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# DRAGON ISLAND

AN ADVENTURE FOR

## THRILLING TALES



# DRAGON ISLAND

A Thrilling Tales Pulp Adventure for 3-5 players of 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>-level

by Walt Ciechanowski

## INTRODUCTION

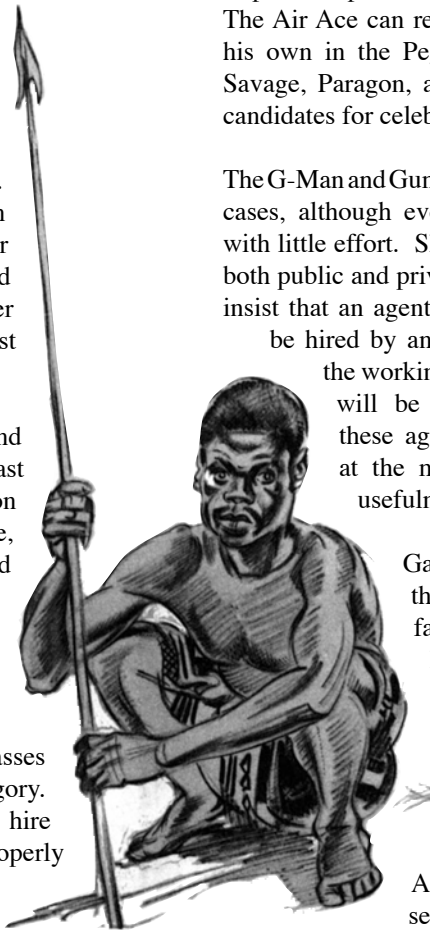
*Dragon Island* is an adventure designed for a party of 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> level characters. Sheldon Grey, world-renowned daredevil and adventurer, is hiring associates for an expedition to an uncharted island in the South Indian Ocean. As there are many roles to fill in an expedition, a wide range of character classes is acceptable. It is assumed that all (or mostly all) of the player characters (PCs) will have at least one level in an advanced class.

Almost all of the occupations and advanced classes in Modern or Past D20, are appropriate. Since Sheldon Grey likes to play to his audience, even non-traditional advanced classes will be accepted, provided they have a high reputation bonus (e.g. "Wow, Sheldon Grey had world famous marksman Texas Tim along?"). Martial Artists, Gunslingers, and F/X-based classes definitely fall into this category. Sheldon Grey will also want to hire a Reporter or Personality to properly immortalize events.

Additionally, many of the advanced classes from *Thrilling Tales* are especially recommended, both for their talents and for reinforcing the feel of the genre. The Ace

Reporter is perfect for Mr. Grey's journalistic needs. The Air Ace can replace the standard airplane with his own in the Pegasus. The Mesmerist, Noble Savage, Paragon, and Rocket Ranger are all good candidates for celebrities.

The G-Man and Gumshoe, and Investigator are special cases, although even these can be accommodated with little effort. Sheldon Grey has many investors, both public and private. Any of these investors may insist that an agent tag along. An Infiltrator might be hired by an investor to get a better look at the workings of the Pegasus. Sheldon Grey will be patronizing and dismissive of these agents, depending on his interests at the moment and the agent's overall usefulness to the expedition.



Game Masters (GMs) should read through the adventure and be familiar with it. While the adventure looks very straightforward at first glance, there are many places where PC actions can move the adventure into a new direction. The "Scene Editing" sections attempt to address some anticipated changes. Additionally, the Alterations section in the back of this adventure offers some intriguing variations on

this adventure.



## OVERVIEW

The Prologue provides background material on Sheldon Grey, Lord Cranston, and the Island. This information may be used as exposition throughout conversations with Sheldon Grey or Sanjay Bhakti.

Chapter One introduces the PCs to each other and the rest of the expedition. During dinner, Thugee assassins attack in response to the last expedition. Chapter One ends with the party boarding the Pegasus, a custom zeppelin built for the expedition.

Chapter Two follows the journey to Cranston Island. The party must negotiate a fierce storm and establish contacts with the B' Kara tribe. The party is led to the native village and poisoned. Chapter Two ends with the PCs drugged and bound.

Chapter Three follows the PCs escape attempt and a sighting of the Dragon (or worse). Chapter Three ends with the party free to plot how to reach the Dragon's nest.

Chapter Four follows the PCs as they attempt to find the Dragon's nest. They confront and kill the beast, leaving its treasure for the taking. They then make their way back to the airship.

Chapter Five follows the zeppelin on its last flight, as a party betrayal and a gang of Dragons attack the airship. Luckily, a steamship on the way to Bombay rescues the survivors.

The Epilogue contains information on wrapping up the adventure and suggesting new threads for further adventures.

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## BACKGROUND

While visiting London, wealthy treasure hunter Sheldon Grey purchased the journal of Lord Richard Cranston, a Victorian Explorer who spent a lot of time searching for a dragon in the Indian Ocean. Lord Cranston claimed to have translated an Arabic text that spoke of an isolated island to the east of Madagascar. This island reputedly contained “the last of the dragons.” Lord Cranston practically bankrupted his estate with one ill-fated expedition after another. “Cranston’s Folly” had become something of a joke in Victorian circles.

On his final expedition in 1895, Lord Cranston claimed to have actually discovered the “Dragon Island,” but the treacherous waters around the island claimed his ship and he was forced to swim ashore. Only three others made it, the rest of the expedition presumably lost at sea. Lord Cranston suggested that they split up and search the island. Lord Cranston would never see the other team again. He and his companion, Terry Fuller, explored for several hours before coming upon a small village with a pyramid in the center.

Lord Cranston describes the tribe as African in appearance, perhaps the descendants of a Bantu migration across the lost continent of Lemuria that linked India with Madagascar. The tribe seemed as in awe of the explorers as they were of the tribe, and after a hearty meal of shellfish Lord Cranston went about the slow process of learning to communicate.

Lord Cranston spent a week with the tribe, which he called the “Bacara.” They seemed to worship something called “Enjama,” which sounded a lot like “the last of the dragons.” Excited, Lord Cranston asked the tribal elders all he could about the dragon. Unfortunately, the language barrier only allowed him to get basic information. Enjama lived in the clouds and protected the tribe from harm.

Lord Cranston determined to set out and find Enjama, but Terry fell ill and died within two days. Lord Cranston realized he needed a new expedition. Thanking his hosts for their hospitality, Lord Cranston

took his lifeboat out into the open sea. While sailing away, he claims to have actually seen the dragon flying in the distance, landing in the general vicinity of the village.

Unfortunately, the treacherous waves that claimed his ship also took his oars. Lord Cranston drifted aimlessly for days, lacking food and drinking water. He feverishly kept his notes up to date, in case he would die before he was able to tell his tale. Luckily, a steamship headed for Bombay crossed his path and rescued him. The captain, aware of Lord Cranston’s reputation, dismissed his claims as heatstroke fancy. Lord Cranston died before the ship reached port, a victim of poor health and broken dreams. The captain sent Lord Cranston’s belongings, including his journal, back to the Cranston estate. The Cranston family simply packed it away, believing that Lord Cranston never really found his island.

The journal was sold along with the rest of the Cranston library to a London bookseller during an estate auction in 1899. It remained in the bookstore until Sheldon Grey put an ad in the London Times looking for writings of Lord Richard Cranston. Upon acquiring the book, Sheldon immediately decided that Lord Cranston claim was true and began making preparations for an expedition.

Sheldon Grey sent out invitations for “adventurers.” They were chosen for their ability, celebrity, or journalistic integrity (Mr. Grey defines “journalistic integrity” as being very flattering toward him and the expedition). While waiting to hear back from them and arranging a meeting in Bombay, Mr. Grey and some of his associates took a little side adventure in the Hindu-Kush Mountains for the Colonial British Government in India.

## SCENE EDITING

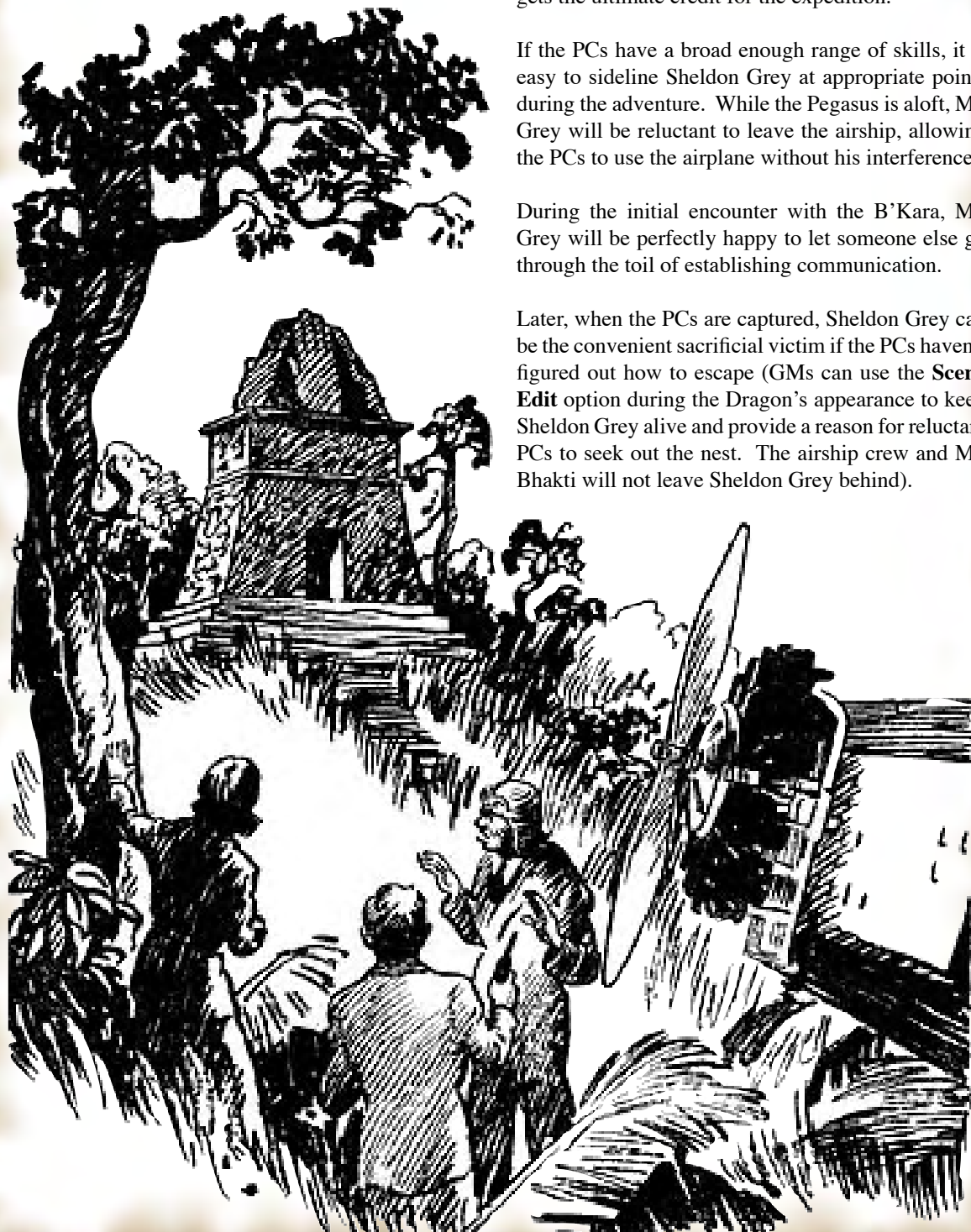
Sheldon Grey is the catalyst for *Dragon Island*. It is he who discovers Lord Cranston’s journal and organizes the expedition. He is also designed to keep the party “on track” and to fill in gaps of expertise. With this in mind, some GMs may be afraid that Mr. Grey could overshadow the PCs. While Mr. Grey does have an adventurer’s spirit, he also likes to get

