MINI SETTINGS

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Dedicated to everyone who's ever created their own world and those who support them.

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WRITTEN AND © BY: Matthew Cutter

The War of Independence is won...but the herculean effort to build a more perfect union has only started. This isn't history — this is Pulp History in the post-Revolutionary Era! Nefarious Illuminati agents hatch plots in smoky Boston taprooms. Fallen gods of the Northmen stalk Ohio's howling wilderness. Risen ghosts abound. Against them, the Sons of Liberty wield diplomacy as well as muskets, but they also dabble in Scientifick Philosophy and even magick! A handful have the blood of the old gods in their veins. So load your flintlock and gather your flats, sharps, and sundry supplies: the battle for liberty has just begun!

ABYSSAL 15

WRITTEN AND © BY: Shane Lacy Hensley

A family of explorers joins a United Nations expedition to explore a mysterious "Event" at the bottom of the Marianas Trench. What they find there will change the world forever. This Saturday morning cartoon-inspired setting features strange and enhanced sea creatures, insidious rival corporations, and the growing urgency of the Event itself and the inexplicable force behind it!

TESLA RANGERS 27

WRITTEN AND © BY: Cheyenne Wright

It's been 11 years since America lost the Robot War and ceded everything west of the Mississippi to the automatons. Now a fresh young scientist with a government contract and a load of new experimental devices is outfitting a voluntary expeditionary force to cross the ol' Miss and head deep into No Man's Land.

Tesla Rangers is a high-octane action adventure pitting cowboys with lightning guns against cast-iron killer robots in a battle for the Wired West.

THE LOST CITY OF ASTLA 37

WRITTEN AND © BY: BJ Hensley

As Astla's resources dwindled, the ancient "elves" fled to a massive city-ship in the stars, hoping to wait out the barbaric and destructive People who overran it. But now the Astlatians have begun to suffer from a terrible wasting disease, and the only cure may be a return to their homelands. Some urge war, some peace. As they debate, small bands return to the surface to scout, raid, and learn from those who remain in the barren wastes.

SPIRITS OF 1786

Spirits of 1786 *is pulp action with the trappings of historical fiction & horror — pulp history, if you will. But this is no history lesson. This is two-fist'd adventure in the Revolutionary era, set against the stormy backdrop of a troubl'd young nation.*

A WORLD TURN'D UPSIDE DOWN

The War for Independence is won — huzzah! But the fledgling States have their freedom only at the price of famine, economic depression, and lawlessness. Some people promote commerce and the reaping of the frontier's resources as a tonic to drag America from the very precipice of ruin.

But the explorers, surveyors, and soldiers who open this savage frontier have to face more than just Indian tribes, still-occupied British forts, and miles of howling wilderness. The countryside teems with Illuminati agents, rebels, loyalists, and cutthroats. And all across the Colonies, the spirits of the dead begin to rise…

A NATION OF INTRIGUE

Though the Revolution against England has succeeded, and the Articles of Confederation serve as a stopgap against unbridled anarchy, a truly united America remains but a dream of the Continental Congress. Economic depression, famine, thievery, and unrest everywhere threaten to undo the work of patriots.

The American Colonies in early 1786 are a hotbed of cloak-and-dagger intrigue, perpetrated by a bizarre array of factions. The Ohio Company's agents unknowingly rub elbows with operatives of Ben Franklin's Committee for Secret Correspondence, while Washington's Culper Ring continues to operate on an even more covert basis than during the War.

The British East India Company, eager to reap the economic benefits of the newly-freed Colonies, has agents in every port and city on the coast — ever seeking word of opportunities to quickly fill their purses. Freemasons and Illuminati fight a shadow war in the dark alleys and parlor rooms of Boston and Providence, while in Philadelphia the League of Scientifick Philosophy seeks to create a new science to supplant superstition.

THE ILLUMINATI

The Illuminati were founded in Bavaria in May 1776, at the University of Ingolstadt, by Law Department Chair Adam Weishaupt. He and his colleagues foresaw enlightenment for all mankind if only they could throw off the chains of tyranny. During the next eight years they infiltrated the masonic lodges of the region, proselytizing new initiates from among the freemasons by promising them access to ever-greater mysteries.

Most Illuminati fled Bavaria in 1784, after their order was officially censured by Frederick II. Many infiltrated the existing

Lodge structure of the freemasons in America, just as they had in Germany. Unbeknownst to the Illuminati, however, others have insinuated themselves into their inner circle — becoming, in effect, a secret society hidden at the nucleus of two others. These are the Regin.

TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Magic is real. It has always been real, even when it was well-hidden.

When Leif Erikson's longships crossed the Atlantic nearly 800 years ago, the Vikings did not make the journey alone, and their discovery of the New World was no accident. Hiding among them were the Regin (*RAY-jheen*) powerful beings the Norse previously worshiped as gods. Following their fall from power, the Regin sought an unspoiled land of their own.

By the time Christopher Columbus sailed the ocean blue, the "gods" of the Old World were firmly ensconced in the wilds of the New. Civilizations had risen to worship them — constructing great mounds, temples, and earthworks — and long since fallen, while the Regin slept away the ages in primordial forests and beneath the earth.

But in early 1786, Land Ordinances authorizing the parceling and purchase of western land have been ratified. Man has come again to the wild places where the Regin and their allies dwell. The ancients are not pleased. They call forth ghostly legions to serve them, and plot a fledgling nation's downfall.

SONS OF LIBERTY, DAUGHTERS OF REVOLUTION

All is not lost, as long as steadfast patriots stand against the darkness. The Sons of Liberty began in 1765 as The Loyal Nine, a group of artisans and shopkeepers opposed to the Stamp Act. But they and the Daughters of Revolution persisted as a secret organization at war's end. In 1768 they learned of strange mounds and earthworks discovered on the frontier. Further research and investigation revealed the presence of beings far older than American Indians.

Soon the leaders of the Sons & Daughters pledged to oppose the machinations of the Regin, no matter the cost. What they lack is a full understanding of the threat they face — but they hope that brave patriots will take up the cause of defending America once again.

CHARACTERS

Spirits of 1786 includes several new races — humans descended from the Norse gods — a new Professional Edge, and a few twists on the traditional Arcane Backgrounds.

THE REGINKUNNR

The reginkunnr (literally, "descended from the gods") are humans whose blood is mixed to some degree with that of the Regin. Some reginkunnr wonder about their innate gifts. Others are unaware of their ancestry and never scrutinize their abilities. Still other families have passed down stories of their origin and kinship with "the gods." Players may create characters of these races, and with the GM decide how much the character knows about her heritage.

CHILD OF THE AESIR

In Norse myth, the aesir are gods of life and lordship, tied to the cycle of seasons, the wheel of time, and Yggdrasil, the World Tree. They are the nobility of the gods. Their human descendants exhibit great health and radiate authority, but also cleave to odd habits at times.

- **HEALTHY:** The aesir are strongly connected with life and health. They begin play with a d6 in Vigor.
- **INTENSE:** Aesir radiate power and authority. They start with a d4 in Intimidation.
- **QUIRKY:** The blood of sovereigns carries eccentricity. All aesir begin play with the Quirk Hindrance.

CHILD OF THE VANIR

The aesir and vanir fought a war at the beginning of time, which ended with the defeated and assimilated vanir taking on the roles of servants and advisors. But they carved a niche for themselves and wielded more power than others supposed. Their human descendants exhibit great wisdom and oratorical flair, and are loyal to a fault.

- **LOYAL:** Vanir have served for so long it's in their blood. They have the Loyal Hindrance.
- **SILVER-TONGUED:** Vanir are good at getting others to do what they want. They start with the Charismatic Edge regardless of their Spirit.
- **STUBBORN:** Vanir are very sure of themselves. They have the Stubborn Hindrance.
- **WISE:** The vanir of myth are gods of wisdom. Vanir begin play with a d6 in Smarts.

CHILD OF THE ALFAR

The elves of Norse myth were mysterious beings, spirits from the dark forests. Those who carry elf blood are rarely aware of its origin, but they enjoy exceptional agility and keen sight, even if their otherworldly presence can sometimes cause humans discomfort.

