreat!

TABLE 4: PLOT TWIST

D20 Roll	Result
1-2	Betrayal!
3-9	New Location
10	Greater Villain
11-13	Hidden Plot
14-15	Reversal!
16-18	Bizarre Occurance
19	Deus Ex Machina
20	Other

Betrayal!: An NPC changes his or her allegiance in a dramatic fashion.

New Location: Roll again on the Location Table (Table 4). The plot will move to that location at the beginning of the next act.

Greater Villain: The villain of the adventure is actually a henchman of an even greater villain. Re-roll on Table 1 to reveal the new threat.

Hidden Plot: The supposed plot is actually a smokescreen for the villain's true purpose. Re-roll the Fiendish Plot on tables 2 and 3.

Reversal!: Events shift, leading to a direct reversal of the PC's fortunes. If they

are working with the police, they suddenly become implicated in the crime. If they are following clues, the trail goes cold. This works both ways, however. If they are losing, they suddenly start to win.

Bizarre Occurance: Similar to the Hook of the same name. Something weird happens, without apparent explanation.

Deus Ex Machina: Help comes from some improbable source, not hinted at all previously. This can apply to the villain as well--he just happens to have a underwater breathing invention when he's apparently drowned, etc.

Other: Any twist that the GM's evil little mind can come up with.



THE SECOND ACT:

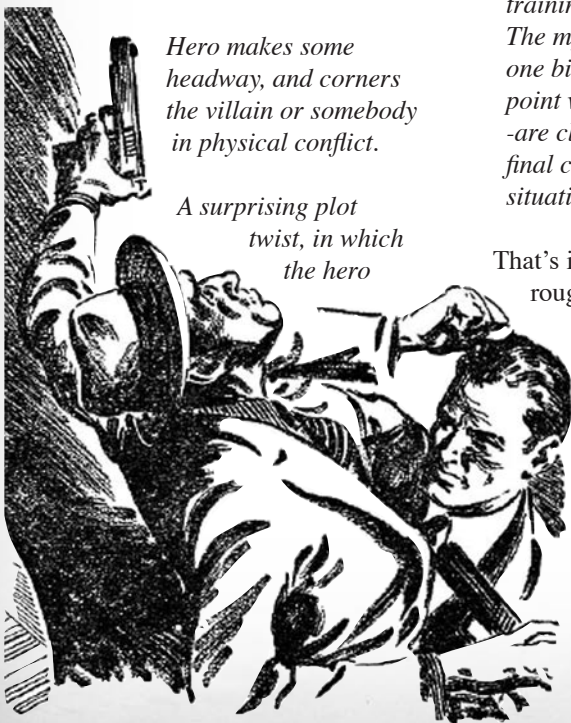
Once you've generated the First Act, it's time to move on to the second. Here's what Lester Dent says about it:

Hero, being heroic, struggles, and his struggles lead up to another physical conflict, and a surprising plot twist.

Using the previously provided tables, generate another action sequence and another plot twist.

THE THIRD ACT:

Same as the above. As Lester Dent says:



Hero makes some headway, and corners the villain or somebody in physical conflict.

A surprising plot twist, in which the hero

preferably gets it in the neck bad, to end the act.

The difference here is that the action sequence should directly involve the Villain, and the plot twist generated at the end of the Act should negatively affect the PCs.

THE FOURTH ACT:

Now you're ready for the climax. There's really nothing left to do at this point that can be generated by random rolls. Everything at this point is up to the actions of the PCs.

In Dent's words:

The hero extricates himself using HIS OWN SKILL, training or brawn.

The mysteries remaining--one big one held over to this point will help grip interest--are cleared up in course of final conflict as hero takes the situation in hand.

That's it you should have a rough outline now for a pulp adventure. Just generate the NPCs, and off you go!

EXAMPLE ADVENTURE OUTLINES:

EXAMPLE ONE:

Villain: (59) Nazi

Fiendish Plot: (13, 18) Acquire Treasure

Location:(07) Far-off Jungle

Act 1:

The Hook: (90) Up To Our Necks

Supporting Characters: Three of them: (00,04,33) Talented Neat Servant, (42,38,03) Smart Helpful Entertainer, (23,92, 40) Small Evil Scientist, (62, 85,67) Dense Old Vehicle Operator.

Action Sequence (18,15,6,4) Fight, armed, Some participants, Nightclub, Bystanders

Plot Twist: (7) New Location (given the nightclub fight, I decide to have the adventure start in the PC's home city, and then shift to the previously-rolled jungle location here).

Act 2:

Action Sequence (15,13,1,11)Fight, armed, Some participants, Nautical Setting, Props.

Plot Twist: (7) New Location (European Country)

Act 3:

Action Sequence (19,20, 18,10) Fight, armed, Lots of participants, Laboratory, Environment.

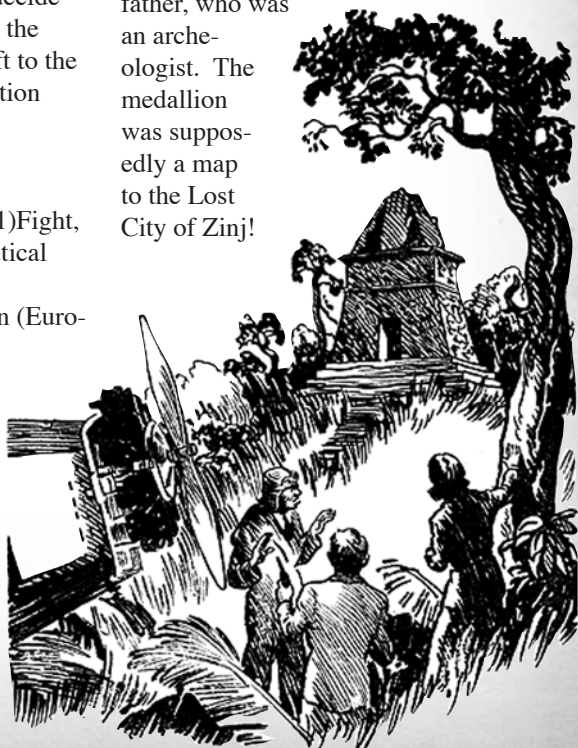
Plot Twist: (2) Betrayal!

Act 4: Climax.

So, looking at the results at left, here's what I come up with: The Nazi's are looking for a legendary artifact. No, not the headpiece to the Staff of Ra. The Jewel of Zinj, which is said to be a phenomenal source of power. However, it is said to be located in the temple at the center of the Lost City of Zinj.

The PCs are at a nightclub, watching the beautiful singer, Elaine Nightengale, perform. Suddenly shots ring out as a group of Nazi secret agents attack, led by a hideous dwarf!

The PCs fight them off, with the help of Carstairs, Elaine's fastidious ex-army servant, but not before they snatch a necklace from around Elaine's neck! Elaine says that the necklace was a gift from her dead father, who was an archeologist. The medallion was supposedly a map to the Lost City of Zinj!



Elaine is able to recreate the map from memory, and the PCs (with Elaine and Carstairs in tow) head off to the jungle nation of Mubullah.

In Mubullah, the PCs are taken upriver by a senile old river boat captain. Along the way, they come under attack by hostile natives, trying to prevent them from reaching Zinj. They finally reach the lost city, only to discover the jewel missing (I'll probably throw another action sequence in here, too...lots of Indiana Jones-style traps and such). They find a dead Nazi (killed by the natives), who has a telegram on him, revealing that the dwarf is a scientist working for the Nazis, and will be experimenting on the jewel at his lab in Berlin!

The PCs then travel to the heart of the Third Reich, and assault the laboratory of Herr Doktor Liebenohne...a deformed dwarf spared by the Nazis purely because of his brilliance, which is as twisted as his body. The fight takes place in Liebenohne's laboratory, filled with experimental weapons and other inventions. Suddenly, just as things are reaching a climax, Carstairs betrays the PCs! He was a Nazi agent all along!

Can the PC's defeat Carstairs and Liebenohne, get the Jewel of Zinj, and get out of Berlin with Elaine before the Gestapo closes in?

Gosh, I sure hope so....

EXAMPLE TWO:

Villain: (30) Mad Scientist
Fiendish Plot: (16, 50) Kill A City
Location:(89) City: Skyscrapers

Act 1:

The Hook: (44) Bizarre Occurance

Supporting Characters: Four of them:

(71, 56, 50) Impulsive, Hard-boiled Investigator; (32, 69, 41) Helpless, Young Scientist; (99, 43, 100) Talented, Feisty Kid and (05, 59, 90) Ugly, Distinctive Henchman.

Action Sequence (20, 3 4, 2) Armed Fight, Few Participants, City Street, Bystanders.

Plot Twist: (12) Hidden Plot. The reroll results in (02, 15) Manipulate a Country.

Act 2:

Action Sequence (7, 5, 19, 6) Vehicle Chase, Few participants, Landmark setting, Environmental complications.

Plot Twist: (7) New Location (In the Air)

Act 3:

Action Sequence (14, 16, 15, 9) Fight unarmed, Lots of participants, Headquarters setting, Environmental complications.

Plot Twist: (1) Betrayal!

Act 4: Climax.

Taking a look at the results of the rolls this time around, I develop the following ideas:

A Mad Scientist is using a disinte-

grator ray to destroy buildings in the city. His goal, although apparently one of simple destruction, is instead to manipulate the US Government into giving a valuable contract for defense developments.

The story begins with the disappearance of an entire office building in the middle of the night. The PCs investigate, and during their investigation, encounter Jenny Jenkins, a brassy reporter looking into the story. Together, the heroes and the reporter discover evidence that the building was vaporized, by some sort of disintegrator. During the investigation, a sniper starts shooting at the PCs (a hired thug employed by the villain to raise the stakes of the gambit)! The villain's main henchman, Albrecht (a giant of a man, like Lothar in *The Rocketeer*) will be seen, but escape.

The PCs and Jenny go to the uptown laboratory of a scientist -- the young and beautiful Raven Sinclair -- to get an expert opinion on the sort of weapon being used. They arrive in time to see Ms. Sinclair in the presence of Albrecht! When the PCs are spotted, Albrecht will pick up Raven, throw her into a nearby horse-drawn carriage, and speed into the lanes of Central Park! The PCs give chase -- the only other carriage nearby is driven by Mickey, a feisty 12-year-old with the horsemanship skills of a jockey!. The chase is on, through the winding paths of Central Park, trying to avoid trees, bystanders, etc.

At the last moment, Albrecht grabs Raven, and leaps from his carriage onto a rope ladder which dangles from the open hatch of an airship, silently hovering over the park!

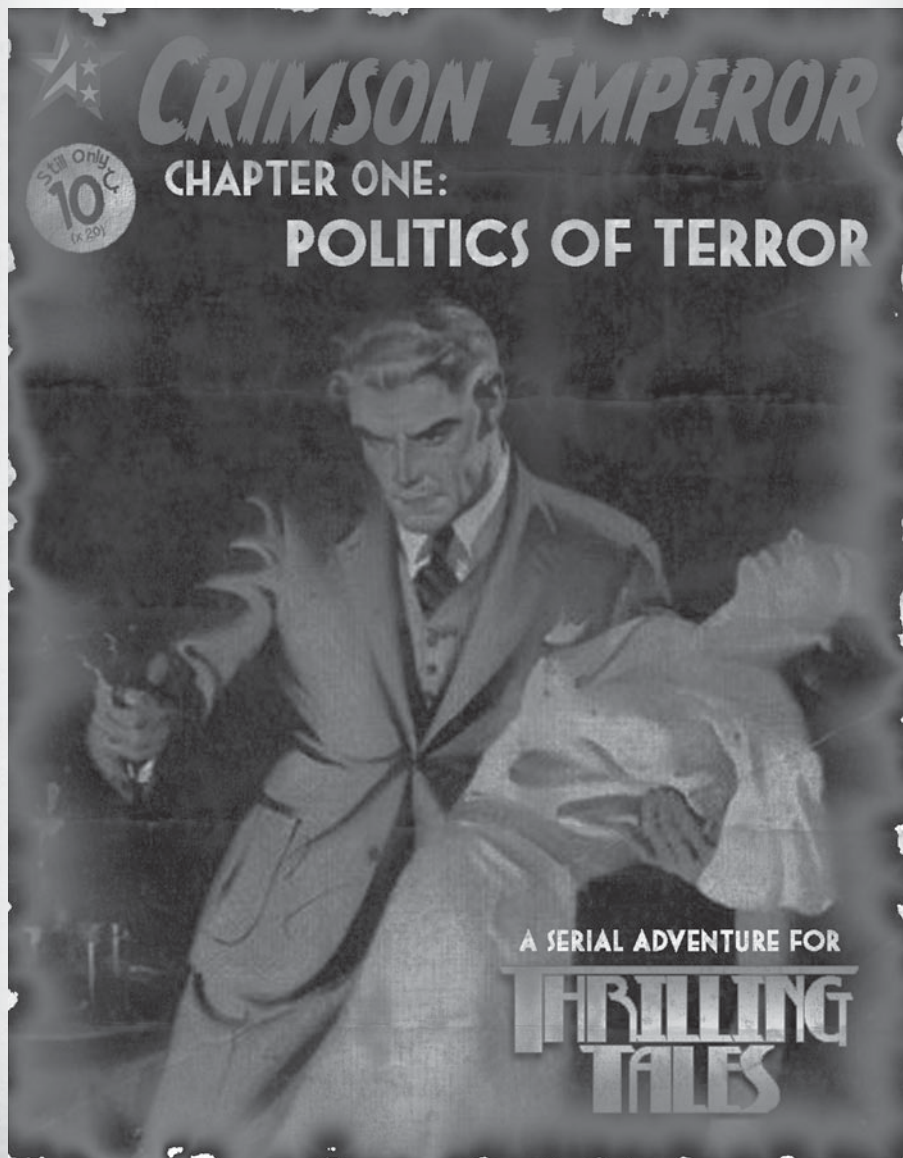
The PCs will have to follow -- and, on board the zeppelin, they discover the true villain is, in fact, Raven Sinclair herself! She used her invention in an effort to influence the War Department to give her a contract to create inventions to defend against her own attack!

The PCs will have to fight their way off the airship -- being careful not to ignite the hydrogen with weapons fire -- and bring the beautiful but deadly Ms. Sinclair to justice!

CHAPTER ELEVEN:

THE CRIMSON EMPEROR

A PLOT POINT SERIAL



Star Only
10
(K-20)

A SERIAL ADVENTURE FOR

**THRILLING
TALES**

I: POLITICS OF TERROR

INTRODUCTION

“Politics of Terror” is the first adventure in *The Crimson Emperor* serial. While it can be played on its own, it is designed to connect to the following adventure, “The Scorpion Syndicate.” Notes are given below on using both approaches. There are many character types that would fit in this adventure.

Men of Mystery and other vigilantes would be perfect for this adventure. They have ears on the street and will be interested in saving those threatened by mob activity.

Ace Reporters and journalists will want to cover the Presidential race, and Sen. Morrison in particular.

G-Men may be sent by the government to keep an eye on mob activity in response to threats to Sen. Morrison’s well-being.

Gumshoes and other urban PCs may simply get caught up in events, or are associated with more directly motivated PCs.

Because of its political nature, this scenario is presumed to take place in the fall of 1936. The GM can adapt this to other Presidential election years, but minor adventure details may need to be changed. Specifically, Senator Morrison is a hero of the common people because of his zeal to end the Depression, tax the rich, and break the mobs. The

Depression angle would have to be dropped in a campaign that took place before 1929. Sen. Morrison’s platform would reflect appropriate contemporary worries (if the GM sets this in the 1944 election year, Morrison would have a “how can we fight enemies abroad if we don’t fight our enemies at home” theme).

BACKGROUND

Senator Stuart Morrison is a political maverick. He is running as an Independent with a groundswell of popular support from the masses of citizens hurt by the Depression. His supporters tend to gloss over his disregard for checks and balances when he was a governor (which Sen. Morrison describes as “cutting through red tape to get things done for the people”), and they believe he can effect real change as President. The newspapers have nicknamed him “Steamship Stu” for his ability to disregard the political winds against him and chug upriver on the fiery coals of his own ambition and popular support.

While the affluent are worried about his tax proposals, organized crime is more concerned about the tactics he’d introduce to enforce order. Steamship Stu has been talking a great deal about broadening the powers and scope of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to take down the mobs. Now, the mobs are organizing to ensure that he doesn’t get elected. In Chapter One, the mobs use street tactics to chip away at his support, culminating in the

firebombing of a hotel. In Chapter Two, a hit man is hired to assassinate Sen. Morrison while he is on the train to his next campaign stop. The PCs must hinder the mob efforts and protect Sen. Morrison from the assassination plot.

If this adventure is being used as part of the Serial, the hit man and his enforcers are brainwashed. While they have been hired to assassinate Sen. Morrison, they are conditioned to fail. The reason why will be made clear in a future installment.

STAND-ALONE ADVENTURE

As the first part of the serial, "Politics of Terror" is very easy to adapt to a standalone adventure. Simply run the adventure as written. The only choice a Game Master would have to make is to determine whether the Hit Man really was brainwashed. GMs who prefer a straightforward resolution can simply make the assassination attempt on Senator Morrison's life

genuine (and perhaps substitute a real historical candidate for the fictional senator). GMs who would still like to use the brainwashing angle will simply have to create their own reasons for sending an assassin who is brainwashed to fail.

The GM can set this adventure during primary season, allowing for Morrison to be knocked off by the official party candidate.

SERIAL ADVENTURE

As the first part of the serial, "Politics of Terror" is run as written. Players should choose characters that have reasons to stick together, for they are going to share in a number of adventures. Serial notes are placed in this adventure to ensure that the GM maintains continuity among the various adventures.



CHAPTER ONE: ROLLING OUT THE BLOOD RED CARPET

In this chapter, the local mobs have decided to make life difficult for Sen. Morrison and his supporters. Things heat up on the night before Sen. Morrison's train is due. Depending on how the GM is introducing the PCs to the adventure, the PCs may be victims of mob crime or a reaction to it. The following is a list of minor mob encounters that the GM can insert into the adventure. Not all of them need be used, but there should be enough of them to drive the point home that organized criminals do not want to see Sen. Morrison elected. The only encounter that should be used is the mobster coup de grace, the firebombing of the hotel from which Sen. Morrison is expected to make a campaign speech tomorrow.

FORESHADOWING

PCs with their ear on the street may be able to anticipate some of the below events so that they are on hand to prevent them. With a successful Streetwise test, the PC will learn that the local mobs are planning disturbances. An Investigation test will reveal the time and place of one of the below events. A Raise on the Investigation test will reveal the plot to torch the hotel.

Serial Note: If the PCs stop the hotel burning, a second attempt will be made by a rival mob. This will start to suggest some coordinated

effort among even rival mobs to influence this campaign. The ties suggested here will be revealed in "The Scorpion Syndicate."