his money's worth. Sheldon Grey is not adverse to letting the PCs take charge, so long as it is he who gets the ultimate credit for the expedition.

If the PCs have a broad enough range of skills, it is easy to sideline Sheldon Grey at appropriate points during the adventure. While the Pegasus is aloft, Mr. Grey will be reluctant to leave the airship, allowing the PCs to use the airplane without his interference.

During the initial encounter with the B'Kara, Mr. Grey will be perfectly happy to let someone else go through the toil of establishing communication.

Later, when the PCs are captured, Sheldon Grey can be the convenient sacrificial victim if the PCs haven't figured out how to escape (GMs can use the **Scene Edit** option during the Dragon's appearance to keep Sheldon Grey alive and provide a reason for reluctant PCs to seek out the nest. The airship crew and Mr. Bhakti will not leave Sheldon Grey behind).





## CHAPTER ONE: A GATHERING IN BOMBAY

The PCs have been asked to join this expedition in one of two ways. They are either currently with Sheldon Grey en route from his last expedition in the Hindu-Kush Mountains, or they have received an invitation to meet Mr. Grey at the Queen Alexandra Hotel in Bombay, British India. All expenses will be paid. The GM should assign a Wealth Bonus appropriate to his campaign as incentive to join the expedition.

Those who have been invited to join the expedition will arrive a day or two before Mr. Grey. Sanjay Bhakti, a local guide hired by Sheldon Grey, will receive them. Mr. Bhakti prides himself on being “modern,” dressing European fashions and speaking English whenever he can. He is very friendly and helpful, offering every possible assistance to arriving members of the upcoming expedition.

After the PCs are settled in, Mr. Bhakti will introduce them to each other and encourage them to explore the city. Mr. Grey has provided him with a small sum of money to facilitate this (and to keep an eye on them).

It should be noted that this is a “pulp” version of Bombay. Since the opening of the Suez Canal, Bombay has become a major crossroads between East and West. GMs are encouraged to play up the strange mix of British and Indian cultures in order to give the city an exotic feel. There are also many world travelers here to reinforce Bombay’s cosmopolitan nature.

Players should take this opportunity to introduce their characters and provide some broad insights into their motivations. Ace Reporters may wish to spice up their newspaper articles with exotic descriptions. Paragons may want to use their encyclopedic knowledge of the subcontinent to impress their comrades. In true pulp tradition, Men of Mystery and Mesmerists may be coming to Bombay from hidden Oriental locations where they honed their special talents.

In any event, the GM should allow the PCs an afternoon to get acquainted before Mr. Bhakti receives a message and informs them that Mr. Grey and his remaining associates have arrived in Bombay. A special formal dinner has been arranged at the hotel and all of the prospective expedition members must attend.

### **Dinner and Dance**

Sheldon Grey has decided to allow his guests to mingle before he makes his entrance. He has instructed Mr. Bhakti to ensure that each of the PCs be present by seven o’clock. This will give any PCs who were along on Mr. Grey’s last expedition an opportunity to present themselves to the rest of the party and share stories of the last expedition.

The next two paragraphs provide capsule notes on the previous expedition. The GM should amend this as necessary and give this information to the former expedition members so they can work it into the conversations.

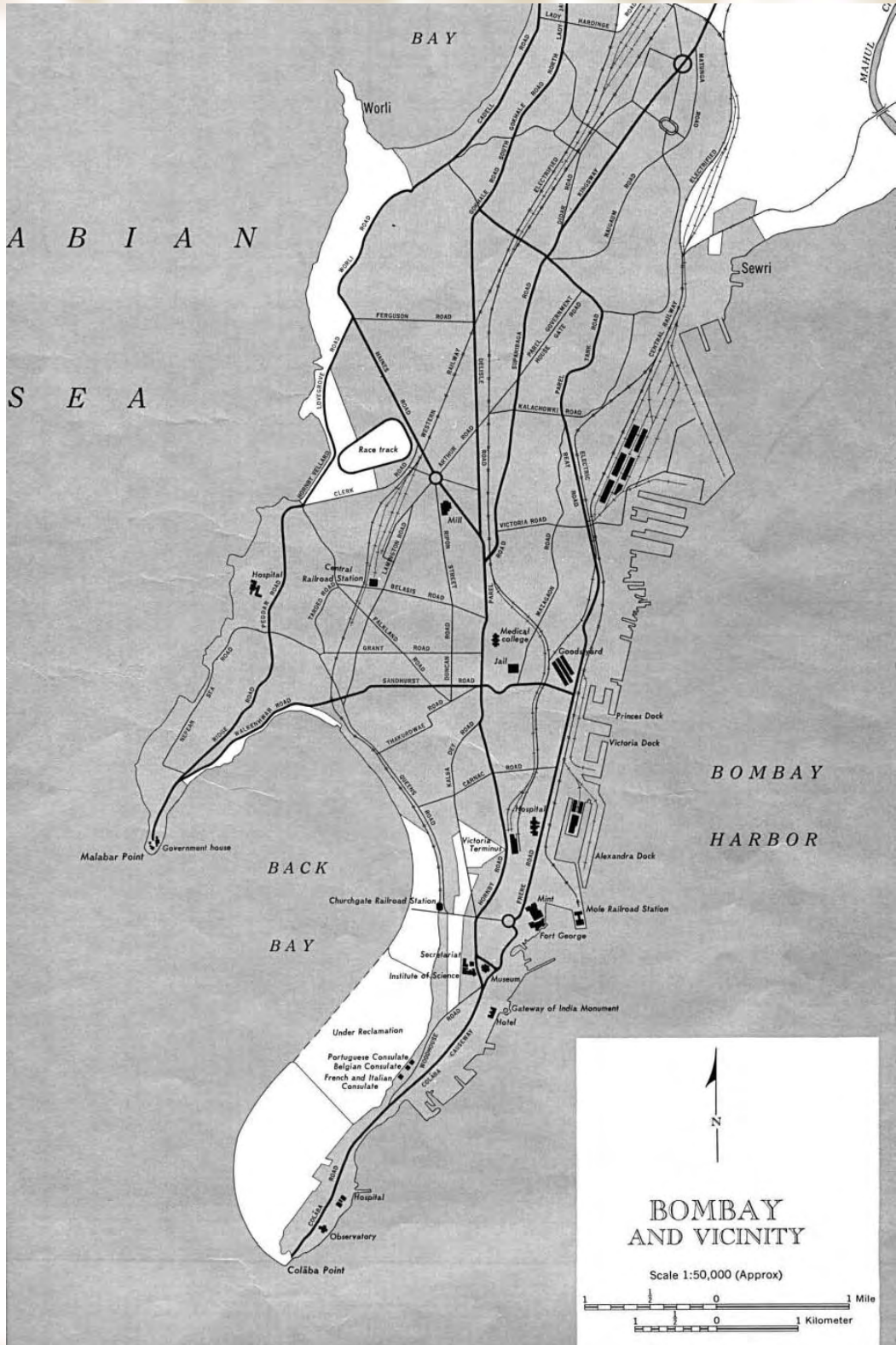
Sheldon Grey’s previous adventure (ended only a day before) concerned the procurement of artifacts from a forgotten Hindu temple in the Hindu-Kush Mountains. The prize of his collection is a golden statuette of Kali. Although Sheldon Grey has made arrangements for the statuette and other related artifacts to be shipped to the British Museum (a silent partner in this last expedition), he has decided to use the statuette as a centerpiece for his table.

The British government believed that a remnant of the Thugee Cult was using the temple as a spiritual center while they carried out ritual attacks in the region. Indeed, the expedition did come under attack from fanatical cultists, but a nearby British regiment defeated them. The colonel from the regiment congratulated Grey for a job well done.

What neither Sheldon nor the British government know is that the “remnant” cult is actually a bit larger than the resistance they met. Some of the cultists are currently members of the wait staff and kitchen crew at the Queen Alexandra (many hired within the

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last week) and are planning on making an example of Sheldon Grey at dinner. Mr. Grey's insulting showcase of the statuette has only heightened their fervor. For more detail on the Thugee, see **Pulp Villains: Thugee** from Adamant Entertainment.