- **AGILE:** Álfar are graceful and stealthy. They begin play with a d6 in Agility.
- **LOW LIGHT VISION:** Álfar are accustomed to operating in darkness. They ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- **OUTSIDER:** Álfar have the Outsider (Minor) Hindrance. They subtract –2 from Persuasion rolls (but not among other reginkunnr).

CHILD OF THE JOTUN

The giants of Norse myth are of all shapes and sizes — from grotesque monsters to paragons of nobility and grace — and represent the forces of nature and chaos. Those descended from the jötun show a similar degree of physical variation, except for the traits they all share: enormous strength, fists like rocks, and a tendency toward irrational fears.

- **PHOBIA:** Jötun begin play with the Phobia (Major) Hindrance. The player may choose what she's afraid of but it should be something relatively innocuous (cats, the ocean, thunder) and contrasts sharply with their tough demeanor.
- **POWERFUL BLOWS:** The fists of jötun deal Str+d6 damage.
- **STRONG:** Jötun possess the strength of their ancestors. They begin play with a d6 in Strength.

PROFESSIONAL EDGES

OCCULTIST

REQUIREMENTS: Novice, Occult d8+

In their quest to check the plots of the Regin, the Sons of Liberty often recruit those who know the ways of black magic and spirits. Those with this Edge have studied dark arts and strange entities for many years, learning their ways and how to defeat them.

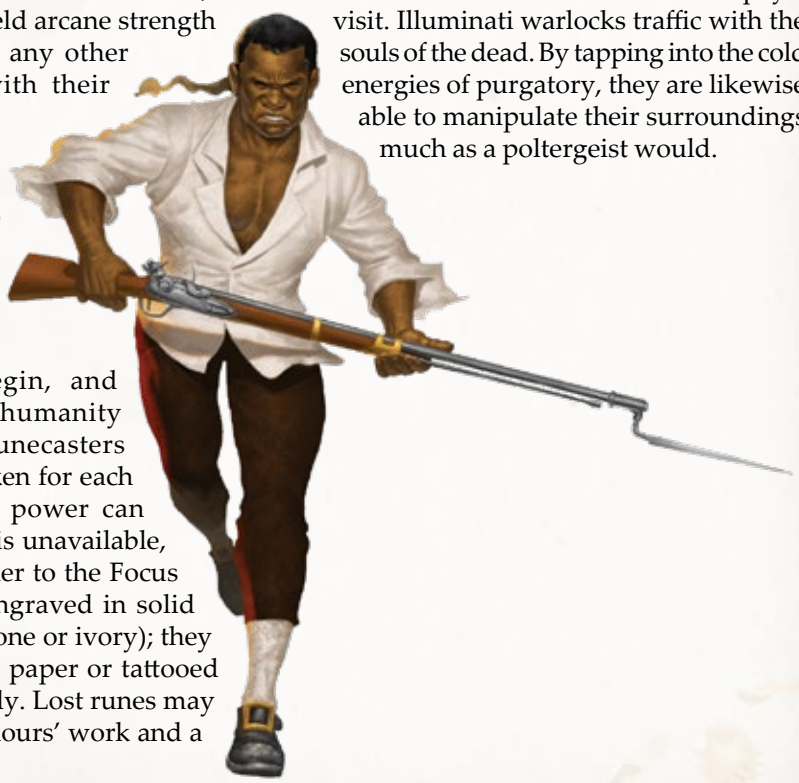
Occultists get a free reroll on Occult rolls.

ARCANE BACKGROUNDS

Five arcane backgrounds are available in Spirits of 1786. Although they have their own Trappings and setting-appropriate names, these Edges work exactly as they're described in *Savage Worlds*.

Clergyman (Miracles): Every town in the Colonies has at least one pastor, priest, or clergyman of faiths as varied as the countries from which Americans hail. Most of these consider arcane powers — even miracles — black magic, and the work of the devil. But a few channel power they believe emanates from the Creator. Call them saints, or "touched," but they wield arcane strength with as much skill as any other practitioner, albeit with their religions' trappings.

Runecaster (Gifted): In Norse legend, Odin hung on a gallows for nine nights and was pierced by a spear to gain knowledge of the runes. He taught it to the Regin, and it filtered down to humanity through the ages. Runecasters have a carved rune token for each power they know. A power can still be cast if its rune is unavailable, but suffers a −2 modifier to the Focus roll. Runes must be engraved in solid material (preferably stone or ivory); they may not be written on paper or tattooed on the runecaster's body. Lost runes may be recarved with 1d6 hours' work and a successful Focus roll.



Scientifick Philosopher (Weird Science): The Age of Reason has brought science to the New World, and none embrace it more enthusiastically than Ben Franklin's disciples in the League of Scientifick Philosophy. By 1786, the 80-year-old Ben Franklin is held in reverence second only to that afforded George Washington. Although his years of scientific innovation are long past, the League has kept the scientific method alive, optimizing the energies and principles established by Franklin. Many (but not all) members of the League are freemasons.

Shaman (Miracles): As long as there have been human beings, there have been those who are more in tune with the spirits of the plants and beasts, the seasons, the heavens, and the cycles of human physiology. These are the shamans, witch doctors, medicine men, and vodoun priests — those attuned to the barrier between the worlds, and to the world of light that lies beyond it.

Warlock (Magic): The black magic of the Illuminati is not practiced by all its members. Indeed, many factions within the secret society shun or openly oppose such practices. But they do not oppose too vociferously, lest the warlocks take notice of them and pay a visit. Illuminati warlocks traffic with the souls of the dead. By tapping into the cold energies of purgatory, they are likewise able to manipulate their surroundings, much as a poltergeist would.

Slang of 1786

There's nothing better than a timely turn of phrase for evoking another era. Try writing a dozen or so terms on cards, and dealing them out before play begins; maybe you can get your group to adopt a few. Huzzah!

Adzooks!: an exclamation

Anatomy: a very skinny person

Avast!: Stop!

Baked: exhausted

Bark at the moon: to agitate uselessly

Barnacles: spectacles

Bird-spit: a small sword

Bit of red: a soldier

Blast your toplights!: Damn your eyes!

Blood and 'ounds!: an exclamation

Brown Bess: common British musket

Chalk: to strike someone's face

Charlyville: common French musket

Clicker: one who shares out the booty

Empty the bag: to tell everything

Fegary: a prank

Fiddler's money: small change

Flats & sharps: weapons

Flawed: drunk

Hanktelo: a fool

Hog in armor: a finely dressed lout

Huzzah!: an exclamation

In deadly suspense: hanged

Jakes: a privy

Knock-down: strong liquor

Make children's shoes: to be occupied with trivia Married to Brown Bess: enlisted in the army

Off the hooks: crazy

Old Robin: an experienced person

Popper: a pistol

Ride shank's mare: to walk

Snabbled: killed in battle

Sot-weed: tobacco

Study the history of the four kings: to play cards Swear like a cutter: swear violently

Tol-lol: pretty good

Tongue enough for two sets of teeth: a very talkative person

Tory: American supporter of the King; a loyalist Water bewitched: weak beer

Water in one's shoes: a source of annoyance Whisk: an impertinent boy

Whig: a supporter of the American Revolution

Source: Eric Partridge, A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English (London: Routledge, 2002).

GEAR

Generally, any gear and equipment from *Savage Worlds* that's appropriate to the late 1700s is available to characters. Flintlock pistols, muskets, and blunderbusses are common firearms, but most fighters also carry a knife, axe, bayonet, or saber. Combat usually begins with a volley of musket fire, followed quickly by melee fighting.

Judicious use of detail can evoke the time period without turning the game into a history lesson. Countless books and websites provide facts of everyday life in the post-Revolutionary era, including typical clothing, foods, currency (pounds sterling, often called "medium" or "specie"), games, and pastimes.

