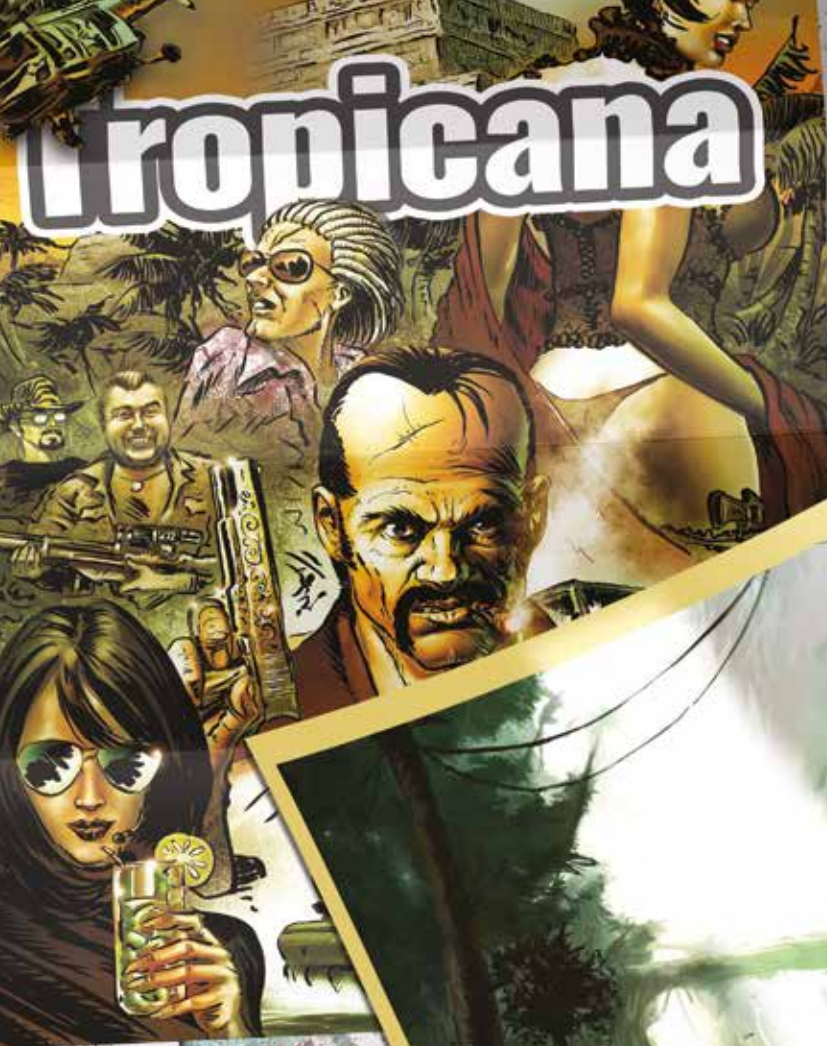




# RESEARCHERS of the Lost City

# Tropicana

## CREDITS

AUTHORS: MAURO LONGO, GIUSEPPE ROTONDO  
EDITING: ANDY SLACK, UMBERTO PIGNATELLI, PIOTR KORYS,  
ART: AGNIESZKA SZAFRANIEC, IGOR MYSZKIEWICZ, BARTEK FEDYCZAK  
LAYOUT: JREK WINNICKI  
SPECIAL THANKS: MK

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*Fortune and glory, kid. Fortune and glory!*

This long adventure for Tropicana is divided into five sections and is designed specifically to introduce new players to this Savage Setting. It is a treasure hunt, set in different districts of the city and the country of San José, and the adventurers will face dangers and perils of all kinds before reaching the legendary "Azcali Lost City".

In the Introduction, the party is put together, then immediately takes the first step of the adventure. From the beginning, the heroes face an enemy in the shadows who wants to prevent them from getting ahead by any means, and will have traitors and false friends beside them.

The four following scenarios (Partss 1-4) can be played in any order and allow the heroes to experience various typical Tropicana situations, in the city, in the mountains, and along the marshes of the Rio Grande.

In the fifth and final part of the adventure, the heroes explore the dense jungle of the hinterland, heading to the Lost City of Kikomoyac's mysterious ruins, in search of the Azcali secret. At the end, they finally face their mysterious opponents.

## BACKGROUND FOR THE GAME MASTER

A researcher at Faye has found a hint that could lead to an ancient and legendary Azcali lost city. Together with the "assistants" she decides to recruit (the heroes), the researcher must solve a "puzzle" in four parts and then head to the place it identifies. But two mysterious groups are on her trail and want to steal her results.

The first of these enemies in the shadows is the well-known antiquarian and relic dealer El Morisco. El Morisco has secretly (but lawfully) funded the expedition through the research department of Faye, which the researcher is part of, and he really does not want to hurt anyone, if he can avoid it. Indeed he wants the researcher to investigate on his behalf, while he is sitting in his shop full of carpets, brass and Azcali relics, and he wants to profit from the whole affair, right at the end of the research. He might be mistaken for a friend for a good part of the story, until his right arm Eusebio eventually tries to steal the researcher's final discovery from her.

The second mysterious enemy is the art market professional and smuggler Boris Arkadevich, who is connected to the Russian mob. Arkadevich is ruthless and pitiless, and once he is aware of the party, he will do anything to eliminate the researcher and her crew and grab the treasure of the Azcali.

Everyone will be partly disappointed when they find out that the treasure hunt does not lead to the true Kikomoyac, but only to an "Azcali Reliquary" built and hidden by the people running away from Kikomoyac. The Reliquary is well stocked with treasures, but it is certainly not an archaeological discovery comparable to the true "Lost City". At the end of the adventure, however, the more skilled and attentive heroes will be able to get new clues about where their real goal is, which could be the target of a future expedition.

# INTRODUCTION

Mireia Fernandez Ramos, a young researcher of the Facultad de Arqueología y Etnología at the University of San José (the Faye) has obtained a certain amount of funds from Professor Francisco de Arona to pursue a search for Kikomoyac, the famous lost city of the Azcali. Kikomoyac is just a legend for many, suitable for tourists and pseudo-archaeology fanatics, but Mireia has discovered a series of quatrains written by Matthieu Carmaux, the famous “Bard Buccaneer”, about the “Seven Cities of Gold” of Kikomoyac. In order not to be considered insane by her own teacher, Mireia has not explained in detail the course of her research and she intends to use the funds to hire brave men and stage an expedition on her own, in search of this famous lost city.

Mireia does not know that the funds come (as they do for several other initiatives of this kind) from a private investor: “El Morisco” (see *Tropicana: Savage Setting* page 19). Professor de Arona does not believe that anything shady is happening and he is not a traitor nor a conspirator. As he always does, he has simply submitted a request for funds

to his usual sponsors. When El Morisco checked out the deal, he granted funds and started to follow Mireia and her “assistants”.

## THE STUDIES SO FAR

According to texts found in the libraries of the faculty, Matthieu Carmaux had heard from an Azcali pirate, his comrade in bravado, that the Seven Cities were real and that, centuries after their abandonment, the Azcali had placed at various points of the country some “colossal stone heads” which indicated the correct location of the cradle of their civilization. The big heads were called the “Guardians of the Four Winds” because they were placed in four different parts of the country, and each of them contained a hint that could be used to find “Kikomoyac”. According to Carmaux, each of these stone heads has engraved Azcali glyphs on the tongue, so only by physically locating the four guardians and “looking them in the mouth” can Mireia find the four clues to the lost city.

### CHRONOLOGY (EVENTS IN ITALICS ARE ONLY FOR THE GAME MASTER)

“UNNAMED AGE”: THE ANCESTORS OF THE AZCALI LIVED IN KIKOMOYAC.

END OF THE UNNAMED AGE: THE ANCESTORS DECIDED TO LEAVE KIKOMOYAC AND TRAVEL TO THE ISLAND OF AZCALYA, WHICH IN THE FOLLOWING CENTURIES WOULD GIVE ITS NAME TO THESE TRIBES.