LEANING ON THE LOCALS

Several low-ranking mobsters will canvas the local businesses, encouraging storeowners and patrons to steer clear of any rallies for Sen. Morrison. While the mobsters may make veiled threats, they will not do any actual harm to the storeowner or his property. This is a good encounter for Gumshoes and other urban PCs who would otherwise not be involved. The Gumshoe could simply be sipping a cup of coffee at a counter as a mobster walks in and harasses the owner.

HARASSING THE PRESS

The local mobs will pressure Ace Reporters and newspaper editors to portray Sen. Morrison in an unflattering light. There are two ways a GM may construct an encounter with this: proactive and reactive.

With a proactive approach, the mobsters wish to influence the reporting of Sen. Morrison's visit. If a PC is an Ace Reporter or newspaper editor, he may be given an invitation to meet with a high-ranking mob official for dinner (the GM may freely choose which mob; if there is more than one reporter PC, then different mobs may attempt to influence each). The PC will be gently but firmly escorted to a noted mob restaurant. The visit will be cordial, but the mobster will indicate

his desire for an accurate portrayal of Sen. Morrison's troubling campaign agenda. The dinner will end with an appropriate bribe and a thinly veiled threat should the Ace Reporter not play ball.

Serial Note: If the PC has met one of the mob bosses before and the GM chooses to use the mob boss for this scene, then the PC should be allowed to make a Notice check. Success means that the PC feels that there is something "off" about the mob boss (which will be revealed in "The Scorpion Syndicate").

With a reactive approach, the mobsters are reacting to an already published article or radio newscast that portrayed Sen. Morrison in a flattering light. The mobsters will be eager to ensure that the reporter or editor in question will not make the same mistake again. The victim in this encounter can either be a PC or NPC, as appropriate.

Basically, the victim is attacked while vulnerable at night (at a bus stop, walking to the steps of his apartment, walking down the street from a restaurant, etc). Four mobsters suddenly accost him. They are concerned about the lies and inaccuracies he's been spreading about Sen. Morrison. They feel it's necessary to beat some sense into him. One mobster will pull a gun to ensure that the victim doesn't try to be a hero while the other three rough him up a little. It is not their goal to kill him or even seriously injure him.

An appropriate PC (such as a Man of Mystery) could come upon the scene and help the victim out. Once the mobsters feel the tide turning, they will flee. In either case, they will make their threat known: stop favoring Sen. Morrison or we'll be back, and we won't be so soft on you next time.

POSTER PATROL

This encounter is designed for a Man of Mystery, police officer, or any PC walking the streets at night. The PC comes upon the scene below and wades into the action to protect the campaign worker.

This scene is similar to the mobster's reactive approach in "Harassing the Press." A Morrison campaign worker is hanging posters along the street. Four mobsters approach him and insist that he reconsider whom he's supporting. They will not hurt him if he hands over his remaining posters and scrams. If he stands firm, the worker is in for a beating. The mobsters won't be as gentle with him as they would the Ace Reporter. It is up to the PC whether to intervene, but the mobsters will offer the warning to "make sure you don't vote for the wrong candidate" as they fight and/or flee.

CAMPAIGN HQ DRIVE-BY

This encounter is designed for any PC walking the street in the early evening, although an Ace Reporter could be inside the storefront interviewing campaign workers.

A sedan drives past the building while a mobster with a Tommy gun riddles the storefront with bullets. The objective is to scare, not to harm, so the shooter will aim high. Alternatively, a brick with a threatening note could be tossed through a window, or a small firebomb could be tossed inside.

HOTEL ASSAULT

This is the “big” event of the night and it occurs in the wee hours of the morning. The city hotel sponsoring Sen. Morrison’s city campaign speech will be firebombed.

The plan is simple. Night watchmen will be bribed to “take a walk” so that a small group of mobsters can enter the hotel with gasoline cans. They proceed to spill gasoline all over the main conference room

(where the speech will take place) and light a match. The flames quickly engulf the room and spread through the rest of the building.

This fire will provide the PCs several opportunities to play hero. Many people will be trapped on the upper floors and require rescuing. The GM is encouraged to use falling ceilings, collapsing floors and staircases, and spreading flames to full effect. Ace Reporters will be sent to the scene as soon as possible. The message is clear: Senator Morrison is not welcome here.

LEGWORK

If the PCs try to discover who was responsible for the fire, a successful Streetwise or Investigation test will reveal the mob behind it. Unfortunately, there is no evidence



tying them to the crime.

PCs looking for future crimes will find out something interesting with a Raise on the test. One mob (not the one responsible for the hotel bombing) is bringing in a hit man to take out the Senator. This Hit Man is to ensure that the Senator does not make it to his next destination alive. Further Investigation or Streetwise checks along this line of inquiry reveals the Hit Man to be Gus the Ghost, who is notorious in another city.

CHAPTER TWO: LAST STOP

In this chapter, notorious mob hit man Gus the Ghost is hired to assassinate Sen. Morrison. Interestingly, Gus the Ghost resides in a different city, making his hiring all the more interesting. Gus has secured a job as a train waiter and plans to assassinate Sen. Morrison after he leaves the city by train. By the end of this Chapter, Gus the Ghost will make his attempt and is doomed to fail.

If the PCs did some legwork in Chapter One, then they are already aware of Gus' plan. If not, then the GM will have to give them the information another way. The best way is for the GM to call for Streetwise tests. The street is abuzz with rumors about Gus the Ghost and Senator Morrison.

Serial Note: If this information leak seems a bit sloppy, then it's because it is. The mob wants the information known, for purposes revealed later in the serial.

RESEARCH ON GUS THE GHOST

Some PCs, especially Ace Reporters and Men of Mystery, may wish to research all they can on Gus the Ghost. Since Gus usually operates in a different city, the PCs will have to go to the library or dig through a newsroom's archives of out of town papers in order to find anything useful.

A successful Investigation check will reveal that Gus the Ghost identifies himself as August Moore, a small-time mobster who was gunned down by a rival mob over a dispute with a prostitute. Moore's body was identified and given a burial. Three weeks later, members of that rival mob involved with the hit started dying. A message scrawled on the wall in the victim's blood would read, "For killing me." Moore's methods were so subtle that he even slew one mobster in bed while his moll slept next to him. She awoke the next morning to find him dead, his throat slit.

Intrigued, the authorities exhumed his coffin and found it empty. It appeared that August Moore really did rise from the grave. The local newspapers immediately coined him "Gus the Ghost." He became a hit man for hire, specializing in getting into secure locations and

using quiet methods, such as knives and garrotes, to kill his victims. PCs with any kind of “Sixth Sense” ability (like Danger Sense) will determine that Gus probably intends to hit Sen. Morrison while he is alone.

FOLLOWING THE SENATOR

Sen. Morrison will not be swayed by mob tactics. If anything, it only strengthens his resolve. He will use every opportunity to point out that this is exactly why the FBI needs to be reformed and why Congress must pass his proposals to crack down on organized crime.

Three people usually accompany the Senator on his campaign. Martin “Marty” Bloom is his close friend and campaign manager. Anyone who wants to talk to Morrison usually has to get through him first. Paul Garrett is Sen. Morrison’s personal bodyguard, hired after Morrison received threats while still governor. Finally, Gladys Price, news journalist, is constantly by Sen. Morrison’s side. He has given her complete access to his campaign to insure accurate reporting.

When the Senator arrives in the morning by train, he will make a brief speech on the train platform about the need to crack down on organized crime. There are no threats to his life, although PCs who make a Streetwise and a Notice check will spot some mobsters keeping an eye on the Senator.

With the original hotel in ruins, Marty Bloom will make hasty arrangements at another hotel. This should alarm PCs, as hasty planning usually leads to large gaps in security. Still, the rest of the day goes by uneventfully. At dinner, Sen. Morrison will make his fiery, populist campaign speech. A few high-ranking mobsters are in the audience, stone-faced, but no moves are made on the Senator.

During the night, Sen. Morrison will invite Miss Price to his room. While this may raise eyebrows (Sen. Morrison is married), nothing life-threatening will happen to the Senator at this time.

The next morning, Sen. Morrison makes a final short speech and boards the train. It is here that Gus the Ghost’s plan goes into action.

TRAIN RIDE OF DEATH

By this point, the PCs may become discouraged that nothing untoward is going to happen to the Senator. The GM may wish to gently remind them that the threat was that the Senator “will not make it to his next destination alive.” This should prompt them to board or watch the train.

Sen. Morrison has his own privately rented car attached to the back of the train. He normally keeps his team with him, and he is suspicious of anyone who tries to gain access, as “his enemies are everywhere.”

Gus' plan is simple. He has hired a few mobsters to ride the train as passengers. During the first few hours of the train ride, Gus will play his role as waiter to the Senator, studying the layout of Morrison's private car as well as gaining the trust of the Senator's party. During one of these visits, when Gus sees Gladys scribbling notes, he apologizes for not having a pen to take their orders. Gladys helpfully does it for him, giving him a sample of her handwriting in the process.

PCs making a successful Notice roll will spot that the same waiter caters to the Senator's party. If they keep an eye on the waiter, a further Notice test will enable them to see him writing something on paper (the forged note).

Just prior to the hit, Gus will slip Gladys a note. The message claims to be from someone who has a huge scoop on Morrison and wants to share it with her in the lounge car. Curious, Gladys will excuse herself to meet him. As Gladys waits in the lounge car, Gus carries a forged note to Marty. This note is in Gladys' handwriting, a forgery, explaining that she received some disturbing news and was breaking her association with them. He shares the news with Morrison, who tells him to find her and take care of it. Marty takes his leave.

PCs who are either in the lounge car or at least watching who is going to and from the back will spot Gladys heading for the lounge and taking

a seat. A Notice test will reveal that she is anxious, as if waiting for someone. If she is approached, Gladys will initially be very friendly (she believes the PC could be the contact with the scoop). Once she realizes he isn't, she will sigh and say that she doesn't like to be kept waiting, especially when she could be with Morrison. A PC with Danger Sense or a similar ability will realize that she's been baited out of the car.

Marty will enter the lounge soon after, clutching a piece of paper in his hand. A Notice roll will reveal that he seems furious with Gladys. He hands her the paper and demands to know what is the meaning of this? Both of them are confused, and smart PCs will realize that a trap is being sprung.

With Gladys and Marty out of the way, Gus will give a silent signal to the mobsters. Two mobsters will make their way through the train to the back, while a third climbs up on the roof. It is important to note that the mobsters are also brainwashed so that they will not harm the Senator (they may attack, but they are programmed to miss or flee once Gus fails).

PCs who don't follow Gladys (or Marty) to the lounge car may have an opportunity to see the mobsters making their way back to the Senator's car. They try to look casual, so the PCs will have to make an opposed Notice check against the mobsters' Stealth checks. A raise on the

roll will also spot concealed weapons. If the mobsters are approached, they will attack the PCs. They'll engage in fisticuffs first, only drawing their pistols if things are going badly for them or the PCs draw first. If the PCs stall the mobsters long enough, Garrett will join the fray.

PCs who are specifically looking for this sort of thing, or ask for an additional Notice roll, will hear the third mobster running on the roof.

Gus will walk into Morrison's car to alert him of the impending attack. This will spur Garrett, the bodyguard, to exit the car to intercept the mobsters. The mobster on the roof will come down on the other side so that there is no escape for the Senator out back. Gus will pull a gun from his tray and prepare to shoot Morrison. At this point, Gus' brainwashing forces him to fail in his attempt. After a couple of tries, Gus becomes confused (he's not used to failure). While he is confused, Morrison pulls out his pistol and shoots him in self-defense.

How this plays out depends on the PCs' actions. If the PCs have a chance at preventing the assassination, they may incapacitate Gus before he breaks the conditioning. In this case, Gus will have no idea that he's brainwashed. If they arrive after the second shot, they may be able to hear Gus' confusion and/or notice that he drops his gun.

Morrison will draw his pistol and shoot Gus unless it is clear that the

threat has been dealt with. Once Gus goes down, the mobster outside will leap off the train.

Even if the PCs suspect something weird is going on with Sen. Morrison, they will have little time to act on it. A Notice test against Sen. Morrison will reveal that he has no idea why the assassin missed; he just considered himself lucky. Garrett will soon burst in with a couple of the conductors, ordering everyone else out of the room. Marty and Gladys will arrive soon thereafter, and Gladys will want to interview any PCs who were involved.

EPILOGUE

Regardless of whether this adventure is used as a standalone adventure or part of a serial, the initial outcome is the same. The newspapers will all be trumpeting about how Steamship Stu survived an assassination attempt. His popularity has only increased as a result of this mob action. Sen. Morrison will praise the PCs as friends, encouraging them to look him up if they ever need anything.

If running this adventure as a standalone, the GM can simply have history take its course. As an Independent, Sen. Morrison has a perhaps insurmountable obstacle to beat the Democratic and Republican candidates. Franklin Roosevelt wins the election and history returns to normal. A cynical GM could have Sen. Morrison drop out of the race for mysterious reasons or fail to survive another assassination

attempt. If the primary option is used, Sen. Morrison simply loses.

If running this adventure as part of *The Crimson Emperor* serial, the GM should leave the election up in the air for now, as the next part of the serial takes place before the general elections. Players should be encouraged to keep the same characters throughout the serial unless circumstances deem otherwise.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

SENATOR STUART "STEAMSHIP STU" MORRISON

Stuart Morrison is a very colorful character. Though short in stature, he makes up for it in presence and attitude. Steamship Stu is proud of his humble beginnings and how he pulled himself up by the bootstraps. He grew up in a slum as his mother worked long hours in a sweatshop. His father was a boxer who didn't know when to quit and died in the ring when Stu was very young. Stuart enlisted and fought in the Great War, and when he came back he swore he'd make something of himself. He joined a labor union, during which he met Marty Bloom. The two became fast friends and Stuart harbored a desire to attain a leadership position within the union. That hope was dashed when the anti-communist "Palmer Raids" purged the union of its current leadership and led to the dissolution of the union. When Attorney General Palmer's feared "Communist

Revolution" failed to take place on May 1, 1920, Stuart seized an opportunity.

He spoke out against the government's treading on people's rights, which propelled him to the city mayor's office. With Marty at his side, Stuart's appeal grew and he eventually became state governor. He turned his eye toward the U.S. Senate just as the economy was collapsing, and he was a vocal opponent of President Hoover. While initially a supporter of President Roosevelt, Stuart now hopes to capture the presidency for himself.

Stuart Morrison is a scrapper. He backs down to no one and he cares little for threats. He rails against government impotence and the crime syndicates because it's popular and crucial to his election campaign. His response to Marty's warnings to tone down his rhetoric was to hire a bodyguard and pack heat. If he has a weakness, it's for attractive women. While Stuart considers himself a family man, he can't help pursuing women he meets on the campaign trail. Currently, reporter Gladys Price is satiating his hunger for the time being.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Guts d10, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Politics) d10, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Shooting d6
Charisma +4, **Pace:** 6;
Parry: 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Loyal, Stubborn
Edges: Attractive, Charismatic, Moxie
Gear: Derringer (5/10/20, 2d6+1)

MARTIN "MARTY" BLOOM

Marty Bloom is Sen. Morrison's campaign manager and one of his oldest friends. Marty is a balding, middle-aged man of very slight build, but he makes up for it with a sharp mind and perseverance. Marty Bloom carefully orchestrates all of Sen. Garrison's important speeches. Indeed, Sen. Morrison's campaign platform is more Marty's creation than his own.

Marty Bloom is dedicated to Sen. Morrison and will do everything in his power to protect him. He disapproves of Morrison's dalliance with Ms. Price and does what he can to keep it out of the papers. He also fears that this affair will give the reporter some control over Morrison.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Politics) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Streetwise d6
Charisma +0, **Pace:** 6;
Parry: 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: Font of Information

PAUL GARRETT

Paul Garrett is a former soldier and police officer that impressed Sen. Morrison while he was governor, stopping a would-be assassin during

a political speech. Paul was offered a great sum to retire from the force and become the governor's full-time bodyguard. Paul has followed Morrison to the Senate and now as a presidential candidate. He is fiercely loyal to the Senator.

Paul does tend to stand out in a crowd. He is a tall, stocky man with a baldhead and handlebar mustache. He likes to wear his clothes loose, which gives him an unkempt appearance. He has an incredible eye for detail.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10
Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d10, Shooting d8, Streetwise d6, Taunt d6
Charisma -2, **Pace:** 6;
Parry: 6; **Toughness:** 8
Hindrances: Mean
Edges: Alertness, Combat Reflexes
Gear: Colt 1911 (12/24/48, 2d6+1, AP1)

GLADYS PRICE

Gladys Price is a dedicated young journalist who is fascinated by Senator Morrison. She first interviewed him when he was a governor and found herself captivated by his presence. She has populist leanings, which garnered her his respect due to her favorable reporting of him. When Sen. Morrison announced his intention to run for the presidency, Gladys asked to accompany him. Always happy to have favorable press, Morrison readily agreed. Gladys wires regular updates on the Morrison campaign

to her newspaper, which resells the column around the country.

Gladys is an attractive young woman with flame red hair. While she had no designs on the Senator, she reciprocated his advances when offered. She realizes that this could hurt her integrity if word got out, but Morrison's smooth words and the promise of a future job in the White House has enabled her to continue the affair.

Serial Note: Gladys Price may return with a larger role in "the Crimson Veil," the fifth and final adventure in the serial. If the PCs befriend her now, they may be able to use her help later.

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

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Investigation d10, Notice d8, Streetwise d8

Charisma +4, **Pace:** 6;

Parry: 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Curious

Edges: Very Attractive, Charmer

Gear: Pad and Pen

HARRY REYNOLDS, A.K.A. "GUS THE GHOST"

There's a logical explanation as to how a murdered and buried mobster survived: he didn't. August Moore was killed. What no one knew was that he had an older brother who looked a lot like him. August Moore's real name was August Reynolds. He changed it in order to protect his relatives from any mob repercussions. He pretended that he

was raised in a Catholic orphanage. Still, he was very close to his brother and when he died his brother swore vengeance.

While Harry did get vengeance on August's killers, he created a mystique regarding his brother's death. He moved the body while the soil was still fresh and buried him in the family cemetery. He adopted his brother's identity and he used methods of killing that would unnerve potential targets.

Unfortunately, someone got a hold of Harry and brainwashed him into taking a futile assassination job against Senator Morrison. Harry has no idea that he is being set up to take a fall.