CLOTHING

Most people in 1784 own only one set of clothing. A coat, waistcoat, breeches and shirt comprise the most common ensemble worn by men. Such an outfit can be extremely flashy and stylish, or quite shabby and cheap, depending on the wearer's circumstances. Tricorn and bicorn hats (so-named for the amount of sides pinned up, and thus how many corners) are also common. Working men might substitute a jacket, leather vest or apron for the coat or waistcoat.

Woodsmen only wear buckskins out in the frontier (and despite contrary rumors they never wear coonskin caps). In urban and rural areas, they tend toward shirts with hunting jackets (long, T-shaped, fringed garments made to shed water), and felted round hats turned up on one side and pinned with feathers. The clothing of aristocratic fops and dandies tends toward extravagance.

Women wear a shift (the default undergarment), and over that a long skirt covered at the top by a bodice (laced in the back by a corset, which can be more or less ornate depending on the station and needs of the woman wearing it). A long apron called a pinafore is sometimes added to this outfit. Straw hats and flowers are not uncommon in summer. The dress of aristocratic women embodies more complex extravagance than can (or need) be described here.

SETTING RULES

Spirits of 1786 uses the following Setting Rules:

- Conviction
- Creative Combat
- Dynamic Backlash

BLACK POWDER WEAPONS

Spirits of 1786 relies heavily on black powder weapons. A few additional rules are in play for this setting.

OVERCHARGING

Black powder muskets and pistols may be "overcharged," meaning the user puts an extra charge of powder in the shot. Overcharging adds an extra die to the weapon's damage, but risks bursting the barrel. A Critical Failure means the weapon's barrel explodes, causing 3d6 damage to the user and ruining the weapon.

FOULING

When a musket, blunderbuss, or flintlock pistol has been fired six times without cleaning, the barrel becomes "fouled" with powder residue.

Thereafter, apply a −1 penalty to further Shooting attempts until the weapon has been cleaned. This requires 15 minute's work and a successful Repair roll.

If the firer of a dirty musket rolls a Critical Failure, it explodes for 2d6 damage and the weapon is ruined.

SAVAGE TALES

Here we present an adventure set in the world of *Spirits of 1786*.

THE ROSE HAND

Roar Thorsgerd — rogue explorer & profiteer — recently discover'd a Regin's resting place near the Forks of the Ohio River. In a gambit to awaken the sleeper, Thorsgerd sends allies to Virginia to steal an artifact. Sensing disaster should Thorsgerd succeed, a Son of Liberty recruits heroes to his cause.

WASHINGTON'S HOME TOWN

The company has traveled to Alexandria, Virginia, on the Potomac River, to hear Timothy Tanner's speech, "On the Topick of Westward Expansion." Known as Washington's Home Town due to the close proximity of the General's Mount Vernon estate, Alexandria is a bustling village of farm trade and nascent industry.

Timothy Tanner is a freemason and aspiring congressman. In his brief but inspiring talk — which is bolstered by Jefferson's writings — at the Alexandria Meeting House, he spells out his case for expanded settlement in the Ohio Territory. He describes what the Congress is doing to make it a reality. He also underlines the importance of Union for all the Colonies.

A relic of the Ohio wilderness that was recently discovered in the Lost City of Cahokia — The Rose Hand — is on display in an adjoining room. Visitors may inspect it before Tanner's talk begins. This hand-shaped, rose quartz carving stands about 18 inches tall, and is believed to be more than 500 years old. Such a curious item must be observed by all men of learning!

If anyone casts *detect arcana* on the relic, she finds it to be infused with magickal power — a sort of battery for arcane energy.

ASSASSINS!

In the midst of Tanner's speech, a rough shout interrupts him:

> *"Look not to the West!"*

At that moment a number of attackers disguised as Indians, who had lingered at the back of the crowd, leap to their feet and storm the podium. Others launch arrows over the heads of the crowd and utter bloodcurdling war whoops.

Give heroes a Notice roll to avoid **Surprise** (see *Savage Worlds*). The attackers' goal is to murder Timothy Tanner in front of a room full of witnesses, per Roar Thorsgerd's orders. Meanwhile, Simon Girty — an ex-soldier who'd allied with native tribes during the war, and was infamous for the brutal torture of Colonel William Crawford in 1782 — steals the Rose Hand during the assassination attempt. If no one specifically watches over the artifact, Girty succeeds automatically.

Given stiff resistance, the assassins make a break for their carriage outside. Use the rules for **Chases** (see *Savage Worlds*) if a pursuit ensues. Simon Girty — with the Rose Hand in a haversack — leaps onto his horse and thunders northwest out of town on the Potomac Trail.

- **SIMON GIRTY:** See page 14.
- **TIMOTHY TANNER:** Use Soldier stats in *Savage Worlds*, but add Smarts d8 and Occult d8.
- **CITIZENS (18):** Use Soldier profile in *Savage Worlds*, but remove the Soldier Edge.
- **"SAVAGE" ASSASSINS (2 per hero):** Use the Soldier profile in *Savage Worlds*. They wear crude Indian costumes. Half wield tomahawks (Str+d6) and the other half bows and arrows (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1).

POINTED QUESTIONS

Captured "Indians" are found to be men of Scandinavian descent disguised in native Delaware garb. A successful Persuasion or Intimidation roll results in the captives telling all they know — and begging not to be hanged for their crimes. Their story is eye-opening.

They claim to be members of a band of outlaws holed up near the Forks of the Ohio. Their leader, Roar Thorsgerd, had them excavating the ancient stoneworks beneath a great earthen mound. Recently, however, new allies joined Thorsgerd — the nefarious scout Simon Girty, and a towering, terrifying British officer known only as Colonel Hal. Of the latter they only wail:

> *"His eyes! His terrible eyes, gleaming in the twilight!"*

Soon after, Roarsgerd dispatched them to Alexandria with Girty. They admit the assassination attempt was a diversion from the true objective — the Rose Hand — but they don't know why Thorsgerd wants it.

INTO THE WEST

If Mr. Tanner yet lives, he thanks the characters profusely for saving his life. He says,

> *"The Rose Hand of Cahokia is a precious item of power, long held in great regard by the Ohio wilderness tribes. I know not what Mr. Thorsgerd has unearthed at the Forks of the Ohio, but I augur no good result if he and his allies succeed.*
>
> *"Regretfully, events of great import demand my return to Boston posthaste. So I ask—will you aid me and the Sons of Liberty in this matter? Travel to Pittsburgh Town. Find these villains. Put an end to their dark designs. I offer any aid I can to ensure your success."*

Characters may purchase whatever gear they think necessary for the journey; Tanner pays the cost. He also gives them a wagon with two oxen to draw it, and assigns several Revolutionary War veterans as allied Extras. Divide these among the players to control.

It's roughly 250 miles to Pittsburgh, a journey expected to take about two weeks on the rough, bog-like roads piercing the wilds of Maryland and Pennsylvania.

- **WAR VETERANS (2 per hero):** Use the Soldier profile in *Savage Worlds*. Each is equipped with a musket, bayonet, powder & shot, haversack, hardtack & dried sundries, bladder, and bedroll.

SHADES OF DEATH

Along the Potomac Road to Cumberland Gap lies a valley where the trees grow so densely, and the rocky walls rise so steeply, it's said one cannot see his hand before his face at midday. This is called the "Shades of Death," and it is shunned by superstitious travelers.

But the heroes don't have that luxury; they must follow the Potomac west to Pittsburgh. After six days' travel, the company approaches

the valley. Although tales greatly overstate the darkness's intensity, it is quite shaded (–1 to attack rolls and vision-based tests).

Here Simon Girty lies in wait with his allies: an Algonquian warband. They don't hesitate to flee if things go poorly. Girty, having already delivered the Rose Hand to Thorsgerd, seeks to kill anyone following his trail. A voice calls from the woods,

"The name is Simon Girty! I suggest you put your sharps on the ground, Long Knives, and walk away from here. Otherwise, you die. This is your only warning."

If the heroes don't surrender, Girty and the Algonquians launch a hail of arrows and attack. If they surrender, Girty has them all bound at the wrists and ankles. Starting with the allied Extras, Girty gleefully tortures each with burning pine cones before cutting the unfortunate's throat. Escape is critical!