END OF THE UNNAMED AGE: *ALONG THE GREAT MARCH THAT LED THEM TO AZCALYA, THE ANCESTORS FOUNDED A “RELIQUARY” WHERE THEY WOULD KEEP SOME GOODS THEY COULD NO LONGER CARRY AND PUT THE CLUES TO FIND THEIR LOST CITY AGAIN: THIS IS THE PLACE ACTUALLY INDICATED BY THE GUARDIANS.*

AROUND 1000 A.C.: A THOUSAND YEARS LATER, IN THE AZCALI “AGE OF FATHERS”, THE RELIQUARY WAS FOUND AND CONSIDERED A SACRED AND CURSED PLACE. THE FOUR GUARDIANS WERE MADE AND THEIR STONE TONGUES ENGRAVED WITH DIRECTIONS TO REACH THE RELIQUARY, WHICH WAS OFF-LIMITS TO THE COMMON PEOPLE.

17TH CENTURY: THE BUCCANEER BARD CARMAUX HEARD THE OLD LEGENDS FROM HIS COMRADE SPITFIRE AND LEARNED THE LOCATION OF THE GUARDIANS, BUT HE WAS NEVER ABLE TO DEVOTE HIMSELF TO THIS TREASURE HUNT.

20TH CENTURY: THE SCHOLAR HUMBERT COPPERPOT TRANSLATES CARMAUX’S QUATRAINS INTO CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH.

LATE 20TH CENTURY: AFTER THE LOSS OF MATTHIEU CARMAUX’S WORKS, THE ALMOST UNOBTAINABLE TRANSLATION BY COPPERPOT REMAINS THE ONLY SOURCE OF INFORMATION USEFUL IN SEARCHING FOR THE LOST CITY.

PRESENT DAY: MIREIA FINDS COPPERPOT TRANSCRIPTION AND STARTS HER RESEARCH.

Reading this story, Mireia decided to find the four stone heads and study their signs, then head directly towards the goal. The problem is that the location of the heads is almost unknown and the only clues about them are the quatrains of Carmaux; however these were badly recorded in modern English in the mid-twentieth century, by a local scholar of poetry.

The only one of these artifacts ever found comes from excavations in the nineteenth century and is still preserved in the local museum (see Part 1).

## RECRUIT A GROUP OF ADVENTURERS

With the Faye funds at her disposal and a vague idea of where the quatrains of Carmaux will lead her, Mireia is ready to take on a group of friends or co-workers to start her research.

A similar hook could be useful if the heroes are **young hearts in search of adventure**: Mireia already knows them and asks for their help for her research. Heroes such as **students, researchers, and professors** might easily take part in this adventure as colleagues and friends of Mireia. One of the players might also play Mireia.

If the group decides to set up an Agency or work for one, then Mireia contacts them in a formal way and uses the services of the Agency for her mission. A first choice would be Betylos, which often contracts with Faye, but any other Agency would also work. If the heroes are freelancers or specialists in other fields, for example **worldly men, tough guys, men of faith, occult investigators** or people in search of **a mission to accomplish**, they will be contacted by Betylos, which will choose them for Mireia.

For all these variants of characters and the adventure hooks, see also Tropicana: Savage Setting page 74-75 .

## MIREIA'S BUDGET

Mireia's budget is not infinite. She will pay the equivalent of a week's wages to each of the specialists she will take on and then she has \$50,000, which must be enough for all the expenses necessary during the adventure. She is quietly willing to spend it all, but she cannot add a single dollar from her own pocket once this fund is spent.

## GATHERING INFORMATION

Here are some hints the heroes may want to investigate, either before they leave or during the adventure. For each of them a successful Investigation or Knowledge roll is needed, or they can just ask Mireia, who will do her own research.

**The Faye:** The *Facultad de Arqueologia y Etnologia* of San José University deals in particular with the Azcali people: all the legends of the ancient inhabitants of the country and their current culture. The creation of the Reserva, which covers and protects most of the Azcali settlements in the Boca Verde and the Rio Grande, allows the researchers to study a Stone Age civilization, settled just a few miles from the 21st Century one.

**Azcali Remains in the Boca Verde:** The main Azcali settlements can be found in the jungle and they are usually from the "Age of the Ancients" or from the "Age of Fathers", the last two legendary Azcali eras that preceded the arrival of Europeans in the country. Here and there in the thick bush appear abandoned settlements, ruins of unknown buildings, colossal stone heads arising from the ground, stained monoliths with bas-reliefs and ideograms, pyramids sunk in the mud, slender towers infested with ivy and other ruins of ancestral and colossal appearance (Age of the Ancients) or just old and abandoned ones (Age of Fathers).

**Kikomoyac:** this legendary lost underground city is said to be the cradle of the Azcali people during the mythical "Unnamed Age", the oldest epoch mentioned in their legends.

It was also known as “the Seven Cities” or “the Seven Caves”, because of its shape. The men who lived there dug houses, terraces and underground passages deeper and deeper, until the moment they abandoned it for unknown reasons. It is said that the city was full of gold, so that even everyday tools were made of this metal. This detail contributes to the general idea that Kikomoyac is only a ridiculous legend and, at the same time, a kind of impossible paradise for worldwide tomb raiders.

**The Quatrains:** The original quatrains written by Carmaux about the location of the Guardians were lost long ago, but Mireia has found a version half a century old, written in current English. Each quatrain refers to the position of a different Guardian and, apparently, three of the Guardians are still in their original sites.

Here are the quatrains:

THE WARDEN OF LIBECCIO LIES DEEP IN THE JUNGLE,  
WATCHED BY WILD BEASTS AND HEAD HUNTERS.  
BETWEEN THE BLACK JUNGLE AND THE FORBIDDEN VALE  
TRESPASSERS MEET UNMERCIFUL FATES.

THE WARDEN OF MISTRAL WAITS ON THE SIERRA,  
HIS HEAD TURNED TO THE SOUTH, OVERSEEING THE JUNGLE  
FROM ABOVE, AMONG THE JUPIMA VILLAGERS  
NOT FAR FROM THE SPANIARDS- SILVER MINE.

THE WARDEN OF GREGALE STARES TOWARDS THE SEA  
LYING ON THE CABO DE LA VENTURA  
NEAR THE SPANISH FORT  
THREE MILES SOUTHWEST OF THE DORADA SHRINE

THE WARDEN OF SIROCCO LIES IN THE SWAMPS  
THAT BUBBLE AT THE RIO GRANDE- S MOUTH  
WHERE FROM ABOVE THE LIGHTNING FALLS AND THE LIGHTS  
OF THE DEAD  
SHINE, AMONG DUNES AND BLACK WATER.

**The Fund from the Faye:** Even though Mireia ignores the fact that the funds at her disposal derive from the finances of El Morisco, this is not a secret. If someone wants to investigate Professor de Arona, this would come out quite easily. Apart from this totally legitimate connection, de Arona is not otherwise involved in this story.

## PART 1: NIGHTS ON THE BOULEVARD

*Atmosphere: High society, vacationers, luxury resorts, top-notch international spies and smugglers.*

### EL GUARDIAN DE LEBECHE

One of the heads of the Guardians was discovered in the 19th century and then moved to the city by the archaeologists of that period. A successful Knowledge (History or San José) or Investigation roll allows a character to know its story. Mireia believes the head to be at the Archaeological Museum of San José.

El Guardian de Lebeche was found somewhere in the jungle and was initially part of a private collection, then finally exhibited for twenty years in the Museum of San José.

If the heroes start from there, they soon discover that the owners have agreed to let the sculpture be exhibited in Les Pyramides, an Azcali-style mega-resort for wealthy

tourists. In any case, it is not possible for the heroes to obtain official permission to examine the statue: the director will deny it (for obvious reasons) and Mireia is not able to obtain a special mandate from the Ministry.

### *SCENE 1 - TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE!*

Once the PCs discover the Guardian de Lebeche is located in the complex of Les Pyramides, the first thing to do is to figure out how to get inside. This resort consists of several buildings and has a general ethnic style, including whole parts of the jungle transplanted around four large "pyramids" built in a modern gray-green stone. If the heroes take a look in the lobby of this magnificent hotel, they will immediately notice a big stone head. But after the initial excitement they can see that... it is not the right one and there are many others scattered throughout the whole Resort: the hard part is finding out which is the right one! Among the Resort attractions there are lots of these "colossal stone heads" sticking out of the ground and the staff is always busy with traditional shows, dances and "Azcali fights".