## Dinner Speech

At 7:30pm, Sheldon Grey will make his grand entrance. Two beautiful Englishwomen will accompany him, one on each arm. They smile approvingly whenever he shares a fanciful anecdote from previous adventures. He will mingle with the guests, thanking his previous associates for a job well done and introducing himself to prospective associates. Once he feels he's made sufficient introductions, he orders another round of champagne and takes his place at the head of the table. He then stands and lifts his glass to propose a toast.

*"Ladies and Gentlemen, I would first like to take this opportunity to thank those friends present and lost for a job well done. Our expedition into the Hindu-Kush was arduous and treacherous, but successful! The statuette before me on this very table is a testament to our endeavor!"*

Sheldon Grey pauses for appropriate applause. At this time, the PCs should make Spot checks at DC 15. They may not take 10 due to the distraction of Mr. Grey's toast. Those who succeed will notice that the waiters (two for each PC) are acting strangely. Some of them are covering the exits, while others are positioning themselves around the room. There are two servers at the pig carving station preparing large knives a bit early. PCs who notice this may also make a Sense Motive check (DC 10) to realize that the wait staff plans an ambush.

Sheldon Grey continues, *"To those who choose to accept my offer to join me in the search for Cranston's Island, I thank you! If, no, when we succeed, I can promise you fame and fortune beyond your wildest dreams! We will rewrite science books all over the world! To the Dragon's treasure!"*

As the dinner guests cheer and sip their champagne, the Thugee make their move. One of the waiters by the carving station shouts a prayer to Kali as he hurls a knife at Grey. Mr. Grey instinctively reacts in the nick of time and the knife shatters his glass before sticking harmlessly into the wall.

Any PC who missed the Spot roll is flatfooted for the first round. All others may react normally. Mr. Bhakti will intercept the Thugee who gets closest to Sheldon Grey. If he isn't assisted, Mr. Bhakti will be knocked to the floor senseless in two rounds.





The Thugee are equipped with knives and cords. If any of the PCs brandishes a pistol, the Thugee will pounce on him en masse to steal the weapon (this could lead to an entertaining game of “pistol hot potato” as the gun is kicked across the floor as various people try to acquire it).

The GM should take care here. The intent is to give the player characters an entertaining opening brawl and a few bruises, not slaughter them. If the Thugee start to gain the upper hand, some of the non-Thugee hotel staff, security, or even British soldiers (a convenient patrol called by the hotel manager) can join in the fight to calm things down. The fight should end with the Thugee ambush thwarted and the PCs licking a few wounds. Sheldon Grey will straighten up, dust himself off, and request another glass of champagne.

*“My apologies, ladies and gentlemen. It seems that the wait staff got a little overzealous when I requested a little entertainment with dinner.” He waits for the chuckle as he converses with the hotel manager. “The manager has assured me that another hall is presently being prepared for the resumption of our dinner. Hopefully this one will be a little less eventful! In any case, we leave at eight o’clock tomorrow. Please be in the lobby at half past seven!”*

The rest of the night is uneventful. Mr. Bhakti, sporting a few bandages, offers to wake the PCs at an appropriate time.

### **Sanjay Bhakti’s Deception**

Unbeknownst to the party, Mr. Bhakti knew about the attempt on Sheldon Grey’s life at dinner. He did nothing to organize the ambush or ensure that the Thugee agents got on the hotel payroll, since that would have left unpleasant fingerprints. Mr. Bhakti pretended to aid the PCs during the ambush. He is actually a much better fighter than he lets on.

Mr. Bhakti is actually relieved that the Thugee attempt failed. He is convinced that Sheldon Grey will find this treasure. Mr. Bhakti hopes to use this treasure in order to fund the underground Thugee Cult. His plan

is to wait until the treasure is discovered and then steal it at the appropriate time, hopefully leaving Mr. Grey and his associates lost in the Indian Ocean.

Suspicious (or paranoid) players may suspect that Mr. Bhakti is a traitor. All attempts to uncover this deception will fail. If hypnotism or psychic powers are available in your particular campaign, the Thugee will have the ability to cloak their minds from such attacks. Mr. Bhakti should be presented as a loyal member of the expedition (which he actually is) until Act Five.

### **SCENE EDITING**

The exact nature and extent of the present Thugee Cult is left up to the GM. GMs with access to *Pulp Villains: Thugee* may wish to flesh out the Cult for future adventures. For purposes of this adventure, they are a shadowy presence that ties events in Chapter One and Chapter Five together.

### **NPCs IN CHAPTER ONE:**

#### **Sheldon Grey**

A daredevil and world traveler, Sheldon Grey is always on the lookout for exotic treasures. The son of a self-made shipping magnate, Sheldon was taught from an early age to make his own mark in the world. Toward that end, Sheldon has used his inheritance to finance expeditions around the world to pursue forgotten treasures.

Sheldon 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 prefers to take charge in his expeditions. He chooses capable companions who will not threaten his authority. Although he will listen to arguments, Sheldon is quick to dismiss any challenges to his decisions as cowardice. It is this stubborn overconfidence that often lands Sheldon

and company into trouble.

**Tough 3/Charismatic 2/Daredevil 3:** CR 8; Medium-size human; HD 6d10+2d6+32; hp 94; Mas 18; Init +3; Spd 30 ft; Defense 18 (+3 Dex, +5 class); BAB +4; Grap +6; Atk +7 melee (1d6+2 nonlethal, unarmed strike); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+2 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +6 with weapon or +7 ranged (by pistol type); FS 5ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft; AL Expedition Party; SV Fort +11, Ref +7, Will +3; AP 61; Rep +8; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 16.

**Occupation:** Dilettante (bonus class skill: Intimidate).

**Skills:** Balance +5, Bluff +5, Climb +4, Concentration +10, Decipher Script +3, Demolitions +3, Diplomacy +6, Drive +11, Gather Information +8, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +10, Investigate +3, Jump +3, Knowledge (business) +5, Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (theology) +5, Listen +3, Pilot +6, Research +3, Ride +6, Sense Motive +3, Spot +4, Survival +3, Swim +3, Tumble +5.

**Feats:** Brawl, Endurance, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Renown, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Vehicle Expert, Windfall x2.

**Talents:** Coordinate, Remain Conscious, Robust.

**Class Features:** Fearless, Nip-Up.

**Possessions:** Sheldon Grey carries all of the usual adventurer gear, based upon his expectations. He often carries a hunting rifle (a Remington 30-06;

GMs using only the core book should use the slightly anachronistic Remington 700) and twin Colt M1911 pistols.

## Sanjay Bhakti

On the outside, Sanjay Bhakti is the stereotypical foreign guide. He is pleasant, helpful, and always smiling. He looks to be in his late thirties and early forties, shorter than average but stout. His hair is thinning at the top. Mr. Bhakti dresses in modern fashions, typically a three piece suit and tie. He is very knowledgeable about Bombay and Indian culture in general.

Underneath the pleasant demeanor, Mr. Bhakti is a Thuggee. He is well trained in the arts of disguise and subterfuge. He is biding his time until he can betray the expedition in Chapter Five.

**Tough 3/Charismatic 3:** CR 6; Medium-size human; HD 3d10+3d6+12; hp 40; Mas 15; Init +6; Spd 30 ft; Defense 15 (+2 Dex, +3 class); BAB +3; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4 lethal or nonlethal, unarmed strike); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4 lethal or nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +3 with weapon or +5 ranged (by handgun type); FS 5ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft; AL Thuggee Cult; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +3; AP 39; Rep +3; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 16.

**Occupation:** Criminal (bonus class skills: Disable Device, Disguise).

**Skills:** Bluff +8, Climb +2, Concentration +6, Demolitions +3, Diplomacy +12, Disable Device +3, Disguise +4, Drive +3, Gather Information +8, Jump +4, Knowledge (streetwise) +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +4, Navigation +5, Pilot +3, Read/Write Language (English), Sense Motive +4, Speak Language (English), Spot +4, Survival +3, Swim +5, Tumble +7.

**Feats:** Acrobatic, Athletic, Combat Martial Arts, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Trustworthy





**Talents:** Charm (females), Fast Talk, Remain Conscious, Robust.

**Possessions:** Mr. Bhakti aims to please, so he often carries items that he anticipates will be useful to his compatriots. He will carry a revolver while on the island, but makes his distaste for firearms known. This distaste is a ruse and Mr. Bhakti will have no problem using the Tommy gun (GMs using only the core book can substitute the stats of the MAC Ingram M10) in Act Five.

## Thuggee

The Thuggee come from all walks of life, dedicating themselves to a cult revolving around the goddess Kali. The Thuggee in this adventure are primarily assassins (similar in concept and execution to a Japanese ninja).

**Fast Ordinary 2:** CR 1; Medium-size human; HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Mas 13; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense 16 (+2 Dex, +4 class); BAB +1; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4+1 lethal or nonlethal, unarmed strike); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4+1 lethal or nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +3 ranged (by weapon); FS 5ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft; AL Thuggee Cult; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will -1; AP 0; Rep 0; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 10.

**Occupation:** Religious (bonus class skills: Knowledge (streetwise), Listen, Sense Motive).

**Skills:** Disguise +2, Escape Artist +6, Gather Information +2, Hide +8, Knowledge (Streetwise) +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +8, Sense Motive +3, Spot +1.

**Feats:** Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Combat Martial Arts, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Stealthy.



**Possessions:** The Thuggee encountered in Act One are disguised as waitstaff and kitchen help. In addition to normal kitchen utensils, each Thuggee may have hidden weapons. GMs who wish to drive home the exotic nature of the Thuggee may wish them to have katars, or punching daggers, hidden on their persons (treat as a regular knife, this is flavor text!). GMs who wish to emulate the “West’s” incomplete understanding of the exotic Orient may equip them with any “oriental” weapon (kris, nunchaku, shuriken, etc.).

## CHAPTER TWO: JOURNEY TO CRANSTON'S ISLAND

True to his word, Mr. Bhakti will wake everyone up at the requested time. By 7:30am, all of the PCs should be in the hotel lobby, enjoying a quick complimentary breakfast prior to taking a bus to start the expedition.