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

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Streetwise d10, Taunt d8

Charisma -2, **Pace:** 6;

Parry: 7; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Mean

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Frenzy, Hard to Kill, Nerves of Steel

Gear: Colt 1911 (12/24/48, 2d6+1, AP1), several knives (Str+d4)

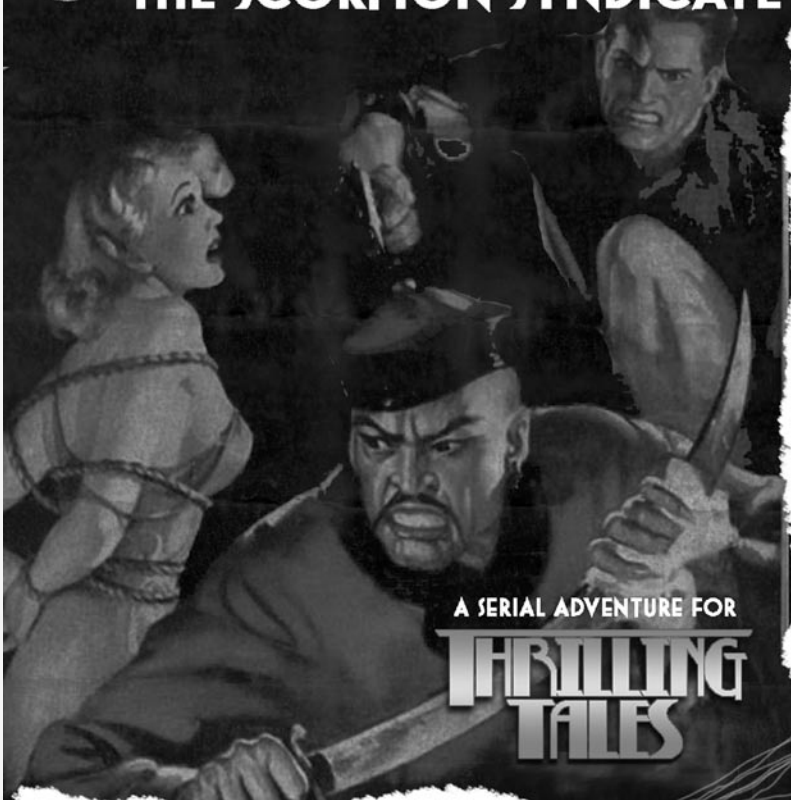
MOBSTER THUGS

The Mobsters who appear in this chapter are all Mooks, as per the rules presented on page 87.



CRIMSON EMPEROR

CHAPTER TWO: THE SCORPION SYNDICATE



A SERIAL ADVENTURE FOR

THRILLING TALES

II: THE SCORPION SYNDICATE

BACKGROUND

For quite some time, the seedy underworld of the City has been dominated by two rival mobs. At times, the rivalry between the Duffy and Marciano mobs has gotten bloody. An uneasy truce keeps the

City from spilling into open war, with smaller mobs carving a niche in the non-strategic areas. This truce is very fragile, and even a perceived breach will send bullets flying until the dust clears and level-headedness returns. PCs with an ear on the street know this only too well.

Without warning, these rivals start working together. The PCs will

slowly discover ties between the mob leaders that indicate a syndicate of some sort. This syndicate emanates from Chinatown. The PCs must go to Chinatown in order to discover the power behind this syndicate.

STAND-ALONE ADVENTURE

“The Scorpion Syndicate” stands alone just fine. If the GM does not wish to play this as part of the larger serial, he may make the Scorpion Lady the true power behind the syndicate and allow the local criminal underworld to revert to old boundaries after she is defeated.

SERIAL ADVENTURE

In “Politics of Terror,” the PCs may have discovered mysterious strings being pulled in the assassination attempt on Senator Morrison. The hit men had been brainwashed, but why? The mystery continues in “The Scorpion Syndicate,” where bitter mob rivals are suddenly working together. As the PCs confront the Scorpion Lady in Chinatown, they will discover that her orders come from a faraway land. When this adventure closes, the PCs will be on their way to Tibet to confront the true enemy.

CHAPTER THREE: STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

While the Duffy mob and the Marciano mob have staked out territory in most of the city, there are some areas free of their control. Armand “Le Renard” Bordeaux is

an independent mobster who runs a prostitution racket. He controls everything from the streetwalker up to the high-class call girl in his domain. Unfortunately for him, Le Renard has made a critical mistake. He turned down an offer to pay respect (protection money) to the Marciano mob, whose territory straddles his. For the last few months, the Marciano mob has been too busy with the Duffy mob to bother with him. That’s now about to change.

Le Renard spends many evenings at the French Riviera Café, a night club where many of his pricier girls work. Tonight will be a special evening, as Le Renard is about to receive a visit from the Scorpion Syndicate.

PCs can become involved in many ways. The default entry is through Mr. Simms, which is described below. PCs with an ear on the street may learn that something is going to happen at the “Riviera” tonight, also described below.

THE MATTER OF MISS SIMMS

This encounter will take place in a Gumshoe’s office (or similar situation – Men of Mystery may have secret ways of being contacted). This particular afternoon a Mr. Norman Simms enters the PC’s office.

Mr. Simms is obviously from out of town. He lacks the local accent and slang in his speech. He is comfortably dressed but not too fancy; he’s definitely a member of

the middle class. He looks to be middle-aged.

A couple of months ago, Mildred Simms, his daughter, started seeing a fellow by the name of Jackie Keegan. Mr. Simms felt that Jackie was trouble, so he forbade Mildred from seeing him. The discussion did not go well, and Mildred responded by running away with Jackie. Mr. Simms has not heard from his daughter since.

Two weeks ago, a friend of Mr. Simms that resides in the City clipped an obituary of Keegan and sent it to him. Mr. Keegan was the victim of a mob hit, confirming Mr. Simm's suspicions. He expected to hear from his daughter now that her mobster boyfriend was dead, but to no avail. Mr. Simms has decided to look for Mildred on his own. Since she is an adult, he can expect no help from the police. He is willing to pay handsomely for her return. He gives the gumshoe Mildred's photograph.

Assuming that the PC takes the job, a day of legwork and an Investigation or Streetwise roll will point to the Riviera as a likely lead. A "Mildred Smith" has recently taken a job there as a prostitute. By the time the PC gets this information, it will be nightfall and the Riviera will be open for business.

DUFFY'S INTEREST

PCs with an ear on the street may learn via a Streetwise test that the Duffy mob has an interest in a runaway gun moll. This gun moll,

Mildred Simms, used to be Duffy mobster Jackie Keegan's girl. PCs who do some legwork (a Streetwise or Investigation check) will learn that Jackie Keegan was personally killed by Mob Boss Seamus Duffy.

PCs who do further legwork will discover that a "Mildred Smith" recently took a job at the French Riviera Café, which is comfortably within Marciano territory. The Duffy gang wouldn't risk open war with the Marcianos to retrieve her, but what secrets does she hold?

THE CLUB

The French Riviera Café is a small club that operates independently of Marciano influence.

GMs can use any typical nightclub layout. There are bouncers at the door. The main room has a bar, a stage, and many tables, including semi-private booths. There are a number of rooms on the second floor for Le Renard's girls use. Le Renard prefers a booth near the stage and is usually accompanied by two beautiful women.

When the PCs arrive, Mildred Simms is upstairs with a city councilman. How the PCs approach Le Renard is up to them. If the PCs approach him diplomatically, he will be Friendly. He will offer to let Mildred go for his expenses paid and a reasonable finder's fee. Unfortunately, the club is attacked before the PCs can close the deal.

If the PCs use a brute force or

infiltration approach, the GM should design reasonable security measures. Two guards, one at the bottom and one at the top, always man the stairs to the second floor. A couple of men also patrol the main hallway to ensure that there aren't any problems. Should the PCs be captured by the guards and presented to Le Renard, he will be Hostile. He will demand to know why they are here. Before the PCs can get much further, the club will be attacked.

DOUBLE HIT

At a dramatically appropriate point, two sedans will pull up to the club and several mobsters come out shooting. They gun down the door bouncers before entering the main room, guns blazing.

If the PCs are in the main club, they will have a chance to hear the shooting outside (Notice rolls) and have three turns to seek cover or prepare a defense. If the Notice check is missed, the PCs will have a final chance to make a final Notice test to spot the mobsters entering. In this case, the PCs will have a turn to find cover.

The mobsters have orders to shoot up the club and acquire two targets, Mildred Simms and Le Renard. Mildred is wanted dead and Le Renard is wanted dead or alive, so the mobsters can afford to be sloppy. If the Mobsters aren't stopped, they will massacre the patrons and staff.

Le Renard will bark out orders to his men before retreating to a secret

rear exit. He has at least as many mobsters as the intruders, but his initially only have pistols. Rocco the bartender will be the first to pull out a Tommy gun and give back what he's getting.

If the PCs haven't discovered Mildred yet, they will have an opportunity to spot her trying to flee. She genuinely fears for her life, and will follow orders from any PC who promises to protect her.

By the end of the battle, most of the mobsters should be dead and the survivors fleeing. Hopefully, the PCs have protected Mildred. Le Renard is either dead or has escaped out the back (if alive, he will return in Chapter Five). Mildred will be willing to go back to her father (if the PCs were hired by him) and is willing to share her story with them.

BODY COUNT

After the battle, the GM should ask for a Streetwise check. PCs who make the check will notice something peculiar about the mobsters' bodies. There are Duffy men and Marciano men among them, indicating that this was a joint hit. This is highly unusual, as the two mobs would rather wipe each other out than work together.

MILDRED'S STORY

Once Mildred is taken to a safe place, she will offer her story. Two months ago, she met Jackie Keegan. He wined and dined her until she agreed to be his girl, even against her father's wishes. She

soon discovered that he was a member of the Duffy mob “running errands” from the City to her home city. When he told her he had to go back to the City, she agreed to come with him. Life was good for a short while.

A month later, things started to change. Jackie was concerned that Seamus Duffy no longer seemed like his old self. He wasn't drinking or playing cards nearly as much, and spent much of his time away from his favorite watering hole. Jackie confronted him about it, but Seamus reassured him that everything was all right. A couple of weeks later, while planning moves against presidential candidate Senator Morrison, Jackie discovered that Seamus was working with Don Marco Marciano. This seemed preposterous, since the Marciano mob was responsible for killing Seamus' brother (and Jackie's good friend). He confronted Seamus once again, and this time Seamus had enough. He gunned Jackie down in cold blood, within earshot of Mildred.

Mildred fled. Too scared and embarrassed to call home, Mildred survived as best she could. She ran deep into Marciano territory and took a position with Le Renard. Le Renard's club seemed like the safest place for her, until tonight. At this point, she breaks down and cries.

DEALING WITH LEGWORK

Players generally don't like loose ends, so it is inevitable that the PCs will wish to track down Seamus Duffy to discover what is going on. While Chapter Four should begin fairly quickly, ambitious PCs may already be on Duffy's tail.

Streetwise or Investigation tests will tell them that Seamus has recently left town. A raise on either test will inform them that Seamus has gone to a nearby city to aid in efforts against Sen. Morrison's presidential ambitions. He will be gone at least a week, and he has left the Duffy mob in the capable hands of Mac Sheridan, his right hand man.

Mac is not happy with the recent “cuddling” with the Marcianos, but he does not question Seamus' decision, especially so soon after Jackie Keenan had.



CHAPTER FOUR TROUBLE AT THE DOCKS

Soon after the hit on the Riviera, the PCs come across some more interesting information. The Marciano mob is expecting a cocaine shipment on Saturday night (how this information gets into the PC's hands is up to the GM, based on the nature and occupations of the PCs). It's common knowledge in the underworld that Don Marco has traditionally refused to deal in cocaine since losing a beloved cousin, Maria, to a cocaine overdose. The Duffy mob has also shied away from selling the drug, since Don Marco has no qualms about messily eliminating cocaine dealers.

The PCs need to discover why Don Marco has had such a sudden change in temperament. More importantly, if this shipment isn't stopped, the Marciano mob is about to make a huge profit.

LEGWORK

The PCs can discover when and where the Marcianos are going to pick up the drugs with a successful Streetwise rolls. Otherwise, they will have to keep an eye on the docks all night and hopefully catch them in the act.

The PCs may also wish to confront Don Marco Marciano directly, especially if they've had previous dealings with him. Don Marco's attitude is indifferent to any PCs who approach him, including with those

with whom he's had history. He will attempt to brush them off, claiming he has a full schedule tonight. Attempts to engage him further will drop his attitude to Uncooperative and ultimately Hostile, especially if they bring up cocaine. If the PCs have warranted a Hostile attitude, Don Marco will secretly assign some of his enforcers to deal with them once they leave.

DOCKSIDE ANTICS

Just past midnight, three sedans pull up to the docks. The occupants of each car (mobster muscle and Joey) get into a runabout (GMs can use the small yacht statistics in the core book for the boat) and approach a large steamship on the horizon. One of the boats includes Joey Corelli, the mob lieutenant in charge of this mission. The PCs will either have to sneak aboard one of the three runabouts or secure their own transportation.

If all goes according to plan, the mobsters will guide the boats alongside the steamship and load their cargo. The drugs are divided into three shipments just in case the Coast Guard (or similar authority) tries to stop them. The Dragon Man is overseeing the transaction. He is accompanied by 4-6 (GM's prerogative) Dragon thugs.

Assuming that the PCs interfere, the Dragon Man and his associates will fight to the death, drinking poison or otherwise committing suicide if they are in danger of being defeated. The Mobsters aren't nearly as devoted,

attempting to flee the moment things start going badly. If cornered, Joey Corelli will plead for his freedom, offering some information in exchange.

JOEY'S INFORMATION

Joey Corelli is a big man when he's backed up by muscle and he is a spineless coward without it. He's been to the big house once, and an experience there has made him deathly afraid of going back. He's willing to spill his guts to ensure his freedom.

Joey has noticed in recent weeks that Don Marco Marciano has been spending his Sunday afternoons in Chinatown; specifically the Crimson Scorpion Restaurant. Joey's also learned that Seamus Duffy's been spending his Sundays there as well, ever since the two mobs got all cozy together. Don Marco doesn't seem like the same man who once declared that the only time he'd ever be in the same room as Seamus is at his casket viewing.

Given this information, and the presence of the Dragon Man, the PCs should be heading to the Crimson Scorpion the next afternoon.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE CRIMSON CONNECTION

This chapter takes the PCs to the City's Chinatown district. GM's are encouraged to play up the ethnic atmosphere of the district, with its large red arch entrance, open markets with exotic (or seemingly exotic) foods, sidewalk vendors, and restaurants (most are tourist restaurants that specialize in chop suey and chow mein, there are few "authentic" Chinese restaurants).

THE CRIMSON SCORPION

The Crimson Scorpion Restaurant sits around the corner from the main tourist streets. The restaurant caters to the local Chinese population; a red neon sign identifying the restaurant is written in Cantonese along with a stylized scorpion. Two Dragon thugs guard the entrance to dissuade "foreigners" (typically casual tourists) from entering the establishment. Around one o'clock, a sedan will drop off Don Marco and a "guest." Don Marco waits until the sedan pulls away and then addresses the thugs. The thugs step aside and let him enter. PCs who make a Notice check will be shocked to discover that Don Marco spoke Cantonese! (If a PC happens to speak a Chinese dialect, he will note that Don Marco simply used a polite greeting). Don Marco's guest will either be Le Renard (if he survived Chapter Three) or Mac Sheridan.

The two men will be led to a table in the back for lunch. Don Marco is calm and reserved, while his lunch guest looks nervous. Don Marco orders for them both. As their meals arrive the Scorpion Lady joins them. She is a very attractive Chinese woman in a crimson silk dress and long fingernails. She engages Don Marco in conversation while one of the waiters stands behind the guest to ensure he stays seated (a Notice check will reveal a shoulder holster). They converse in English for the guest's benefit.

If the PCs managed to prevent the cocaine shipment, the Scorpion Lady will be very cross. Oddly, Don Marco acts as if he's her loyal henchman, rather than an associate (the GM should amend her reaction based on events in Chapter Four). The Scorpion Lady will then turn her attention to the guest, asking Don Marco why he was brought here. Don Marco explains that he felt it wise to "ensure" his guest's loyalty in future endeavors. The Scorpion Lady isn't so certain, cautioning Don Marco that it's best to keep the inner circle as small as possible. The guest makes a plea on his own behalf, relishing the opportunity to join the Inner Circle. After a little arguing, Don Marco asks if they should consult the Crimson Emperor. The mere mention of the Emperor's name causes the Scorpion Lady to soften, assuring Don Marco that it won't be necessary. The guest will be allowed into the Inner Circle.

DOUBLE TROUBLE

When lunch is complete, they leave the table and pass through the kitchen to the alley out back. Directly across the alley is a door into a warehouse (also guarded by two Dragon thugs patrolling the alley). Inside are several Dragon thugs and a Russian scientist.

The Scorpion Lady introduces the scientist as Dr. Grigory Janovich, a Tsarist who fled his country after the Russian Revolution. Dr. Janovich will be puzzled, as he was not expecting guests and was servicing the machine. However, he reassures the Scorpion Lady that he can perform the operation.

At this point, the guest gets nervous. The Scorpion Lady tells him that there is nothing to worry about as she leads him to the machine (she is using hypnosis on him). The machine consists of two tables with restraining belts and a large T-shaped machine between them. Dr. Janovich leaves the room and returns with a young Chinese man who is stripped to the waist (this reveals a crimson scorpion tattoo on his left forearm). The doctor praises the Emperor for his foresight in insisting that a subject be ready at all times. Both the young man and the guest are strapped to the table. Hypnosis or not, the guest is panicking now. He demands to know what is going to happen to him. Dr. Janovich says that it's unfortunate that he could not perfect his machine before the Revolution. Now that the guest is immobilized,

the Scorpion Lady explains that the machine will take accurate measurements of his face and hands. It will then surgically alter the Chinese man's features to match. It then dawns on the guest that he is to be replaced. He screams at Don Marco for assistance, but Don Marco only laughs as he rolls up his own sleeve to reveal a crimson scorpion tattoo!

Unless the PCs interfere, the guest will be stripped of his shirt and Dr. Janovich will affix a facemask and gloves to both men. He will then turn on the machine to do its work, a process that will take a few hours.

WAREHOUSE BATTLE

At some point, the PCs will battle the Scorpion Lady, Don Marco, and the thugs. If they don't do so on their own, then they will be encouraged when spotted by a Dragon thug or two. If threatened, the Doctor will set his machine to self-destruct (even with the two patients strapped to it) and commit suicide. The self-destruct process will take several rounds. If anyone examines Dr. Janovich's body, they will discover a crimson scorpion on his left forearm.

Don Marco and the thugs will fight to the death (while the PCs won't find out until later, the original Don Marco is still very much alive and can be recopied). The Scorpion Lady will attempt to flee, but she will commit suicide if cornered (this could be played out as a colorful chase through Chinatown). Before

she dies, she will taunt them with, "*The Crimson Emperor of the Fu-San Dynasty will rise again!*"

If the PCs explore the warehouse, they will find a few rooms devoted to living areas (for Dr. Janovich and the duplicates). There is also a small temple room that smells of incense and contains the statue of a crimson dragon.

EPILOGUE

If the PCs manage to save the guest, he will be very grateful and will promise to aid the PCs in the future (he'll never get the chance, since the Crimson Emperor will have him killed).