When the heroes realize they have to examine at least two dozen heads, they must first find a way to have free access to the inner areas of the structure; the easiest way to do this is to pay for a room in the Resort, at the modest sum of 200 dollars a day per person. Any other method of infiltration will work, but players should note that the security is managed by BSI (see *Tropicana: Savage Setting* page 30), smart and efficient contractors.

A formal request to the resort director to see the heads receives a straight 'no', because the head is part of the resort's attractions, and the entertainment staff must not be distracted or disturbed.

### *SCENE 2 - LES PYRAMIDES*

When the heroes are inside the Resort, the next task will be to identify which is the right head. In fact there are dozens of them, of different shapes, ages and origins. Only an

expert in this type of artifact (for example Mireia, or a character that has already seen one) would recognize the right one. None of the staff has any idea of what the heroes are searching for and some of the heads could be found only in areas where the heroes are not allowed, accessible only through the right key-card.

Let the heroes devote themselves to this subquest, while wandering among pools and artificial jungles, holding their cocktails. For example, they could try to reach a big head:

- + *In the Queen's suite:* someone has to enter this room booked by some rich guy, maybe seducing the owner;
- + *In the office of one of the owners, Horacio Quesada:* someone must avoid BSI's security system by hacking it or stealing a key-card;
- + *In an area reserved for employees:* they might have to bribe or convince one of the attendants to take a look at one of the big heads in a warehouse closed to the public.

Unfortunately, none of these "big heads" is the right one.

### *SCENE 3 - THE RING OF FIRE*

After milling around for a while, heroes discover that there is a big head on the top floor of one of the Pyramides, normally closed during the day and used in an evening show for the guests' entertainment.

If they manage to infiltrate this show, which takes place every night, the heroes will take their places in the bleachers of a magnificent stone amphitheater, the center of which is an arena. At the center of the ring there is one last big head (the one they are looking for).

The shows are performed in the light of torches and under a roof of stars.

There are plenty of extras dressed as Azcali, dancing, fighting and doing "sacred representations" for the amusement of tourists. Luckily they often call people from the audience to take part in the show, and this offers an opportunity to enter the arena:

**Azcali Fight:** A demonstration of this noble art. The “volunteer” will be stripped except for one or two pieces of clothing, and anointed with gilded oils. Then he has to face a champion of this sport and will not be able to get close enough to the Guardian to look in its mouth, unless he wins the fight. After a few feints and false blows, the “Champion” will simply try to grapple and immobilize the opponent and never try to hurt him or her (unless he gets hurt, of course).



## THE “CHAMPION”

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

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Taunt d6

**Charisma:** -; **Pace:** 15; **Parry:** 6;

**Toughness:** 7

**Edges:** Acrobat, Brawny, Martial Artist

**Tribal Dance:** More or less expert dancers are called from the audience to perform acrobatic moves and dances in a sort of tribal style and then be selected by the public. To win the competition and get close enough to the big head as “the Bride” or “the Champion” of the god, a hero must win three consecutive opposed Agility checks against the Champion.

**Walking on Fire:** A “shaman” sets up a line of coals that leads right across the mouth of the “god”. Normally they do not expect the tourists to volunteer for the walk, but if someone wants to try, he must make a successful Vigor check or be forced to leave the coal line and suffer a Fatigue level.

## SCENE 4 - A HOLE IN THE WATER

If with these or other systems, the heroes manage to look into the mouth of the statue, they will see that... there are no glyphs inside! The big head looks just like the right one, but a Perception or Common Knowledge roll reveals that it is a fake: well done, but still a fake. If someone investigates (maybe with the crazy Mexican cook, or the French entertainment manager), it is possible to discover that one of the owners of Les Pyramides, Horacio Quesada, is addicted to gambling and has big debts with Boris Arkadevich, the owner of the

Romanoff, another great resort of San José, and that the Guardian has been delivered to Arkadevich, who intends to sell it as soon as possible to a Russian tycoon and lover of pre-Columbian art. And the buyer will surely take it to some remote dacha in the Russian Federation. This has been kept hidden and a fake created, because the Guardian had been entrusted to Les Pyramides and Quesada did not have authority to dispose of it as he did.

If the heroes understand this background, they can blackmail or convince Horacio Quesada to tell the truth and even to give some help to get into the Romanoff.

## SCENE 5 - AT THE ROMANOFF

With or without the help of Quesada, to continue the adventure the heroes need to introduce themselves into the Romanoff and in particular into the office of Boris Arkadevich, the owner. It is the classic wolf's lair, as Arkadevich, unlike Quesada, is a very dangerous person, well-connected with the Russian mob. Even his guards are not the quiet professionals of the BSI, but ruthless henchmen, accustomed to protecting the multiple interests of their boss.

Our heroes have to access the office of the tycoon using some subterfuge, perhaps suggested by Quesada. For example:

- \* Proving their skill in a shooting competition held in the interiors of the Romanoff. Arkadevich is fond of shooting and could offer an assignment or a special prize to the heroes. You can use the Competitions rules (Tropicana: Savage Setting page 60). Besides Arkadevich himself, 6 people compete, with Shooting d8.
- \* Seducing Arkadevich: This powerful and arrogant man is very open to the charms of a one night stand.
- \* Joining a poker game with very high stakes (\$ 50,000 base). The game takes place in the office. You can use the Gambling rules. Besides Arkadevich himself, 3 people compete, with Gambling d8.

If things go wrong, the heroes will be stopped by the tycoon's guards and beaten until they reveal their secret and their goal. At that point, Arkadevich will leave them to his right arm Agron, who has kidnapped Mireia's sister or another close relative, forcing the group to report any progress in the research to him and give him every possible help, or he will kill and/or torture her and/or members of the team.

Otherwise, if the trickery succeeds, sooner or later Arkadevich will get suspicious about the whole thing and, recovering the surveillance footage of his office, he will find out what heroes did. From that moment on, he will send Agron to follow them so as to be led to the lost city.

From now on, in short, Arkadevich becomes the real enemy of the adventure.

#### HORACIO QUESADA

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

**Skills:** Fighting d4, Gambling d8, Intimidation d6, Perception d6, Taunt d6

**Charisma:** +2; **Pace:** 15; **Parry:** 4;

**Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Habit (minor, gambling), Stubborn

**Edges:** Filthy Rich



#### BORIS ARKADEVICH

**Gear:** Switchblade knife (Str+d4); S&W revolver (range: 12/24/48, damage: 2d6+1, RoF 1, Shots 6, AP 1).

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

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Gambling d10, Intimidation d8, Perception d6, Shooting d10, Taunt d6

**Charisma:** +2; **Pace:** 15; **Parry:** 6;

**Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Arrogant, Cautious, Greedy

**Edges:** Alertness, Filthy Rich



#### AGRON, ARKADEVICH'S RIGHT ARM

**Gear:** Switchblade knife (Str+d4); S&W revolver (range: 12/24/48, damage: 2d6+1, RoF 1, Shots 6, AP 1).

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

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Gambling d10, Intimidation d8, Perception d6, Shooting d10, Taunt d6

**Charisma:** -4; **Pace:** 15; **Parry:** 8;

**Toughness:** 8

**Hindrances:** Mean, Overconfident, Ugly

**Edges:** Block, Brawny, Martial Artist



## EPILOGUE – THE INSCRIPTION

If heroes manage to enter Arkadevich's office and examine the Guardian de Libeche, they will finally be able to see the inscription hidden in its mouth. The Azcali hieroglyphs can be translated by Mireia or by someone making a successful Knowledge (Azcali language or Linguistics) roll:

*Always honor Fourga's Pride!*

One way or another, heroes can move on to the next quatrain and look for another Guardian. If all the Guardians have been examined, it is time to move towards the last part of the adventure: see Part 5.

## PART 2: THE WORST BARS IN SAN JOSÉ

Atmosphere: *Gangsters, noir, gunfights and the underworld.*

### EL GUARDIAN DE GREGAL

The Guardian of the Northeastern wind had been positioned by Azcali priests in the heart of a sacred and forbidden area, before it became the place where the city of San José was founded. The only other Azcali building on the peninsula was the sanctuary of La Dorada, but this has nothing to do with the “big head”, except for the fact that the quatrains of Carmaux use it as a reference point.