SIMON GIRTY: See page 14.

- **ALGONQUIAN INDIANS (2 per hero):** See page 12.

INCIDENT AT THE RED HEN

At Braddock's Road, the company turns north toward Fort Pittsburgh and the Forks of the Ohio. After another four days' travel the patriots arrive at a grimy but welcoming carriage house and tavern called The Red Hen. It is a welcome respite from the road, perhaps offering the opportunity for an **Interlude** (see *Savage Worlds*).

Before long, a wild-eyed farmer bursts through the door and shouts in terror,

"They've return'd! The spirits of the dead—they walk!"

All merriment ceases. Locals rush to lock shutters and bar the doors. They urge heroes not to go outside, but don't stand in the way of anyone intent on doing so. If anyone leaves The Red Hen, read the following:

The night is cool and damp, with no ghosts in sight. But the hill on which The Red Hen sits affords a fine view of the surrounding countryside. You turn south and your heart leaps into your throat.

Winding slowly through dark trees about a half-mile off, limned in moonlight, a spectral river of fog snakes westward in the lowlands. Blinking in disbelief, you focus more closely and discern the "fog" is actually a column of marching spirits. Hundreds—perhaps thousands—of ghosts trek grimly into the wilds.

Seeing the ghostly procession provokes a Fear test (at –2 if viewed through a spyglass). The spirits don't diverge from their path, and disappear in 15 minutes or so. Locals report that this is the third time such a ghostly march has been sighted.

- **CITIZENS (12):** Use Soldier profile in *Savage Worlds*, but remove the Soldier Edge.

PITTSBURGH TOWN

Four more days brings the party to Pittsburgh, a rough-and-tumble frontier trading town. The stockade walls, earthworks, and stone fortifications of the former Fort Pitt remain.

Frontiersmen and trappers comprise most of the population, alongside exporters' agents from the Ohio Company, the E.I.C., and various Pennsylvania concerns. The flat, hostile stares of trappers tell aristocrats they are not wanted here. Gambling, wrestling, and eye-gouging are common sights. A miasmatic stench assaults your nostrils.

With a successful Networking attempt (see *Savage Worlds*), travelers discover the general location of Roar Thorsgerd's hideout: a stockade fort where the Youghiogheny River (the "Yock") meets the Monongahela River, just east of Pittsburgh and south of the Pennsylvania Road.

Alternatively, the characters may devise a plan to seek Thorsgerd and his followers in Pittsburgh, and use Survival (tracking) or some other means to follow them back to the lair. Either way, they are led to the confluence of the Monongahela and the Yock.

TIMES THAT TRY MEN'S SOULS

Read this when the heroes arrive at the fort:

Thorsgerd's stockade stands on a low hill among tall elms and pines, apparently built to fence in the ancient earthworks. But the sight turns your blood to ice. For arrayed on the hillsides surrounding the fort are hundreds upon hundreds of silent, bloodied ghosts. Stock-still they stand

with their backs to you, gazing upward at the fort's walls, waiting for…something.

The scene provokes a Fear test at –2. When fright subsides, however, the heroes realize that the ghosts do not move at all. Nor do they react if intruders walk past them — or through them — or even attack them. For now, they await their true master's awakening.

- **GHOSTS (200):** See *Savage Worlds*.

EXCAVATIONS & REVELATIONS

Inside the fort, Roar Thorsgerd and his minions' mission is almost complete. They have completely excavated the top of the earthworks — a stone, three-tiered ziggurat — and exposed the tomb of an ancient Regin called Meili the Betrayer. The Rose Hand sits nearby, throbbing with strange energy that drains slowly into the sleeping Meili. When the transfer is complete, the sleeper awakens!

Success on an Athletics (climbing) roll allows a hero to scale one tier of the ziggurat. Thorsgerd and his allies fight tooth and nail against interlopers. His minions are arrayed around the base of the ziggurat, while Thorsgerd (and Simon Girty, if he lives) take cover at the top. Col. Hal leaps into battle with a ghastly cry. Thorsgerd fights to the death.

There's no set amount of time before Meili wakes up. But ratchet up the tension by describing how the Rose Hand's glow seems to ebb and dim by the moment, as tremors shake the ziggurat. The stakes are high!

- **COLONEL HAL:** See page 13.
- **ROAR THORSGERD:** See page 14.
- **THORSGERD'S MEN (1 per hero):** Use the Soldier profile in *Savage Worlds*. They wield axes (Str+d6) and spears (Str+d6).

WHAT IS WON OR LOST

Defeating Thorsgerd and his men, and removing the Rose Hand from the earthworks, ensures that Meili the Betrayer's slumber continues unabated. When heroes peer into the excavated earthworks, read the following:

Lying in the earth is an eight-foot-long Viking boat, its prow carved into a dragon's head. In the belly of the boat, half-embedded in soil, is a massive corpse wrapped in an ancient shroud.

Something gleams in the dirt. Climbing down, you're amazed to discover the dull shine of gold. Necklaces and pendants hang upon the corpse, accouterments for a journey into the afterlife. In this life, there is enough to make all of you very rich.

The ancient gold fetches up to £6,000 if sold if Philadelphia or Boston. If the heroes are defeated, tarry too long (GM's discretion), or commit some blunder, Meili awakens and rallies his ghostly army with a piercing cry. Facing hundreds of ghosts, heroes who cannot escape are doomed.

Even if the company is victorious, they must figure out what to do with the ancient Regin's body. For there are others who wish him awake — and the Regin's servants are legion.

CHARACTERS & CREATURES

This section contains creatures and characters found in *The Rose Hand*, along with others you can use to round out adventures. Several creatures and animals from the *Savage Worlds* **Bestiary** are also appropriate for *Spirits of 1786*: bears, cats, dogs/wolves, ghosts, horses, mules, snakes, soldiers, swarms (usually insects), vampires, werewolves, and zombies (called *draugr* — literally "after-goers" — not risen dead but rather ghosts-made-flesh).

ALGONQUIAN INDIANS

The Algonquian tribes, native to eastern America, are one of the most populous and widespread.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d6, Fighting d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d8
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6
Edges: Marksman, Quick
Gear: Tomahawk (Str+d6), knife (Str+d4), bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1), arrows ×12.

COLONEL HENRY DRAKE

Once one of the most feared British officers on American soil, the Illuminati's dark rituals returned Colonel Henry Drake, aka "Colonel Hal," to unlife after his demise at Yorktown. And it's difficult to kill what's already dead…

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d12
Skills: Athletics d10, Common Knowledge d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Riding d10, Shooting d8, Stealth d8
Edges: Ambidextrous, Hard to Kill, Marksman, Two-Fisted, Tough as Nails
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10
Gear: Cavalry saber (Str+d6), tomahawk (Str+d6), knife (Str+d4), blunderbuss (Range 10/20/40, Damage 1–3d6, RoF 1), powder & shot ×12.
Special Abilities:

- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation
- **Hardy:** Additional Shaken results do not cause Colonel Hal a Wound.
- **Regeneration (Slow):** Hal makes a natural healing roll once per day, even if he is killed, burned, dismembered, etc.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; no additional damage from Called Shots; ignores 1 point of Wound penalties; doesn't breathe; immune to disease and poison.
- **Weakness (Burial):** If Hal is Incapacitated and his body consecrated and buried in hallowed ground, he is forever dead.

GUARDIAN TREE

Sometimes a nature spirit bonds itself to an ash tree, or is placed there by the Regin to serve their purposes. When approached, the "living tree" roars to life and smashes intruders.