Interestingly enough, the bus does not head towards any of the docks. Instead, the PCs are taken to a local airport, where a large airship is moored. Sheldon Grey explains.

*"Ladies and Gentlemen, Lord Cranston wrote that the Island of the Dragon was virtually inaccessible by sea. He lost his ship on the way in and his lifeboat on the way out. We may be retracing his steps, but, through the use of modern science, we shall succeed where he failed. I give you the airship Pegasus, custom built to my specifications by the German Airship Company!"*

The Pegasus is impressive. It is filled with helium rather than hydrogen as a safety precaution. Sheldon Grey has stocked the cargo hold with items that he thought would be useful. While GMs should be careful not to "overstock" the PCs, Sheldon Grey will have an assortment of small arms and explosives available. He also has a wide range of survival gear. The Pegasus is also equipped with a special bay for a

single airplane. The airship has luxurious passenger cabins, with each PC getting his or her own suite. Captain Roger Gordon leads a 20-man crew.

While statistics are provided, GMs should keep in mind the destiny of the airship in Chapter Five. Damage to the airship should be dramatically scripted rather than meticulously played out.

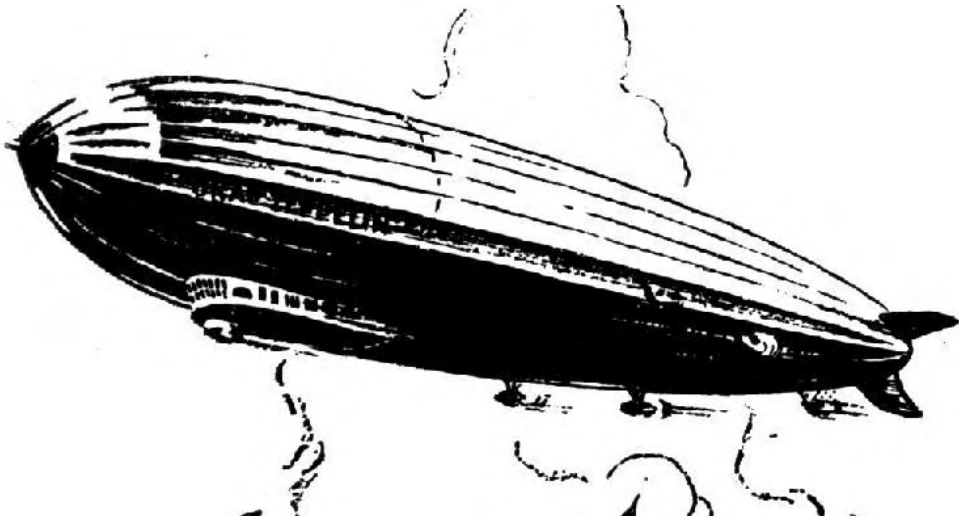
### **Pegasus (Airship):**

Crew 21, Pass varies, Cargo 20,000lb., Init -2, Maneuver -2, Top Speed 300 (30), Def 6, Hardness 5, hp 50, Size G.

The Pegasus carries two gun mounts on either side of the vessel. These mounts are usually retracted until the captain calls for combat readiness. Each mount holds one MG-34.

**MG-34 (machinegun)** Dmg 2d10, Critical 20, Type: Ballistic, Range 110ft., RoF A, Mag Linked, Size H, Weight 26 lb.

The Pegasus also carries an airplane that is usually kept in a hanger (the airplane is reconnected by matching speed with the airship and then attaching cables to be hoisted aboard). If one of the PCs has his own airplane, it is docked in the Pegasus. If not, Sheldon Grey has his own airplane aboard (use statistics for a standard two-seater airplane equipped with a machinegun).





Once the Pegasus is on its way, Sheldon Grey will invite the entire expedition to the lounge for refreshments and further instructions. The pilot PC (or Mr. Grey himself) will be expected to make routine reconnaissance missions in order to spot the island and to become familiar with the hooking procedures. Journalists will be expected to take photographs and write flowery praise about the expedition. Everyone else will be expected to help with the routine maintenance of the airship.

## **Storm Warning**

On the fourth day, while out on patrol, the airplane pilot or passenger may or may not spot an oncoming storm (Knowledge (physical sciences) check at DC 15). If the check is failed, the airplane may get caught in the monsoon. The exact effect of this situation depends upon the d20 vehicle system being used, but the occupants should come out of it shaken and drenched. If the airplane crashes into the water at a safe enough distance from the storm, the airship will mount a rescue operation.

If the Pegasus was warned of the storm, the pilot will do his best to steer clear. The worst that the airship will suffer is a little rain on the windows. If the Pegasus was not warned, the pilot will not notice the storm until too late, forcing the passengers to suffer through a lot of turbulence.

During the evasive maneuvers, a bolt of lightning strikes the airship and sets it on fire. The pilot of the returning airplane will be the first to notice it; otherwise, the closest PC or airship crewman will spot it. Any quick action will snuff the flames, and the crewmen quickly patch it.

After these incidents, Captain Gordon will advise Sheldon Grey to turn around, but Mr. Grey will hear none of it. He didn't invest a lot of money into this airship and this expedition just to turn tail after a rough patch. The captain will grudgingly obey.

## **Land!**

Land is sighted the day after the storm. It is a small, volcanic island surrounded by jutting rocks. The crosswinds make exploring the island by air rather difficult, and it looks as though another storm is on the way. Captain Gordon suggests recalling the airplane and landing the Pegasus. For once, Sheldon Grey agrees. Once the airplane returns, the captain calls his navigator and the airplane crew into a conference to determine where to settle down. A Navigation check at DC 10 will reveal that the best spot is a sandy beach bordered by jungle on the western side of the island.

Mr. Grey informs the party that they will explore the island once the airship touches down. He reminds them that Lord Cranston referenced island natives, possibly Bantu. They should arm themselves and be on their guard. He suggests splitting into two teams once they get on the beach.

## **First Encounter!**

Fortunately, the party is destined to stick together. A Spot check at DC 20 will reveal that the airship is being watched from just inside the jungle. The B'Kara noticed the airship descend like a cloud from the sky. They believe the airship crew to be sacrifices sent by M'Longo, the sky god. The B'Kara will treat the crew with ritual reverence and will not attack unless attacked first.

Once the party realizes they are being watched, a Knowledge (tactics) check at DC 15 will reveal that the party is outnumbered two to one, possibly even three to one. A Sense Motive check at DC 15 will further reveal that the B'Kara are holding back and may be considering communication.

Unfortunately, a couple thousand years of isolation have shaped the B'Kara tongue into something almost indecipherable. Even PCs versed in Swahili (or the Linguist talent) will have difficulty with even the most basic communications (DC 30). A PC may use Diplomacy at DC 20 to communicate a desire for friendly contact. This negotiation will take a

half hour before M'Cari, the tribal shaman, will step out of the jungle to make contact. This provides the party with their first look at the B'Kara.

M'Cari is a thin, bald man with dark ebony skin (a PC with Knowledge: Anthropology may notice (DC 15) that M'Cari's features are not entirely African in origin. A scientist may speculate that the B'Kara are the result of mingling between the Africans and the Indians in ancient Lemuria, or perhaps one of the Lost Tribes of Israel or a Greek, Roman or Egyptian crew found their way here at some point in the distant past). He is covered in paint and ritual scarring, wearing only a loincloth and frayed arm and leg bands. He carries a colorful staff that is carved in the rough image of a bird or bat on the top. He approaches warily and then drops to one knee with his arms outstretched. In reality, he is thanking

M'longo for this sacrifice, but to the expedition it looks like a gesture of welcome.

After standing, M'Cari will motion the party to follow him, pointing at the darkening clouds for emphasis. He is offering shelter before the rain. While the Pegasus is probably the best defense, Sheldon Grey will encourage the party to follow the B'Kara back to their village. Once the party accepts the offer, more natives appear out of the shrubs as escorts. They are dressed in a similar manner to M'Cari, without the face paint. Each carries a spear or blowgun, but no shields. A PC with Knowledge: Anthropology or Knowledge: Tactics at DC 15 may deduce that the B'Kara probably have no human enemies.





## SCENE EDITING

It is entirely possible that some members of the party will choose to remain behind. M'Cari will not push for them to come. He feels that M'Longo will guide them into the village when it is time. Those who do stay with the airship will be able to weather the storm and may, with a Spot Check at DC 30, realize that they are still being watched. PCs who remain behind may use Survival Checks to procure local provisions (fishing and hunting) for the trip back.

Some PCs who remain behind may decide to follow M'Cari and the other PCs through the jungle. In this case, they will still need to make their Spot Check (DC 30) in order to avoid being noticed entering the jungle. As M'Cari's group is not being particularly stealthy, the stalking PCs should have no problems following them. GMs should have the PCs make periodic Move Silently checks (DC 15) in order to avoid detection. Stealthy PCs are also subject to the whims of jungle fauna (see Jungle Scenes near the end of this adventure).

If a stalking PC is detected, either through a failed Stealth check or a scrape with wild fauna, then three B'Kara warriors immediately surround him. They will assist the PC in linking up with M'Cari's group. If a stalking PC remains undetected, he will be able to observe the village from the jungle. He will need to make periodic Hide Checks to remain undetected.

If none of the PCs choose to go with M'Cari, Sheldon Grey will be furious and practically order them to go, reminding them that he's their boss. If they still refuse, he will take Mr. Bhakti and a couple of the airship crew and go alone. The PCs may follow them or sight the dragon swooping down later. In this case, Mr. Bhakti will help Sheldon Grey escape, effectively playing out Chapter Three off-camera.

### The Village

The B'Kara lead the party through thick jungle. The GM should feel free to add any fauna he likes for color, regardless of geographical origin (a mix of African and Indian fauna will lend credence to the



Lemuria theory). After an hour of traveling and the beginnings of light rain, the jungle opens up to a large village before a wall of stone that indicates the boundary of the first mountain.