### SCENE 1 – EARLY INVESTIGATIONS

The Carmaux quatrain speaks of a place about three miles southwest of the sanctuary of La Dorada. The place is more or less somewhere between the Sagrados and La Laguna; too large an area to search thoroughly.

There are some possibilities:

- \* With a successful Investigation roll, searching in some old archives, a hero may find that a great “Azcali antiquity”, a “big head”, was found in a building in Zamora, the old Spanish city buried beneath the present one. It was in an old warehouse. Studying ancient maps, the heroes can find the current location of the warehouse, more or less under a bar currently called El Agujero.
- \* With a successful Streetwise roll (and maybe a bit of money), an old smuggler can tell his story: a couple of times he did some exploration in the old underground city in search of lost

Spanish rubbish and he saw with his own eyes something similar to what the heroes are searching for. The smuggler used to get in and out of Zamora through the cellars under a bar now called El Agujero, owned by El Lagarto.

- \* With a Common Knowledge (-2) or Knowledge (San José) or Streetwise roll the heroes can think of asking the most famous antiquities expert in the city: El Morisco. This is also a way to let one of the characters in the shadows of this adventure enter into the story. El Morisco pretends to know nothing of the research, but in one way or another he will direct the heroes to El Lagarto: “He knows all the places in that district; if there is something to know, you have to ask him.” El Morisco also gives general indications of common sense: “Do not play the game of the smugglers, it is too dangerous; if you find something valuable and don't know what to do, you know where to find me...” In El Morisco's shop “La Sierra Encantada” it is possible to notice his right arm Eusebio, who is in charge of spying on the heroes on behalf of his master, for a moment.

### SCENE 2 – IN THE LIZARD'S HOLE

El Lagarto is not the most dangerous or powerful crimelord in the city, but he is probably smart and strong enough to be too tough for the heroes. El Lagarto manages petty crime and various

premises in the slums and has several minions ready to fight if the heroes should decide to be undiplomatic (see *Tropicana: Savage Setting* page 19). You can usually find him at his favorite local bar and hideout: El Agujero.

If the heroes come to El Agujero and try politely to convince El Lagarto to let them pass through his basement and enter the ruins of the buried city, the ignoble profiteer will expect a favor in return:

- \* "A good fight: there is always a need for fresh bones to break. If you win a match against the Anaconda I will unroll a nice red carpet towards that fetid hole for you myself." (see *Tropicana: Savage Setting* page 90).
- \* "Bring me a caiman! Mine has escaped from the cage and I need one of those beasts for a fight, tomorrow night. Where can I find a damn caiman in so little time?" Yeah, where can the heroes find a damn caiman? There are several of them along the Rio Grande or in the marshes around Esperanza, but also at the Water Park in front of the city, on the island of Great Torpedo. The heroes may be able to catch the poor animal personally or pay a guardian of the park or a poacher for the favor. Obviously that will take many dollars... And then, they have to carry the beast back alive and in good condition; this is not something that is strictly legal...
- \* "Can you drive? That son of a bitch of Napoleon is organizing a street race tonight. Give him a beating in my name and I swear on that bulldog snout of his that I'll give you the keys to the cellar." El Lagarto can give indications about the place and time of the race, but the car to be used and the money for the initial bet must be provided by the heroes. See Competition rules. 5 people compete, with Driving d8, plus Fred Lorraine, Wild Card, with Driving d10 and the Ace Edge.

If the heroes want to try out their bad manners, it's time for a lovely fight (or even a shootout) inside the room. Probably it will end with them getting a beating, and then with one of the above proposals. If, however,

they manage to get the key, or simply sneak into the basement (with two successful group Stealth rolls) and force or pick the lock, then the problem is solved.

### SCENE 3 - ZAMORA

The cellars of El Agujero actually seem to be the half-buried remains of some large warehouse of the past, on which someone has built the current building. A passage abandoned for years goes down to a room full of old building materials, now unusable, with a rusty iron gate. If heroes do not have the permission of El Lagarto but they still managed to get here, the fence is easily broken or forced (a successful Strength or Lockpicking roll opens it).

Damp stairs descend into the dark. The steps are half-ruined and partially unusable and it is not easy to understand where they lead.

Exploring the dark passages requires a successful Notice roll (-2). If the roll is failed, all PCs must make an Agility roll or suffer Fatigue as per Bumps and Bruises rules.

After a bit of searching in the ruins, the PCs encounter the big head they are looking for, but it is almost completely sunk in the mud: they only see a stone circle standing out from the hardened slime (the top of the head). The PCs have to dig down to the mouth before they can read the epigraph.

If they do not have tools with them, they will have to find some around. This is actually possible, because here and there among the collapsed passages of Zamora there are old tunnels dug by smugglers and some rusty spades and pickaxes. They only need to be careful not to get lost and beware of the unsafe walls, the traps placed by smugglers, and that huge Black Caiman that is said to be wandering around!

Finding the tools requires a new successful Notice roll (-2). If the roll is failed, all PCs must make an Agility roll or suffer Fatigue as per Bumps and Bruises rules - this represents the chance of suffering minor injuries while wandering around the dark, slippery, crumbling tunnels. In addition to

this, for every failed roll, draw a card. If it is a face card an event ensues:

**Clubs:** A passage collapses! The group is randomly split in two: draw a card for each character. Those with a red card are in one group and those with a black card are in the other. The two groups can get back together with a successful Notice roll (-2) or continue exploring separately. While the groups are separated, draw a card for each.

**Diamonds:** The group finds adequate tools for digging!

**Hearts:** Trap! One random character must make a successful Agility roll to avoid falling into a pit dug by smugglers and taking 2d6 damage.

**Spades:** A caiman (see Tropicana: Savage Setting page 84) crawls towards the group (just once, the second time read it as a Club). The characters must roll for Surprise.

## SCENE 4 - BETRAYAL AND FLIGHT

After clearing the Guardian from the debris and looking it in the mouth, it is time to come back outside. The problem is that El Lagarto has changed his mind or that the thugs of Arkadevich were down in the basement on the trail of the heroes and now they are right in front of the exit, waiting for them to turn back.

Heroes can become aware of the problem before reaching the exit with a successful Notice roll, and identify the affiliation and number of their opponents. After that, they'll

need to open fire and make their way out with extreme measures, lure their enemies into some trap, look around for dynamite or decide to cut and run through the tunnels of Zamora.

They can search for a way out of the tunnels using the same rolls as above, when they were searching for digging tools. Instead of the tools, they find a way out through a cave near the coast, close to a hidden, isolated cove.

## EPILOGUE - THE INSCRIPTION

If heroes manage to examine the Guardian and find their way out, they will finally be able to check the inscription hidden in its mouth. The Azcali hieroglyphs can be translated by Mireia or by a person making a successful Knowledge (Azcali language or Linguistics) roll:

### *Along the monkey's path*

If the heroes were followed, spied on, or threatened by Agron and/or Eusebius, going into the basement of Zamora, faking their own deaths and going underground might be the best way to remove these hindrances for a while.

One way or another, the heroes can move to the next quatrain and look for another Guardian. If the four Guardians have been examined, it is time to move towards the last part of the adventure: see Part 5.

# PART 3: A FISTFUL OF DYNAMITE!

Atmosphere: *Guerrillas, rebels, corrupt soldiers and a lot of dynamite.*

## EL GUARDIAN DE MISTRAL

According to the quatrains of Carmaux, the Guardian of the Northwestern wind is located on the Sierra de Plata, near the Old Mine, one of the largest mines dug by the Spaniards when they arrived in the region. For decades

it was exploited and expanded by hundreds of natives, slaves and convicts, up to the present form of a maze of ancient and crumbling galleries, abandoned since 1645.

All characters who have lived in San José for at least a month know something about the Sierra: a wild, harsh and inhospitable land, considered off limits by many, since the entire mountain range is in the hands of the guerrillas of the Frente de Liberación Nacional and all villages, airstrips and roads are patrolled by squads of freedom fighters.

