

Savage Worlds Adventure for Thrilling Tales: Hold it right there Dr. Totmacher!

Those were the last words I shouted at him across a rooftop in Manhattan. He did not Stop. He Jumped and I thought he was going to fall. But at the last second he got a hold of the rope ladder that his cronies lowered from an airship above. Luckily he had to leave some of his research behind. That is how we found out where he was going to be. Syria! He was opening the ancient Temple of Shimati deep in the desert, following a trail to the fabled tablets of destiny of old Mesopotamia. We could not let him get his hands on the tablets, the danger was far too great. When we arrived we quickly found out the site was secured like a military base. Frontal assault was out of the question. We called in many favors from our more... shady acquaintances. Finally a contact sent us to an old grave robber who was in that temple once, as a boy. He could hardly speak. He was blind on one eye and had lost a leg. It is a wonder he was still alive. During the conversation we learned he still counts himself lucky. He had lost his older brother in the temple and barely escaped himself with a small golden statue. Thanks to selling this statue he could live comfortably ever since. He would not tell us how he lost his brother or his leg and eye. After some gentle persuasion on our part he was willing to let his grandson Aziz lead us to the secret entrance they had used so many years ago. The main gate was supposedly impossible to open. We had to hurry. This was our only chance. We must stop Dr. Totmacher !

Overview

The adventure takes place ca. 1932. An intrepid band of Pulp heroes is hot on the tails of infamous Nazi Scientist Dr. Totmacher, member of the Thule society and seeker of the occult. As Dr. Totmacher has a little army on his side the Heroes have only one option to get to him: To use the secret back door. Once inside there is no way back and they will have to fight and think their way out of this forsaken temple. In the darkness a rare creature waits for a fresh meal and a brother thought dead might return. Not to mention that the place is crawling with Nazis.

If the heroes manage to overcome all the obstacles they can face Dr. Totmacher in the main temple room. When the heroes arrive either arrested or charging, he is almost finished with his ritual. However not everything happens like he had hoped...

General

I will try to convey the mood of the place and describe it enough to get you rolling, but any minutiae details are left to your imagination and gaming group.

When the Heroes arrive Dr. Totmacher has already blasted the Temple door open with explosives. That shook the ground, made parts of the temple collapse and destroyed a sarcophagus down in a burial chamber. It also awakened some other creatures that were in deep hibernation...

The lower floors are all pitch black, however there are sconces at the walls that will keep on burning when lit with fire, even after all these years! On the upper floors the Dr. and his man have established a base camp inside the Temple, there are generators humming and bright lights everywhere.

There are two or three dozen Nazi soldiers in the complex. Whenever the characters start a fight in the area indicated on the GM map roll a D6 for the guards Notice. On a success they hear the commotion. When they meet the heroes later they are prepared. One patrol consisting of 6 Soldiers is immediately sent to investigate. If this first patrol does not return Von Wildbrand (See 8. for details), henchman of Dr. Totmacher, will have the temple room fortified and then go to investigate himself with another 6 Soldiers.

Dr. Totmacher will not interrupt the ritual in the main Temple room and stays inside with his assistants and his Loyal SS troopers, no matter what happens!

Nazi Soldiers (p. 112 Thrilling Tales - Mooks)

If you do not have them already I suggest to get some free paper minis. The Pulp section of the downloads on the [Pinnacle site](#) has some. And [Triple Ace Games](#) has some example flats for Pulp adventures too.