The village is arranged in a circular formation, with the epicenter being an artificial mound of stone. The mound is reminiscent, though much smaller than, a Sumerian ziggurat or a Mesoamerican pyramid. It stands about 15 feet tall and contains an altar of some sort at the top. If anyone asks M'Cari about this, he will simply nod and say, "N'Jama." Sheldon Grey will become very excited, as he is now certain that Lord Cranston was correct.

Many small huts surround the village. They are all similar in design, simple bamboo and grass huts. One curious feature is that sharpened pieces of bamboo seem randomly placed along the rooftops of the huts. If this is pointed out, "N'Jama" will also be the answer.

A couple hundred friendly-seeming natives surround the party. M'Cari leads the party to a large hut near the edge of the village. This is the home of G'Bora,

the Chief of the B’Kara and his family. G’Bora will be sitting cross-legged on the floor of his hut, wearing a cloak made of lion skin and a large mane. He and M’Cari will speak for a bit, after which M’Cari motions for the party to sit around the chief. M’Cari will then leave to prepare an herbal drink while G’Bora speaks to the party.

G’Bora launches into a fascinating tale of how the B’Kara came to the island and enjoys the protection of M’Longo. Unfortunately, this is all lost on the party, although they are expected to listen and nod approvingly. G’Bora also enthusiastically explains that the price of this protection is ritual sacrifice to the tribal guardian, N’Jama. At times in the past, M’Longo has rewarded the B’Kara for their dedication by sending outsiders to be sacrificed. Now, M’Longo has smiled very favorably on them by sending down many sacrifices at once.

PCs who try to follow the Chief’s tale will be able to grasp that M’Longo is the god of the tribe and that he is pleased. The tribe welcomes them with open arms.

At this point, M’Cari returns with a large clay cup that smells like hot spiced wine. The Chief takes the cup, raises it, and says “M’Longo!” At that point he takes a drink and passes the cup to the nearest PC.

The contents of the cup are actually a potent sleeping drug. It takes a few minutes to kick in; long enough for each member of the party to have drunk from it. This poison, made from the local gharim plant (found only on the island) is a potent knockout drug. It has a Save DC of 20. Initial damage is 2d4 Con, secondary damage is unconsciousness in 1d3 minutes. Interestingly, the Chief succumbs to the poison as well.

If anyone resists the effect of the drug, M’Cari will use his back-up plan. He screams for assistance and then attacks the nearest PC. His intent is to subdue, not to kill. At this point, armed warriors enter the hut to aid in the capture. M’Cari and the warriors have their weapons dipped in the poison, but its potency is lessened (initial damage 1d3 Con, secondary damage

is unconsciousness in 1d6 minutes). If there are PCs in the jungle observing, they will notice the armed warriors going inside.

## SCENE EDITING

Chapter Three assumes that the PCs have been captured. This may not be the case. If any or all of the PCs manage to escape, tribal warriors will pursue them. They will also have to deal with a coming storm and possibly jungle fauna. The GM should feel free to adlib as he sees fit, using the island map as a guide, though it is likely that the PCs will try to return to the airship. In this case, they will catch a glimpse of N’Jama swooping down through the clouds to accept the sacrifice, providing enough inspiration for Sheldon Grey to proceed according to plan in Chapter Four.

## NPCs IN CHAPTER TWO:

### Captain Roger Gordon

Roger Gordon was formerly an RAF officer assigned to Britain’s own airship projects. He proved a capable leader, and Sheldon Grey convinced him to resign and become his chief pilot. Captain Gordon runs a tight ship, but is stalwart and faithful to the end.

**Smart Ordinary 2/Charismatic Ordinary 2:** CR 3; Medium-size human; HD 4d6+4; hp 22; Mas 13; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; Defense 12 (+2 class); BAB +2; Grap +1; Atk +2 melee (1d6-1 nonlethal, unarmed strike); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6-1 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +4 ranged (2d6 pistol); FS 5ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft; AL Pegasus; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +3; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 14.

**Occupation:** Military (bonus class skills: Navigate, Pilot).

**Skills:** Balance +1, Bluff +7, Concentration +3, Craft (mechanical) +4, Decipher Script +4, Diplomacy +11, Gather Information +4, Intimidate +6, Investigate +8, Knowledge (behavior) +5, Knowledge (technology)



+5, Listen +3, Navigate +8, Pilot +6, Research +4, Ride +1, Sense Motive +7, Speak Language (German), Spot +3, Survival +3, Treat Injury +2.

**Feats:** Aircraft Operation, Attentive, Brawl, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Studious, Trustworthy.

**Possessions:** Captain Gordon is always smartly dressed. He carries a service revolver at all times.

### **Pegasus Crewman**

The airship crew is a diverse lot, chosen from among aircrews in Europe and America. All are dedicated to the ship and will do everything in their power to protect it. GMs should feel free to adjust a few skill points for specific crewmen.

**Dedicated Ordinary 1/Strong Ordinary 1:** CR 1; Medium-size human; HD 1d8+1d6+2; hp 10; Mas 13; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense 13 (+1 Dex, +2 class); BAB +1; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed strike); Full Atk +3 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +2 ranged (2d6 pistol); FS 5ft. by

5 ft.; Reach 5 ft; AL Pegasus; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8.

**Occupation:** Blue Collar (bonus class skills: Craft (mechanical), Craft (structural), Repair).

**Skills:** Balance +2, Craft (mechanical) +5, Craft (structural) +5, Demolitions +1, Disable Device +1, Knowledge (technology) +2, Navigate +1, Repair +1, Sense Motive +7, Speak Language (English if foreign, German if English is primary), Swim +4.

**Feats:** Endurance, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

**Possessions:** The crewmen are generally in uniform and carry appropriate tools for their station. All crewmen have been issued service revolvers, but they usually do not wear them during routine operations.

### **M'Cari, Tribal Shaman**

In most aspects, M'Cari is the leader of the tribe. He is their spiritual guide, interpreter of the gods, and anointer of the chief. M'Cari takes his role seriously, and he truly believes that N'Jama is a divine animal. M'Cari has always used the sacrifices to get rid of "undesirables," keeping the tribe as pure as possible. He interprets every setback as a failing to M'Longo.

**Dedicated Ordinary 3/Charismatic Ordinary 3:** CR 5; Medium-size human; HD 6d6; hp 24; Mas 10; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense 14 (+1 Dex, +3 class); BAB +3; Grap +2; Atk +3 melee (1d6-1 nonlethal, unarmed strike); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6-1 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +2 (1d8 spear) or +4 ranged (1d8 spear or 1 dart); FS 5ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft; AL M'Longo; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +3; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

**Occupation:** Religious (bonus class skills: Knowledge (arcane lore), Knowledge (behavior), Knowledge (theology)).



**Skills:** Bluff +11, Concentration +1, Craft (chemical) +6, Diplomacy +10, Gather Information +5, Intimidate +7, Investigate +5, Knowledge (arcane lore) +3, Knowledge (behavior) +5, Knowledge (history) +4, Knowledge (theology) +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +2, Navigate +2, Perform (dance) +6, Perform (percussion) +5, Profession (shaman) +6, Sense Motive +10, Spot +5, Survival +2, Treat Injury +4.

**Feats:** Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Attentive, Brawl, Deceptive, Educated, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Trustworthy

**Possessions:** M'Cari owns a number of fetishes and ritual items, including ceremonial daggers, rattles, staves, and drums. He often wears a wooden mask carved in the shape of N'Jama's face when performing ritual ceremonies. For weapons he usually carries a blowgun with poisoned darts and his ceremonial knife, although he is also proficient with a spear.

## G'Bora, Tribal Chief

G'Bora is a well-respected chieftain among the B'Kara. Unfortunately, he is also M'Cari's pawn. The tribal shamans have always determined who gets to rule, and they usually choose those who are strong and gullible. G'Bora accepts M'Cari's words without question. The GM should feel free to use the same stat block if N'Kamo replaces G'Bora,

**Strong Ordinary 4/Dedicated Ordinary 2:** CR 5; Medium-size human; HD 4d8+2d6+18; hp 44; Mas 16; Init +5; Spd 30 ft; Defense 16 (+1 Dex, +1 class); BAB +5; Grap +8; Atk +8 melee (1d4+3 lethal or nonlethal, unarmed strike); Full Atk +8 melee (1d4+3 lethal or nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +8 (1d8 spear) or +6 ranged (1d8 spear); FS 5ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft; AL B'Kara Tribe; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +11; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8.

**Occupation:** Law Enforcement (bonus class skills: Diplomacy, Intimidate).

**Skills:** Bluff +2, Diplomacy +6, Intimidate +4,

Investigate +5, Knowledge (tactics) +6, Listen +5, Navigate +1, Spot +6.

**Feats:** Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Combat Martial Arts, Defensive Martial Arts, Great Fortitude, Improved Combat Martial Arts, Improved Damage Threshold, Improved Initiative, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

**Possessions:** As tribal chief, G'Bora has the best of everything. In the eyes of the PCs, his possessions are worthless baubles of shell, bone, and grass. G'Bora usually carries a spear and a knife when anticipating combat, but he is more than happy to engage in unarmed combat.

## B'Kara Tribesman

While individual statistics may vary, this stat block is for a typical B'Kara hunter. GMs should feel free to modify this stat block for children, the elderly, or even stronger individual tribal members.

**Strong Ordinary 1/Tough Ordinary 1:** CR 1; Medium-size human; HD 1d10+1d8+2; hp 11; Mas 15; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense 13 (+1 Dex, +2 class); BAB +1; Grap +3; Atk +4 melee (1d6+2 nonlethal, unarmed strike); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+2 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +2 ranged (1d8 spear or 1 dart); FS 5ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft; AL Tribe; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1; AP 0; Rep +1; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10.

**Occupation:** Rural (bonus class skills: Handle Animal, Survival).

**Skills:** Climb +5, Handle Animal +2, Hide +2, Intimidate +2, Listen +0, Move Silently +2, Navigate +2, Search +2, Sense Motive +0, Spot +0, Survival +1, Swim +5.

**Feats:** Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Athletic, Brawl, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

**Possessions:** B'Kara tribesmen are lightly armed, usually wearing a loincloth and carrying a blowgun, spear, and knife.