The Sierra is deliberately left without telephone or satellite coverage, although radio and television work as normal and water and electricity facilities are guaranteed. The villages practice collective agriculture, focused almost entirely on subsistence and marijuana cultivation. The marijuana is then sold in San José by the Mama Negra, the Green Brigades and other Villa Rosada activists, organizations or groups close to the rebels.

Reaching the Sierra and exploring the surroundings of the Old Mine means passing the Army blockades and rebel patrols, or coming to terms with one of these two forces to cheat the other.

## SCENE 1 – TO THE SIERRA

The three easiest ways to reach the Sierra are:

- + Ally with the Army and get a pass to get on the cordillera, unbeknown to the Frente. The soldiers are bad fish to fry; most of them are corrupt and always looking for a way to get back at the rebels. If the heroes decide on this course of action, they will have to find a good contact and play dirty. The fat and greedy Sergeant Gonzalez sounds like the right guy for them. His contingent is stationed along the Carrera Norte and, if well-bribed, he will drive the heroes in a jeep through the bush and let them get close to their destination, leaving them near a trail, a few miles away from their target. But before the jeep reaches the trail, along the way it will be ambushed by the rebels, who spray the car with a couple of pounds of bullets. Play this as a standard 5 round Chase. The jeep is driven by one standard soldier; there are 6 rebels, riding three dirt bikes (one drives and the other is free to shoot).

- + Collusion with the Rebels might seem easier, especially if the heroes make a successful Streetwise roll and get in contact with the Green Brigades, the Yupima Indios or the Esperanzanos, all organizations that can lead them directly to their destination. If the heroes manage to convince a contact or pay for a ride, they will leave in the middle of the night on a camouflaged land rover with bags over their heads. Unfortunately bypassing the Army is not so easy, and soon the land rover is intercepted by a small convoy. Go on with a Chase on the narrow paths of the jungle between the rebels and the military, with the standard Chase rules. Whether the land rover crashes into a ditch or the rebels just deliver the heroes near a trail and then lead their pursuers away, the outcome is more or less the same; they are now only a few miles away from the mountains.
- + Reaching the Sierra on their own. Why not? They are heroes, after all! A speedboat can avoid the naval patrols from the coast guard and reach the shore where the Sierra meets the coast; from there, they can go up into the mountains on old smugglers' paths. Or the heroes could use a small aircraft, avoid military helicopters with skillful maneuvers and try to land on one of the airfields of the Sierra, and then deal with the Rebels on the spot. Another way could be to go openly on the Carrera Norte up to the village of San Calixto, where the rebel area begins. If they pass the military checkpoints, the heroes will face one of the largest known rebel bases in the country. In San Calixto, the Frente has established a roadblock for all vehicles moving along the Carrera and the whole village has been fortified against all kinds of assaults. There are rocky and sandy bunkers, firing positions inside the remains of the Spaniards' watchtowers and even mortars hidden among the houses. Passing along the Carrera Norte will require a contribution of \$200 "for the cause", and the constant "protection" of a group of rebels.

## SCENE 2 - ON SMUGGLERS' PATHS

If the heroes have gotten in trouble in the jungle (off-road, in an ambush, left behind or shot down with their aircraft) they will find the first slopes of the mountains after a few miles. The area is wild and dangerous and only old Azcali and smugglers' tracks run through it. It's time to face the perils of the mountains.

Each party member must make two successful Climbing rolls. For each failed roll, the character suffers one level of Fatigue, or a Wound on a critical failure.

## SCENE 3 - AMONG THE REBELS

Once on the Sierra, the heroes are ambushed by dozens of Yupima, so many that fighting them would be madness. Luckily, the Yupima don't want to kill them, but hand them to the Rebels.

Unless they try to make their way for miles through unfamiliar mountains (with a good chance of ending up riddled with bullets after a few hours), the heroes will somehow have to reach a compromise with Miguel and his commanders.

The Sierra is not off-limits to those who prove to be allies or supporters of the Frente. Indeed, Miguel and his rebels do everything they can to make it an area where the "friends" of the Revolución are welcome and can carry out their activities. So, they are willing to let them do their research and drive them to the Old Mine. The only thing they require in return is to "prove" loyalty and friendship. If the heroes do so, with promises, money and/or a successful Persuasion roll (-2 unless at least \$1000 are offered), they are welcome, otherwise they will be tested during the delivery (see "Scene 4").

## SCENE 4 - THE DELIVERY

Rebels lead the heroes to the Old Mine, where the Guardian they are looking for is, in one of their base camps. Before allowing the PCs to examine the big head, if the rebels don't trust the heroes, they will keep them shackled for the time required to deliver some explosives. Members of the Green Brigades are coming to get these for use in future demonstrations

in the city. Soon, a beat-up van arrives from the Carretera, carrying young people of the Green Brigades, seemingly imbued with ideology. The vehicle is parked near the mine entrance, where the delivery will take place.

The two groups meet and begin to discuss politics in one of the first rooms cut from the stone of the mine, where there is a rebel sentry. Whatever the position and the status of the heroes, shackled or not, a successful Notice roll allows them to understand, from certain details, that at least two of the "Brigades" are actually impostors, probably undercover agents. A Raise allows them to realize that the Rebels seem to know that and are aware of the treason being committed against the Green Brigades.

In short, the Tercio has infiltrated the Brigades and is manipulating them to get close to the Frente and get explosives, for who knows what purpose, but the rebels know this and have prepared a countermove. If the heroes do nothing, they are ordered to load dynamite boxes onto the van and during this anybody making a successful Notice roll will hear a ticking sound from the inside of one of the boxes.

If the heroes act in any way, the infiltrators of the Tercio and the Rebels will soon start a gunfight and the heroes will have to choose a faction. The boxes of explosives are obviously one of the first things that will be hit, exploding and bringing down part of the mine.

Otherwise, a few minutes after the departure of the van, someone will hear quiet ticking close to one of the boxes of dynamite left in the entrance: while the Frente thought to play a trick on the Tercio, the undercover agents have done the same! Either way, a great explosion will destroy the mine entrance...

### Rebels (12) and Brigade Members (3)

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

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Streetwise d4, Survival d4, Swimming d4

**Charisma:** -; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5;

**Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Vow (Lead the People to freedom)

**Gear:** Machete (Str+d6, AP 1); Uzi submachine gun (range: 12/24/48, damage: 2d6, RoF 3, Shots 32, AP 1, Auto) or S&W revolver (range: 12/24/48, damage: 2d6+1, RoF 1, Shots 6, AP 1).

**Tercio Infiltrators (5)**

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

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d8, Streetwise d6

**Charisma:** -; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6;

**Toughness:** 5

**Gear:** Switchblade knife (Str+d4); S&W revolver (range: 12/24/48, damage: 2d6+1, RoF 1, Shots 6, AP 1).

## SCENE 5 – DOWN IN THE OLD MINE

The heroes and the survivors of the explosion (rebels, infiltrators and/or real members of the Brigades) will soon find themselves in the dark, in the midst of a cloud of dust, inside an old Spanish mine abandoned for centuries.

First of all, they will need to obtain light and possibly medicines for the injured, then they'll need to make their way through the tunnels to find another way out.

The Old Mine has other secondary entrances, and finding one requires a successful Notice roll (-2). For each failed roll, draw a card. If it is a face card, an event ensues:

**Clubs:** A passage collapses! The group is randomly split in two: draw a card for each character, those with a red card are in one

group and those with a black card are in the other. The two groups can get back together with a successful Notice roll (-2) or continue exploring separately. While the groups are separated, draw a card for each.

**Diamonds:** The group finds a way out of the mine!

**Hearts:** Pitfall! One random character must make a successful Agility roll to avoid falling into a pit caused by the explosion and suffering 2d6 damage.

**Spades:** Lost! The penalty to the next Notice roll is -4. Each time you draw a Spade face card, the penalty is increased by -2.