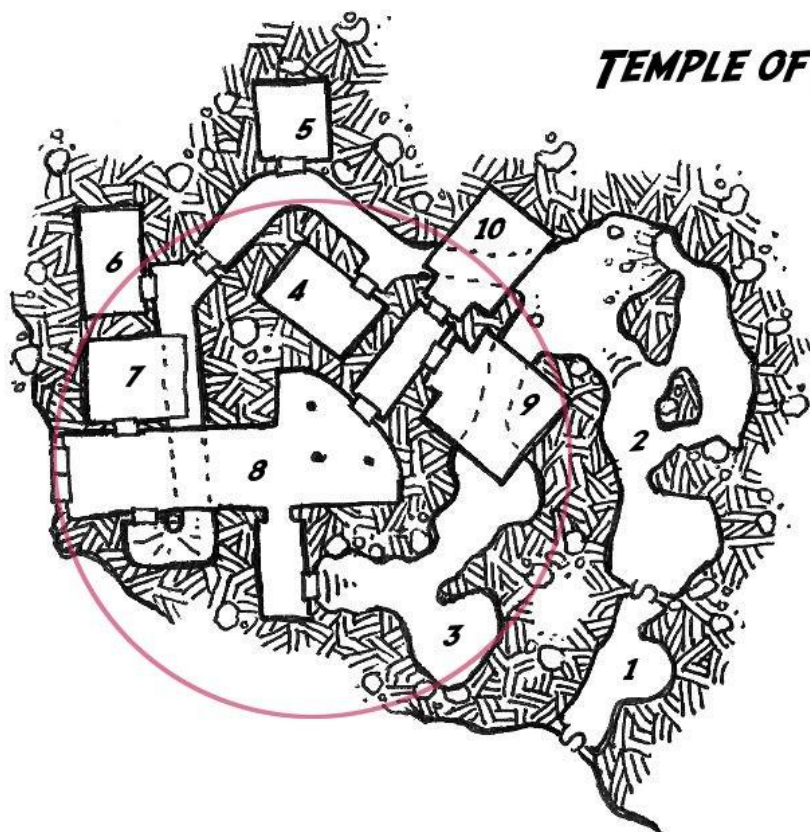


1. Secret Entrance

Aziz leads us to an unremarkable crack in the side of the Hill. Covered in thorny bushes it is nearly impossible to detect. The Stars twinkle overhead and the light of the moon is enough for us to see. After we carefully cleaned away the Thorns I was still hard to see. A small Crack where a child would fit through easy enough, but for us grownups this will be tight. After a lot of silent cursing we finally make it inside. Dust and sand covers everything. Even the Spider that made their webs here died long ago. It smells of Dust and the air is arid but fresh. Sharp rocks hurt the feet. The walls were clearly made by man, the tool marks in the stone are still visible.

Not much to see here. Aziz shows them the door to the temple interior. It is a massive stone that moves upwards by using an ancient winch in the wall. It cracks and creaks when used but the door locks into the open position easily enough. As soon as the door is open Aziz runs away. The sound inside the small room is dampened and can hardly be heard on the outside. From the opening cool air flows towards the characters. Without a light source they cannot see beyond.

TEMPLE OF SHIMATI



1. SECRET ENTRANCE
2. OLD BURIAL CAVE
3. ALCOVE
4. UNFINISHED CHAMBER
5. FIRST BURIAL CHAMBER
6. SECOND BURIAL CHAMBER
7. PREPARATION ROOM
8. ENTRANCE HALL
9. SACRIFICE ROOM
10. MAIN TEMPLE ROOM

INDICATES AREA OF
ENEMY HEARING



2. Old Burial Cave

Our lights barely brighten this chamber. The air is full of dust. We can see that the walls where once painted in what must have been a bright white, but the color has long since faded into a yellowish gray. There are niches in the wall where the dead must have been laid to rest. We can still make out bone fragments here and there. It is surprisingly cool. Wait, there is a Body over there in the middle of the room! And that does not look like an ancient mummy. It has a gun in its hands.

In fact it is the long-lost brother. It seems air has conserved him rather well. But that is not the only thing... He actually is not as dead as he looks like of course., however that is not noticeable. Once the characters have examined him and want to move further into the cave he will awaken in their back and attack the nearest victim. He claws and bites at the targets chest, as if he tries to expose the heart. During the fight the backdoor suddenly slams shut with the noise of something breaking in the walls. After the heroes defeat him his chest breaks open and a Beetle as large as a fist emerges and quickly scuttles to a crack in the wall and disappears. The Characters can try to kill it, but it is really quick and so hitting it is not easy. The door is invisible from the inside and there is no way to open it back up.

Mummified Brother (Zombies p. 157 SWEX weakness Heart/Chest instead of Head)

3. Alcove

A revolting smell emanates from this area. The air a hushed chitter fills the air and it sounds like stones scraping against each other. The light from our lamps shines on something gleaming. It moves and is hard to see. Oh no. Its beetles. Lots of them. I hate beetles!