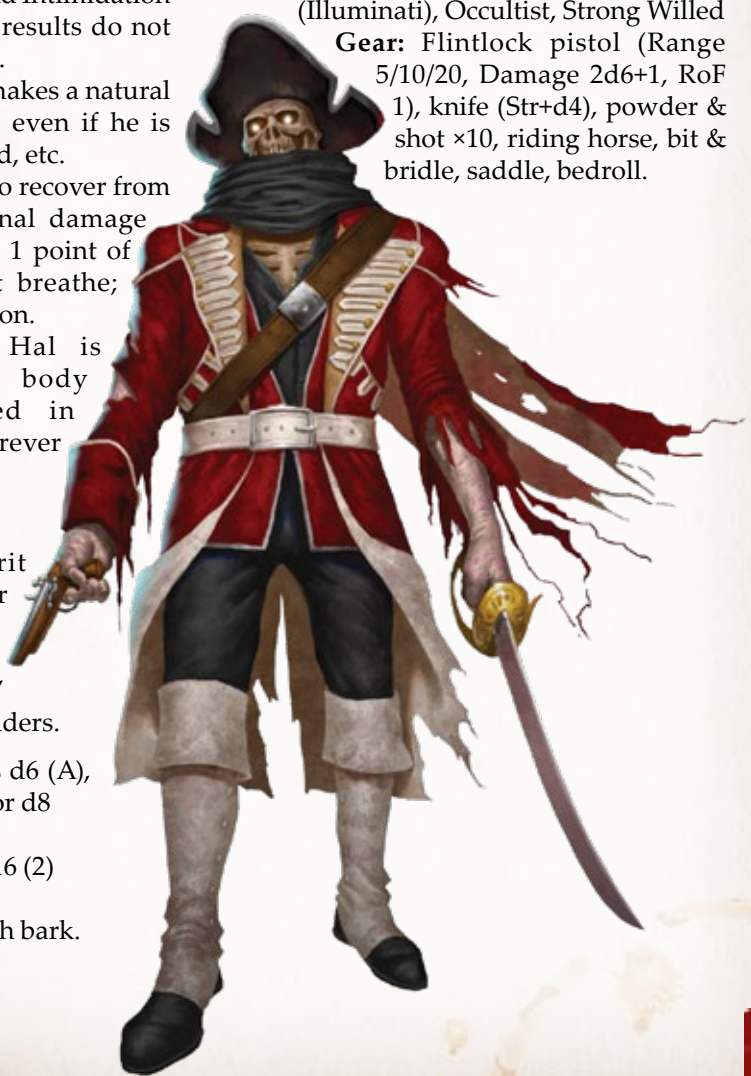
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6
Pace: 0; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 16 (2)
Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** The tree has tough bark.
- **Branches:** Str. The tree may attack up to four opponents within a Reach of 6" each turn with no Multi-Action penalties.
- **Size +8 (Huge):** A guardian tree stands nearly 35 feet tall and has two extra Wounds.

ILLUMINATI AGENT

Agents of the Illuminati are cunning spies and master planners. Some are warlocks who practice dark magick; these add the Arcane Background (Magic) Edge.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d8, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Occult d8, Persuasion d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Cautious, Wanted (Minor)
Edges: Alertness, Aristocrat, Connections (Illuminati), Occultist, Strong Willed
Gear: Flintlock pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1), knife (Str+d4), powder & shot ×10, riding horse, bit & bridle, saddle, bedroll.



MEILI THE BETRAYER

Meili Odinson, one of Thor's brothers, sleeps beneath ancient earthworks at the Forks of the Ohio when the heroes first encounter him. Should he awaken, he becomes an implacable, crafty, and deadly foe—leading to many future adventures. Meili is a massive, red-bearded berserker with glowing yellow eyes who wields a greatsword.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12
Skills: Athletics d8, Common Knowledge d4, Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Occult d6, Persuasion d4, Stealth d4
Edges: Berserk, Block (Imp), Brawny, First Strike, Sweep (Imp), Tougher Than Nails
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 12(1)
Gear: Hide armor (+1), helm (+3), greatsword (Str+d10).
Special Abilities:
- **Hardy:** If Shaken, further Shaken results do not cause Meili a Wound.
- **Low Light Vision:** Meili ignores Illumination penalties for Dim and Dark conditions.
- **Regeneration (Slow):** Meili makes a natural healing roll once per day, even if he is killed, burned, completely dismembered, etc. It is extraordinarily difficult to permanently slay a Regin.
- **Size +2:** Meili stands close to eight feet tall and weighs 300 lbs.
- **Weakness (Magick):** Meili is susceptible to arcane powers, suffering a –2 modifier to resist their effects.

ROAR THORSGERD

Aware of his heritage from a young age, Roar Thorsgerd spent years scouring the frontier for signs of his Regin ancestors. Thorsgerd is a cruel and capricious leader.

Race: Jötun (See Jotunpage 6)
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8
Skills: Athletics d8, Common Knowledge d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Occult d10, Persuasion d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d4, Survival d6
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 8
Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Phobia (Major—Bees)
Edges: Bruiser, Brute, Combat Reflexes, Marksman
Gear: Axe (Str+d6), flintlock pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1), powder & shot ×5.
Special Abilities:
- **Fists:** Str+d10.

SIMON GIRTY

One of the most notorious characters in the Colonies, Girty "went native" and fought against the Americans and the British during the war. He's a consummate woodsman and tracker.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d10
Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d6, Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Riding d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Survival d8
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 7
Hindrances: Outsider (Minor), Mean, Wanted (Major)
Edges: Ambidextrous, Block, Combat Reflexes, First Strike, Hard to Kill, Nerves of Steel, Quick, Strong Willed, Sweep (Imp), Two-Fisted, Woodsman
Gear: Tomahawks (Str+d6) ×2, musket (Range 10/20/40, Damage 2d8, RoF 1), knife (Str+d4), powder & shot ×12, haversack, riding horse.

WITCH

These foul beings trade their souls to dark powers in return for arcane abilities and a long lifespan.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d10
Skills: Athletics d4, Common Knowledge d6, Fighting d4, Intimidation d8, Notice d10, Occult d10, Persuasion d8, Spellcasting d10, Stealth d6, Taunt d8
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7
Hindrances: Mean, Ugly
Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), Rapid Recharge, Wizard
Powers: *Arcane protection*, *banish*, *bolt*, *detect/conceal arcana*, *entangle*, *fly* (broomstick), *healing*, *puppet*, *shape change*, *zombie*; **Power Points:** *25*
Gear: Iron cauldron, worm-eaten tome, cursed gold, copious herbs, insects & powders.

ABYSSAL

In 2061, a massive event occurred somewhere deep in the Marianas Trench. It's unclear whether this was an earthquake or some other seismic occurrence, but it turned attention away from recent advances in space travel to a re-examination of our own unexplored depths.

The first probe was the Hanley-Schmidt expedition, which sent back video of strange illuminated globules streaming from the depths of the trench. These blob-like "luminants" pulsed with an unknown type of energy, but further study was interrupted when contact with their sole bathysphere was lost.

A second expedition took place six months later, funded by an eccentric movie mogul. This expedition verified the massive luminant stream issuing from somewhere deep in the trench, as well as massive sonar signatures.

Plants and animals within the illuminated "gardens" grow to tremendous size, and it is suspected some sort of infected creature was responsible for the loss of the Hanley-Schmidt team.

The third expedition to the trench was led by the United Nations, anxious to ensure no one country monopolized this phenomenal new energy source and prevent any wars that might result from it. The UN does not explore the trench themselves but instead created a permanent base at the center of the Maug Island cluster. From there they opened charters to those organizations it approved to plumb the depths beneath. These companies, a mix of private corporations and state-owned enterprises, have collectively come to be called the "sea corps."

The UN force is led by UN Executive Office (XO) Jason Hau, a reasonable and fair-minded man of mixed Chinese and American heritage.

It is now 2068. Seven sea corps have legally joined the United Nations Maug Islands Expedition, part of the Mariana island in the South Pacific. Most of the sea corps are professional organizations with humanity's best interests at heart.

Most, but not all.

THE SEA CORPS

Three sea corps are featured in this Mini Setting:

- **KAMASU CORP:** A conglomerate of Asian mining and energy companies. They are generally a cordial and professional outfit led by Yoshiko Masuhara.
- **THE DARK WATER SYNDICATE:** Despite rumors that CEO Mara Oceanus has ties to international organized crime, the Dark Water Syndicate was somehow given a charter to join the UN expedition. Her family leads the sea corp, and is staffed by minions hired more for their willingness to follow orders than any compunction for the UN's rules. Mara is often called the "Typhoon Tycoon" by the press.