**Joker:** This must be the right way! The next Notice roll is without penalty.

## EPILOGUE – THE INSCRIPTION

One way or another, before or after the escape from the mines, the heroes will be allowed to examine the “big head” and read the inscription inside the mouth. The Azcali hieroglyphs can be translated by Mireia or by a person making a successful test of Knowledge (Azcali language or Linguistics):

### *Up the tombs' river*

It's time to move to the next quatrain and look for another Guardian. If the four Guardians have been examined, it is time to move towards the last part of the adventure: see Part 5.

## PART 4:

# SWAMPS, ALLIGATORS AND HEAVY HANDS

Atmosphere: *Martial arts, marshes, critters and rootwork.*

## EL GUARDIAN DE SIROCO

According to Carmaux's quatrains, the Guardian of the Southeastern wind is located in the middle of the marshes at the mouth

of the Rio Grande. The marshes are located near the second largest city of the country, which is really little more than an overgrown village: Esperanza.

This city is a place rarely visited by tourists and everyone knows that the gang called La Mama Negra is the real owner of the area. La Mama Negra is an association of various families, each consisting of a few dozen criminals, a group of foremen and a Little Mama who runs it. The Esperanzanos deal in cultivating and selling low-grade drugs (mostly hallucinogens and cannabis), smuggling emeralds and rare animals, trading in weapons and objects of art.

The whole village is behind the Mama Negra and very tightly knit. Few are those who do not support or derive benefit from Mama's activities, so the definition of the gang as the "Esperanzanos" is more real than people commonly think.

All around Esperanza, the mouth of the Rio Grande is a marshy delta of dozens of rivers, large and small, kept as a nature reserve.

## SCENE 1 - ESPERANZA

First of all, the heroes will need to reach Esperanza and ask around. Sooner or later, the heroes must understand that the only way to track down the Azcali big head is to rely on locals. And that means befriending some Mama Negra.

Through their contacts or with a successful Streetwise roll, they can track down some street bravo connected to the Mama, who can help. Whoever he is, the bravo volunteers to take a message to Mom and tells the heroes to wait until they are called.

But Esperanzanos are not known for admitting just anyone to their homes at the first request.

The heroes will be left for a couple of days wandering around the town, with no response. Everyone they meet is probably a spy for the Mama. They can attend bars, witness a funeral with a music band and slow processions, join a religious wake that lasts all night with mystical ecstasy, creole chanting, drums and burning candles.

In any case, whatever they do, no one will help them and everyone will tell them to wait.

## SCENE 2 - THE BULLET YARD

If the heroes have already been involved with Arkadevich, Agron and a couple of Russian henchmen come to town to threaten and/or finish the job with the heroes (see Part 1). If that meeting never happened, the enemies could be El Lagarto's "boys" (see Part 2), a reprisal by the Tercio or even the Rebels (see Part 3). If this is the first Part the group is playing, the Esperanzani will find a rival band of lowly thugs and lead them to the heroes.

Whatever the case, a boy calls the heroes and leads them to an abandoned block. Then, he invites them to enter a courtyard between four concrete crumbling buildings and says they are expected there.

The ruined courtyard is at the very center of the block, and the ground is covered with thousands of used cartridges, debris and old rusty appliances. Moments after their arrival, their opponents are allowed to enter by another door. The very next moment, they start shooting.

Enemies: Number of heroes +1.

### LOWLY THUGS

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d4, Streetwise d6, Swimming d4, Taunt d4

**Charisma:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5;

**Toughness:** 5

**Hindrances:** Greedy, Mean

**Gear:** Switchblade knife (Str+d4); S&W revolver (range: 12/24/48, damage: 2d6+1, RoF 1, Shots 6, AP 1).

## SCENE 3 - THE LIMOUSINE

If the heroes manage to get out of the bullet yard, a white limousine with gold (and bulletproof) trim stops near the exit of the building and the door opens in front of them.

Inside the car, there is an 18-year-old Creole girl, with dreadlocks and extremely revealing and flashy clothes. The space inside the limo is vast and all the heroes can sit comfortably, drink aged rum and... fight.

The girl begins to question the heroes and often gives them heavy slaps. She says that neither they nor their attackers are welcome in Esperanza and the bullet yard is what they keep for foreigners. *Go solve your disputes somewhere else. What do you want? Stone heads? Lost cities? I don't give a damn!*

The girl is Dalilah, one of the Little Mamas, and she is there to test the heroes. They have the option to fight her, seduce her or convince her to help (Persuasion-4 roll; offering any amount of money will make it -6).



### DALILAH

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

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d4, Streetwise d6, Swimming d4

**Charisma:** -; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8;

**Toughness:** 6

**Hindrances:** Arrogant

**Edges:** Acrobat, Alertness, Attractive, Block, Improved Martial Artist, Martial Style (Capoeira Zamorana ZAMORANA IS OK)

**Gear:** S&W revolver in her purse (range: 12/24/48, damage: 2d6+1, RoF 1, Shots 6, AP 1).

## SCENE 4 - THE AUNTIES

Whether beaten or convinced to help, Dalilah asks the driver to go to an old fence at the edge of Esperanza, in a place that looks like a junkyard. Inside a caravan partially sunk in the mud, there are the three "Aunties". They do not know where the stone head is, but they can offer the heroes "herb-tea" and allow them to "see" the place.

Each character is offered a cup of "tea". Those who fail a Vigor (-4) roll lose consciousness, while those who succeed only feel dizzy and relaxed. Those who lose consciousness must also make a Spirit roll. On a successful roll they have visions of the surrounding area, and one of them, in a trance, sees and even draws a large, collapsing mangrove in a quagmire.

At the end of the trip, the Aunties wish good luck to the heroes and then leave them in the hands of Grandpa Enoch. He is a disgusting

geezer, spitting phlegm all the time and blowing his nose with his hands. He recognizes the mangrove, and takes them on his boat to the heart of the marshes. If well paid, of course.

## SCENE 5 - CAIMANS

### AND MANGROVES

Grandpa Enoch brings the heroes on his motor boat through canals and sand dunes, infested with black caimans, while the clear sky towards the ocean is crossed by endless lightning and greenish lights flash and disappear among the pools, both natural phenomena of this region. After a few hours, they arrive in front of a huge mangrove, but the head of the Guardian is partially sunk into the swamp and it will be necessary to swim between its roots to read the inscription in its mouth.

Obviously, those who engage in this delightful activity will be the target of a piranha swarm! Checking the inscription requires a successful Notice roll.

### PIRANHA SWARM

Swarms are considered as one large creature. When wounded, the swarm is dispersed.

Swarms cover the area of a Medium Burst Template and attack everyone within every round.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Notice d6, Swimming d10

**Pace:** 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7

### Special Abilities:

**Aquatic:** Piranhas are at home in the water; they can't survive on land, and cannot be stomped.

**Bites:** These deadly fish inflict hundreds of bites every round, hitting automatically and dealing 2d6 damage to everyone in the template. Damage is applied to the least armored location.

**Swarm:** Parry +2. Cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Area effect weapons work normally.

## EPILOGUE - THE INSCRIPTION

The Azcali hieroglyphs can be translated by Mireia or by a person making a successful test of Knowledge (Azcali language):

### *Down the blacktree's stairs*

It's time to move to the next quatrain and look for another Guardian. If the four Guardians have been examined, it is time to move towards the last part of the adventure: see Part 5.

# PART 5: TOWARDS THE LOST CITY

## THE EXPEDITION

With the four inscriptions, it is quite simple to find the Lost City. The Azcali hieroglyphs must be translated and then put in order (clockwise, starting from the Northwestern one, the sacred direction for the Azcali):

- \* Up the tombs river
- \* Along the monkeys' path
- \* Down the blacktree's stairs
- \* Always honor Fourga's pride

The Boca Verde is full of native Divinities, monkey paths and black trees. But the tombs' river is surely the Rio Catacumbas, a small tributary of the Rio Grande, tight, slow and tortuous. The Catacumbas owes its name to the large number of prehistoric sepulchres found in its valley; mounds built with black stones, overgrown by plants and partially sunk into the ground. For years these graves were the main targets of San José's treasure hunters. A Bacaima village called Ayleguà is located at the confluence of the Rio Grande and the Catacumbas and it is from here that the heroes must leave on their final expedition.