## CHAPTER THREE: SACRIFICE TO THE GODS

All PCs who were captured in the last act awaken to a watery, windy storm in the middle of the night. The monsoon is in full force, and the PCs are bound with their hands behind their backs inside a wooden cage not far from the mound. Two tribal warriors guard them.

PCs who wish to untie their bonds may do so with an Escape Artist Check at DC 35 (with modifiers for synergy, if one PC attempts to untie another). While struggling against one's bonds is not unusual to the guards, they are on alert. The GM should use an opposed Sense Motive Check to the PC's Bluff Check. Other PCs may attempt to distract the guards; adjudicate as necessary.

Once free, there is still the problem of getting out of the cage. The cage door is simply tied shut. A knife could easily cut the bonds. Unless the PCs got a guard close enough to the cage to Sleight of Hand his stone knife, the PCs will have to use Escape Artist (DC 30) to untie the door. Physical PCs, in the rippling muscles pulp tradition, may decide to bend or break the bars. Each bar has a Hardness of 5 and 10 hp. Gripping two bars and ripping them open is DC 20 (DC 15 for one bar at a time, but c'mon, this is pulp!).

The GM will have to adjudicate this as he sees fit. With a blowing storm in the middle of the night, the PCs should only have to worry about two guards and a village border sentinel or two (the village sentinels watch for predatory animals). If they make too much noise, more villagers will appear.

If the PCs slip away into the jungle, they will still have to deal with the usual dangers on the way back to the Pegasus.

### Ritual Sacrifice

At dawn, M'Cari arises and blows a conch shell to awaken the village for the sacrifice. He is dressed in full ritual garb, a dried seaweed cape, shell and shark tooth necklaces, and a wooden helmet carved in the shape of a pteranodon head. He also has a rattle, which he ritually shakes as he approaches the cage.

If the PCs haven't escaped yet, one of them will be randomly chosen as the sacrifice. He will be removed from the cage and brought to the altar. As he is led up the steps, he can see that there are bonds for his hands and feet. The stone altar also looks bloodstained.

If the PCs have escaped, M'Cari will take it as a sign of M'Longo that he is displeased with Chief G'Bora. G'Bora is to be sacrificed instead. The Chief accepts his fate with honor, standing on the altar rather than being bound hand and foot. Only one of his ankles is tied to the altar.

As the sun rises, some villagers begin to rhythmically drum, accompanied by chants of "*N'Jama..N'Jama... N'Jama...*". Soon, there is a loud squawk in the air. Even from the airship, people will be able to see the pteranodon, N'Jama, swoop out from its nest in a nearby mountain and glide in a circle down to its prey.

If the PC to be sacrificed manages to escape his bonds, N'Jama will take its meal from the first person it gets its claws on. If the sacrifice is G'Bora, he will panic at the last second and try to get free, but to no avail. N'Jama is a messy eater, although the GM may wish to spare the PCs the details.

### SCENE EDITING

GMs who don't want to have a PC torn apart can instead have N'Jama scoop up its meal in its jaws and fly back to its nest. The bonds around the PC's wrists and ankles will simply snap from the strain. The PC will then be deposited in the cave to await his fate.

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE DRAGON'S CAVE

The sight of N'Jama is enough for Sheldon Grey. Now that he's seen the dragon, nothing will stop him from getting the treasure. He immediately starts making plans to find that nest and expects the PCs to help him. He will open discussion for the best way to get up to the Dragon's nest. With the passing of the storm, the airplane is once again an option. Mr. Grey is also an experienced mountain climber. This is a perfect opportunity for the players to show off their ingenuity.

Particularly resourceful players might get an idea to create or get a hold of the drug that was used to capture them. Unfortunately, the players do not know the ingredients of the drug. To pursue this option, they will either need to scrape what they can from jungle traps or go back into the village and steal some from M'Cari's hut. A Paragon or scientist might be able to break it down and identify its constituent parts. A Mesmerist might try to pry the information from a subdued M'Cari's mind. More physical heroes may try to Intimidate him. Intimidate checks warrant a +2 circumstance bonus, +4 if M'Cari is aware that the drug will be used against his god. If M'Cari is aware of the purpose and he gives the secret anyway, M'Cari will commit suicide at his earliest opportunity.

The PCs should be able to make enough of the drug to down a hippopotamus. They can choose how much they want to dilute the poison, but the GM should be careful to keep multiple shots down to two or three. Ingestion is best, but injection is easier.

### SCENE EDITING

Resourceful PCs may want to bring the secret of the drug home with them. The GM has two ways to handle this. First, he may simply rule that it cannot be done. The gharim plant only grows on this particular island. Efforts to transport the plant back to civilization and cultivate it will simply fail (or the components are simply lost in Chapter Five with the airship).

Second, the GM may actually allow an exotic PC, such as a Man of Mystery or a Paragon, to keep the drug for further adventures (especially if the PC goes by a poisonous name, like "the Blue Scorpion"). In this case, the GM should arrange the circumstances of Chapter Five to allow the PCs to keep the formula and a few seeds.

### Scuffles with the B'Kara

Another problem the PCs will have to consider is the B'Kara. While the sacrifice has satiated N'Jama for now, the PCs actions have probably not pleased the tribe. Worse, if Chief G'Bora was the sacrifice, the new Chief, N'Kamo (use G'Bora's stat block), will want to cement his authority by recapturing the sacrifices. Even if Chief G'Bora remains in power, he will want to capture the rest of the expedition.

Game Masters should tailor the B'Kara's plans according to how the PCs prepare to find the Dragon. If the plan involves the airship lifting off, a B'Kara war party should attack just as the final preparations are being made. The airship captain would be very concerned about spearheads tearing holes in the canvas. The PCs would have to hold off their attackers as the zeppelin gets airborne.

If the PCs plan requires the airship to remain grounded for the duration of the expedition, the B'Kara will not attack the airship due to a healthy respect for M'Longo's Cloud. Airship crewman may spot the occasional scout and even take a shot or two, but there will be no major altercations until the PC's return.

If the PCs wander through the jungle and start to climb the mountain, a B'Kara war party will track them and attack at the best opportunity. The B'Kara are more afraid of divine vengeance than the PCs, so they will be persistent in their pursuit.

In any case, the GM should adjust the numbers of B'Kara based upon the abilities of the PCs and the amount of difficulty they've been facing so far.



## Jungle Encounters

If the PCs choose to travel to the mountain by foot, they will have to deal with the local flora and fauna. Again, the GM is encouraged to set the difficulty according to his needs. In addition to wild animals, the PCs may also encounter the jungle staples of quicksand, B'Kara traps, and precarious rope bridges.

### The Rickety Bridge

A genre staple, the Rickety Bridge is a bridge made of planks and ropes that cross a gorge. The B'Kara built and maintain it. The Rickety Bridge is a good place for a party to be chased across by a wild beast, caught between two armed bands of B'Kara, or a place to cut the ropes so the party can flee to safety.

GMs should be careful where they decide to place the bridge. Putting it between the Pegasus and the village may rob the adventure of a thrilling scene when the B'Kara attack the airship. Alternatively, PCs who cut the bridge between the village and the mountain will have a tough time getting back to the Pegasus.

Devious GMs may want to add crocodiles to the river below. Statistics for a huge alligator are provided.

**Huge Crocodile:** CR 4; Huge animal; HD 7d8+28; hp 59; Mas 19; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., swim 30 ft.; Defense 16, touch 9, flat-footed 15 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +7 natural); BAB +5; Grap +21; Atk +11 melee (2d8+12, bite), or +11 melee (1d12+12, tail slap); Full +11 melee (2d8+12, bite), or +11 melee (1d12+12, tail slap); FS 15 ft. by 15 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ aquatic, improved grab, low-light vision; AL none; SV Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 27, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

**Skills:** Hide +0 (+4 while submerged), Listen +5, Spot +5.

**Feats:** None.

*Aquatic:* Crocodiles can move in water without making Swim checks and cannot drown in water.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a crocodile must hit an opponent of its size or smaller with its bite attack. If it gets a hold, the crocodile grabs the opponent with its mouth and drags it into deep water,

attempting to pin it to the bottom.

**Skill Bonus:** Crocodiles gain a +12 species bonus on Hide checks when submerged.

### Lord of the Jungle

The party comes across a ferocious feline. The GM can use any great cat; statistics for a large tiger are provided below.

**Tiger:** CR 4; Large animal; HD 10d8+18; hp 63; Mas 17; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; Defense 14, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +3 natural); BAB +4; Grap +14; Atk +9 melee (1d8+6, claw); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+6, 2 claws), +4 melee (2d6+3, bite); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ pounce, improved grab, rake 1d8+3, low-light vision; AL none; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 23, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

**Skills:** Balance +6, Hide +5 (+9 in tall grass or undergrowth), Listen +3, Move Silently +9, Spot +3, Swim +11.

**Feats:** None.

**Pounce (Ex):** If a tiger leaps upon a foe during the first round of combat, it can make a full attack even if it has already taken a move action.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the tiger must hit with a claw or bite attack. If it gets a hold, it can rake (see below). See Improved Grab.

**Rake (Ex):** A tiger that gets a hold of its target can make two rake attacks (+9 melee) with its hind legs for 1d8+6 points of damage each. If the tiger pounces on an opponent, it can also rake.

**Skill Bonuses:** In areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth, a tiger's Hide bonus improves to +8.



## Quicksand!

This natural trap always seems to be in the way as the party is fleeing danger. This is a good encounter to couple with another encounter if the PCs are fleeing or chasing someone or something.

Patches of quicksand present a deceptively solid appearance (appearing as undergrowth or open land) that may trap careless characters. A character approaching a patch of quicksand at a normal pace is entitled to a DC 8 Survival check to spot the danger before stepping in, but charging or running characters don't have a chance to detect a hidden bog before blundering in. A typical patch of quicksand is 20 feet in diameter; the momentum of a charging or running character carries him or her 1d2x5 feet into the quicksand.