If this adventure is used as a standalone, the mystery of the Crimson Emperor can remain hidden for now. If the GM went with the Scorpion Lady mastermind option, then Dr. Janovich will be the original scientist. Under pressure, he will tell the PCs that the real Seamus Duffy and Marco Marciano are held somewhere in Chinatown. The GM can make rescuing them the final chapter. In this event, it is not necessary to have the Scorpion Lady killed. She can escape for further adventures.

If this adventure is used as part of the serial, then the PCs will want to track down the Crimson Emperor. This is the basis of "The Valley of Death," the next serial in the series.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ARMAND "LE RENARD" BORDEAUX

Armand Bordeaux is originally from Louisiana, although he plays at being French. He keeps to himself. He doesn't like to associate with mobsters simply because he doesn't see himself as one. Besides, they have their own prostitution rings; why should they get a piece of his? In addition, the city police tend to leave him alone, since he keeps his hands clean of mob influence. In the past, Armand could count on the rivalry between the Duffys and the Marcianos to give him privacy. Now, he's about to learn a brutal lesson with the Scorpion Syndicate.

Armand is an attractive man of a blended ethnic background. He wears a short black goatee that matches his well-groomed hair. He prefers white suits and speaks in a pretentious French accent. He is very friendly and almost likeable when in his own environment.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Streetwise d10, Taunt d6

Charisma +2, **Pace:** 6;

Parry: 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Arrogant, Loyal

Edges: Connections, Moxie

Gear: Colt 1911 (12/24/48, 2d6+1, AP1)

MILDRED SIMMS

Mildred is a pretty young woman who fell for the wrong man. Unfortunately, that man was killed and she's now on the run because of what she knows. She isn't happy turning tricks for Le Renard, but she's grateful to have his protection.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d4, Guts d8, Notice d6, Streetwise d6
Charisma +2, **Pace:** 6;
Parry: 4; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Wanted, Curious
Edges: Attractive
Gear: None.

MOBSTER ENFORCERS & MUSCLE

The mobster enforcers, muscle and hit men in the adventure are all Mooks (use the Mook rules on page 87)

Gear: Enforcers typically carry a Tommy Gun (12/24/48, 2d6+1, AP1, Auto, ROF 3 Shots 50) and a pistol (use the Colt M1911 as a default) as a back-up weapon. Most enforcers carry a knife (Str+d4) as well.

THE DRAGON MAN

The Dragon Man is one of the Crimson Emperor's most trusted henchmen. No one knows his real name. He is a slim, well-muscled Asian man with a baldhead and "Fu Manchu" mustache. He usually goes topless or wears his shirt open to display a large crimson dragon tattoo that coils around his torso.

The Dragon Man only speaks Cantonese, although he understands English. He prefers using ancient weapons or no weapons at all when fighting, but he is smart enough to carry a pistol. When it seems he is losing, the Dragon Man will use a knife to slit his own throat.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10
Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Streetwise d10, Throwing d10
Charisma -2, Pace: 6;
Parry: 9; Toughness: 8
Hindrances: Arrogant, Death Wish, Mean. Obligations (Crimson Emperor)
Edges: Brawny, Improved Block, Improved First Strike, Improved Frenzy, Improved Level Headed
Gear: Do Sword (Str +d8), Smith & Wesson Revolver (12/24/48 2d6+1, ROF 1 Shots 6)

DRAGON THUGS

This stat block is for the unnamed Asian martial artists in this adventure. The GM should feel free to modify this if he needs to adjust the power level.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8.
Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Knowledge (Chinatown) d8, Stealth d8, Shooting d6, Throwing d6
Charisma: -4; Pace:6;
Parry: 6 Toughness:6
Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Obligations (Tong)
Edges: Acrobat, Quick Draw
Gear: Fu Hatchet (Str +d6)

MOB LIEUTENANT

This stat block is for high-ranking mobsters like Mac Sheridan and Joey Corelli.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Streetwise d10, Taunt d8
Charisma -2, Pace: 6;
Parry: 7; Toughness: 6
Hindrances: Mean
Edges: Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Level Headed
Gear: Colt 1911 (12/24/48, 2d6+1, AP1)

MARCO MARCIANO

Don't let the name fool you. This is the duplicate of mob boss Don Marco Marciano. He looks exactly like him, short black hair, deep-set eyes, and olive complexion; but beneath the skin he is one of the Crimson Emperor's trusted henchmen. He is trained to mimic Don Marco's speech and mannerisms, and he continually receives information from the real Marco Marciano to play his role.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d10
Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d10, Streetwise d10, Taunt d8, Throwing d8
Charisma -2, Pace: 6;
Parry: 7; Toughness: 7
Hindrances: Mean
Edges: Hard to Kill, No Mercy, Rock and Roll!
Gear: Tommy Gun (12/24/48, 2d6+1, AP1, Auto, ROF 3 Shots 50)

THE SCORPION LADY

The Scorpion Lady is a lethal martial artist and talented Mesmerist in charge of the Crimson Emperor's plans in the City. She is a very attractive Chinese woman with a cold demeanor. She is utterly devoted to the Crimson Emperor and would commit suicide before allowing herself to be captured.

The Scorpion Lady is not a duplicate. She does have a crimson scorpion tattoo, but it is on her left shoulder blade. While the Scorpion Lady prefers unarmed combat, she is smart enough to know to shoot at pistol-wielding opponents.

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d8, Knowledge (Chinatown) d10, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Psionics d8, Shooting d6, Taunt d8

Charisma: +2, **Pace:** 6;

Parry: 7 **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Obligations (Crimson Emperor), Mean

Edges: Arcane Background (Psionics), Block, First Strike, Frenzy, Charmer, Mentalist, Very Attractive

Powers: *puppet* (hypnosis), *boost/lower trait* (hypnosis), *stun* (hypnosis), 10 Power Points.

"DR. GRIGORY JANOVICH"

Dr. Grigory Janovich is an older Russian scientist who laments the loss of Tsarist Russia and loathes the Communist Soviet Union. He has joined the Crimson Emperor in the hopes of overthrowing the

Revolutionary government and bringing Russia into a new Tsarist golden age.

Dr. Janovich is a tall, stocky man with a balding head and a full beard. He wears a monocle.

The Dr. Janovich in this adventure is actually a duplicate that has been trained to operate and service Dr. Janovich's machine. As such, he is more of a glorified technician than an actual scientist.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Knowledge (electronics) d10, Notice d6, Repair d10, Shooting d6

Charisma: +0, **Pace:** 6;

Parry: 5 **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Overconfident

Edges: McGyver

Gear: tools, .Colt 1911 (12/24/48, 2d6+1, AP1)

The Mirror Machine: Dr. Janovich's creation is a large machine that rests between two tables. Given a few hours, the machine can copy the facial and hand features of one person onto another. This ability requires certain nervous stimulation, and the duplicate must redo the process once a week. Dr. Janovich has also developed a solution that, when exposed to a duplicated face, will cause the face to revert to its original shape (a plot device used later in this Serial).



12+ Only
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CRIMSON EMPEROR

CHAPTER THREE: THE VALLEY OF DEATH



A SERIAL ADVENTURE FOR
**THRILLING
TALES**

III: THE VALLEY OF DEATH

BACKGROUND

It is October, 1936. After uncovering a conspiracy to replace key crime lords with duplicates, the PCs do some research on the mysterious Crimson Emperor of the

Fu-San Dynasty. They learn of an exiled ancient Chinese leader who fled into Tibet, promising to return one day and reclaim not only his throne but the entire world as well.

The PCs meet intrepid explorer Sheldon Grey in London. He allows them to join him on an expedition with Big Game Hunter

Diana Pearson in the search for the abominable snowman. They travel to the Plateau of Tibet, where they accept the hospitality of a remote monastery during their quest. The PCs also get wrapped up in the Chinese Civil War, as a communist patrol is combing the plateau for a secret weapon.

In the end, the hunt for the yeti leads them to more adventures in mysterious Tibet.

STAND-ALONE ADVENTURE

As "Valley of Death" is very different from the earlier adventures in *The Crimson Emperor*, it is very easy to run on its own or even as the first part of a two-part Tibetan adventure along with "Escape From the Crimson Palace." In this case, the PCs are simply part of a yeti-hunting expedition (both Sheldon Grey and Diana Pearson can be substituted with appropriate PCs, if desired).

SERIAL ADVENTURE

In "The Scorpion Syndicate," the PCs learned of a mysterious Chinese Emperor replacing mob leaders with duplicates. At the beginning of this adventure, the PCs should research the Emperor and learn of his legendary location as well as Sheldon Grey's interest in it. The PCs will encounter the effects of the *Crimson Mist* and clues as to where the *Crimson Emperor* stands in the Civil War.

TIBET IN LATE 1936

Whether Tibet is a part of China or an independent nation depends on whom you ask. The Republic of Tibet has been in existence after the Chinese Revolution of 1911-12, but the Chinese government never acknowledged this. While Great Britain has had cordial relations with Tibet and a 1904 treaty with them, the British government recognized China's control over the region in 1906 without Tibetan assent. Currently, Tibet is enjoying relative calm thanks to the Chinese Civil War. Most of the fighting is concentrated in southern China, leaving Tibet alone for now.

Buddhism is the dominant religion in Tibet. The dominant Yellow Hat Sect provides the model for most monasteries in Tibet: celibacy, vegetarianism, prohibition of alcohol, higher standards of learning and a de-emphasis on esoteric subjects such as magic.

In a Pulp setting, the Tibetan monastery is an exotic, mysterious place (although, ironically, it shares many parallels with its European equivalent). GMs who wish to play up Pulp stereotypes may incorporate plenty of meditative scenes and have the monks dole out cryptic proverbs to the PCs on a regular basis. Care and sensitivity should be applied here, and it should be noted that "Tibetan Buddhism" as portrayed in this adventure is designed to reflect a Pulp feel, not an authentic interpretation of the real world religion.

CHAPTER SIX: JOURNEY TO TIBET

In “The Scorpion Syndicate,” the PCs heard of a Crimson Emperor of the Fusan Dynasty. This chapter presumes that the PCs will want to do a little research into this almost mythological figure. If the PCs don’t decide to do this on their own, the GM should encourage it.

It’s doubtful that any PC has ever heard of the Crimson Emperor or the Fusan Dynasty, even with ranks in the Knowledge (history) skill. They will need to do research in a good local library. An Investigation check will uncover the information. PCs with d8 or better in an appropriate Knowledge (history, for example) may use a +2 bonus to their Investigation roll.

After several hours, the PCs will come across an entry in the World Explorer Journal, a quarterly publication put out by the World Explorers Club, based in London (see Player Handout #1, on the next page). This is the only concrete information they can get on the Crimson Emperor or the Fusan Dynasty. It should become pretty obvious that the only way to get more information is to contact Sheldon Grey directly

INVITATION VIA TELEGRAM

The fastest and cheapest way to contact Sheldon Grey is via telegram. Within a few hours, the

PCs will receive a response (see Player Handout #2, on page 214). Obviously, Mr. Grey expects the PCs to come to London, chat with him, and join his expedition. Hopefully the PCs will feel the same.

The journey to London via steamship will take 5-7 days, depending on where the PCs are (most trips to Europe take a little over four days from New York City or Boston). If the PCs’ home city is on the west coast, GMs may wish to put Mr. Grey’s expedition three weeks out. Transatlantic flights are still a couple of years away.

If the PCs take the bait, Mr. Grey will ask them to get a hotel in London and he will meet them at the World Explorers Club in Bloomsbury.

Serial Note: As the PCs disembark from port, they will notice a newspaper headline (either because they purchased a newspaper or they see someone else reading one) that announces: **ASSASSINATION FOILED!** The story goes on to read that, while engaged in a Presidential debate in San Francisco, Senator Stuart Morrison was the target of an assassination. Luckily, the police were able to take down the shooter before the candidate was injured.

GMs using “Valley of Death” as a standalone adventure should ignore this scene.

PLAYER HANDOUT #1

Excerpt from the World Explorers Journal, Summer 1936 volume.

Once again, renowned explorer Sheldon Grey is considering an exotic adventure to a faraway land in search of a mysterious beast.

While Mr. Grey's last such expedition ended in a spectacular failure, he appears ready and determined to try again. This time, he will attempt to capture the mysterious Abominable Snowman on the Plateau of Tibet. He is also searching for the Palace of the Crimson Emperor rumored to be in the same area.

"Prior to the unification of China," Mr. Grey explains, "there were many petty kingdoms in the region. The Crimson Emperor, who lived around 350 years before the birth of the Savior, ran one of these kingdoms. The Crimson Emperor was so ruthless and cruel that the other kingdoms united against him, defeating his army and forcing him into exile somewhere "in the west." Before fleeing, the Crimson Emperor prophesized that he would build a great empire in the west and conquer not only the lands of those who defeated him, but those of the entire world.

"Most scholars believe that the Crimson Emperor and a few trusted subjects built a palace on the inhospitable Plateau of Tibet. Certain Buddhist texts mention that the Crimson Emperor later met with Alexander the Great on the bank of the Indus River. Later, it was whispered that the Crimson Emperor, presumably a descendant, advised Genghis Khan. I believe that this palace exists, and who knows how much history hides behind those walls?"

Others remain skeptical. "After the Cranston Island incident, I am quite frankly shocked that Mr. Grey is so eager to track down another mythical creature and a fictional emperor to boot," said Sir Derrick Upton, also a member of the World Explorer's Club. "I tried to persuade him to invest the expedition funds in developing transatlantic flights. Why risk another public failure and waste even more money?"

Currently, Mr. Grey is giving a series of lectures at Cambridge University. He plans to lead an expedition into Tibet to find the palace and capture an abominable snowman once his speaking engagement terminates in November.

TELEGRAM

DIRECT TO YOU VIA

World Wide Network



The filing time shown is the date and time on full-line X.400-Comm, and the time of receipt at destination as shown on all messages, 4 97A-90A-33 TDME. Form LFP101

LFP: 13:28PST, 28SEP07:WC#41= LON

RECEIVED YOUR MESSAGE STOP I AM SURPRISED AND OVERJOYED AT YOUR
INTEREST IN THE FUSAM STOP WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS WITH YOU
FURTHER IN LONDON STOP THERE IS ROOM ON MY EXPEDITION STOP WE
LEAVE IN TWO WEEKS STOP SHELDON GREY



Western Union, NY, NY

A MEETING IN LONDON

Once the PCs have settled into their accommodations, they will receive dinner invitations from Sheldon Grey at the World Explorers Club.

The World Explorers Club is a three story stone building in the shadow of the British Museum. Membership is by invitation only. The Club traces its origins back to Sir Francis Drake although the clubhouse was built in 1729.

When the PCs arrive, they will be met by the doorman, who asks to see their invitation. Once he is satisfied, he will show the PCs to the cloakroom and ask a servant to summon Mr. Grey. He will then escort them to the parlor to wait, offering refreshments. The parlor is adorned with paintings of prominent club members.

Sheldon Grey soon enters. He is happy to see them and tells them that their journey has not been in vain. After introductions, he enthusiastically leads them to a private dining room where the PCs will be introduced to three other members of the expedition, Tsang Wing, Diana Pearson, and Doug MacLeod.

Grey introduces Tsang Wing as a Chinese Nationalist who is familiar with Tibet. He then introduces Diana Pearson, who is the daughter of Richard Pearson, a former prominent member of the club (his portrait hangs in the parlor). Mr. Pearson died in an avalanche while

hunting yeti ten years ago. Diana wants to finish what her father started. Doug McLeod is Pearson's hunting companion.

Grey mentions that the British Museum would be very interested in any Fusan artifacts and that the London zoo would love to have a yeti as a main attraction. He would be very grateful if the PCs joined them, as it would spare him the time and expense of filling out the rest of the expedition. Dinner will then be served.

ONWARD!

Assuming that the PCs sign on, Sheldon Grey's travel plans include taking the Dover ferry to France, boarding a train to Marseille, taking a steamship to Bombay, and finally a train to New Delhi. A chartered plane awaits them there to take the final leg over the Himalayas into Tibet. Tsang Wing knows a village with a small airfield that can supply them on their trek into the Tibetan Plateau.

This leg of the journey is glossed over in this adventure. GMs who wish to flesh out this part can add spice to the journey with stops in Cairo and Bombay. Alternatively, the "pulpish" option would be to cut from dinner to the New Delhi airfield.

ACROSS THE MOUNTAINS

One of Sheldon Grey's contacts is Winston Goldsmith, a middle-aged pilot who offers air tours of northern British India, especially

the Himalayans. He is happy to see his old friend and he reminds Grey that he still owes him from a card game in Bombay. Grey reminds him that he purchased the DC-2 for Goldsmith.

The DC-2 is a 14 passenger airplane with ample cargo space for the expedition's gear. Goldsmith's partner, Nareed Haandi, is a young Indian who speaks perfect British English. Goldsmith and Haandi are not given statistics due to their short-lived appearance.

The journey across the mountains is breathtaking. Goldsmith has plotted a course through the mountains that offers incredible views. Goldsmith also regales the PCs with stories about his air exploits in the Great War, many of which sound dubious. Haandi's stories are more interesting, as he intermingles the history and mythology of the region.

IT'S JUST A COLD

During the flight, Sheldon Grey will start acting strangely. PCs can spot this with a Notice check. If questioned, Grey will respond that nothing is wrong. An opposed Notice check against his Spirit will indicate that he's lying. A Knowledge (medecine) or Healing check will indicate that Grey is sweating, and is in the first stages of a fever.

Sheldon Grey will laugh this off as nothing to worry about. He's been in worse shape before, and they have traveled too far in order to stop now.

Besides, they can always delay a few days when they get to the airfield.

CRASH LANDING!

After several hours of negotiating the mountain ranges, the DC-2 makes its way onto the Plateau of Tibet. Sheldon Grey has selected a remote area of Tibet with only isolated villages. Diana Pearson will note that her father had selected the same region. Goldsmith starts to circle the area to look for a British-built landing strip.

PCs who make a Notice roll will hear the faint sounds of another airplane nearby. Before they get a chance to point it out, the distinctive sound of machinegun fire hits the side of the plane. Goldsmith shouts for everyone to hold on while he tries evasive maneuvers. He notes that the fuel tank was hit.

He doesn't get much of a chance. A second spray of gunfire penetrates the cockpit, killing both Goldsmith and Haandi. The plane falls into a dive. If the PCs don't act quickly, their trip to Tibet will be cut short. There are parachutes available, but there will be no time to strap them on and jump before the plane crashes.

This is an opportunity for PCs with good piloting skills to shine. The DC-2 is about 1000 feet in the air. Rather than using the rules for out of control aircraft in the **Savage Worlds** core book, for a pulpish feel it is enough to say that the DC-2 will crash in five turns unless it can



be pulled out of a dive. PCs must get to the cockpit (which will take 1 round, and require an Agility check made at -2). The bodies of the crew will need to be pulled away from the controls, requiring a Str check. Once a PC is in the pilot's seat, a Piloting check must be made. A successful check means that the airplane is stabilized, but still descending fast.