If the heroes have trouble understanding how to proceed and even Mireia's knowledge is not enough, they may resort to El Morisco (this could be suggested by Professor de Arona, Mireia or a Streetwise roll). As always, El Morisco is polite and friendly, but he is plotting to get his hands on everything. If it seems useful, the cunning art dealer offers to send his trusted henchman Eusebio with the team to "streamline matters" and/or add money to Mireia's funds.

## SCENE 1 - AYLEGUÀ

Ayleguà is a village of a few hundred souls, made up partly of the traditional Bacaima stilt houses on the river, and partly of newer buildings. The village has maintained most of its centuries-old appearance, except for colored t-shirts and bottles of fizzy drinks. A Ranger House also serves as a hostel and a resting place for travelers authorized to reach this point in the Boca Verde, the farthest place where non-Azcali visitors are allowed by the laws of the Reserve. This is also the town where semi-processed emeralds arrive from the Esmeralda Extractiva, deep in the jungle, and the Rangers are very careful that everything goes as it should, and there are no problems in the city.

Ayleguà is connected to the city of San José by a road running through the jungle and passing the small town of El Recodo. From El Recodo, the track follows the Rio Grande and becomes little more than a dirt trail, so the heroes can make this journey by river or by land. They might also want to use a small aircraft from San José, which can land on a local airfield.

But things are never that simple for heroes, right?

If Eusebio is not yet part of the team, any way the heroes decide to take to reach Ayleguà they have to deal with sabotage caused by El Morisco:

- \* By land: a spiked chain is put on the road, puncturing the tires of the group's vehicle. It can be noticed by the driver with a successful Notice roll (-4), and avoided with a successful Driving roll (-2). If it's not avoided, it will destroy

the tires and make the vehicle useless. Moreover, if the driver fails a Driving roll (-2), all the passengers in the vehicle must make an Agility roll or suffer one level of Fatigue for Bumps and Bruises, or a Wound on snake eyes. The spiked chain seems to have been put down a few moments before the heroes passed.

- \* By river: the chosen boat has been damaged and begins to take on water. The sabotage must have occurred at El Recodo. This has no further consequences except for delaying the group.
- \* By airplane: the engine malfunctions a short time after takeoff and someone seems to have made a hole in the fuel tanks. An emergency landing somewhere in the jungle will be necessary. If the pilot fails a Piloting-2 roll, all the passengers in the vehicle must make an Agility roll or suffer one level of Fatigue for Bumps and Bruises, or a Wound on snake eyes.

The saboteur is Eusebio, who has meanwhile reached Ayleguà and appears as a friend of El Morisco. His aim is to put the group in trouble, and then gain their trust and join them. He offers to accompany the group into the jungle and fix their various issues. Even if the heroes should suspect that he is the saboteur, there is no evidence of this and they cannot directly attack him or deal with him in a surly way in the village square, because of the Rangers.

## SCENE 2 - "DO YOU HAVE A PERMIT FOR THE RESERVE?"

Occasionally, Reserve authorities allow expeditions in the Boca Verde, beyond Ayleguà, but Mireia did not think to ask for this concession, which is still very rare and often requires "sweeteners" to different "powers". Even if the heroes request it now, several months will pass before the authorities of San José give an answer, and Professor De Arona cannot intercede. Meanwhile, for one reason or another, Mireia and the heroes WILL NOT have the Rangers' permission to visit the Reserve, nor

to investigate Azcali ruins. The Rangers take their job very seriously and will not accept bribes.

If they want to go on, they must do so clandestinely.

Accepting Eusebio's help, or finding another guide through a Streetwise roll, is the only way to go on.

None of the local guides know any "Black Tree" but if you go up the river, there is indeed a place full of monkeys, everybody knows that. Some Bacaima boatmen could lead the group that far. If the heroes decide to trust Eusebio, he will fix everything to perfection, find a local guide, and instruct and pay him personally.

If by chance the heroes do not want to commit an illegal act or do not know how to proceed, the Game Master may field Arkadevich and his gangsters, who have reached Ayleguà hot on the heroes' trail and are ready to shoot, fight and act like bad guys in every way, if the heroes do not try to outrun them. Again, Eusebio could be the "bad adviser" who convinces them to hurry up and/or help the heroes against the Russians.

## SCENE 3 - ON THE RIO CATACUMBAS

So far, the heroes should have understood that it will be necessary go up the Rio Catacumbas, find "the monkeys' path" and then the "black tree" to continue. The river trip can be made quietly, unless it is necessary to play a chase against the Russians mobsters among canals, swamps and black caimans.

The place where the monkeys come together is a sandy shore with no docking point, actually infested by primates of all kinds. If the Russians are on the heroes' heels, Eusebio or the "guide" can drop them on the shore and then try to lure Agron and his henchmen away. Otherwise, Eusebio jumps on the bank with the heroes and the boatman will wait in place for their return.

When the heroes start to explore the shore and take their first steps into the area, they meet the first groups of small monkeys. The primates are alarmed by their presence and stop to watch them, and more and more monkeys approach the group, standing at a distance on the branches, but visibly nervous. If the heroes attempt to pass quietly through the jungle, they must accomplish a Stealth Dramatic Task (with group rolls). If the Dramatic Task fails, or the heroes simply ignore the alarmed monkeys, they begin shrieking and some huge angry males jump in front of the group, launching into combat.

**Angry Monkeys (number of heroes +2)**

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smart d6 (A), Strength d6, Spirit d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Notice d4

**Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 4

**Special Abilities:**

**Bite:** Str.

**Size -1:** They are bigger and meaner than most monkeys, but still smaller than a man.

## *SCENE 4 - THE BLACK TREE AND FOURGA'S PRIDE*

Having defeated the angry monkeys, the heroes find a great track that goes to the heart of the Boca Verde.

The heat and humidity of the jungle are extreme and the heroes must make a Vigor roll or suffer the effects of Heat (see Heat rules in *Savage Worlds*).

Finally, the heroes will come in sight of an unmistakable Black Tree. It is of an unknown species, with the main trunk of a bottle tree, huge and ramified roots like a mangrove's, and long branches, from which blackish filaments hang.

A successful Notice roll lets the heroes understand that the filaments seem to strangle and poison all the plants around, that there are no animals nesting or having holes near the tree and that the air is impregnated with a sweetish and sour fragrance.

It is a Poison Tree, a plant from the Azcali legends: the soil between the roots is covered

with the bones and skulls of animals that the plant attracts, poisons and leaves decomposing at its feet, to feed on them. The trunk, the filaments, the vines and branches are all impregnated with a poison that works on contact. Treat the poison as a contact Venomous poison (see Poison rules in *Savage Worlds*).

Standing close to the tree for more than one hour also has the same effects as a Knockout poison.

Hidden among the roots of the Black Tree there are stone stairs that descend to a lower basin, a ditch created by the shape of the land and the roots.

At the bottom of these stairs, there is a huge Azcali wheel, a stone disc almost completely covered with symbols and inscriptions made in bas-relief, with all the gods and heroes of their main mythology.

Among them there is also Fourga, God of Pride, often depicted as a hunter. Looking at the point identified by this figure heroes will be able locate a lever inserted into the stone slab. Pulling the lever, a system of still-active counterweights triggers the stone disc and it rolls aside. The passage to the Lost City is open.

## *SCENE 5 - AZCALI RELIQUARY*

The passage leads to a room in the shape of a cube of stone of about sixteen feet per side. The walls, floor and ceiling are infested with roots of the Black Tree. The rotating disc of stone from which the heroes entered stays open.

The whole room is decorated with carvings, showing episodes of the Azcali history and myths, including those concerning Kikomoyac.

By studying these bas-reliefs it is possible to know something of the place. The Ancestors of the Azcali lived in an underground city, a sanctuary against the beasts and wild animals of the surrounding forest. There the Ancestors built homes, terraces and underground ways and buried their dead

on the surface. Apparently, however, the Ancestors had counterparts who lived along the coast and between the islands. At one point in the story, this second tribe convinced the people of Kikomoyac to leave their subterranean refuge and move to the islands, in a place called Azcalya, "The Island of the Herons", which soon became the capital of a prosperous and happy kingdom. So "The Age of the Gods" began.

The only thing is that this is certainly not the place from which they started their migration. Probably this is just a temporary refuge chosen by the Ancestors in their march towards Azcalya.

