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THRILLING TALES



SUDDENLY...
THE DOOR BURSTS IN!

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Suddenly...*, a line of supplements produced by Adamant Entertainment. Each supplement contains a brief encounter, a discussion of how characters might interact with it, and an array of elements you can introduce to further complicate the situation. You can use the supplement to jumpstart a stalled situation or as a jumping off point for an entirely new adventure.

This supplement introduces a staple of pulp adventures – the door bursts in and an adversary advances with gun blazing. At that moment why takes a back seat to what as characters scramble for their lives. When the arid smoke thins they may have time to investigate why. Or they might



have to attend a funeral at which they take center stage one last time.

SUDDENLY... THE DOOR BURSTS IN!

The Set Up: The characters shut themselves in a room. For whatever reason they refuse to move, idling away their time rather than seeking out adventure. That's okay. Adventure will seek them out with a vengeance.

Stalls like this frustrate Game Masters, players, and writers. However, in this case play it up a bit. Focus on the mundanely of the characters actions and how this contrasts with their usual mode. Emphasize the character, plot, and emotional conflicts paralyzing the situation. Then suddenly...

The Event: The door bursts in. A well-dressed man strides forward, blazing away with a pistol. He grabs one character (the biggest/strongest) with one hand, throws him into another character, and shoots a third in one smooth motion. At this point the characters begin to react.

D20 Event: The Character Information section below contains a scaled stat block for the assailant. Select a block capable of challenging the characters without overwhelming them. The encounter starts with a surprise round, though you can let the players roll Listen checks (DC 100) if you wish. The “strong” character will fail his grapple check, even if you have to ignore the rules. It helps set up the combat flow.

In this case do not be afraid to use “timed” rounds. Give each player 30 seconds or less to decide his character’s action. If player takes longer the character loses his action for the round.

Story Structure: We want to restart the action after allowing, creating, or falling into a lull. This is a dramatic, symbolic transition; from a neutral/negative state the characters come face to face with direct danger and must respond. Their reactions tell us a great deal about them as people. It can also highlight places where they need to grow.

Things That Happen: During the combat you can use the following images:

1. The well-dressed man’s hat gets knocked off in the struggle. He picks it up and reseats it while pistol-whipping the character that dislodged it.
2. One of the characters ends up face first in the radio.
3. The well-dressed man pushes one of the characters out a window.

Encounter Goals and Variations:

The well-dressed man’s attack, though seemingly random, does have a purpose. That purpose determines the tactics he uses and how long he will stick around. The suggested purposes for the attack include assassination, intimidation, and the wake-up call.

Assassination: In this case the adversary wishes to remove one or more of the characters. He focuses his attacks on his targets until they collapse. He makes a hasty escape after achieving his goal.

Assassination works best as a goal when it targets a single character. The assailant attacks without mercy, hounding them though the room. Other characters get dismissed from the fight as quickly as possible.

Intimidation: In this case the adversary wants to scare the characters a bit. He



roughs them up, slams the big guys into the walls, and raises a ruckus. He then leaves after delivering a semi-cryptic warning. Appropriate warnings include “Don’t show your face around the bar anymore” or “The Councilman is off limits”.

Intimidation works best when the characters have crossed one or more powerful men. The warning should give them enough information to figure out who sent the bruiser with a little thought.

The Wake-Up Call: In this case the adversary works for the characters’ erstwhile allies. He wants the characters to start moving again. His hard and fast attack will, he hopes, shake them out of their doldrums. After a round or two he calls a halt to the fight by “surrendering”. When things calm down the adversary delivers a warning and some information the characters need to get moving again.

The wake-up call works best when the characters stalled themselves out by arguing or over-thinking the problem. It’s a reminder to both the characters and the players/readers that this is pulp – things need to move or they fall apart.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT...

Eventually the characters resolve the attack. What happens next depends on the well-dressed man’s goal and where the story needs to go. We took the liberty of suggesting a few possibilities below.

Assassination: After the encounter the characters should ask “Who ordered the hit” and “Why did they order it.” The ideas below suggest some traditional possibilities.

A1) A mob boss, angered by the characters interference with his bootlegging operations, ordered a hit on one of the characters. If they continue to interfere he will send set another “appointment in a church” for another character.

A2) A city councilman wants to remove one of the characters before a crusading police officer gets to him. The target character does not even know he holds evidence against the councilman. The crusader will get in touch with the character shortly after the assassination attempt.

A3) One of the characters’ former enemies came into money. He hired the assassin to clean up old business while focusing on his new life. The characters can choose to go after him or try to deal with the assassin directly.

A4) The enemy of a character’s father decided to murder his foe’s child. The

assassin will disfigure the downed character (e.g. cutting off a finger) before making his escape. If the target dies his father will contact the other characters to find out what happened. If not, then the assassin will return shortly to do his job.

Intimidation: After the encounter the characters should ask “Who ordered the attack” and “What do they want us not to do.” The ideas below suggest some traditional possibilities.

I1) The would-be beau of one of the character’s lady-friends sent the adversary to remove the character’s impediment to his suit. The rivalry may only exist in the beau’s imagination. The adversary warns the target character to stay away from his lady-friend.