A Note from the Author

This preview is a glimpse of something I've wanted to create for years — an homage to *Jonny Quest*®, an obscure DC comic series called *The Sea Devils*™, and other sea-based adventure series.

For the preview, the heroes' submersible can't reach beyond the Bathypelagic Zone (4000 meters deep). In the full setting, technological advancements in the Plot Point Campaign gradually allow the heroes to reach greater depths, eventually leading them all the way down to the lowest point on Earth, the Challenger Deep, and the truth about the mysterious "Event!"

- **SEA HORSE:** This company was founded by one of the player characters. The "founder" is a brilliant scientist and business person who staked all the company's resources on this risky expedition. The rest of the player characters are trusted friends or family members who accompanied him or her out of love, excitement, or obligation.

LUMINESCENCE

The sea corps have made several astounding discoveries so far, but all seem to stem from glowing energy particles emanating from somewhere deep in the trench. Finding the source is one of the sea corps' highest priorities, and will almost certainly turn into a ruthless race to claim or exploit it once found.

The luminants are the consistency of the "lava" in lava lamps. Most are about the size of baseballs though much larger conglomerates are occasionally encountered. They waft along the various currents of the area and gather in stiller waters.

Red, green, and yellow luminants have been observed thus far. They seem to act almost like batteries for some currently unknown energy source the UN has designated "luminescent energy." All the licensed sea corps are attempting to harness and use this energy, but none have yet managed to develop a practical interface.

Luminous Bloom: Luminescence causes plants *and* their detritus to sprout and grow at incredible rates. It triggers photosynthesis and allows plants to live even below the "Midnight Zone," where such organisms cannot usually survive. Plants infused with luminescence resemble the original but glow brightly along their veins, granting otherworldly illumination to much of the stygian abyss.

Further abilities of the luminescence are revealed as the campaign progresses. Uncovering these secrets, and the strange source of the luminants, is the core of the *Abyssal's* mystery.

MAUG ISLAND SEA STATION

The sea corps make their home at the top of an extinct volcano that forms the Maug Islands, part of the Northern Mariana chain. The UN chose this location both because of its nearness to the Marianas Trench and because the islands form a natural protective barrier against the area's frequent storms.

Each sea corp is granted its own "pod," built and approved in standardized fashion by the United Nations Marianas Event Force (UNMEF).

The largest of the pods belongs to the UN itself. "Pod One" houses about one hundred sailors, marines, researchers, and support staff. They maintain a mobile security and rescue force in case of trouble, using naval vessels provided by the member nations.

The UN doesn't send submersibles into the trench as part of their agreement with the sea corps, but provide specialized labs and extensive monitoring stations for common use. Data uncovered here is shared with the sea corps but only made public at the discretion of the director, Dr. Anna Ranganathan.

The sea corps occupy pods two through seven. They're much smaller, providing housing and facilities for 28 individuals. Each has laboratories, a vehicle hangar, sick bay, mess hall, and housing.

Floating walkways with vista points and underwater tubes connect the pods. Entry is managed and recorded by magnetic key cards and some of the sea corps have created guard stations as well.

Dark Water is in Pod Two, Sea Horse in Pod Five, and Kamasu Corp in Pod Seven.

At minimum, each pod has the standard facilities and equipment listed below:

- **COMMAND CENTER:** View screens, terminals, sensors, and communications arrays give the leadership of each pod state-of-the art equipment to run their station.
- **PERSONAL QUARTERS:** Each pod has six semi-private rooms with two beds each, four four-bed barracks, two lavatories, and four showers. Some of the sea corps, most notably Dark Water, also maintain "rapid response forces" on the nearby islands. The other pods call them "mercenaries."
- **DOCK:** Every pod has a Poseidon speed boat for surface travel moored to the upper dock. Some companies have much larger vessels they use for additional housing, or more boats to accommodate several teams in the field at once.
- **HANGAR:** The hangar includes a dive well to the open ocean and airtight flood doors in case of breech. Inside are five Humboldt sea scooters for free diving up to about 100′ (Pace 8), and an experimental Manta Deep Diving Submersible. The Manta is a highly-mobile, six-seat sub that can reach the edge of the Bathypelagic Zone at about 4,000 meters.
- **LABORATORY:** Each lab includes five work stations and a comprehensive suite of miscellaneous equipment. Pod One has some more specialized, larger, and expensive equipment all sea corps may use by request (also providing the GM a way to manage information on occasion).
- **MESS HALL / KITCHEN:** Meals are prepared and served in a communal mess hall. These also double as a briefing and planning area and so are equipped with advanced audio-visual equipment, including holographic displays and input tablets.

MAKING CHARACTERS

The ideal setup for the game is a mother, father, aunt, or uncle as the founder of the Sea Horses, accompanied by a trusted friend or two and their children, nieces, or nephews. Take inspiration from television shows like Jonny Quest, Lost in Space, Sea

Quest®, or even a less silly version of The Venture Brothers.

Race: All heroes in *Abyssal* are humans.

Skills: All of the player characters are adventurers or scientists (or both!) with various specialties. It's recommended that at least one hero in each group have a good Boating skill since the team will often be in boats and submersibles. Someone should also have Science at d8 or better to analyze the various data and clues crucial to some of the Savage Tales.

Of course combat skills are always helpful, this is *Savage Worlds*, after all, and there are plenty of threats the heroes must defend themselves against.

Edges & Hindrances: Heroes may not take Can't Swim in this setting. Swim tests are required for any member of the sea corps.

Arcane Backgrounds aren't appropriate for this setting. Rich and Filthy Rich are also off-limits because part of the tale is Sea Horse's occasional need for funding.

Gear: Players don't need to purchase gear; all their needs are provided for by the company. Characters may have any reasonable personal items they like though, such as mementos, collections, or keepsakes.

SETTING RULES

The tone of *Abyssal* is that of a relatively serious Saturday morning cartoon series. The plots and stories feature simplified realism with occasional moments of light-hearted humor. Science is a strong theme, but it's cartoon science that provides context and "surface logic" to the adventures rather than realism that gets in the way of a good story.

The following Setting Rules from *Savage Worlds* are in play, along with the new ones listed below:

- Conviction
- Creative Combat
- Dumb Luck
- Fast Healing
- Heroes Never Die
- High Adventure
- Wound Cap

ANIMAL INTELLIGENCE

Animals in *Abyssal*, like most Saturday morning cartoons, often have human qualities, memories, and emotions. This doesn't increase their Smarts attribute, it's just factored into their behavior and what their "Animal" Smarts actually means relative to the setting.

The party might drive off a particularly troublesome great white shark, for example, which then returns later in the campaign and remembers who defeated it. Or a friendly seal might lead the group to a trapped or injured companion. Such animals might also have a distinguishing feature or behavior to tell them apart from others — a notched fin, scarred nose, notable "dance," or other trait.

EPISODIC STARTS

Some Savage Tales dictate a particular setup and starting point rather than giving the team a briefing to see if they accept the task.

An adventure might start with the team showing a reporter around Skull Reef, for example. The action starts with that assumption and should generally be followed unless the GM feels there are extenuating circumstances.

It helps if the players are told about this up front so they understand the conceits and are more likely to go along with it.

WATERCRAFT

VEHICLE	SIZE	HANDLING	TOP SPEED	TOUGHNESS	CREW	COST
Poseidon Speed Boat	0 (Normal)	+1	90 MPH	14 (2)	1+5	80K+
Notes: Sensor suite, long range radio, life preservers.						
Manta Submersible	5 (Large)	+1	45 MPH	11 (2)	1+5	$2M
Notes: Heavy Armor. ***Weapons:*** 2× Linked Stun Ray (Fixed Front), 2× Stun Ray (Left and Right coaxial mounts). The Manta's ability to withstand crushing depths is based on the steady and even equalization of pressure, not its relatively low Toughness and Armor.						