All this way for nothing: Mireia sits down and begins to cry.

## SCENE 6 - THE SEVEN ROOMS

Used to living under the ground and defending themselves from beasts and other enemies, the Ancestors always had a passion for stone gates, sliding walls, traps and pitfalls.

The entire structure where the heroes are is built this way, and besides the bas-reliefs depicting the story of the Azcali, there is much more to investigate.

**Peyuma's Room:** The wall in front of the entrance of the room in which heroes have just entered has three holes placed horizontally at eye level, large enough to let someone put his arms inside. Above them, there is a symbol with two snakes intertwined: Peyuma, the Double God, Lord of Snakes, Mirrors and Tricks. Peyuma is wrapped around another glyph, which means "the Seven Rooms". Inside, the holes are swarming with maggots, cockroaches, spiders and scorpions. They are not dangerous, but the heroes can only figure this out with a successful Knowledge (Science) roll. If someone puts an arm inside, on the bottom of each one there is a lever: the mechanism is very deteriorated and to operate it successfully a Repair roll is required.

The lever at the bottom of the central hole closes the stone disc behind the group, leaving them in the dark. The lever can be

used again to open and close the door, but at the first critical failure, the mechanism is broken and stops working.

**Azicaya's Room:** The lever at the bottom of the right hole opens the left wall: behind this there is another cubic room, with three new holes on the wall in front of the entrance, vertically arranged. The room is identical to the previous one and lots of human bones can be seen on the floor. Characters that succeed at a Notice roll see that the bones of the arms are cut in two. Whatever was originally here is unknown, but over the three vertical holes there is the symbol of Azicaya, the Brother of the Sun, one of the two sacred heavenly twins. Next to each of the three holes are etched other symbols (the same symbols and in the same order as those in Limanya's Room: see below).

**Limanya's Room:** The lever at the bottom of the left hole opens the right wall: behind this there is another cubic room, with three new holes on the wall in front of the entrance, vertically arranged. The room is identical to the previous one and lots of human bones can be seen on the floor. Characters that succeed at a Notice roll see that the bones of the arms are cut in two. Whatever was originally here is unknown, but over the three vertical holes there is the symbol of Limanya, the Sister of the Moon, one of the two sacred heavenly twins. Next to each of the three holes are etched other symbols (the same and in the same order as those in Azicaya's Room: see below).

*To use the three vertical holes of the two side rooms facing each other (Azicaya's and Limanya's), it is necessary that two people together pull the lever at the bottom of the same hole (top, central or bottom) in the two different rooms. If this does not happen, a blade falls through the hole to cut off the arms of those who did it wrongly. If both succeed in the Repair Check for the same levers, then they can access three new rooms:*

**Venyarta's Room:** Near the top holes in Limanya's and Aicaya's rooms there is the symbol of Venyarta, God of Thieves, Monkeys and Cleverness. When the levers are moved together, a stone slab with stairs descends from above in the central room (Peyuma's Room) and allows heroes to get

to this other room over the top of the cube. Inside that place, heroes find themselves inside the Poison Tree and in the midst of a swarm of poisonous spiders as big as cats. An idol fashioned in solid gold is at the center of the room. It is a key to the TRUE Kikomoyac, but the heroes cannot know this now.

### JUNGLE SPIDER SWARM

Swarms are considered as one large creature. When it is wounded, the swarm is dispersed.

Swarms cover the area of a Medium Burst Template and attack everyone within it every round.

**Attributes:** Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Notice d6

**Pace:** 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7

#### **Special Abilities:**

**Bite or Sting:** Swarms inflict hundreds of tiny bites every round, hitting automatically and dealing 2d4 damage to everyone in the template. Damage is applied to the least armored location.

**Split:** This swarm can split into two smaller groups (Small Burst Templates). Their Toughness is reduced by -2.

**Swarm:** Parry +2. Cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Area effect weapons work normally, and a character can stomp to inflict damage equal to his Strength each round. Swarms are usually foiled by jumping in water, unless they are aquatic creatures to begin with.

**Jungle Spiders:** These tiny spiders inflict a mildly toxic poison. Characters Shaken or Wounded by their bites must make a successful Vigor roll or suffer one level of Fatigue, which can be recovered in 24 hours. This swarm has the Wall Walker special ability.

**Torteda's Room:** Near the central holes in Limanya's and Aicaya's rooms there is the symbol of Torteda, the Jaguar God of War and the Jungle. When the levers are moved together, with a series of puffs of dust an ancient secret door partially opens in the middle of the wall in Peyuma's Room, under the three horizontal holes. By pushing it with a Strength check and crouching down, heroes can get into a cubic chamber, similar to the previous ones. In the centre, a clay globe

as big as a water melon rests on a low pillar, and scattered around there are embalmed mummies, gold weapons, Azcali ornaments and jewellery. On the walls, bas-reliefs depict the old myth of the Fountain of Eternal Youth. The treasure of this room would be enough to make the heroes' fortune, or fill a whole wing of the Museum of San José. Inside the globe, if someone pays attention, there is greyish water (with great powers, according to the Azcali).

**Hunycame's Room:** Near the bottom holes in Limanya's and Aicaya's rooms there is the symbol of Hunycame, God of the Hell of Mechanical Tortures (Azcali have many Hells). When the levers are moved together, the whole floor of the central chamber (Peyuma's Room), except for a space two feet wide around the edges, turns into a trap door and drops the unlucky people in the middle into a pit, full of sharp gold spikes. It is not possible to refit the floor in place. Those in the central room must make an Agility-2 roll or suffer 3d6+3 damage.

## SCENE 8 - FINAL SHOWDOWN

What sort of adventure would this be without a final clash? When the heroes begin to explore the reliquary and understand the trick of the levers, it's time to put the bad guys on stage!

Arkadevich's henchmen are the perfect enemy for a gunfight in this Azcali trap. Agron and his minions can enter, guns in hand, and open fire on everything and everyone, or threaten the heroes.

If our heroes are in trouble, they might try to open the other rooms, risking their arms in the holes in the wall, or it could be the bad guys do this, trying to quickly find the treasure. This could lead to the closure of the large stone disc at the entrance (and therefore darkness falling in the room!), to the fall of the large slab which provides access to the upper chamber, or to the opening of the trap door to the pit: all diversions that might change the situation in favor of our Heroes.

If the mobsters are defeated or overcome too easily, Eusebio can be used as a twist and run away with some of the loot, or be blinded by

the lust for gold and activate some trap of the reliquary.

In any case, a great battle and a few dead is a great end for the adventure.

### THE WEIRD OPTION

If it fits your campaign style, the greyish water in the clay globe can actually have great powers.

If drunk or poured over wounds, it completely heals all Wounds and Fatigue.

If the globe is broken (and this happens with the same rules as for Innocent Bystanders), the mummies in the room come back to life! They will not attack Azcali characters, but will randomly charge anyone else. For the Azcali mummies, use the Skeleton stats found in Savage Worlds Deluxe.

### EPILOGUE

If the heroes got rid of Agron and his henchmen, and recovered the Idol and the treasures of Torteda's Room, there is little else to do here.

Like any good story, a treasure hunt cannot leave the heroes too "rich",

otherwise they would withdraw immediately from the business. If they return loaded with treasures, El Morisco and Eusebio will lighten them a little, maybe by pouring some soporific poison in their drinks at their celebration.

It is also true that Mireia's expedition is not for loot, and she wants to deliver the artifacts and treasures to the Museum and to Faye. The heroes will certainly receive a bonus to the reward they agreed, but they are not going to become billionaires and tomb raiders from this adventure... unless they decide to rob Mireia...

And the real Kikomoyac? The Seven Cities of Gold exist but they are somewhere else. The only real indication of the Lost City's whereabouts was engraved on the inside of the Azcali stone disc that sealed the reliquary. It was called "Fourga's Room" and that's the reason that part was called "the Seven Rooms". Did the heroes think to look at that?

If the answer is yes, Mireia now has a lot of material to study. But, as soon as she has investigated symbols, coordinates and glyphs, there is no doubt that she will ask again for the help of our heroes.

And this time to reach the true lost city!