A Piloting roll will reveal that they'll never make it to the airfield Goldsmith had planned on landing. Notice checks will reveal that the attacking aircraft has left. A Notice roll (with +2 for those with the Piloting skill) will reveal no good places for a landing. The best chance the PCs have to survive is either to crash the plane into the large lake below them or parachute out. A successful crash landing into the lake will require a Piloting roll at -4. If the piloting PC succeeds,

all un-strapped occupants of the plane take 2d6 points of damage. If the piloting PC fails, strapped occupants take 2d6 points of damage and un-strapped occupants take 4d6 points of damage.

Now that the PCs have landed, they'll need to exit the plane before it sinks (3 turns). Sheldon Grey will ask them to salvage what they can. What the PCs are able to take is up to the GM, but take into account that the PCs are wearing heavy snow gear (which adds a -2 to their Swim rolls).

The shore is 18" away. The water is calm, but PCs will take a -1 on their Swim checks for every five pounds of additional gear they carry.

PCs who chose to parachute (which requires an Agility roll to perform successfully, with one opportunity to reroll before hitting the ground) will land on the shoreline of the lake as the plane crashes into it.

Once they get ashore, the PCs will be subject to the severe cold. It's also getting dark. While a snowstorm obscures vision, a Notice roll reveals a monastery just a short walk away. The PCs should be able to get there within an hour. Meanwhile -- the heroes notice that Sheldon Grey's fever has gotten worse and he's starting to shiver.

CHAPTER SEVEN: UNWELCOME GUESTS

The Choje Monastery sits on a foothill overlooking the great lake. The monastery is a singular structure, looking to American eyes like a fortress (a PC can be forgiven for mistaking it for the Fusan Palace, although both Grey and Tsang will be quick to point out that it's a monastery). The meager path that leads to the front gates is covered in snow, leaving the party to carefully walk up the hill. A large gong stands next to the gate.

As the PCs start to climb up the hill, the gates will open and a half-dozen men draped in heavy cloth and carrying lanterns emerge. The crash landing of the airplane has attracted their attention, and the Lama has ordered several monks to tend to survivors. One monk, Danu, acts as the leader. Unlike most of the monks, Danu understands English. His proficiency is poor, but he can get basic communications across.

Danu's first order of business is to determine whether the newcomers are hostile. He will ask basic questions of intent, pitting his Notice against the PCs Spirit if they attempt to lie. His attitude is Neutral and will turn to Uncooperative if the PCs are brandishing weapons. As a vegetarian, Danu finds the thought of hunting animals abhorrent. Still, Sheldon Grey's condition will be enough to sway his judgment to allow the PCs into the monastery.

THE MONASTERY

As foreboding as the weather is outside, the Choje Monastery is warm, colorful, and inviting. The "monastery" is more of an outpost; less than forty monks reside here, in contrast to other monasteries in Tibet where monks number in the thousands. All of the monks here have undertaken a sacred vow to keep the secret of the yeti from outsiders.

Structurally, the monastery is a large building surrounded by a circular wall (the length is about 200 yards in diameter). Between the building and the wall is a yard that completely surrounds the building. Large cylindrical mandalas (prayer wheels) line the exterior of the building, and even in late hours monks can be seen turning the mandalas as they walk.

The building resembles a step pyramid, with each of five floors being smaller than the one below it. The bottom level is a storage area. There are many grains and dried vegetables here, as well as barrels of water. The second level is the great hall and the kitchen. The monks gather here to eat.

The third level is divided into many small rooms. These are the monk's quarters. The fourth level is the temple. There are also a few sand mandalas in various states of completion (these are ritually destroyed once finished). The fifth level, like the third, is divided into many small rooms. These rooms, however, are chapels, and each

is dedicated to a deceased monk, leader, buddha, or Tibetan god. The fifth and smallest floor is the Lama's quarters. Atop the building is a stupa that contains relics of the Buddha Choje, who founded the monastery. All of the rooms are richly decorated with tapestries and murals of buddhas and gods.

Each floor is connected not by stairs but by ladders, which can easily be pulled up to prevent access. While the defensive implications are obvious, this is also to ensure that the monks aren't disturbed during important times.

MEETING WITH THE LAMA

Once the monks escort the PCs inside, Danu will insist that they leave their weapons in a storage area on the first floor. If they agree, Danu's attitude will increase one level. If they refuse, Danu will tell them that their position indicates a hostile threat, and his attitude will go down even further. Once his attitude becomes Hostile, he will no longer speak with the PCs. Instead, he sends a monk to get the Lama's opinion. By this point, Sheldon Grey can barely stand. Regardless of the outcome of the negotiations, Danu will allow the monks to take Sheldon Grey to the guest quarters on the second floor to treat his illness.

Lama Ranpoche will agree to meet the PCs in the Great Hall. He will be Friendly if Danu gave a favorable report, and Neutral if not. The Lama trusts Danu, but feels his prejudice

against outsiders sometimes clouds his judgment. Like Danu, the Lama speaks English, but he does so with clarity. He welcomes them to Choje Monastery, a place of reflection in a hostile climate.

The Lama will start with the usual questions. Since it's likely that all of the PCs are American, he will gently rebuke Danu's assumption that they are British. When Diana Pearson introduces herself, the Lama has a glimmer in his eye (the PCs can spot this with a Notice roll). If pressed, the Lama will admit that Richard Pearson stood in this monastery a decade ago. He hopes that Richard's daughter is more prudent.

If the PCs ask about the Abominable Snowman, the Lama will ask them why they seek him. The old monk will neither confirm nor deny its existence. He is averse to hunting the creature. The yeti, should he exist, should be allowed to live in peace, unmolested.

If the PCs ask about the Palace of the Crimson Emperor, the Lama will acknowledge the legend. The plateau beyond the monastery and surrounding villages is a desolate place, and it is possible that a palace ruin could hide within it. Certainly no living person who's claimed to come from the Palace has ever graced the monastery.

After a few minutes, the Lama will end conversation, noting that the first priority is to get Sheldon Grey back to full health. He gives instructions

to the monks to prepare the guest rooms and provide food and clothing if necessary. He will then ascend to the temple floor to perform a final ceremony before retiring.

NIGHT WARNING

During the night, all ladders are raised. Two monks guard the first and second floors (four monks total). It will be very difficult for the PCs to wander very far in the monastery without being noticed. If seen, they will be gently reminded to return to bed.

In the middle of the night, Danu and a fellow monk will leave the monastery. PCs who happen to be awake (or doing some snooping of their own) may see or hear them (with a Notice check). The monks are sliding a ladder down so they can descend. Once they get to the first floor, Danu retrieves a small gong from behind some grain bins. He and his companion exchange pleasantries with the monks on duty as they venture out into the courtyard. Two more monks who guard the gate open them for Danu, and then close them as soon as Danu and his companion have left.

If the PCs try to get their weapons first, they will find one of the monks guarding them. The monks offer advice, but no resistance if the PCs insist. The gatekeepers will even open the gates for them, although regaining entry will require some Persuasion. Tracking Danu should not be too difficult in the snow. It is far more difficult for them not to

be noticed trudging in six inches of snow behind them. The monks travel five hundred yards into the foothills, at which point Danu stops and bangs the gong. The monks wait.

After fifteen minutes, the monks seem concerned. They speak to each other in Tibetan, although the general gist is clear: They expected a response, but no one has come. "Perhaps they didn't hear the gong?" the companion asks. "They always hear the gong," Danu answers. The monks try twice more, waiting for about 15 minutes after each ringing. Finally, they shrug and give up. "If they choose to ignore the voice of peace," Danu laments, "then the voice can not save them from the arm of war."

While the PCs may not understand the full implications, what has happened is that the monks wanted to warn the yeti that hunters were here, as they've done throughout history. The monks are peaceful and desire no violence, but that does not mean they won't warn the yeti of the danger. Now, they are resigned to the possibility that Grey's expedition may succeed.

If the PCs are caught tailing them, Danu will be quite angry. He will accuse them of sneaking out under the cover of darkness to kill. If they protest, he will be quite defensive, claiming that he has done his part to stop them (which indirectly confirms the existence of the yeti).

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE CRIMSON DEATH!

RED DAWN

The monks rise at dawn for morning prayers and meditation. The PCs will be roused at this time and offered breakfast. They will be informed that Sheldon Grey is sleeping, but far from recovered.

During breakfast, one of the monks positioned at the gate will sound the alarm gong. If the PCs look out the window, they will notice a military unit approaching the monastery from along the lake. A Common Knowledge check (with bonuses for those PCs with tactics, military or other appropriate Knowledge skills) will reveal that the soldiers are Chinese Communists. The PCs will also know that they are a long way from their bases of power. The force consists of 20 soldiers, two lieutenants, and a captain.

Danu and two monks will exit the monastery and greet the unit, much as they did the PCs the previous night. Captain Yao requests that his unit be given sanctuary and Danu grants it. The first floor is soon filled with soldiers. The Captain politely declines the request to discard their weapons and he notices the PC's weapons on the floor. He asks to see the leader of these men. Danu mentions that the leader is suffering from a fever, so Yao replies that a second-in-command will do. This creates a controversy among the NPCs, as Diana feels

she won't be taken seriously as a woman and Tsang wants nothing to do with Communists. After some deliberation, they will ask one of the PCs to speak for the expedition.

The Lama insists on seeing Captain Yao first, to which he agrees. After a few minutes of conversation and breakfast served to the soldiers, the Lama invites the designated PC to join them.

THE CRIMSON DEATH

How the conversation will progress depends upon what the PCs have already seen and an opposed Intimidation Test of Wills between Captain Yao and the PC. Whoever wins the check will structure the conversation.

Captain Yao is very probing at first. He asks the PC if they arrived via a plane his men spotted descending last night (the PC may draw an inference that the Communists shot down the airplane, but that isn't the case). If the PC mentions that the plane is at the bottom of the lake, Captain Yao will regrettably sigh and say that's unfortunate (he wanted to search the plane for traces of the Crimson Death).

Captain Yao has heard that someone is testing a weapon of great power in Tibet. He lays the blame on British Imperialists, and he is disappointed that the PCs are American.

Captain Yao will insist that the PCs come with his men to a village in the Tando Valley they stumbled across

while marching here, which shows signs of this horrible weapon.

The PCs will be able to get the sense that Yao is genuinely concerned about what he has seen. He will not be dissuaded from taking the PCs with him to the village, especially if they have scientific or investigative skills.

The Lama will not object, but he will insist that Sheldon Grey remain in the monastery until he is fully healed. The Lama will also insist that no violence be brought into the monastery, hopefully quashing any PC notions of having a shootout with the soldiers in the monastery.

THE VILLAGE

The journey to the village should be relatively uneventful.

As the village comes into view, the PCs immediately notice that there are no signs of life. It is lightly snowing, yet none of the chimneys in the village are exuding smoke. There are no bodies in view, although a pit is visible in the center of town. Although now covered by snow, Captain Yao mentions that the pit was still warm with the bones of burnt bodies when his group passed through overnight. The remaining villagers are dead in their homes.

Captain Yao allows the PCs to investigate as long as they are escorted (usually two soldiers per PC). There are a few interesting clues in the village regarding what happened.

First, there is a small mound of snow just outside the village, close to the mountains between the village and the monastery (a Notice roll is necessary to spot this). If the PCs excavate, they will find a discarded tray of fish and vegetables. A successful Track check will indicate two sets of large footprints heading to and from the mountains. These were made by yeti that were sprayed with the Crimson Death and fled back into the mountains without the village tribute.

Second, PCs who examine the bodies notice bright red blotches all over the skin. A Knowledge (Medicine) roll reveals that the villagers died from a very potent contact poison that irritated the skin.

Third, there is a small Buddhist Temple (more of a chapel) in the center of the village. This is where the longest-lived villagers finally succumbed to the disease. There is a quickly painted drawing on a mat that shows a very rough sketch of the village and river. A Dragon is shown breathing fire over the village and an arrow originates from the Dragon with its tip pointing upriver. The artist believed the village was attacked by a Dragon from the north.

FIREFIGHT!

As soon as the PCs have had a chance to discover all three clues, all heck breaks loose. A rival army attacks from the south, having laid in wait for ambush (if a PC happens to be looking for ambushes, he may spot a soldier or two with a Notice

check opposed by their Stealth). The rival group starts by shelling the village with Stokes mortars (24/48/96, damage 4d8, AP9, Med. Burst Template). After a couple of rounds of barrages, soldiers move forward with rifles.

Standalone: The rival soldiers are a British unit. They were asked by the Tibetan government to eliminate a Communist force that's been experimenting with chemical weapons. Once the fighting starts, it won't matter to the British that the Communists are not behind it.

The British unit is roughly three-quarters the Communist unit (use the same stats for the British officers). The PCs will need to attack the Communists from within in order to ensure a British victory. If the PCs need encouragement, have Captain Yao accuse the PCs of being spies and turn his gun on them.

Serial: The rival soldiers come from the Palace of the Crimson Emperor. They were hunting for survivors of the crashed plane and consider the Communist patrol an unexpected bonus. They have orders to capture anyone not wearing a Chinese communist uniform.

The GM can use the Chinese Communist stats for the Crimson Guard. They are twice the size of the Communist patrol, with another 20 men approaching from the north. GMs looking for a good cliffhanger ending can have the PCs hold out against the first wave, losing most

of the communists, only to have a second fresh force come out of the north with guns raised. The Crimson Captain issues a surrender order in English in the name of the Crimson Emperor.

NPC MORTALITY

The next adventure in the Serial does not require any of the current NPCs to play. Through luck of the dice or GM fiat, Diana Pearson, Tsang Wing, and Doug MacLeod may be killed. It is not necessary for the GM to kill any of them, but it may add drama to the scene.

EPILOGUE

Standalone: Assuming the Communists are defeated, the PCs are free to track the yeti to their lair if they so wish. Unfortunately, due to the effects of the Crimson Death, they will not be able to retrieve any live Abominable Snowmen. A corpse would still be valuable to the scientific community. The real brains behind the Crimson Mist may remain a mystery for now.

Sheldon Grey will recover in a few days. To the surprise of many, he elects to stay at the monastery for a while.

Serial: The PCs should be prisoners of the Crimson Emperor. If they slip past the army this time, the GM should create another encounter to trap them (one option is to have the PCs meet a British patrol that is actually made up of disguised agents of the Crimson Emperor). This will lead directly into the next adventure.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

SHELDON GREY

A daredevil, world traveler, and fortune hunter, Sheldon Grey is always on the lookout for exotic treasures. The son of a self-made shipping magnate, Grey was taught from an early age to make his own mark in the world. Toward that end, Grey has used his inheritance to finance expeditions around the world to pursue forgotten treasures.

Sheldon Grey is charming, handsome, and rakish. He has never married, preferring to travel the world and partake in adventures rather than settle down and raise a family. Lately, however, he has started to feel his age (he is approaching forty), and often speaks of settling down. Few take him seriously.

Sheldon Grey prefers to take charge in his expeditions. He chooses capable companions who will not threaten his authority. Although he will listen to arguments, Grey is quick to dismiss any challenges to his decisions as cowardice. It is this stubborn overconfidence that often lands Sheldon Grey and company into trouble.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Driving d6, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d10, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Tracking d10.

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6;

Parry: 6 **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Outsider ('gone native')

Edges: Danger Sense, Marksman, Woodsman

Gear: Sharps Big 50 (Rifle 30/60/120, 2d10, Shots 1, AP2), Twin Colt 1911s (12/24/48, 2d6+1, AP1)

TSANG WING

Tsang Wing is an educated scholar who detests communism and the civil war ravaging his country. Tsang (his family name) is a strong believer in democracy, and has studied in England and America to learn more about it. He is also fascinated with ancient Chinese culture. A casual conversation with Sheldon Grey in London led to Tsang being hired on this expedition.

Tsang is in his mid-thirties, but his youthful face leads most to underestimate his true age. Tsang dresses in European clothes, a consequence of having lived in London for a year and outgrowing his old clothes.

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

Skills: Climbing d4, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Knowledge (several, as needed) d10, Notice d10, Shooting d6, ,

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6;

Parry: 5 **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Vow, Loyal

Edges: Scholar

Gear: Tsang Wing carries a .45 automatic pistol (12/24/48, 2d6+1, AP1) and a knife (Str +d4), although he is loathe to use either.

DIANA PEARSON

Ever since she was a child, Diana Pearson wanted to be just like her father. Richard Pearson was strong, confident, and brave. He traveled to exotic lands and learned to survive in hostile wildernesses. In her youth, Richard had no sons and Diana was the apple of his eye. He named her after the Roman goddess of the hunt. He taught her how to shoot and survive in the wilderness. Unfortunately, at least in young Diana's eyes, he also wanted her to be a proper lady. He insisted that she go to school in England, pulling strings to get her there. While she was in school, Diana learned of her father's death on a Himalayan expedition.

Diana is coldly beautiful, but her eyes lack any spark. Years of hunting have dulled her senses to suffering, and her desire to finish what her father started consumes her every thought. Still, she is not totally unapproachable, and she will warm to any PC who shares her interest in hunting.

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Driving d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d8, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Tracking d8

Charisma: +0; **Pace:**6;

Parry: 5 **Toughness:**6

Hindrances: Outsider, Vow

Edges: Alertness, Giant Killer, Marksman, Moxie

Gear: Remington 30-06 (24/48/96, 2d8, AP2, ROF 1, Shots 6), Mauser C96 pistol (10/20/40, 2d6+1, ROF 1, Shots 10)

DOUG MACLEOD

Doug McLeod is a gruff, redheaded man of Scots-Irish descent. He dabbled in some amateur fisticuffs in his youth, but soon found himself work in a traveling circus. The circus folded with the onset of the Great Depression, but McLeod happened to be in the right place at the right time when Richard Pearson, a former provider of animals for the circus, needed another hand in an African expedition. McLeod became a loyal employee ever since.

In a twist of fate, McLeod was mauled by a jaguar during a Mayan expedition and was recuperating in the hospital when Pearson disappeared in the Himalayan expedition. He feels personally responsible, believing that Pearson would still be alive if he had been there. McLeod offered his services to Diana, who appreciated having one of her father's seasoned employees on her team. He is fiercely loyal to Diana and will not allow anything to happen to her.

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Driving d6, Fighting d10, Guts d10, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d8

Charisma: -2; **Pace:**6;

Parry: 7 **Toughness:**8

Hindrances: Ugly, Loyal

Edges: Brawny, Combat Reflexes, Nerves of Steel

Gear: Sawed-off Shotgun (5/10/30, 1-3d6, ROF 1-2, Shots 2), Colt 1911 (12/24/48, 2d6+1, AP1), Machete (Str +d6).