Effects of Quicksand: Characters in quicksand must make a DC 10 Swim check every round to simply tread water in place, or a DC 15 Swim check to move 5 feet in whatever direction is desired. If a trapped character fails this check by 5 or more, he sinks below the surface and begins to drown whenever he can no longer hold his breath (see the Swim skill description). Characters below the surface of the quicksand may swim back to the surface with a successful Swim check (DC 15, +1 per consecutive

round of being under the surface).

Rescue: Pulling out a character trapped in quicksand can be difficult. A rescuer needs a branch, spear haft, rope, or similar tool that enables him to reach the victim with one end of it. Then he must make a DC 15 Strength check to successfully pull the victim, and the victim must make a DC 10 Strength check to hold onto the branch, pole, or rope. If the victim fails to hold on, he must make a DC 15 Swim check immediately to stay above the surface. If both checks succeed, the victim is pulled 5 feet closer to safety.

## Monkey Trouble

GMs looking for a humorous diversion need look no further than a monkey encounter. These playful primates steal items, throw coconuts, and otherwise harass and annoy the party. This can be very dangerous if the PCs are trying to be stealthy. There should be about four monkeys per PC in the encounter.

**Monkey:** CR 1/6; Tiny animal; HD 1d8; hp 4; Mas 10; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., climb 30 ft.; Defense 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+2 size, +2 Dex); BAB +0; Grap -12; Atk +4 melee (1d3-4, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d3-4, bite); Face/Reach 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; AL none or owner; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 5. **Skills:** Balance +10, Climb +13, Hide +13, Listen +4, Spot +4. **Feats:** Weapon Finesse (bite).



## Hunting/War Band

Small bands of B'Kara comb the jungle regularly in order to hunt or gather. PCs who are searching for food themselves will likely stumble upon a band. When gathering, the B'Kara are easy to spot. When hunting, the B'Kara will be hidden in the brush as they wait for a target. Due to the dangers of the jungle, B'Kara are always armed. There should be

two B’Kara for every PC in the encounter. Use the typical B’Kara warrior statistics. If the PCs or the B’Kara are hunting, the typical statistics for a wild boar are provided.

**Boar (Wild Pig):** CR 3; Medium-size animal; HD 3d8+9; hp 22; Mas 17; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; Defense 16, touch 10, flatfooted 16 (+6 natural); BAB +2; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d8+3, gore); Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+3, gore); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ ferocity, low-light vision, scent; AL none; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 4.

**Skills:** Listen +7, Spot +5.

**Feats:** None.

*Ferocity (Ex):* A boar is so fiercely aggressive in combat that it continues fighting even when disabled or dying.

*Scent (Ex):* This ability allows a boar to detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell.

### Hunting Traps

The B’Kara have a number of traps in the jungle in order to keep ferocious animals away from the village and to trap small animals. The PCs may get caught in these traps. Because these traps are intended to deceive animals, they are usually harder to spot (Survival DC at 15 or 20).

The pit trap and the snare are two examples. The pit-trap is a simple hole, covered over with leaves, branches, and other flora. The animal steps on it and falls in. Depending upon the GM’s whim, the B’Kara may have sharpened sticks to impale prey, possibly coated with gharim poison. Most pit traps are for small animals and will only slow down or twist the ankle of a human. The snare is a noose of rope set in brush, designed to constrict and possibly hoist prey in the air.

GMs are encouraged to get creative with the traps, especially if there are skilled trappers or infiltrators in the party.

### Climbing the Mountain

N’Jama lives in a cave that sits almost a half mile high (2,000ft) up on the sheer side of the mountain. Unfortunately, due to the uneven terrain and crosswinds, the PCs have a better chance of scaling up the cliff side rather than making their way around to a gentler slope.

Scaling the cliff requires a Climb check at DC 20. Normally, an accelerated climber would have to make 67 Climb checks! For pulp action, it’s suggested that the GM cut this down to a handful of rolls at regular intervals (maybe once every 250 ft).

Once the PCs start to get close to N’Jama’s cave, there is a chance the pteranodon will smell them with its scent ability or hear them. At this point, N’Jama will leave the cave and investigate. It will use its beak and claws to pull PCs from the mountain, causing them to fall.

### Flying in

N’Jama will certainly hear the PCs if they approach the cave with an airplane. N’Jama will leave its cave and attack the flying intruder. N’Jama has never seen a flying machine before and will initially mistake it as another flying dinosaur. Once it realizes its mistake, it will start raking at the pilot or gunner. Use whatever vehicle rules you use to conduct the combat.

This is a perfect opportunity for an Air Ace or pilot to show off. The airplane and the pteranodon can fly through the outskirts of the mountains, playing a game of cat and mouse. This is ample fodder for stunt flying through mountain passes and clouds (once the battle is engaged, the GM can conveniently forget about all that crosswinds stuff if it gets in the way of a good chase scene!).



## Dealing with N’Jama

Once the battle is engaged, N’Jama will fight to the death. If N’Jama is drugged, it will most likely plunge to its death. Resourceful PCs may want to capture it and bring it back to the civilized world, but this will be a very difficult challenge. It makes little difference to the end scenario whether N’Jama is brought on board the Pegasus or not.

If N’Jama manages to snatch a PC, it will not immediately kill them. Instead, if possible, it will take the PC back to the cave and deposit him on a ledge to save as a future meal before continuing the battle with the rest of the party.

## N’Jama’s Cave

The Dragon lives inside a large cave. The cave is actually a hole that slopes downward at a steep angle (a

Knowledge (Earth and life sciences) check at DC 15 will recognize this as a vent tunnel; the air is definitely warmer). There are a few ledges carved into the sides. On one of these will be any PC victims that were carried away. If the old chief was sacrificed, he may be here as well (it is up to the GM’s taste whether he is alive or a half-eaten meal). Strewn throughout the ledges are many bones of former victims.

PCs who attempt to climb up the tunnel on their own will be at a DC of 20, but there are ledges at regular intervals (every 30 feet or so) where a climber can catch his breath. The first ledge is about 100 feet down. Just below this (another 30 feet) is the ledge where N’Jama’s nest is.

This nest holds the secret to N’Jama’s treasure. There are three golden-brown eggs inside, each approximately two feet long. The shells are thick (Hardness 4, HP 10), but each only weighs about 40lbs.

## Don’t Leave Empty-Handed

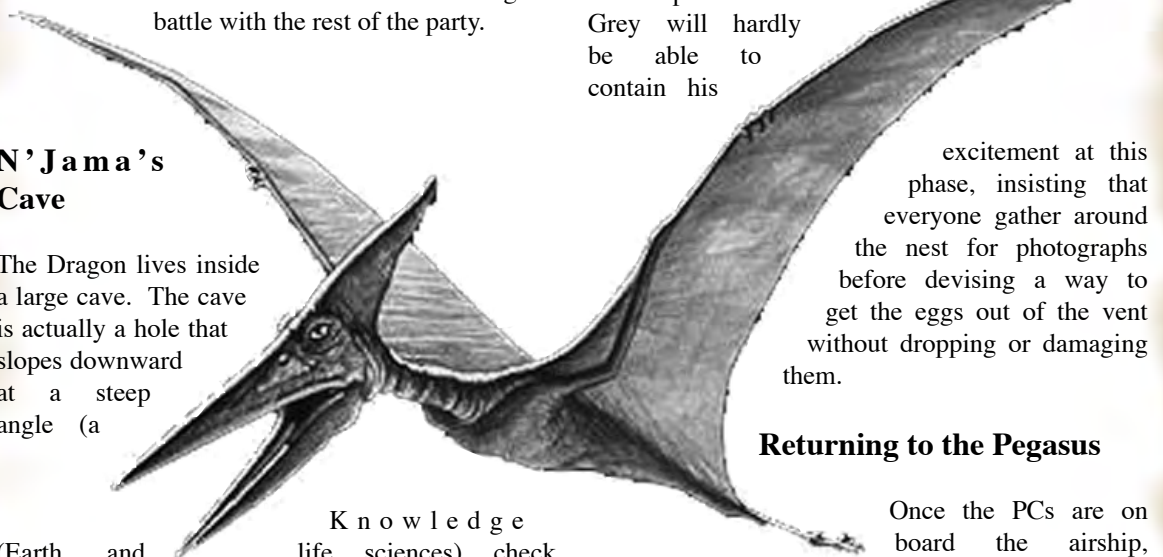
Sheldon Grey (or Mr. Bhakti, if Sheldon Grey met his fate) will insist on bringing the eggs home. Even if the creatures don’t hatch, this discovery will turn the scientific world upside down. Mr. Grey will hardly be able to contain his

excitement at this phase, insisting that everyone gather around the nest for photographs before devising a way to get the eggs out of the vent without dropping or damaging them.

## Returning to the Pegasus

Once the PCs are on board the airship, Chapter Five may begin. How difficult it is to get back to the Pegasus depends on how the PCs handled getting to N’Jama’s cave. Regular rules and circumstances apply if the PCs have to scale back down the mountain and cross through the jungle (GMs may get a few more uses out of Jungle Scenes).

The B’Kara tribe will still be a threat unless the PCs rescued the old chief. In this case, any hunting party will be persuaded by the old chief to allow the PCs safe passage (and possibly even escort them back to the Pegasus). The old chief will then return to his village to wrest his title back.



## NPCs IN CHAPTER FOUR:

Aside from characters introduced earlier, the largest NPC featured in Chapter Four is N'Jama herself:

### N'Jama

N'Jama is the queen of the island, worshipped as a goddess by the B'Kara. She is fiercely protective of her nest in battle. N'Jama has a 60' wingspan.

**Pteranodon:** CR 8; Gargantuan animal; HD 16d8; hp 120; Mas 18; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); Defense 20, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+3 Dex, +9 natural); BAB +16/+11/+6/+1; Grap +20; Atk +16/+11/+6/+1 melee (2d8+8, bite); Full Atk +16/+11/+6/+1 melee (2d8+8, bite) and +11/+6/+1 melee (2d6+8, 2 claws); FS 20 ft. by 20 ft.; Reach 15 ft.; SQ scent; AL none; SV Fort +16, Ref +12, Will +7; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 26, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 5.