The Swarm acts immediately and attacks the characters. The smallest of the creatures will try to climb up the characters and enter their bodies through their mouth, ears, nose or eyes. Treat this as a free agility trick against one victim every round. The big ones, about the size of a fist, will instead attack the extremities. If the soldiers should hear the fight they will rush down here and arrive within D6+1 rounds. If the fight is not over when they arrive the beetles will split and attack the enemy too.

Once the characters defeat the beetles they notice a statue covered by filth and grime at the back of the alcove, depicting a goat headed woman. The statue is hollow and damaged in parts. The beetles used it as a nest. If the characters destroy the statue: It is empty except for some dead beetle shells Sumerian writing covers the face of the statue.



The only thing that can still be deciphered is the name Mamitu, the goat-headed, Mesopotamian goddess of destiny, who decreed the fate of the newborns. Everyone with knowledge history or religion knows this on a simple success. On a raise the character also knows that is not the only function she had. She was also seen as a judge in the afterworld and in some circles even as a daemon of curses!

At the end of the stairs a partially collapsed, massive stone door blocks the way. The characters can look through the cracks but cannot move it. There is not much to see but they can clearly hear the soldiers talking and working, the humming of generators always present. Someone is barking orders in a sharp tone, but he cannot be seen. Unless the characters use explosives there is no way to get through there.

Swarm (p. 154 SWEX) Give the Swarm one wound.
Once the swarm suffers one wound he Tricks stop.
Treat any shaken result as a wound.

4. Unfinished Chamber

As we enter this room it is clear it was never used. There is no door and the walls are still rough and the ground uneven. There are no paintings on the walls and no remains of any sort. Dust covers everything and there are no signs anyone was in here in the last few hundred years.

As described, nothing to see here. Or, if you prefer, you can place anything you like in here.

5. First Burial Chamber

The door seems stuck. After we used some force a gust of old air greets us. As the first one is through with some light we hear him gasp. We rush to get in too. It is marvelous. Bright colors greet us, the wall is full of several pictogram and symbols. There is almost no dust here, like the last person just left a little while ago. Dark blue tiles cover the floor. Everything is undisturbed. A closed stone sarcophagus rests in the middle of the room, surrounded by golden paraphernalia and stone cylinders half as high as a man covered in carved signs. The treasure will be worth a fortune if we can salvage it. However the items are too heavy to lug around just now.

The pictogram on the walls as well as the cylinders all tell the story of a great leader who made a pact with Mamitu. He bargained the life of his firstborn daughter to make sure that his son would be destined to be a great war hero. This came to pass, however the tale is a cautionary one. The father forgot that Mamitu is not only the goddess of fate. She is also known as a demon of irrevocable curses! And that is what befell the family. After his son fulfilled his destiny by becoming a great hero and winning a war the curse took effect. A beetle plague kills the whole family, one by one. Last to die was the father so he could see what he had done. They were all buried in this place.

The Sarcophagus is sealed. If the players want to open it they can with the use of tools and force. If they open it they will find a mummy of a richly dressed man inside. On a notice check the characters will realize that his fingertips are scratched off, as if he was trying to dig out of the sarcophagus. Nothing else will happen until the characters leave. Once they turn their back to the sarcophagus the mummy will awaken and attack from behind.

Mummy (Zombies p. 157 SWEX weakness Heart/Chest instead of Head)

6. Second Burial Chamber

As we walked around the corner we saw that something had opened the door from the inside. We approach the doorway carefully. The room is empty. We could still barely make out the once glorious details on the walls, not dissimilar to the ones in the other chamber we just visited. This one in however. Rubble covers everything and the stone dust is still hanging in the air making us cough. The sarcophagus is shattered from falling debris and empty. We head on, no sense in digging around in there.

The room indeed did cave in when Dr. Totmacher had the huge entrance doors blasted open. The carcass of the buried warlord did rise from the shattered sarcophagus and is slowly heading up to the soldiers. After the characters look into the room for a moment the sound of Gunfire and men screaming in panic arises from above.

As soon as the characters reach the stairs the gunfire dies down and reassured laughter of the soldiers rings loud.