LAMA RANPOCHE

Lama Ranpoche has been the leader of this monastery for almost half a century. He looks like a bald man of sixty, although in reality he is ninety-one. He enjoys company, but speaks in short sentences. This is not due to his age; the Lama believes that every utterance should be meaningful, and he does not waste time with idle chatter or embellishments.

The Lama has been protecting the yeti in this area for years. Traditionally, the yeti have always helped defend the monastery from outsiders. They have defended the monastery often from looters and fortune seekers.

The Lama remembers Richard Pearson. He visited the monastery with an expedition ten years ago. The Lama warned him not to hunt for the yeti, but Pearson ignored his request. Ranpoche heard from villagers sometime later that Pearson's expedition was buried in an avalanche. There were no survivors.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6.

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Psionics d12, Stealth d6, Survival d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:**6;

Parry: 5 **Toughness:**5

Hindrances: Obligation (Monastery), Vow

Edges: Arcane Background (Psionics), Mentalist, New Powers, Power Points.

Powers: *Deflection* (precognition), *healing* (mind over matter),

puppet (hypnosis), *speak language* (telepathy), *teleport* (dematerialization), 30 Power Points.

TIBETAN MONK

The monks of the Choje Monastery wear simple robes, shave their heads, and wear yellow hats. They speak little, usually only when spoken to (which is difficult for the PCs, since none of them are likely to speak Tibetan or one of the Indian languages). All of them are aware of the existence of yeti, but they have vowed never to reveal that secret. They use the rules for Mooks found on page 87.



CAPTAIN YAO JIN

Captain Yao Jin is a soldier who probably would never have achieved the rank of captain in the National Army. The Communists couldn't afford to be choosy, and Captain Yao proved himself worthy in battle. Captain Yao is a firm believer in Communism and keeps tracts on his person at all times (he even has a Cantonese translation of Karl Marx's The Communist Manifesto). Captain Yao is a strong man with chiseled features and a slim mustache.

As a soldier, Captain Yao appreciates loyalty, frankness and discipline. He never learned to bluff, and his diplomacy skills are lacking. When asking doesn't work, Captain Yao immediately moves to intimidation. He wants the Crimson Mist to use as a weapon for Communism.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8.
Skills: Climbing d8, Driving d6, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidate d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d6
Charisma: -2; **Pace:**6
Parry: 6 **Toughness:**6
Hindrances: Mean, Obligation
Edges: Hard to Kill, No Mercy
Gear: Browning Hi-Power (12/24/48, 2d6+1 AP1), officer's sword (Str +d6)

CHINESE COMMUNIST LT.

The Lieutenants are the squad leaders of the Communist army. These stats can double as the stats for the British officers.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8.
Skills: Climbing d6, Driving d6, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Survival d6
Charisma: 0; **Pace:**6
Parry: 6 **Toughness:**6
Hindrances: Obligation
Edges: Combat Reflexes
Gear: Revolver (various makes, depending on the nationality) (12/24/48, 2d6+1)

CHINESE COMMUNIST SOLDIER

These are the grunts of the Communist army. They are fiercely loyal and devoted to the cause of Chinese Communism. These stats can double as the stats for the British soldiers, or the Crimson Guard, as needed. They use the stat rules for Mooks found on page 87.

Possessions: The Soldiers carry pistols (various makes, depending on the nationality-- 12/24/48, 2d6+1), rifles (24/48/96, 2d8), and knives (Str d4).



CRIMSON EMPEROR

Still Only
10
(x 20)

CHAPTER FOUR: ESCAPE FROM THE CRIMSON PALACE



A SERIAL ADVENTURE FOR

THRILLING TALES

IV: ESCAPE FROM THE CRIMSON PALACE

BACKGROUND

It is nearing the end of 1936. The PCs had uncovered a conspiracy by the mythical Crimson Emperor to

control American mob bosses and influence the Presidential election. Their investigation led them to Tibet, where they discovered a mysterious chemical weapon that has wiped out an entire village. Unfortunately, they have found themselves captured by the Crimson Emperor's army.

STAND-ALONE ADVENTURE

If this adventure is being used as a standalone, then the GM will have to contrive an opportunity for the PCs to wander too close to the ancient palace and get captured. Since the Crimson Emperor wishes to remain secret, any threat will be neutralized (including sending an airplane to shoot down any “trespassing” aircraft. The PCs could be part of a hunting/mapping expedition or simply airplane passengers passing over the Plateau of Tibet. Once the PCs are brought before the Crimson Emperor and discover his secret plans, they will be treated in the same way as the Serial PCs.

As a standalone, the hidden palace can be relocated to any part of the world where the PCs happen to be. The GM should substitute the East Asian motif for whatever local ancient cultures existed (for example, a palace buried in the mountains of Guatemala may have influences from Olmec, Aztec, Toltec, Mayan, and Incan cultures).

SERIAL ADVENTURE

In “Valley of Death,” the PCs saw the effects of the Crimson Death and were captured by the forces of the Crimson Emperor. During this adventure, the PCs will learn of the Crimson Emperor’s plans and escape his clutches.

CHAPTER NINE: DASTARDLY SCHEME REVEALED!

In “Valley of Death,” the Crimson Emperor’s soldiers captured the PCs. Bound and stripped of their weapons, the PCs will be taken to the Palace of the Crimson Emperor.

The Palace is built into the side of a crevasse in a remote area of the Tibetan Plateau. Due to the nature of the split, the crevasse is almost entirely covered by overhanging rock, shielding the palace face from aerial exposure. It is also difficult for an airplane to safely traverse the crevasse (Pilot check at -2).

The Palace is about a day’s march from the Tando Valley (see “Valley of Death”) and it will be nightfall as the soldiers march up the bottom of the crevasse to the Palace Entrance. The overhanging rocks make the valley pitch black.

The front of the palace is lit by enormous torches, which give the ornately carved palace façade an eerie glow. PCs who make a Knowledge (Art) or Knowledge (History) check will note various influences in the design, including Chinese, Tibetan, Indian, and even Greek. An airplane hanger is built into the rock wall opposite the palace, and there is an airplane sitting outside. The aircraft has Nazi markings.

The PCs will be led into a grand hall, which is the court of the Crimson Emperor. The room is richly decorated with silks and frescoes. The paintings include a map of the original boundaries of the Fusan Dynasty as well as key figures and battles throughout history (presumably those whom the Crimson Emperor aided). The emperor's chair sits on a raised dais with a large banner depicting a crimson dragon wrapped around a globe. The soldiers will force the PCs to their knees and warn them that it is forbidden to look at the emperor without his consent. Failure to comply is an immediate death sentence (the guards aren't in the mood for lip. Sarcasm and such are dealt with a rifle butt to the face. Any attempts at heroics or staring at the Emperor before acknowledged will be met with a bullet. If the GM feels negative reinforcement is necessary, he can have one of the NPCs, such as Doug MacLoed, test the waters and get a bullet for his trouble).

Serial Note: The next section presumes that this chapter is part of the Crimson Emperor serial. If the GM is using this adventure as a standalone or as the second part of the Tibetan adventure, the Crimson Emperor's responses should be adjusted accordingly. In the end, all fates are the same. The PCs know too much and will be locked away as their likenesses are used to further his evil scheme.

AN AUDIENCE WITH THE EMPEROR

After several minutes, the Crimson Emperor makes his grand entrance (in reality, his duplicate, as the heroes will eventually discover). He is wearing robes of red and gold and a matching ornate headdress. A servant removes the hat, revealing a surprisingly clean-shaven man (lacking the expected "Fu Manchu" look) with short-cropped hair. A second servant removes his robes, revealing a crimson military uniform with gold trim cut and decorated in a European royal style.

"You have traveled long and far to see the Crimson Emperor of the Fusan Dynasty," he states. "Rise now and enjoy his hospitality."

The Crimson Emperor will ask them to identify themselves. If necessary, he will use his powers of mesmerism to compel truthful responses. As he hears their names, the Emperor will smile and refer to previous events in the serial that the PCs were connected with.

At this point, the PCs may gloat about foiling his plans, especially his attempts to influence the election. The Emperor will smile at this, letting them know that everything went according to plan. As proof, he offers a copy of the PC's local paper trumpeting Steamship Stu Morrison as the President-elect. This may confuse the PC's at first, but the Emperor will assure them that all of the dirty tactics and assassination

attempts against Senator Morrison were designed to garner him votes. In other words, the Crimson Emperor wanted Sen. Morrison to win the election.

The Emperor will lament the PC's involvement in "the Scorpion Syndicate," claiming that their destruction of the Mirror Machine caused a minor setback. They can, however, be assured that the Mirror Machine in this palace is in perfect working order.

The Emperor will allow a few more questions, but he limits his answers to admitting involvement in the previous schemes. He will elaborate further at dinner, where the PCs will be honored guests.

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER?

The PCs will be escorted to an elaborate dining hall and seated at a well-decorated table already laden with tasty dishes. There are already representatives of other governments chatting and drinking here. PCs may make Common Knowledge checks to identify the ambassadors. There are representatives from Germany, Italy, Japan, and Russia here (as well as any fictional "bad guy" nations the GM may have used in previous adventures).

There are also American representatives here as well, including Marty Bloom, President Morrison's former campaign manager. With the exception of Bloom, whom Serial PCs would know from "Politics of

Terror," none of the representatives are well known (in other words, no Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, etc).

If the PCs decide to try anything funny, the GM should remind them that the dining hall is well guarded by Crimson soldiers holding submachine guns. PCs who mingle will find that the ambassadors are suitably impressed by the Crimson Emperor's conquest of America and the potency of the Crimson Death.

Not long after the PCs arrive, the Crimson Emperor will make his appearance and sit at the head of the table. He is accompanied by a Frenchman in a lab coat. The Emperor will order wine glasses refilled and offer a toast.

"Gentlemen, I have promised you control of the entire world, with national boundary lines redrawn to your specifications. I have conquered the sleeping giant through its own democratic electoral process." He pauses as the representatives break out in laughter. *"With the use of Dr. Marcel's weapon I will strengthen my control over the United States and together we will crush our enemies!"* With that, he raises his glass and toasts the representatives.

PCs who make a Notice roll will notice that Dr. Clark Marcel is not happy, but is doing his best to keep his composure (in truth, Dr. Marcel is just as much a prisoner as the PCs).

THE SHOCKING REVELATION

The Crimson Emperor will offer a second toast. This time it is directed at the PCs.

“The Crimson Mist will be unleashed on (insert appropriate American Campaign City here). Naturally, I shall need scapegoats, someone upon which to lay the blame for this terrorist action. Divine Providence has brought those scapegoats to me!”

To their horror, the PCs realize that the representatives are toasting them. Soon after, the PCs are escorted to their cells to await duplication.

CHAPTER TEN: PRISONERS OF THE EMPEROR

Once the PCs have settled into their cells, the following sections can be shuffled and arranged as the GM sees fit. It is important that the players receive all of the information on the checklist before proceeding to Chapter Eleven.

A NICE COZY CELL & SOME COMPANY

The first place that the PCs will be escorted to is their new home. They will be taken to the dungeon where they will be paired off into cells. The cells are made of stone with steel bars (and no windows), making an escape an unlikely proposition.

There is another prisoner as well, Lianna Marcel. She will only share a cell with a female PC, but she can also communicate with the other cells through the bars. Lianna is a pretty young lady who is held captive here so that her father, Dr. Clark Marcel, will continue his work in providing the Crimson Emperor with more potent versions of the Crimson Mist. Lianna hates being used like this, and will ask the PCs to help her find some way to help her father.

NOT THE FACE!

The PC is taken to the secret lab where Dr. Grigory Janovich and the Mirror Machine await them. The Mirror Machine consists of two tables with restraining belts and a large T-shaped machine between them. Characters who have been through “the Scorpion Syndicate” will recognize it as a duplicate of the machine in the Chinatown Warehouse. Similarly, this “Dr. Janovich” is also a duplicate.

For all PCs, the routine is the same. Two elite guards will escort each PC (it is up to the GM how many PCs are taken at once; since this encounter is supposed to go smoothly, the more isolated the PC feels, the better). The PC will be strapped down on one of the tables and a young Chinese man (or woman) who is stripped to the waist (a woman volunteer would still wear something for modesty, unless the GM wishes to veer into “spicy” territory). Each volunteer has a crimson Crimson tattoo on his left forearm.

The process of duplication takes several hours as the machine “reads” the victim’s face and hands and adjusts the volunteer’s features accordingly.

INTERROGATION

A PC who has already been duplicated will be taken to see the Crimson Emperor. The meeting will take place in one of the observation lounges that overlooks the ravine.

Two elite soldiers will escort the PC and remain in the room with them. The PC’s duplicate will be here as well. The purpose of the meeting is to give the new duplicate the information he needs to go to America and impersonate the PC. The Crimson Emperor will first use diplomacy to encourage cooperation. After all, he only wishes to unite the world under one government. There will be no more wars, no more suffering, and no more poverty. He will usher in a golden age. If the PC cooperates, then the Crimson Emperor will promise that he or she will be well cared for after the takeover of the world.

If the PC refuses to cooperate, then he will have the guards immobilize the PC as he forcibly extracts information. He asks very basic questions about the PC’s home, friends, family, job, business associates, membership in organizations, etc. Once the interrogation is over, the Crimson Emperor sends the PC back to his cell.

Serial Note: If the PCs played the previous chapter badly and missed information regarding the plans of

the Crimson Emperor, then now is a good time for the Crimson Emperor to reiterate his plan.

A VISIT FROM DR. MARCEL

Dr. Marcel is allowed to visit his daughter semi-regularly. If Lianna has gained the trust of the PCs, then she will ask her father to tell them what he knows.

Dr. Marcel will tell the PCs that the duplication process is not perfect. The Mirror Machine manipulates the nerves of the skin and over time those nerves unravel and return to their natural state. Continuous treatments are necessary every couple of months to maintain the disguise. Dr. Marcel has accidentally discovered that irritants, such as itchy powders, will cause the nerves to unravel more quickly. This also means that duplicate victims are usually held alive so that the disguises can be kept longer.

Dr. Marcel will also reveal that the Crimson Mist is a powerful weapon but it must be sprayed on victims in a semi-liquid state. It disperses quickly, so releasing it too high in the atmosphere will negate its effects. Also, explosions or fire will dry out essential components almost immediately, rendering what is left inert. Dr. Marcel is still alive because he’s assured the Crimson Emperor that he can solve these problems with more experimentation.

Dr. Marcel hates what he is doing. He takes full responsibility for all of the deaths that his mist has caused,

and it has taken its toll. He almost looks more like Lianna's grandfather than her father. Dr. Marcel is also a fatalist; he does not see any way that the PCs could escape the Crimson Emperor's clutches. If, however, they could escape with Lianna, then he would stop cooperating with the Crimson Emperor (suicide is implied).

If one of the PCs is a scientist, Dr. Marcel may suggest that the PC become his assistant. The Crimson Emperor will grant the request, enabling Dr. Marcel to teach the PC how to make the itchy powder.

CHECKLIST

Before going to the next chapter, the following things should have occurred:

- Every PC should have been duplicated.
- Every PC should have been interrogated.
- The PCs should have met Lianna and understand why she is kept here.
- The PCs should have met Dr. Marcel and learned about the itchy powder and the limitations of the Crimson Mist.
- The PCs should understand that, if they flee with Lianna, Dr. Marcel will stop cooperating.
- The PCs should realize that the Crimson Mist will be released in

their home city by their duplicates.

- The PCs should realize The current President of the United States is a duplicate.



CHAPTER ELEVEN: A DARING ESCAPE!

STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

One night, Heinrich Schulhoffer, the German ambassador, visits the PCs. He will give the PCs an intriguing offer. He knows that Dr. Marcel visits the cell often. Schulhoffer is willing to free Marcel and his daughter and escape in his transport plane. Unfortunately, the Crimson Emperor will not allow any of the ambassador's security guards into the palace. So Schulhoffer is willing to offer a deal with the PCs.

His plan is simple. He will come to visit the PCs just before Dr. Marcel is escorted into the cellblock. He will take care of the guard and get the keys to open the cell doors. When the guards arrive with Dr. Marcel, the PCs will be able to surprise and overwhelm them. They will then use Dr. Marcel as a hostage to escape (Schulhoffer will provide them with the most convenient escape route). Once outside, Schulhoffer will meet them at the airplane and transport them back to Germany, where he will allow them to go free.

PCs should be naturally suspicious of Schulhoffer's motives. A successful Notice check (opposed by the German's Spirit) will reveal that Schulhoffer hopes that Dr. Marcel can be persuaded to share his secret of the Crimson Mist with Nazi Germany. There is also a veneer of racism, as Schulhoffer considers the

Crimson Emperor to be non-Aryan and inferior.

Regardless of their suspicion, the PCs should realize that Schulhoffer offers their best chance to escape. They should cautiously accept his agreement. He will share the escape route with them the next time he returns, when it is time to act.

THE ESCAPE BEGINS

As promised, Schulhoffer returns just after the PCs have been served breakfast. He jovially asks the jailor to allow him into the cell to ask the PCs a few questions. The jailor agrees, fishing out his keys and opening the door to the cellblock. At this point, the German Ambassador pulls out a silenced pistol and shoots the jailor in the back of the head.

As Schulhoffer unlocks the cell doors, he will tell the PCs that their quickest way to escape is to use the elevator at the end of the hall. The bottom floor is a service entrance, usually guarded by four guards. Once the PCs deal with them, they should be able to run across the valley to the Nazi transport plane. Schulhoffer also notes that one of the keys opens the closet in the jailor's room which contains all of their confiscated equipment (convenient, yes, but this is pulp! GMs who do not want to let the PCs off that easily may ignore the closet altogether).

WHAT IF THEY PLAYERS COME UP WITH SOMETHING ELSE?

It's entirely possible that your players may not wait around to hear Herr Schulhoffer's offer. Gamers have a hard time keeping their characters captive, even if it is a staple of the genre.

In the event that the PCs attempt their own escape, the GM should feel free to incorporate elements from this chapter into the events surrounding the player's own plans.

In other words: Wing it.

Serial Note: *The PCs may realize that they no longer need the Ambassador at this time and double-cross him. Let them. They will still need to lay in wait for Dr. Marcel and convince the Nazis to take them once they get to the airplane.*

Within half an hour, two guards approach the cellblock with Dr. Marcel. The PCs should have a tactical plan to take out the guards and free Dr. Marcel (the jails provide a convenient dumping ground for captured guards).

ELEVATOR TROUBLES

Assuming that the PCs take out the guards and convince Dr. Marcel to come with them, they should head down the hallway to the elevator.

Unfortunately, the Crimson Emperor has grown suspicious of the suddenly departing German Ambassador and sends another group of guards to check in on the cellblock. As the PCs are heading toward the elevator, call for a Notice roll. Those who make it hear the other elevator coming toward their level (and can see the top of the elevator coming into view). There are three armed elite guards in the elevator who will have to be dealt with before the PCs can escape down the other elevator.

