

RACE FOR THE JADE SCROLL



A ONE SHEET ADVENTURE FOR THE DAY AFTER RAGNAROK BY KEATON & KENNON BAUMAN

Hong Kong is home to criminals, eccentrics, rebels, and refugees...and an occupying Japanese army. Nevertheless, one of the heroes receives a letter informing her that an old friend living in the city—former Oxford University Professor Cyrus Lockheart—has died, and that he left certain papers and personal effects to her. There is one condition: the items, broadly hinted to be of great value, must be retrieved in person. In the post-Serpentfall world, the easiest way for the heroes to get to Hong Kong is via chartered seaplane or on their own aircraft. If the heroes are already in Hong Kong, they hear about Professor Lockheart's passing from the English-speaking underground.

THE EMPEROR OF PERPETUAL HAPPINESS

Once in Hong Kong, the heroes learn that the professor, previously a respected archaeologist, had set himself up as an appraiser and fence for black market Chinese artifacts. Lockheart's manservant Irving, now keen to escape the occupied city, arranges to meet the heroes at a tavern to provide the remaining inheritance. He stresses in his communiques that he is eager to be rid of whatever the professor left them.

The heroes arrive at the tavern—identified via a buzzing electric sign as *The Emperor of Perpetual Happiness*—ahead of Irving, and try to make themselves comfortable in the dirty taproom among a rough-looking clientele (20-30) of dockworkers, sailors, and smugglers (Bandits (**DAR**, p. 79) and Thugs (**DAR**, p. 83)).

Irving arrives shortly after nightfall, presenting himself directly—if unsteadily—to the heroes, looking over his shoulder as if concerned he is being followed. A proper English manservant, Irving provides the heroes with a sheaf of roughly bound papers culled from Lockheart's notes with shaking hands, and then carefully produces a paper-wrapped cylinder from inside his jacket: the most important item that the professor meant for them to have. Irving intimates that the item is an ancient scroll that Lockheart kept for himself despite exorbitant offers from both the city's Japanese occupiers and representatives from the Soviet consulate, and notes that it consumed much of the professor's thoughts in the months before his death.

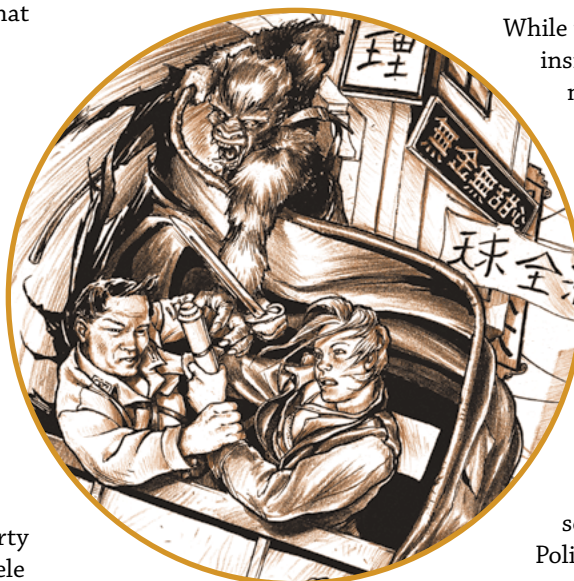
SUDDEN DEATH

Before Irving can present the scroll, he doubles over in pain, collapsing. The scroll slips through his fingers, bouncing on the uneven floor and rolling chaotically around the crowded room.

The scroll's case is jade worked in elaborate serpent patterns, capped in gold: its potential value is immediately clear. Any low-life who lays hands on it tries to leave the bar with it immediately, but is attacked by other patrons hoping to acquire the obviously valuable scroll for themselves. The bar erupts in violence.

Irving is dead by the time he hits the floor: a cursory examination reveals that he was recently subjected to a contact poison. A raise on Streetwise, Healing, or Knowledge (Chemistry) indicates that the poison is one favored by Russian agents.

ENTER THE DRAGON



While the heroes struggle to recover the scroll inside the bar, a *Kempeitai* (the Japanese military's secret police) special agent known only as Kaida arrives to take control of the scroll herself. A product of the classified Japanese biological weapons program Unit 731, Agent Kaida is a powerful psychic. She does not know (or care) why the scroll is valuable. She knows only that she has been ordered to retrieve it.

Agent Kaida enters the *Emperor of Perpetual Happiness* flanked by four or five regular *Kempeitai*, leaving more squads waiting outside each exit: four Police (**DAR**, p. 82, Shooting raised to d8), commanded by one or two Officers (**DAR**, p.82). Kaida is mute, but if forced to negotiate

she uses her psychic abilities to dominate one of the *Kempei* (even an unconscious one) and force him to speak for her. While speaking for Kaida, the dominated *Kempei*'s face goes slack, his eyes glaze over, and his voice becomes expressionless and monotone.

As Kaida enters the bar she uses a mind-controlled *Kempeitai* to demand the scroll. If the heroes move to stop her, the brawl for the scroll resumes, this time with Kaida and her minions in the fray. While Kaida uses a series of psychic thralls (including bar patrons or even unconscious PCs) to secure the scroll, the *Kempeitai* use pistols to protect her (and, if possible, retrieve the scroll on their own).