MISCHIEF & MAYHEM

Thanks to episodic starts, some missions direct certain player characters to undergo individual or personal tasks, some of which might cause trouble and mischief for the rest of the team. A younger member of Sea Horse might sneak out to meet a romantic interest from Dark Water, for example. Or a jealous brother might sabotage his sister's mission out of sibling rivalry (never intending any real harm, of course).

When the adventure takes away a player's control like this, it gives him or her a point of Conviction. See some of the Savage Tales in this preview for examples.

NONLETHAL DAMAGE

Unless the GM says otherwise, damage in *Abyssal* is always non-lethal. Heroes, villains, and creatures never die unless it's a particularly dramatic moment and the GM says so. If a giant squid Incapacitates a hero, she's found floating in the water, injured but alive afterward. If an enemy Incapacitates a rival with a spear gun, it might split her air hose and knock her out instead, or it might just be a painful injury that sends her "off screen" for a while.

The one exception is "powering up," explained under **Luminescence** on page 25. Creatures boosted by luminants often don't survive the experience.

Death and the Depths: A submarine's structural failure at significant depth results in an instantly fatal implosion. In *Abyssal*, the vessel instead starts to crack and leak in dramatic fashion. If the heroes don't immediately head for the surface, emergency systems override manual controls and drive the sub quickly to manageable depths.

UNDERWATER RULES

Abyssal does not attempt to realistically replicate the perils of diving. The bends (decompression sickness), rapture of the deep (nitrogen narcosis), and other real-world concerns are generally ignored unless they're the focus of a particular narrative.

SAVAGE TALES

GUPPY LOVE

The following adventure matches two teens in a potentially romantic situation. The Game Master should feel free to change any of the genders as desired. The nonplayer character is either Malcolm Oceanus or his sister Meredith.

Ten minutes ago you received a message from a notorious band of pirates called the Sea Witches:

"This is Kali Makara, mistress of the Sea Witches. I have no doubt you've heard of us. I have captured the Darwin *and all its passengers. We will return the ship and all your brats for five million Euros. If I do not hear from you in an hour, we'll sink the* Darwin *and everyone aboard. There will not be a second request."*

Most of you were in the Poseidon taking readings from the nearby reefs when the message came in…all except the youngest member of your team…who's on the Darwin*!*

You raced to the vessel's last known location, noting that Mara Oceanus' private yacht, the Wave Ripper*, sets out at the same time but is at least an hour away. You're the kids' only hope!*

The missing Sea Horse is a child or teen player character, if possible, on a UN-sponsored field trip aboard the captured vessel, the *Darwin*.

A Common Knowledge roll reveals the Sea Witches are an all-female band of ruthless predators who have stalked the Mariana Islands since the Event.

UN Executive Officer Jason Hau confirms the situation and says UN security forces are on the way, but won't arrive for 90 minutes. They're willing to pay the ransom if required, but that will only embolden the Sea Witches and other pirates to cause additional issues later on.

Officer Hau quietly asks the Sea Horses to find another way. He trusts them to save the children. They must hurry, however, for Mara Oceanus' child is also on board. The "Typhoon Tycoon" will arrive in about an hour and is likely to take a very heavy hand with the Sea Witches, which might result in terrible casualties.

COMMUNICATIONS

A moment after the party finishes speaking with Hau they receive a broken communication from a player character on board the Darwin. The hero can communicate this herself or you can interject for her, but the message is something like this:

"…managed to sneak away… hiding in hold…pirates haven't… us yet… six of them… armed with…"

The trapped hero managed to sneak away from the pirates before she was seen, along with Mara Oceanus' son Malcolm (or her daughter Meredith — whichever the GM feels is the best romantic match for the player character). The two are now down in the hold, hiding among cargo containers and scientific equipment.

The *Darwin* is a quarter mile off a formation called Skull Reef. The heroes' Poseidon speed boat is hidden from the pirates by a small island and haven't been detected yet.

Let the group start planning their actions using the map of the *Darwin*, which UN XO Hau provides if asked. Malcolm (or Meredith) Oceanus and the player character have smart watches with cellular service but can't get a reliable signal through the ship's thick steel hull and various electronics suites. To reach the rest of the party, they must sneak up out of the hold and risk being spotted by the Sea Witches. (The GM might want to physically separate the teen's player in another room and pass on occasional broken messages for maximum chaos!)

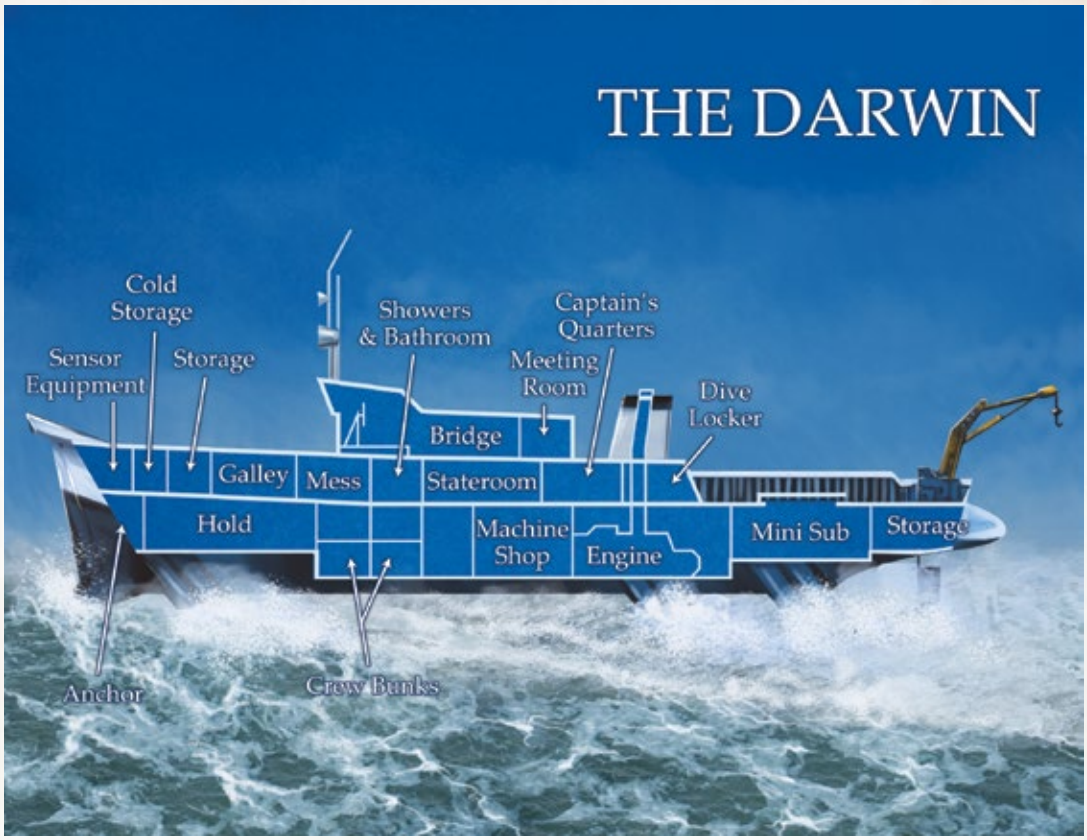
Have them make a Stealth roll anytime they attempt to do so. The Sea Witches are alert and active, but they're looking for a rescue attempt to sneak *on* to the *Darwin*. They did a cursory search of the hold, didn't see anything important, and aren't looking for anyone hiding on board.

BUDDING ROMANCE

While the party tries to figure out how to defeat the pirates, it becomes obvious Mara Oceanus' son or daughter has a crush on the player character trapped with him or her.

Of course the immature Oceanus expresses this affection in the worst way possible, picking on the player character, making rude comments, or whatever else the GM feels is appropriate. Remember this is "cartoon romance," so the relationship should start poorly and get worse before the teens realize what's really going on (whether the *players* do or not).