(It needs to be noted here that the palace elevators have a "cage" configuration. The outer door is a simple pull-down caged door that can be left up when the car is not there. The inner door is a simple "pull-out" accordian door that is only about 3 feet high (and is usually not used). Thus, people can interact and even shoot each other through the doors).

The service tunnel is six floors down (there are three more levels below that). The GM could have soldiers shoot up or down at them from higher or lower floors. This could result in a weakening of the elevator. GMs are encouraged to make the elevator trip as thrilling and entertaining as possible.

SERVICE TUNNEL

The four guards will be running down the tunnel as the PCs land. Once the PCs have taken down the guards, they can exit out into the valley.

CHAPTER TWELVE: FLIGHT FOR FREEDOM!

This is the final chapter in "Escape from the Crimson Palace." The PCs must board the Nazi plane and make their escape. They will have to deal with not only the Crimson Emperor's men, but also the remaining Nazis on the plane. If the PCs can fly south enough, they can get help from British forces.

JOINING A BATTLE IN PROGRESS

As the PCs enter the valley, they will see the Nazi transport plane taxiing down the runway. They will also see several dead Nazi and Crimson soldiers. The transport plane is about to be overrun by ten armed Crimson soldiers. Only a couple of Nazi soldiers are shooting back at them from the airplane.

The PC's greatest help is a jeep (actually a Wehrmacht Kubelwagen -- Acc/TS 20/40, Toughness 10(3), Crew 1+4) parked next to the service entrance. This jeep has an MG-34 machine gun fitted on it (30/60/120, 2d8+1, AP2, ROF 3, Shots 200). The PCs can use it to hold off the Crimson soldiers as they drive up to the transport plane.

Schulhoffer is eagerly calling to them and will order the transport plane to slow down so that the PCs can intercept them. He will insist that Dr. Marcel and his daughter load first (at which point he feels

no loyalty to the PCs and has no qualms ordering the Nazi soldiers to turn their guns on them). The transport plane has two Nazi pilots, the German Ambassador, and two soldiers left. The PCs will have to overcome them if they wish to commandeer the plane.

FLY THE UNFRIENDLY SKIES

Once the PCs are in the air, they will have to figure out where to go. PCs may make a Knowledge check to realize that their best chance is to head south toward British-controlled territory. If the PCs fail this check, then Dr. Marcel will suggest it. They can also use their radios to alert the British that they are not Nazis.

While flying towards safe harbor, the PCs are followed by three of the Crimson Emperor's fighter aircraft. The PCs can use the transport plane's machine guns to fight them off.

Nazi Transport Plane (Junkers Ju52): **Acc/TS** 18/70; **Climb** 20 **Toughness** 20 (2); **Crew:** 3+18; **Cost:** *Military*
Weapons: Machinegun (dorsal 360)-- **Range:**30/60/120 **Damage:** 2d8 **ROF** 3 **Weight** 25 **Ammo** 150 **Notes:** AP 2; Vehicle)

Crimson Emperor's Fighters (Nakajima A1N2): **Acc/TS** 12/48; **Climb** 20; **Toughness** 10 (1); **Crew** 1; **Cost:** *Military* **Weapons:** Twin machineguns (Fixed Forward -- **Range:** 24/48/96 **Damage:** 2d8 **ROF** 3 **Weight** 25 **Ammo** 150 **Notes:** AP 2; Vehicle)



plane group after them before they get to British territory.

EPILOGUE

Standalone: The British government will be very interested in the Crimson Emperor and his plans for world domination.

They plan to unmask the faux President when he visits Great Britain. The PCs should have their wealth levels increased for their information. If the GM wishes, the PCs could go on to stop their duplicates in the final adventure of this serial, "The Crimson Veil."

The fighter planes are simply trying to down the craft, not destroy it, so the PCs will have some advantage. If the plane does go down, then the PCs will hopefully have radioed the British, who will send airplanes to the rescue. The PCs and Lianna will have to use parachutes to escape the plane before it crashes.

Dr. Marcel will not be going with them, regardless of the outcome. Realizing that his knowledge is dangerous to the world, Dr. Marcel kisses his daughter goodbye before biting down on a cyanide capsule. No Healing will save him. His last words are "I'm sorry..."

If the GM feels that the PCs take down the Crimson's aircraft too quickly, he could send another three-

Serial: The PCs must return to their home city and find their duplicates before the Crimson Mist can be unleashed on their city. They also need to unmask the faux president. These events are chronicled in "The Crimson Veil."

Diana Pearson, if she is still alive, will insist on going back to the monastery and retrieving Sheldon Grey, leaving the PCs to deal with the events of "The Crimson Veil" alone.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

"THE CRIMSON EMPEROR"

Fu Dao, the Crimson Emperor, claims to be the latest descendent of the Fusan emperors. No one has challenged his claim. While one might expect that centuries of isolation and exile would produce a leader mired in his own past, nothing can be further from the truth. Fu Dao is very much a student of modern culture and believes that "Western ways" must be adapted in order to ensure that his new empire will stand the test of time (ironically, China is fated to pursue a similar course by the end of the next decade). Toward that end, he wears his hair short, keeps his face shaved, and has adopted European military dress.

The one trait that the Crimson Emperor has inherited from his ancestors is megalomania. He truly believes that he is destined to rule, and has seized on current world events to further his goals. He is secretly funding the Chinese Nationals in the hopes of creating a new China beholden to him (and create a balancing force against his "ally" Japan). The Emperor has also forged ties with the Germans and the Italians, promising them that his ambitions lie no further than East Asia and keeping America out of the war. In truth, the Emperor plans to conquer them all in time.

The "Crimson Emperor" that the PCs meet in this adventure is actually a duplicate. The true Crimson

Emperor is masquerading as the President-Elect of the United States of America. Use the below stats for either the duplicate or the true Emperor.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d12, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Psionics d12, Taunt d10, Throwing d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6;

Parry:8; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Arrrogant, Overconfident, Vengeful (Major).

Edges: Arcane Background (Psionics), Block, Combat Reflexes, Command, Filthy Rich, Followers, Fervor, Improved Dodge, Improved Level Headed, Mentalist, New Power, Nine Lives, Power Points.

Powers: *Armor* (hard skin), *Barrier* (telekenetic force), *Boost/Lower Trait* (hypnosis), *Deflection* (telekenetic force), *Entangle* (hypnotic paralysis), *Fear* (hypnotic suggestion), *Invisibility* (cloud men's minds), *Puppet* (hypnotic mind control), *Smite* (chi infusion), *Speak Language* (mental attunement), *Telekenesis*, 40 Power Points.

Gear: In his own house, the Crimson Emperor has access to everything he needs. When wearing his military uniform, he prefers to carry a German mauser pistol and a samurai sword (a gift from the Japanese Emperor).

"DR. GRIGORY JANOVICH"

Use the stats found in Part II: *The Scorpion Syndicate*.

DIANA PEARSON

Use the stats found in Part III: *The Valley of Death*.

DOUG MACLEOD

Use the stats found in Part III: *The Valley of Death*.

DR. CLARK MARCEL

Dr. Clark Marcel is a noted French scientist who invented a new lethal gas during the Great War. Horrified by its affects, Dr. Marcel planned to destroy the evidence and pretend that it never existed. Unfortunately, Dr. Marcel was noted in the Paris community and one of the Crimson Emperor's spies learned of his invention. The Emperor arranged for Lianna, his daughter, to be kidnapped and promised Dr. Marcel that she would remain alive only as long as he agreed to produce the Crimson Mist.

Dr. Marcel is haunted by his work. His hair is decidedly thinner and wrinkles mar what was once a youthful face. Even his eyes are starting to fail him. Dr. Marcel sees no way out of his predicament and it is slowly killing him. He would have taken his own life months ago if he weren't concerned for the safety of his daughter.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6.
Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6,

Guts d6, Healing d6, Knowledge (biology) d12, Knowledge (electronics) d12, Knowledge (chemistry) d12, Notice d8, Repair d10, Shooting d6, Weird Science d12

Charisma: +0, **Face:** 6;

Parry: 5 **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), Gadgeteer, Mr. Fix It, McGyver, Power Points, Rapid Recharge.

Gizmos: *None currently*

Gear: Dr. Marcel usually carries lab tools with him. He also has a cyanide tablet in case he gets the opportunity to use it.

Nerve Agitator Powder: Dr. Marcel's counteragent to the Mirror Machine is a fine yellow powder that, when it comes in contact with affected skin, will cause the victim to itch and revert to his normal form. PCs with Dr. Marcel's formula can recreate a batch with Knowledge (chemistry) or Weird Science check. PCs without the formula can attempt to recreate it as well, but with a -4 on the roll.

LIANNA MARCEL

An old proverb states: Be careful what you wish for; you might get it. This proverb sums up Lianna. A few months ago, Lianna was the smothered daughter of a noted Parisian chemist. He frowned on her advancing her education, wishing that she would find a good husband and produce grandchildren. Lianna, however, wanted more out of life. She was an artist and spent most of her time producing paintings that she



hoped would draw attention to her. She wanted out of her safe, comfortable life and into something more exciting.

And then the agents of the Crimson Emperor kidnapped her from an art museum and whisked her off to Tibet. Now she is even more isolated and, worse, she is insurance for her father's cooperation. Unlike her father, Lianna plans to escape.

Lianna is an attractive woman of nineteen. She tries to keep her spirits up by drawing frescoes in chalk on the walls of her cell. She has also found that cooperation gets her out of the cell every once in a while, so she is careful to stay in the good graces of her captors. Make no mistake, though, Lianna will turn on them in a second at a chance for freedom.

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

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Investigation d10, Notice d8, Streetwise d8

Charisma +4, Pace: 6;

Parry: 5; Toughness: 6

Hindrances: Curious

Edges: Very Attractive, Charmer

Gear: Lianna keeps some colored chalk in her pockets.

CRIMSON ELITE SOLDIER

The elite soldiers are the Palace Guard. These are the soldiers to use whenever the PCs are facing soldiers within the walls of the palace.

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Lockpicking d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Swimming d6, Throwing d8

Charisma: -2 Pace: 6;

Parry: 6; Toughness: 6

Hindrances: Mean

Edges: Quick Draw, Rock and Roll!, Strong Willed.

Gear: The elite soldiers carry MP38 submachine guns (12/24/48, 2d6, ROF 3, Shots 32) and Nambu pistol (12/24/48, 2d6-1, ROF 1, Shots 8)

CRIMSON "GRUNT" SOLDIER

These are the soldiers that the PCs will encounter in the valley while rushing to the transport plane. They use the Mook stats on page 87.

Gear: The soldiers carry Arasaka rifles (24/48/95, 2d8, ROF 1, Shots 6), Nambu pistols (12/24/48, 2d6-1, ROF 1, Shots 8), and knives (Str+d4).

DIPLOMAT

This stat block is designed to be used for all of the diplomats, including Ambassador Schulhoffer.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d4, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (politics) d10, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Shooting d6

Charisma: +0, **Pace:** 6;

Parry: 5 **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Overconfident

Edges: Connections

Gear: The diplomats usually carry briefcases of important documents as well as an appropriate pistol.

NAZI SOLDIER

The Nazi soldiers protecting the transport plane from the Crimson Emperor's forces use the stats found on page 112.

MILITARY PILOT

This stat block is intended for the Crimson fighter pilots and the Nazi transport pilots.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Notice d8, Piloting d8, Shooting d8

Charisma: 0, **Pace:** 6;

Toughness: 7

Hindrances: --

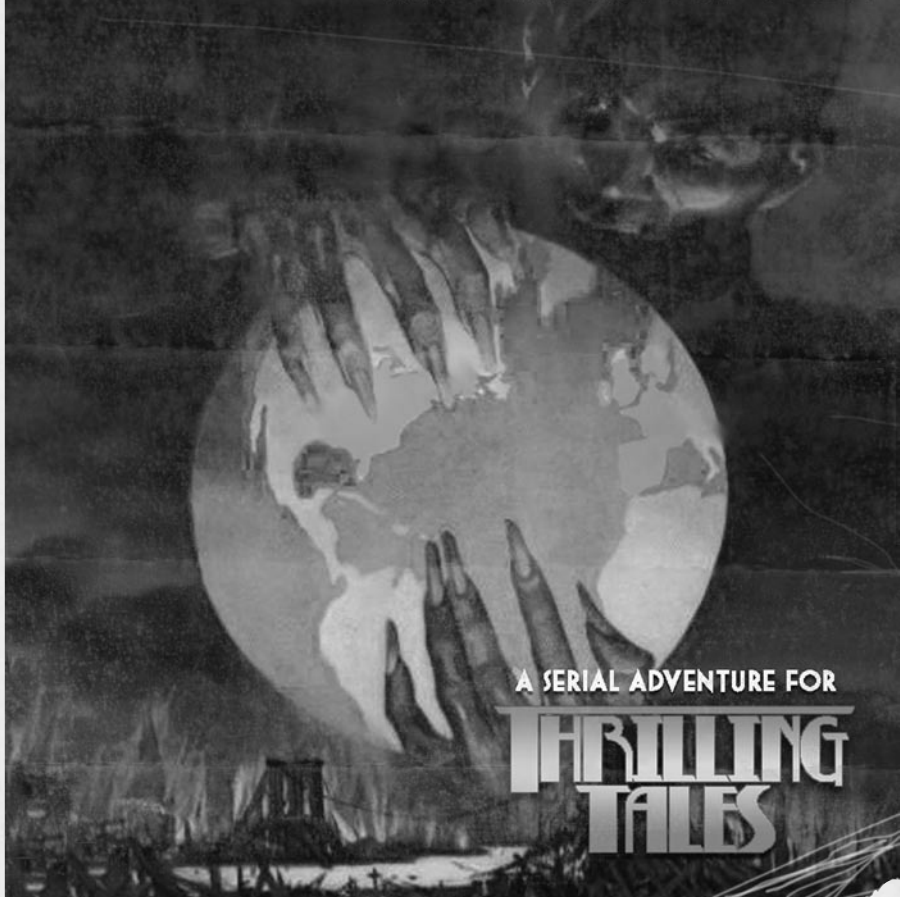
Edges: Ace





CRIMSON EMPEROR

CHAPTER FIVE: THE CRIMSON VEIL



V: THE CRIMSON VEIL

BACKGROUND

It is January, 1937. President-elect Stuart Morrison is preparing to take office. He promises to crack down on organized crime and end the economic depression. In a gesture of

unity, Morrison has asked Franklin Roosevelt to be his Vice-President ("demoting" his running mate to Secretary of War). Oddly, Roosevelt has accepted.

What the world does not know is that Morrison is not who he claims to be. The insidious Crimson

Emperor has orchestrated Morrison's election and has disguised himself as the former Senator. The Crimson Emperor plans to turn America into an Empire, one that will ally itself with Germany and Japan.

To further his goals, the Crimson Emperor has developed a chemical weapon, the Crimson Mist. He plans to spray this weapon over a major American city (the campaign city) and blame it on organized crime. He will use this as a pretext to grab emergency powers in his inaugural speech.

Dark times are ahead unless the PCs can stop the machinations of the Crimson Emperor!

STAND-ALONE ADVENTURE

As the culmination of the serial, "the Crimson Veil" will require some reworking in order to accommodate standalone play. Certain elements of this mini adventure, such as a completely fictitious president, may be too awkward to use in a standalone scenario.

The easiest way to use this mini adventure as a standalone is to ignore the presidential angle. Instead, the Crimson Emperor may be played as (or replaced by) a typical megalomaniacal pulp villain that wishes to use the Crimson Mist to further his nefarious plans. In this case, he would be working with the local mob bosses to implicate the PCs as the perpetrators of the crime. The Crimson Emperor will use the Crimson Mist as an

example to blackmail other cities into acquiescing to his demands, whatever they may be.

This scenario should start with Chapter Fourteen. The PCs will be imprisoned and learn of the scheme prior to making their escape. They will then confront their duplicates, as outlined in Chapter Thirteen. Finally, the PCs will confront the main villain. Chapter Fifteen may be used as a guide in designing an appropriate climax.

SERIAL ADVENTURE

In "Escape from the Crimson Palace," the PCs learned about the Crimson Emperor's plans. In this final segment of the serial, the PCs will have to clear their name and expose the president as a fraud. GMs who wish to add new chapters to the serial should consult the Plot Complications section at the end of this mini adventure. A few options are offered to extend the campaign into a radical, yet pulpish, diversion from established history. It will be up to the PCs to define this new direction.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: THE CRIMSON PLOT

In "Escape from the Crimson Palace," the PCs learned that their duplicates are planning to unleash a horrific weapon upon their city. The PCs will have to hide their presence while uncovering the whereabouts of their evil doppelgangers.

The Crimson Emperor's sinister plot is relatively simple. The Crimson Mist is being produced in an old illegal brewery just outside of town. During this production, the duplicates are trying to maintain their covers, offering just enough evidence to the outside world that they are here (the fact that they are acting a bit strangely works to their favor when later framing the PCs). Once the Crimson Mist is ready, the duplicates will be summoned to a local private airfield where they will fill the tanks of crop dusters with the poison. The duplicates will fly the crop dusters over the city, spraying the Crimson Mist on unsuspecting citizens.

The Crimson Emperor hopes to use this plot to declare emergency powers and effectively become a dictator under the guise of protecting America. He will implicate the PCs as well as the mobs, arguing that stronger police powers are necessary to break the back of organized crime and that more direct federal action is necessary to end the Depression. If the PCs don't stop the Crimson Mist, the Crimson Emperor may very well succeed.

NERVE AGITATOR POWDER

PCs who have played through "Escape from the Crimson Palace" may have access to Dr. Clark Marcel's formula for Nerve Agitator Powder. This fine yellow powder, when applied to skin treated by the Mirror Machine, will cause the skin to itch and revert to its natural state (the pre-duplicated face).

In order for the powder to work, the PC must apply it to the affected skin. This can be achieved by scoring a hit in combat if the target is not immobilized. The powder acts quickly; causing the affected area to itch for 2d4 turns. During this time, the target is at a -2 to all rolls, due to the itching. The target also needs to make a Vigor check; failure makes the target unable to do anything but scratch for 1d4 turns (or the end of the itching, whichever comes first).

Being an irritant, the Nerve Agitator Powder will affect anyone who comes in contact with it. While this potentially gives the PCs a powerful new weapon, the powder is limited by availability (to be determined by the GM; a batch typically gives 10 doses), range (it needs to be thrown), and effectiveness (against skin untreated by the Mirror Machine the powder only itches for 1d4 turns).

KEEPING A LOW PROFILE

The Crimson Emperor has ordered the local mobs to keep an eye out for the PCs. The duplicates have been given a code phrase so that the mob will not mistake them for the PCs. The GM should feel free to

introduce mobsters (or corrupt police officers) to harass and engage the PCs in order to kidnap him. PCs that are captured in this manner will be taken to the tenement containing the Mirror Machine in Chapter Fourteen. It is important to remember that the Crimson Emperor wants the PCs to be taken alive in case he has further need of the duplicates.