7. Preparation Room

We enter a room that the Nazis use as a storage area and radio room. The sound of the dead radio is unnerving us. Crates stack up until under the ceiling. It smells like cigarettes and sweat. The mosaic floor is full of soldier's tracks and drag marks of crates. They have irreparably damaged the beautiful tiles. Damn those ignorant fools.

If by some miracle the characters managed to be undetected until now they can quickly search around and find some ammunition and grenades. First they will have to dispatch the Soldier on Radio duty however. He is leaning back on his chair smoking oblivious to them as he is reading some German newspaper.

Nazi Soldier (p. 112 TT - Mook)

If they have been discovered beforehand the room is empty as the soldiers are called off to cover the Dr. and look for the intruders.

8. Entrance Hall

After stepping over the remains of a mummy that was shot to pieces we enter a great hall. The ceiling is 5 meters high and covered in markings. It looks like the pillars can hardly hold it up as several cracks run through them. Artificial light streams in from the outside, the once great doors have been almost disintegrated by an explosion. We hear the humming of a generator from and can barely make out a panzerwagen and about a dozen soldiers building a camp. Over everything the airship covers most of the sky. We turn around and head for the three big statues in the back. The Dr. must be there somewhere.

If the characters have been heard before the hallway will be full of soldiers ducking behind pillars and waiting to open fire. If he was not defeated yet Von Wildbrand is also here guiding their effort.

If the characters are still undetected they can sneak in and land a surprise attack.

Von Wildbrand has the commando and orders his men around to build defenses and carry around supplies. There are twice as many soldiers here than characters. A firefight is almost inevitable at this point. If the characters manage to still sneak past the opposition they will sooner or later be attacked from behind once they face Dr. Totmacher in the main chamber.

Characters x 2 Nazi Soldiers (p. 112 TT -Mooks)



Josef Von Wildbrand

Von Wildbrand (Nazi Officer p. 113 – Henchman)

Dr. Totmacher and Josef Von Wildbrand are friends since they were children. Young Totmacher was easily picked on and Von Wildbrand was there to make sure it didn't happen. They developed a friendship no one really understands as they have nothing in common at all. That is what Von Wildbrand believes. While he believes he has a friendship with Dr. Totmacher, Totmacher knows better. When he was young and got picked on in school he quickly saw that Von Wildbrand was easily manipulated. With his vastly superior intellect Totmacher made Von Wildbrand believe whatever he wanted him to believe through tall tales and simple lies. As they grew up this went further and further. When they were teenagers, Totmacher got Von Wildbrand to attack a girl who had declined Totmacher's advances. It happened while the school was on a picnic at a lake. Von Wildbrand first beat and then drowned the girls

because he was being cheered on and fired up by Totmacher. After the fact Von Wildbrand was shocked and felt actually guilty. But Totmacher made sure no one would actually blame Wildbrand and told a story how it was all an accident. He covered everything and made sure that Von Wildbrand would keep his mouth shut. Even more, he got Von Wildbrand to be grateful to Totmacher for all his help. That was the first but not the last time. From then on Von Wildbrand would remove whoever Totmacher deemed a threat based on lies and manipulation through Totmacher. At some point Von Wildbrand simply died inside and fully embraced Totmacher's visions. Now he is an irredeemable follower without any remorse or regret.

9. Sacrifice Room

As we look around this room we almost fall into a trapdoor to the area below. An altar rests on a dais in the middle of the room, and the trapdoor is right in front of it. Lampposts are set up to light up even the darkest corner. Beds stand all around the center dais. We can clearly see the scenes of people being shoved down this shaft on the walls. It seems they were painted over whatever was there before. pictures of the beetles are everywhere. I REALLY hate beetles !

This room is of course a sacrificial chamber. It was built later than the rest of the temple by unknown inhabitants. It seems clear they somehow worshiped the corpse animating beetles. Soldiers have kept clear of this area as it is used by Dr. Totmacher, his assistants and black shirt bodyguards. If the characters want to dig around they can find some notes from Dr. Totmacher

I came here for the tablets but it looks like only a fragment of them is near. However I may have found something else. In the main temple my good assistants have translated some passages about necrotic beetles that can reanimate the dead. What a useful tool this could be for us! It seems the power inherent in the fragment can be used to commune with the old gods. They seem to be open to bargains as I understand it. Maybe I can find out how to control these beetles for our uses. They would make the perfect base for my personal army.