During the commotion, a combination of errant gunfire and bad wiring leaves the *Emperor of Perpetual Happiness* in flames, adding urgency to any attempt to escape with the scroll. Regardless, the *Kempeitai* waiting outside open fire on anyone attempting to leave the bar via the marked exits, unless they are accompanied (or controlled) by Agent Kaida.

THE CHASE

If Kaida—or someone she has enthralled—leaves the burning tavern with the scroll, she retreats to a car waiting outside, which heads toward the Japanese headquarters at the Peninsula Hotel in Kowloon. She posts three or four *Kempeitai* with Type 100 submachine guns and orders to shoot any pursuers on sight, and then commands the rest to follow her in heavy trucks. If the heroes manage to escape with the scroll (and get past the waiting *Kempeitai*) ahead of a pursuing Kaida, they can immediately head toward the passenger docks where their plane is waiting.

The streets of Hong Kong are narrow; crowded by tall buildings on all sides, cramped with fruit carts, chicken crates, bamboo scaffolding, and uninstalled plate-glass windows. The roadways are filled with cars, motorcycles, military transports, handcarts and rickshaws, any of which may prove to be significant obstacles in a high-speed chase.

MONKEYS ON THE ROOF

No matter who is chasing whom, the heroes soon learn that they are being pursued by a third group swinging between rusting fire escapes and leaping from roof to roof: Soviet Man-Apes. Hiding their simian features under heavy trench-coats and wide-brimmed fedoras, the urban-trained Chumanzees and Orang-Humans (*DAR*, p. 84-85) poisoned Irving, and planned to secure the scroll when he succumbed. He lived longer than expected; the Man-Apes then intended to retrieve the scroll from the heroes when they left the bar, but stood down when Kaida arrived, hoping to avoid a direct confrontation with the Japanese.

Once the heroes have escaped from Kaida with the scroll, the Man-Apes pounce, leaping onto moving vehicles or tackling heroes moving on foot. The attack is very goal-oriented; they're after the scroll, and want to get it with minimum additional carnage. If they get the scroll, they quickly climb to the rooftops, swinging back toward the Soviet consulate.

NOT SO FAST

Once the heroes have secured the scroll once and for all, they return to the harbor to find their seaplane waiting, as-yet unmolested by the Japanese Navy. The engines roar to life, and they take off just as the *Kempeitai* attempt to close the docks, pistol rounds plinking against the fuselage. Kaida has one more ace up her sleeve.

A Japanese submarine surfaces in Kowloon Bay. Four tubes iris open on the sub's upper decks. Rockets blast out of the tubes, lazily tracking the heroes' plane. Suddenly, the sides of the rockets fall free, revealing men within! Each of the four triggers a jet pack and races toward the fleeing aircraft. The Jet Troopers use grappling guns to secure themselves to the plane, and then board, attempt to secure the scroll, and return to Hong Kong. The troopers have no compunction against killing the heroes, but will do everything in their power to ensure that the plane does not crash with the scroll on board. Despite their orders to retrieve the scroll intact, they're willing to die to ensure that the heroes don't escape with it, either.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

Unless the adventure ends with the heroes crashing into Kowloon Bay, they are now in possession of an ancient Chinese scroll of apparently immense value: a true MacGuffin. It may simply be a fabulously ornate artifact wanted by eccentric collectors, but may be of genuine strategic importance. It could contain research from a mandarin sorcerer outlining ways to protect oneself from the taint of the dragon (Snakebite), or serve as a map to a hidden paradisiacal Shangri-La untouched by the war or its aftermath. Getting the scroll into Allied hands—or making use of it themselves—takes the heroes further into a world of esoteric intrigue and espionage.

If they didn't manage to keep the scroll, but still got away, they have that sheaf of Lockheart's papers—containing clues, perhaps, that will let them track it down again ...

Jet Troopers

As Elite Soldiers from *DAR*, p. 82, with Piloting d8. Each is equipped with a Jet Pack (*DAR*, p. 44), Type 100 SMG, combat knife, and Nambu 14 pistol.

Agent Kaida

Agent Kaida ("Little Dragon") is a tall, reedy woman with inky black hair and cold gray eyes. A red scarf at her neck flutters as if pushed by some otherworldly wind, briefly revealing a raw, ragged scar across her otherwise flawless neck. She is beautiful... but cold. Almost reptilian.

ATTRIBUTES: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d8

SKILLS: Driving d4, Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Investigation d4, Notice d6, Psionics (Arcane) d10, Shooting d8

PACE: 6 **PARRY:** 5 **TOUGHNESS:** 6 **CHARISMA:** 0

HINDRANCES: Mute (Minor), Arrogant, Pacifist (Minor), Snakebit (Major)

EDGES: Arcane Background (Psionics), Danger Sense, Hard to Kill, Harder to Kill

PSIONIC POWERS: Puppet, Mind Reading, Fear, Telekinesis

POWER POINTS: 20

Credits

Writing & Design: Keaton Baunman & Kennon Bauman

Editing: Kenneth Hite **Interior Art:** Mike Vilardi

Graphic Design & Art Direction: Hal Mangold

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