**Skills:** Listen +3, Move Silently +8, Spot +6.

**Feats:** None.

**Scent (Ex):** This ability allows a pteradon to detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell.

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE FINAL BATTLE

The Pegasus will have two days of smooth sailing before the next encounter. PCs are encouraged to tend to their wounds and bask in their success. At their first big meal, Sheldon Grey, if alive, will once again propose a toast, thanking all of the members of the expedition for their dedication and hard work. He will also lead a prayer for those who lost their lives. If Sheldon Grey is dead, this will be a more somber memorial toast delivered by Mr. Bhakti.

### Storm Warning, Redux

On the morning of the third day, the crew will spot another storm in the airship's flight path. Captain Gordon orders his radio operator to broadcast at regular intervals to discover any nearby vessels in case of emergency. The airship radio picks up the *Edmund V*, but before any real communication can be established, the radio cuts out and all heck starts to break loose.

The radio cuts out because one of N'Jama's mates has ripped off the antenna. There are three mates, and all are on a mission of vengeance! At the same time, Mr. Bhakti has sabotaged the engines with dynamite. The airship is slowly going down. After setting the explosion, Mr. Bhakti will load the eggs into the airplane and attempt to leave with them. He is carrying a pistol and a large knife and he won't hesitate to kill anyone who gets in his way. Once he gets to the hanger, he will also be brandishing a tommygun.



The pteranodons rip through the canvas and smash through glass windows. They are out for blood. The GM should make this battle as cinematic as possible, keeping the PCs on edge through the entire ordeal. If any PC falls, he will have to make Swim checks at DC 20 in the

stormy waters.

At least one of them should catch Mr. Bhakti in the act of escaping. When spotted, Mr. Bhakti will shout the following speech (or something similar):

*“You fools! My brothers and I have sworn an oath that no one may desecrate a temple of Kali and live! You have paid for this transgression by providing us with the means to advance our cause! The scientific community will pay most handsomely for these specimens! Goodbye, my friends! May Kali accept your sacrifice!”*

With that, Mr. Bhakti will cover his escape with machine gunfire. Whether or not Mr. Bhakti is stopped is irrelevant, for within two rounds a pteranodon will enter the open hanger and slaughter Mr. Bhakti (in his death throes, Mr. Bhakti may discard the tommy-gun in the direction of the PCs). The airplane should be damaged beyond repair at some point during the battle.

Unlike N’Jama, the other pteranodons will not fight to the death. They will break off if seriously injured. Unfortunately for the PCs, the damage is already done. The Pegasus will crash into the ocean.

## Saved?

The PCs should have time to exit the airship as it crashes into the ocean. Swim checks are made at DC 20 due to the stormy weather. There are four lifeboats on board, and the PCs can climb into each one before they are released. In the distance, the PCs can see the *Edmund V* on the horizon. The crew fires flares to catch the ship’s attention.

If desired, the GM can have a final Thugee ambush. There are Thugee agents among the crew of the *Edmund V*, and they will make a last ditch effort to





wreak vengeance on Sheldon Grey and his associates. Otherwise, the credits simply roll as the ship picks up the party and heads off towards Bombay.

## NPCs IN CHAPTER FIVE

The only things introduced in this chapter are N'Jama's three mates:

### N'Jama's Mates

While not as large as N'Jama (wingspans of 45-50 ft), these pteranodons are pretty vicious themselves. While they do not initially come to her aid, they will launch a wrathful strike afterwards.

**Pteranodon:** CR 6; Huge animal; HD 14d8; hp 100; Mas 14; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); Defense 17, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +5 natural); BAB +10/+5; Grap +10; Atk +12/+7 melee (2d6+4, bite); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (2d6+4, bite) and -9/+5 melee (2d4+2, 2 claws); FS 15 ft. by 15 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ scent; AL none; SV Fort +10, Ref +13, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 20, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 5.

**Skills:** Listen +3, Move Silently +8, Spot +6.

**Feats:** None.

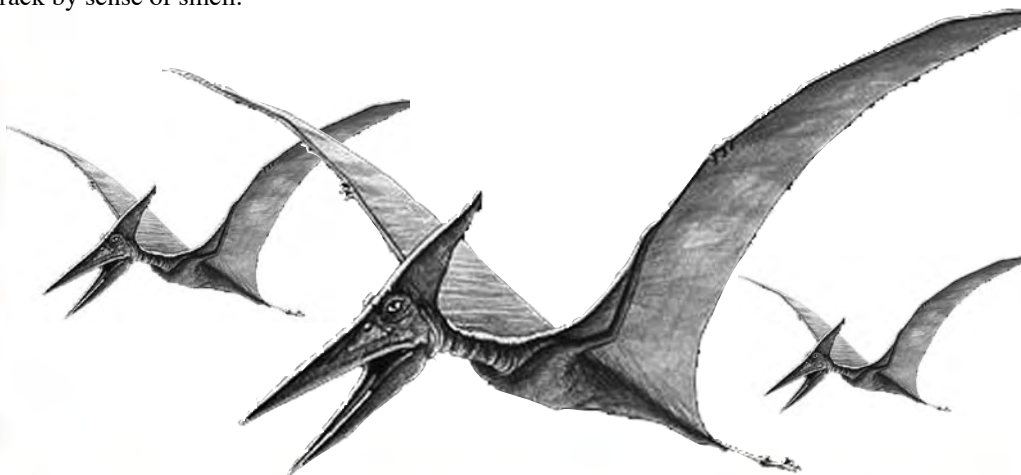
**Scent (Ex):** This ability allows a pteradon to detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell.

## EPILOGUE

In the end, the PCs will have little to show for the expedition except for bruises and entertaining stories. Absent any proof, Sheldon Grey's latest adventure will be written off as a failure by respectable newspapers. Any journalists along for the expedition may be able to sell their stories to a pulp fiction magazine. If Sheldon Grey is still alive, he will immediately start planning a follow-up expedition. This offers an opportunity for a "Return to Cranston's Island" scenario.

For those GMs actually worried about the impact of a pteranodon-infested island on their campaign, they may utilize the volcanic nature of the island to their advantage. Since the pteranodons make their nests in venting shafts, a sudden eruption could wipe them out. In any case, absent a female pteranodon or eggs, the surviving pteranodons will be the last of their kind.

If the GM allows the gharim poison to continue its presence in the campaign, a Man of Mystery or a Paragon may find allies in the natives once the pterodon threat is over, giving the PCs a "secret island" to get their special drug. An Air Ace may even use the island as a secret base while fighting the Japanese if the campaign takes place just prior to or during World War II.



## ALTERATIONS

There are many points in this adventure where the GM may wish to diverge from the script, either due to individual campaign considerations or a simple matter of taste. Below are listed a number of possibilities for alterations to the adventure:

### Scaling

While the adventure was designed for characters of level 5-7, it is easily scalable up or down for parties of varying levels. The frequency and number of Thugee and B'Kara in each encounter can be easily adjusted. Just adjusting the hit dice can also scale the pteradon threat. Jungle encounters should be developed with the character levels in mind.



### The Many Faces of Sheldon Grey

Sheldon Grey is the catalyst for this adventure. Some GMs might balk at his inclusion, especially if there are already wealthy daredevils in the party. In this case, the GM may substitute Sheldon Grey for an appropriate PC with a similar background. The GM should read and absorb Mr. Grey's role throughout the adventure to make the necessary modifications.

Additionally, GMs should have very little problem substituting a wealthy NPC daredevil from their own campaigns. In this case, the GM's job is even easier. Just go through the adventure and scratch out Mr. Grey's name.

### A Trustworthy Mr. Bhakti

Some GMs may find Sanjay Bhakti's betrayal an unnecessary complication, especially if another character is substituted for Sheldon Grey (thus "forcing" a Thugee rivalry where there was none). Most of the adventure, barring Act Five, would work exactly the same whether or not Mr. Bhakti is a villain. If the GM decides to play him straight, then Mr. Bhakti may become a contact for some or all of the PCs after the conclusion of this adventure.

If this isn't the PC's first adventure, the GM may substitute another cult or organization that has planted its own agent (one of the airship crew, or even Captain Gordon!). In this case, the Thugee attack in Act One is an isolated event, a smokescreen for the real traitor later.

### Recasting the Tribe

The B'Kara tribe was designed as a stereotypical primitive tribe. While this was done in the name of pulp authenticity, the tribe as written may be offensive to some gamers. The author does not support or condone bigotry, prejudice, or racism in any way.

While the B’Kara as written are possible descendants of Lemurians or Africans, a resourceful GM may modify the ethnicity and the tech level of the tribe as he sees fit without breaking the adventure. Some possibilities include a lost Egyptian, Greek, or Roman colony, the medieval kingdom of Prester John, or a Lost Tribe of Israel. All that matters is that the group is insular (which is not difficult due to the unforgiving coast) and that they respect and appease the Dragon.

GMs who wish a “spicier” scenario could replace the B’Kara with a tribe of Amazons, where the women far outnumber the men. In pulp tradition, they tempt the men with their charms in order to sacrifice them to the Dragon later. Again, the author does not support sexism, but this scenario is thematically appropriate for a pulp setting.

### **Spicing up the F/X**

This adventure assumes that the tribal shaman has no real F/X abilities. Some pulp campaigns, however, have more of an occult focus. With a little tinkering, the GM can make M’Cari an actual acolyte, mage, psychic, etc. If M’Cari is enhanced in this manner, care should be taken to ensure that N’Jama remains a credible threat to the B’Kara tribe. If the GM truly wishes M’Cari to be powerful, then N’Jama should be treated as a favorite pet, with the new arrivals being seen as a special treat.



### **The Tip of the Iceberg**

Ambitious GMs may want to make the tribe and N’Jama simply the beginning of an entire valley of prehistoric creatures behind a ring of mountains. Sheldon Grey would certainly be up to the task of modifying his plans to explore a lost world. In this case, Cranston’s Island is a lot bigger than presented in this adventure (Cranstonia?). Other tribes or even a lost civilization may exist within the valley. Details of this lost world are left to the GM to flesh out.