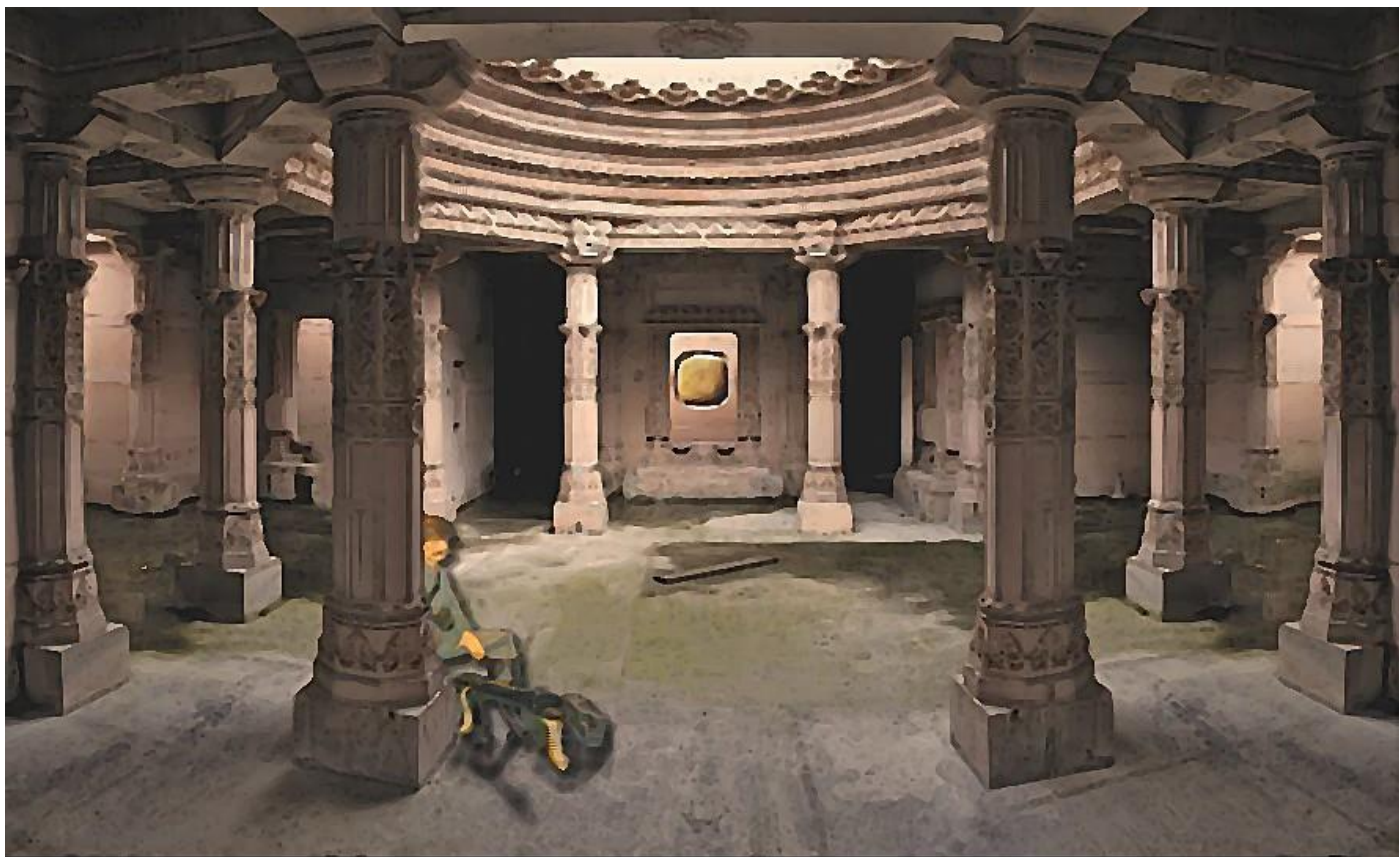
In fact the Assistants translated only partially. And not absolutely correct. The full story is only depicted in the first burial chamber below. This could have unforeseen effects...