I2) One of the characters’ good deeds annoyed an Irish gang. They worked themselves into a tizzy. Fortunately, before they went off half cocked, one of the local politicians sent his “friend” over to talk with the characters. The adversary warns the characters never to come around the Irish neighborhood again.

I3) The police want the characters to stop interfering with their comfortable lifestyle. They called in a favor from one of their supporters (either a politician or a criminal) who sent the adversary to deal with the problem. The assailant warns the characters to “stay out of other people’s business.”

I4) An unknown cult stalks one of the characters friends. The assailant is their representative; he came to warn the characters to avoid associating with the stalking target. This, unfortunately, actually tips their hand. The characters now know the target is in danger.

The Wake-Up Call: The well-dressed man will, in this case, answer the characters’ questions. However he tailors his answers to drive the characters back into action. He reveals as little as necessary, leaving mysteries to help goad them on. The ideas below suggest some traditional possibilities.

W1) A friendly but exasperated old patron sent the well-dressed man with information about their latest investigation. The adversary became so frustrated listening to the characters’ dither that he eventually broke down the door just to get them to shut up.

W2) The well-dressed man represents the Jesuits. They have information of interest to the characters recent activities but do not wish to divulge it to the unworthy. He attacked them to test their reflexes and their moral strength.

W3) The well-dressed man represents a criminal organization interested in assisting the characters out of their latest predicament. He attacked them to establish his credibility; he hopes the characters will listen to him after he knocks them around a bit.

W4) An old enemy sent the well-dressed man with information designed to both assist and trap the characters. The well-dressed man attacked them to establish himself as a valid threat. His information contains both rewards for doing as the old enemy requests and naked threats about what will happen if the characters fail to comply.

CHARACTER INFORMATION

The description below provides some clues as to the well-dressed man's identity. The accompanying stat block gives d20 Modern information about his potential abilities. These abilities scale with the characters' allowing him to present a credible threat against even a fairly established group.



The Well Dressed Man

Description: A broad shouldered man wearing a charcoal grey Italian cut suit of raw silk, a white shirt, and a perfectly knotted ascot bursts though the door. The ascot's diamond stud glitters as he lifts <insert character name here> with one heavy hand.

Low Level (Strong 2/Tough 2)

CR 4; Medium human criminal; HD 2d8+6 plus 2d10+6; hp: 34; Mas 16; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 15, touch 15, flat-footed 14; BAB: +3; Grap +5; Atk +6 melee pistol whip (1d4+3) or +5 ranged pistol (2d6); Full Atk +6 melee pistol whip (1d4+3) or +5 ranged pistol (2d6); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SV Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +1; AP 1; Rep 0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 14

Skills: Climb +7, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (streetwise) +5, Profession (enforcer) +5

Feats: Heroic Surge, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Personal Firearm Proficiency, Weapon Focus (Colt .45 pistol)

Talents (Strong): Melee Smash

Talents (Tough): Robust

Possessions: Expensive Suit, Colt .45 (2d6, 20, 30 ft., RoF 5)

Mid Level (Strong 5/Tough 5)

CR 10; Medium human criminal; HD 5d8+15 plus 5d10+15; hp: 87; Mas 16; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 17, touch 17, flat-footed 16; BAB: +8; Grap +10; Atk +11 melee pistol whip (2d4+5) or +10 ranged pistol (2d6); Full Atk +11/+6 melee pistol whip (2d4+5 /1d4+5) or +10/+5 ranged pistol (2d6); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +3; AP 6; Rep 2; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 16

Skills: Climb +10, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (streetwise) +5, Knowledge (tactics) +3, Profession (enforcer) +10

Feats: Brawl, Heroic Surge, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Personal Firearm Proficiency, Streetfighting, Toughness, Weapon Focus (Colt .45 pistol),

Talents (Strong): Melee Smash, Improved Melee Smash, Advanced Melee Smash

Talents (Tough): Robust, Damage Reduction 1/-, Damage Reduction 2/-

Possessions: Expensive Suit, Colt .45 (2d6, 20, 30 ft., RoF 5)

High Level (Strong 5/Tough 5/Soldier 5)

CR 15; Medium human criminal; HD 5d8+15 plus 5d10+15 plus 5d10 +15; hp: 129; Mas 16; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 20, touch 20, flat-footed 19; BAB: +11; Grap +13; Atk +15 melee pistol whip (2d4+7) or +14 ranged pistol (2d6+2); Full Atk +15/+10/+5 melee pistol whip (2d4+7/1d4+7/1d4+7) or +14/+9/+4 ranged pistol (2d6+2); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SV Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +6; AP 8; Rep 3; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 16

Skills: Climb 10, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (streetwise) +5, Knowledge (tactics) +3, Listen +7, Profession (enforcer) +10, Spot +7

Feats: Knockout Punch, Brawl, Heroic Surge, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Knockout Punch, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Personal Firearm Proficiency, Streetfighting, Toughness, Weapon Focus (pistol),

Talents (Strong): Melee Smash, Improved Melee Smash, Advanced Melee Smash

Talents (Tough): Robust, Damage Reduction 1/-, Damage Reduction 2/-

Features (Soldier): Weapon Focus (Colt .45), Weapon Specialization (Colt. 45), Tactical Aid, Improved Critical

Possessions: Expensive Suit, Colt .45 (2d6, 20, 30 ft., RoF 5)

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