Since the Crimson Emperor has taken control of the mobs, it will be very difficult for the PCs to maintain a low profile if they go to a public place. There are mob agents in the train stations, ports, and airports. They will also be prevalent in places where the PCs would frequent in their normal lives.

One way for the PCs to keep a low profile is to rely on a trusted friend or romantic interest. It is likely that this contact will have noticed something odd about the duplicate and will be willing to help out his or her true friend. This contact could also smuggle the PCs around in a car to get them around the city. This contact is probably being watched, so if the PCs aren't careful to be discreet and "shake the tail," contacting their friend could get them captured early on.

THE UNDERWORLD ANGLE

If the PCs look into the seedy underbelly of the city, they may discover information about the Crimson Mist. A Streetwise check will alert the PC that there is something going on at an abandoned brewery in a wooded

area just outside the city. The illegal brewery kept the Duffy mob in business during Prohibition but was abandoned once the Eighteenth Amendment was repealed.

The brewery is well-protected by Duffy and Marciano enforcers who remain out of sight. The Crimson Mist is being placed in barrels and stored in the back of a pickup truck. Inside, the brewing apparatuses have been converted to manufacture the mist, overseen by a duplicate of Dr. Grigory Janovich.

The PCs could decide to destroy the Crimson Mist before it leaves the brewery. In this case, the GM should play out the battle normally. The PCs may be able to Intimidate the duplicate Janovich into giving the location of the secret base. If not, then they will either have to convince their duplicates to provide the information or use another Streetwise check (at -2) to discover the location of the tenement in Chapter Fourteen.

GMs who wish to run the airfield battle regardless of what the PCs do should either have the truck pulling away as they approach or allow them to Intimidate a guard into telling them that they're too late. The Crimson Mist is on its way.

IF I WEREN'T ME, WHERE WOULD I GO?

The duplicates have had at least a week or two to utilize their stolen identities. They have been living those lives as best they can, trying not to draw too much attention to themselves as they prepare for the plot. For PCs who live solitary lives, this isn't much of a problem. Duplicates who have taken over the lifestyle of a PC with an active social or professional life will have to make excuses to keep people from discovering their secret. Thus, the PC may no longer show up to work, forget to call his girlfriend, or skip classes. This could cause quite a bit of trouble for the real PC once he tries to resume his normal life; alternatively, it could alert a trusted friend that there is something "wrong" with the duplicate.

All of the duplicates are waiting in various locations for the telephone call that will lead them to the airport. At least one duplicate has been taking flying lessons in order to determine the best path to fly. PCs can discover this information with an Investigation check, at a +2 if the analogous PC is making the check). If the PCs contact the private airfield and can change the owner's attitude from Neutral to Friendly, the owner will tell them that the duplicate is a natural. In the event of a failure the airfield owner will tell the duplicate that someone is looking for him.

If the PCs do not uncover the airfield information, then they will have to

follow one of the duplicates when the phone call comes. This will require appropriate Stealth checks to keep the duplicate from noticing that he's being watched, or Tracking to follow the duplicate across the city. The duplicate rarely leaves his home (or office, if the job is insular enough).

AIRFIELD ASSAULT!

The private airfield is a former farm just outside the city limits. The owner runs a crop dusting operation for the surrounding farms, making it ideal for the Crimson Emperor's purposes. The Emperor will first send mob enforcers to secure the airfield (bribing the owner to look the other way). The truck will arrive next and the mobsters will start filling the crop dusters (one for each duplicate) with the Crimson Mist. Finally, the duplicates will arrive and pilot the airplanes. If they aren't stopped, the duplicates will spray the Crimson Mist all over the city.

The GM should time the attack of the Crimson Mist with the approach of the PCs. This will allow for at least one duplicate-piloted crop duster to get into the air, allowing for some Air Ace action (alternatively, the GM may wish to have the planes being fueled if no PCs are pilots). The duplicates are armed and will have no qualms shooting their originals, as the distribution of the mist takes precedence over keeping the PCs preserved.

There should also be as many mob enforcers as necessary to make

the battle interesting. Some enforcers will be stationed at the airfield entrance; others will be guarding the truck and ensuring that the pilots get off the ground. There are also two Model-A Fords, as well as any PC vehicles that the duplicates used to arrive there.

The Crimson Mist needs a precise application in order to be effective. As long as the PCs can down a plane before it makes its spraying run, the mist will harmlessly disperse.

PCs can Intimidate captured duplicates into giving the location of the Mirror Machine in Chapter Fourteen.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN: MIRROR IMAGES

The Mirror Machine and the imprisoned originals of the duplicates are located in an abandoned tenement building in a depressed part of the city. The tenement is a four story building. The first floor is manned by enforcers. The upper floors contain the prisoners and the Mirror Machine is in the basement.



How this chapter proceeds largely depends on the circumstances. For GMs using this adventure as a standalone, the PCs should start as prisoners on one of the upper floors. Even serial PCs who start the adventure with Chapter Thirteen may find themselves at the tenement prior to the conclusion of that chapter, especially if they are taken prisoner.

The key objectives of this chapter are to disable the Mirror Machine, free the captives, and prepare to

unmask the Crimson Emperor. The GM should hold off Chapter Fifteen until all of these goals are met.

GROUND FLOOR

The ground floor is occupied at all times by six mob enforcers. One apartment belongs to Dr. Janovich and contains many paintings and relics of Tsarist Russia. All of the staircases to the basement save one have been boarded up.

UPPER FLOORS

The upper floors have been divided into cells. The doors are made of strong wood (Armor +4, Toughness 10) with high quality locks (-2 to Lockpicking rolls) All of the windows have been boarded up (Toughness 8) and covered with steel bars (Toughness 12). Each floor is guarded by at least two mob enforcers.

There are three prisoners of note on the upper floors. The first two are the mob bosses Marco Marciano and Seamus Duffy. They have been imprisoned for several months but look no worse for wear. They are willing to negotiate any reasonable offers to help them escape. The mobsters can easily be convinced to help the PCs expose and eliminate the Crimson Emperor.

The third prisoner is a different matter. He is the President-elect of the United States, Stuart Morrison. Steamboat Stu is bedridden with a mutated cancer running through

his body. The Mirror Machine treatments have actually enhanced the spread of the cancer (an ailment which Morrison was careful to keep out of the hands of the press, for fear that it would hurt his campaign).

If the PCs participated in "Politics of Terror," then Morrison will recognize them. Even if he doesn't, Morrison knows that the Crimson Emperor has usurped his presidency and that he will be unable to retake it in his present condition. He also knows that another treatment from the Mirror Machine will kill him and that the Crimson Emperor plans on taking over the Vice-President next.

Morrison is willing to undergo the procedure one last time to enable a PC to take his face, if it's suggested. It would enable the PC to get close enough to the Crimson Emperor and expose him as a fraud. Morrison suggests that the PCs approach the Crimson Emperor during a public event so that the exposure cannot be covered up.

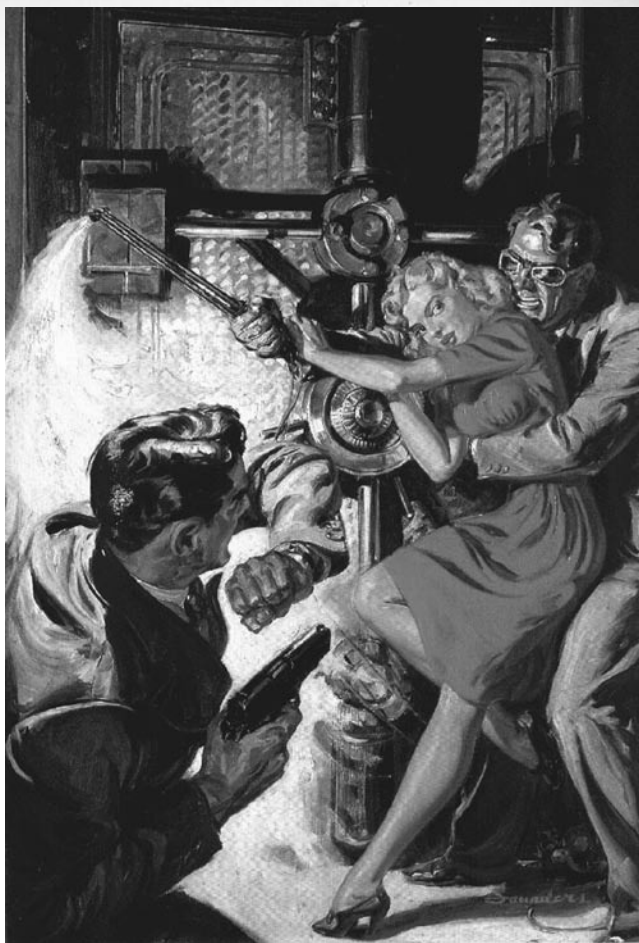
BASEMENT

The Mirror Machine sits in the basement. It consists of two tables with restraining belts and a large T-shaped machine between them. Characters that have been through earlier parts of the serial will recognize it as a duplicate of previous machines. This is actually Dr. Janovich's third machine, hastily built after the events of "the Scorpion Syndicate."

Dr. Janovich is here as well. This is the actual Dr. Janovich and he is protected by Crimson Scorpion martial artists (the actual number should be determined by the GM). If his bodyguards are defeated, Dr. Janovich will beg for his freedom. He genuinely wants to help his native Russia return to its former glory and he can't do that if he's dead. If this adventure is a standalone, or if the PCs lack the capacity to make more Nerve Agitator Powder, then Dr. Janovich will offer to operate the Mirror Machine or give them the formula in return for his release. Unfortunately for the Doctor, any deal he makes will be moot. The mobsters will kill him before he can leave the city.

USING THE MIRROR MACHINE

The PCs will probably want to use the Mirror Machine to disguise a PC or two (probably Senator



Morrison, although Dr. Janovich or mobsters may also be duplicated). With Dr. Janovich's help, the process takes a few hours and is an automatic success. PCs trying to operate the Mirror Machine without Dr. Janovich's help must make a Knowledge (science) or a Weird Science check to figure out the device. This check may have a bonus to the roll, or be disregarded if the PC had a chance to examine the other versions of the Mirror Machine.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: THE VILLAIN UNMASKED!

Once the Crimson Mist plot has been foiled and the Mirror Machine has been disabled, the PCs will want to unmask the Crimson Emperor. Chances are that the Crimson Emperor is aware of the PC's activities and is taking steps to insulate himself from them. The Crimson Emperor will only be vulnerable when appearing at events he cannot cancel, such as the swearing-in ceremony or other state events.

Between appearances, the Crimson Emperor has rented a suite at an upscale hotel. He is always accompanied by his bodyguards and has extra security in the hotel.

For serial campaigns, this is the final chapter in a long story. The PCs are finally about to confront the mastermind behind it all! GMs should do all they can to ensure that this final scene is a memorable one, with the villain conversing with the PCs as they fight (remember, the Crimson Emperor organized the mobs into a syndicate under his control, manipulated an election and became President, made allies of hostile governments, and developed a deadly weapon). The Crimson Emperor is also upset that the PCs just foiled his attempt to wrest emergency powers under the guise of protecting the country.

TRAVELING TO THE CAPITAL

Since the Crimson Emperor is in Washington, DC, the PCs will have to travel there. How they get there



is up to the PCs. The agents of the Emperor will be watching, and the GM is encouraged to design an encounter or two along the way if desired.

The Crimson Emperor is very reclusive when out of the spotlight, using his stance against organized crime as a cover for his aloofness. He prefers to let Vice President Roosevelt act as his mouthpiece. Both men are surrounded by security.

THE EASY WAY

The easy way for the PCs to get to the Emperor is for one of the PCs to disguise himself as Morrison. While the Crimson's inner circle may be aware of duplicates, the standard security guards will not. Steamboat Stu was a very colorful and recognizable person in life; no security guard would stop him and force him to produce his credentials. By the time someone spots the disguised PC, the PC should be close enough to use the Nerve Agitator Powder.

THE HARD WAY

The hard way for the PCs to get to the Emperor is to use the brute force approach. This approach can be effective if the PCs have help from one or both of the mobs. In this case, the PCs will have to fight their way in (leaving room for moral ambiguity in dealing with regular security guards who are just doing their jobs). They will then have to get close enough to use the powder on the Crimson Emperor.

DRAMATIC CLIMAX

The GM should provide a suitable moment for the PCs to attack the Crimson Emperor. A classic scene is the taking of the Oath of Office. The PCs, especially one disguised as Morrison, can get on the platform just as the Crimson Emperor is putting his hand on the Bible. The shocking moment is captured on film.

The Crimson Emperor is a good recurring adversary for the PCs. Once the ruse is up, the Crimson Emperor will do anything he can (including taking hostages) to make his escape. He has a submarine waiting for him in the Potomac. He will not fight to the death even if all hope of escape is lost (a Mastermind of his caliber won't be in prison for long).

WHAT IF THE PLAYERS DECIDE TO TAKE OUT THE CRIMSON EMPEROR DISCREETLY?

Let them. As long as the Mirror Machine has been disabled and Dr. Janovich is out of the picture, the PCs can try to waylay the Crimson Emperor in his hotel and send him packing. With his disguise foiled, the Emperor will have no choice but to flee. The real President Morrison is dying and Vice President Roosevelt will take his place.

EPILOGUE

This is the final adventure in the serial. If the PCs fail to stop the Crimson Emperor, then the GM could craft a new campaign about an America run by a criminal mastermind (see Plot Complications, in the next section).

If the PCs do stop the Crimson Emperor, they may have gained a formidable arch-nemesis. The Crimson Emperor will not let any setback, even one this big, prevent him from hatching further schemes.

The PCs will also gain the gratitude of the real President Morrison, who will die shortly after the plot is foiled. They will also gain the trust and gratitude of newly returned President Roosevelt. Two mob bosses may also owe the PCs a favor or two.

PLOT COMPLICATIONS

The following plot complications are optional variations on the serial. The GM should consider each option carefully before adding it to his campaign.

A LITTLE HELP FROM THE PRESS

PCs who survived “Politics of Terror” may remember Gladys Price, the reporter who shared a special relationship with then-Senator Morrison. While the default assumption is that the Crimson Emperor sent her packing once he took Morrison’s place, the GM may wish to utilize her to help the PCs. She could be investigating the strange circumstances surrounding

President Morrison’s sudden change in personality and is either in the PC’s home city or in Washington, DC trying to uncover the truth.

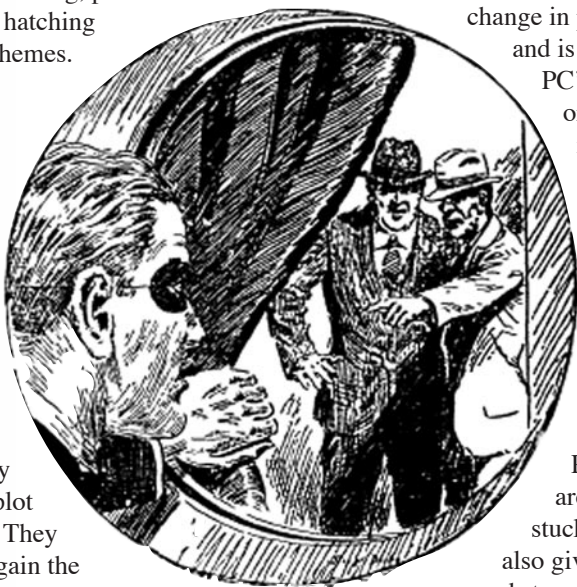
GMs can use her to provide information to assist the PCs if they are getting stuck. She can

also give them a good story to ensure that their reputations aren’t harmed

by attacking what seems to be the president.

PRESIDENT MORRISON REMAINS

The subplot regarding the real President Morrison’s cancer was designed to allow GMs to put history back on track at the conclusion



of the adventure. At the GM's discretion, this need not be the case. The real President Morrison could retake his position, offering intriguing possibilities, as the pulp campaign will diverge from actual history and allow all involved to reshape the future.

GMs who wish to pursue this option should disregard the references to President Morrison's cancer. The Crimson Emperor will also not conveniently ask Franklin D. Roosevelt to be his Vice-President. Instead, President Morrison will simply retake his position after the Crimson Emperor is exposed.

UNDER THE CRIMSON HEEL

Chapter Fifteen is designed to provide closure to the serial. However, having an imposter as President of the United States can make for an interesting campaign, especially as time moves closer to World War II. The PCs would be outlaws in their own country, fighting to overthrow the corrupt government.

NAZI DEATH WEAPON

In "Escape from the Crimson Palace," the Nazis were interested in procuring the Crimson Mist. They also know that the PCs were duplicated to unleash the Crimson Mist on the City. When the PCs return to the City, they may discover Nazi agents following the same leads they are. This could lead to an interesting three-way shoot-out at the airport in Chapter Thirteen.

Alternatively, the PCs could arrive at the airport in Chapter Thirteen only to find that their duplicates are dead and the Crimson Mist is missing. At the same time, a German U-Boat is taking the weapon back to Germany in order to be analyzed and duplicated.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

All characters appearing in this final part of the Serial have appeared in earlier parts. Use the stats as they previously appeared.



THRILLING TALES

CHARACTER NAME _____

ATTRIBUTES

d__ Agility
 d__ Smarts
 d__ Spirit
 d__ Strength
 d__ Vigor

DERIVED STATISTICS

	BASE	MODIFIER
Charisma <small>(0+edges/hindrances)</small>	_____	_____
Pace <small>(6" average)</small>	_____	_____
Parry <small>(2+½ Fighting)</small>	_____	_____
Toughness <small>(2+½ Vigor)</small>	_____	_____

HINDRANCES

EDGES

SKILLS

d__ Arcane: _____
 d__ Boating
 d__ Climbing
 d__ Driving
 d__ Fighting
 d__ Gambling
 d__ Guts
 d__ Healing
 d__ Intimidation
 d__ Investigation
 d__ Knowledge: _____
 d__ Knowledge: _____
 d__ Knowledge: _____
 d__ Lockpicking
 d__ Notice
 d__ Persuasion
 d__ Piloting
 d__ Repair
 d__ Riding
 d__ Shooting
 d__ Stealth
 d__ Streetwise
 d__ Survival
 d__ Swimming
 d__ Taunt
 d__ Throwing
 d__ Tracking

HEALTH

Wounds:

-1 **-2** **-3** **Inc.**

Fatigue:

-2 **-1**

POWERS

POWER	COST	RANGE	EFFECT	DURATION
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

GEAR

WEAPON	RANGE	ROF	DAMAGE	WEIGHT
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
ARMOR	AREA PROTECTED	PROTECTION	WEIGHT	
_____	_____	_____	_____	
_____	_____	_____	_____	
_____	_____	_____	_____	