10. Main Temple Room

Ducking behind the pillars we try to sneak into the large room. Moonlight shines in through the Dome roof, somehow enhanced by the surroundings. Debris covers large parts of the floor. The room is bare compared to the burial chambers below. But this all doesn't matter. The air tastes like sulfur and we can see the fragment from here, glowing, inset into the far wall in an alcove. Dr. Totmacher stands in front of it, chanting in a guttural tongue. His assistants stand next to him holding up stone tablets of their own. Just as we get ready a machinegun awakens and spits death in our direction. No time for subtlety, this must end here!

If the Characters were captured instead of reaching this on their own with all other enemies defeated, Totmacher will first talk down to the characters and then finish his ritual. As they are under heavy guard they cannot escape. At the end of his ritual a blinding flash of light emanates from the tablet fragment. That is the moment for the characters to free themselves and attack! The rest plays out like below.

Let's assume the characters have not been captured. As soon as the characters enter they can only quickly assess the situation. The ritual is just complete and with a flash a machinegun opens fire and Dr. Totmacher turns his attention to the characters.



He will immediately order his Blackshirts to attack. His assistants stand next to him and guard him with their life (see p. 88 TT). Dr. Totmacher will start to mumble something from the far end, all the while a machinegun uses covering fire to keep the heroes from entering.

In the second round Dr. Totmacher finishes his prayer. Depending on what has happened before different things occur.

- If the heroes have already destroyed the beetles no beetles show up.
- If the heroes did not meet the beetles yet they will burst out of cracks in the walls and floors. However they will attack everyone besides Totmacher, not only the characters.
- Several hidden alcoves will break open in every wall of the room. A whole family is buried here and they emerge to join the fight (See 5. First Burial Chamber for the details). At first they only attack the heroes, but as soon as the Dr. takes damage or is shaken once the mummies will turn and attack everybody at random.

As soon as Dr. Totmacher realizes his mistake when one of the mummies attacks him he will try to flee with the tablet. Depending on what you plan you can either let him escape with it on the airship or let the heroes kill/catch him.

One of the soldiers will use a grenade in the second round. This grenade will of course shake the construction and the complex begins to cave in. Use this for effect but don't let the characters die from it. They should feel pressured to finish this quickly and escape. As long as Dr. Totmacher is alive the Blackshirts will not flee and do everything to cover his escape.

6 SS Soldiers (p. 112 TT - Extras)

1 Machinegun (Use Gatling Stats, p. 51 SWEX, soldier p. 112 - Extra)

Assistants (as soldiers, no weapons - Mooks)

Characters + 10 Beetle Mummies (Zombies p. 157 SWEX

Their weakness Heart/Chest instead of Head - Mooks)

Swarm (p. 154 SWEX)

Dr. Totmacher (Nazi Sorcerer p. 115 TT)

Brilliant already in young years Erwin Totmacher is plagued by ambition. However as a child and teenager his Mental abilities did not mean much. He was not one for brawns so he saw need for a friend that could Protect him. That was Von Wildbrand. With him at his side Totmacher was safe from harassment and he had someone he could use for tasks he felt were beneath him. Totmacher got Von Wildbrand through all the higher schools, simply because he is gifted and could already make demands from schools at the age of 12! The normal science too easy for his tastes he was quickly interested in the occult. As the son of a lowly factory worker it was hard for him to make connections. However the name Von Wildbrand helped him open doors and so he could become a member of the Thule Society at 16, the youngest member in the history of the society. Digging deep in the dark arts he soon became a promising sorcerer and got more and more responsibilities and tasks. He himself was not content with the small and meager rituals the others saw as the pinnacle of their craft. He wanted more. His research led him to the fabled Mesopotamian "Tablets of Destiny". It is said whoever holds them is the legitimate ruler of the universe. The perfect goal for a man of his ambition. Totmacher is absolutely ruthless in his quest and will stop at nothing. He does not care much for the Nazi propaganda however. He sees the Nazis simply as a steppingstone to his own magnificent rule over the world.



Conclusion

After the Dust has settled the Heroes might have a fragment of the Tablets of Destiny. Even if Dr. Totmacher escaped, or was buried, with it in the collapsing temple they at least stopped a nefarious plan and did not let the beetles get into Totmacher's hands.

Maybe they will be able to Return. After all there is Gold to be dug up! And who knows what other secrets might be hidden among the treasure.