There's no predetermined outcome, but Oceanus' should realize his or her attraction before the end of the scene and resent himself or herself for it. The iconic story is constant friction between the pair before it's



resolved at some critical moment later in the campaign. Of course Mara Oceanus won't approve of these feelings and forbids further contact — causing the two to sneak around later on when they acknowledge their mutual attraction. This is a grand opportunity for the "soap opera" style interactions among the party and their nefarious rivals.

- **KALI MAKARA:** See below.
- **SEA WITCHES (6):** See below.

KALI MAKARA

The leader of the Sea Witches is a former academic who graduated from Oxford! On returning home to her native India, she rejected civilization and capitalism and became a revolutionary. Eventually, hounded by Interpol and various Asian authorities, she fled the mainland and became a modern-day pirate.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Athletics d8, Boating d6, Common Knowledge d6, Electronics d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Cautious, Driven (destroy capitalism), Mean
Edges: Alertness, Attractive, Charismatic, Elan, Extraction, Dodge, Rock and Roll.
Gear: Laser SMG (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, AP 2, RoF 4, Shots 100).

SEA WITCH

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Athletics d8, Boating d6, Common Knowledge d6, Electronics d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Mean
Edges: Attractive
Gear: Laser pistol (Range 12/30/60, Damage 2d6, AP 2, RoF 1, Shots 50).

RESCUE AT SEA

The Sea Horses are on their Poseidon speed boat taking water samples when they receive a message from the UN Executive Officer Jason Hau.

Calling the Sea Horses, calling the Sea Horses. Come in Sea Horses! An oil rig is on fire near Guam. We're sending help but you're an hour closer! Can you respond?

The heroes set course for the oil rig and arrive ten minutes later. Read the following as they close:

You saw smoke from miles back. Now you see flame. Half of the rig is a blazing inferno! Numerous emergency rafts surround the base. Workers crawl down a ladder or jump from the platforms…then a series of explosions hurl dozens of them into the sea!

Moments later, you see fins break the water!

The Sea Horses race into the disaster, cutting the motor as they drift in through the flailing survivors. Many workers swim toward the boat in panic, but others are unconscious, floating face-up thanks to their life vests with head supports. Shark fins move among them all, looking for easy prey.

Saving the unconscious survivors is a Difficult Dramatic Task. Those who want to drag them into the boat must enter the water and make an Athletics (swimming) roll. Each success and raise grants a Task Token and represents a rescued survivor. Those who aren't rescued at the end of the task slip beneath the waves and are lost.

A Critical Failure on the Athletics roll means the rescuer was bitten by one of the various maneaters circling the struggling workers. She takes Str d8 + d6 damage.

Unfortunately, the **conscious** survivors are in a panic thanks to the burning rig and the frenzied sharks. They collectively inflict a −4 penalty to the rescuers' Athletics rolls each round. A player character can use Intimidation or Persuasion to restore order for a round, however (so it's best if they act before the rescuers!). A Critical Failure incites even more panic; no survivors can be rescued that round. Failure has no effect. Success reduces the penalty by 2, and a raise eliminates it completely.

HONORING HEROES

Give the heroes a point of Conviction if they save at least half the unconscious victims. XO Hau also sends out a memo to all the other sea corps praising their brave actions.

ENTANGLED

Maug Island draws much of its energy from underwater thermal vents. One of these, a generator 3000 meters below sea level, is experiencing intermittent failure and the Sea Horses have been asked to repair it.

Two hours ago, UN Executive Officer Jason Hau asked your team to look into a failing thermal generator on the slopes of Southern Maug Island. The generator is 3000 meters down in a sea canyon filled with luminants, so extreme caution is urged.

Your team spiraled down into the depths and has just arrived at the site. The generator sits on a long slope surrounded by thick beds of floral luminants.

A number of giant squid circle the humming device! Several attempt to grasp the heavy machine as you watch but yank their tentacles away in pain when they feel the boiling hot thermal water streaming around it.

Allow the party to take in the scene and come up with a plan. The moment they "threaten" the squid, however, one of them, a particularly massive brute with a scar down its giant left eye, does something amazing.

You're about to move in and chase the squid away when something extraordinary happens. The largest of the creatures stares at you with a baleful eye, scarred above and below by some previous foe. A moment later, luminant particles coalesce around its body, surrounding it in a glowing aura! It must be some kind of armor for the thing grapples the generator and begins to pull…

If left alone, the giant squid crushes the generator in a few rounds. If the team wants to stop it, it's a Challenging Dramatic Task *for the squid!* The heroes are the opposition trying to keep the squid from succeeding!

The squid needs four successes on a Strength test in three rounds to uproot the heavy generator, bolted deep into the mountainside and fused with the bedrock below. This is a standard Strength check for the massive beast so the heroes must use their stun rays or Tests to delay and penalize its attempts. If the thing *doesn't* succeed after four rounds, it stops trying to attack the generator and turns on the Manta instead!

The moment the heroes attack the squid (GM's call what constitutes an attack), the rest of the "shoal" (group) join in the fracas. One of them attempts to grapple the sub and keep it from attacking (pit their Athletics against the driver's Boating instead of Agility or Strength). A grappled defender can normally only attempt to escape, but in this case the other occupants can try to fire their stun rays at their attacker, using its Parry for the close combat shot instead of Short Range.

If a giant squid is Stunned, it falls away into the darkness and flees.

Note: This is the first time anyone has seen a creature "power up." The luminants give "Scarface" armor so he can disrupt the generator. The energy force doesn't affect any of the other squid for now, and it doesn't grant Scarface the ranged attack ability. That comes later in the Savage Tale, **Prepare the Garden**.

- **SCARFACE:** This beast has powered up with luminants and is protected by Heavy Armor +4. Use the statistics for a Giant Squid on page 25.
- **GIANT SQUID (3):** See page 25.

RESOLUTION

Once defeated, Scarface swims quickly away, drifting off into the deep as the luminants take their toll on his system. If he was successful in tearing the generator from the mountain, the station's energy wanes for a few days until a repair crew is able to install a new one.

If the heroes share what they experienced with UN XO Hau, he thanks for this startling development and later rewards them with an experimental upgrade to their Manta, an electrified network across the skin that stuns any predator that attempts to grapple it.

- **ELECTRIFIED FIELD:** The field only activates when multiple nodes are contacted at once, making it safe for divers or smaller sea creatures. Creatures of Large Size or greater are automatically Stunned if they attempt to grapple. This works three times before the system's batteries must be recharged, which must be done independently of the Manta back at the team's pod.

PREPARE THE GARDEN

Prepare the Garden is the first Plot Point in the eventual campaign we plan to publish at a later date. It begins when the founder of Sea Horse detects a strange signal from deep within the abyss. Allow the player to rephrase this in her own words or read it verbatim as she wishes:

> *"I've detected a strange signal coming from the trench. The Manta still can't get beyond the Bathypelagic Zone but I want to get as close as possible and get a better reading. Suit up, team. We're going deep!"*

The heroes load up in the Manta and drop through the airlock. As one of the characters pilots the sub, the founder files a dive plan with the UN and tells chief scientist Dr. Ermes Gonzalez about the signals. Gonzalez promises to monitor the signals as well and wishes the team good luck.

FIRST CONTACT

The Manta reaches a depth of 3,800 meters almost two hours later. The pressure monitor has just begun to touch the red zone so the founder or pilot brings it to a halt.

Someone in the team should now make an Electronics roll to use the sub's sophisticated sensors. Failure means they still get the information but it takes 10 long minutes of adjusting the equipment and scanning frequencies. Success easily detects a regular, repeated sonic sequence transmitting from somewhere in the deepest part of the trench, in the Hadalpelagic Zone. With a raise, the scientist also realizes the luminants floating throughout the ocean act as boosters for both signals.

Let the players discuss for a moment, then allow a scientist to realize one way to test a repeated signal is to attempt to return one. She can use the Manta's communication arrays to broadcast chords in several octaves, frequencies, and strengths.

The strange signal continues unaffected, but as the team listens in silent fascination, a message seems to form in their minds. It says simply "Prepare the garden." They have absolutely no idea what it means. For now!

Nothing else happens, but as the heroes snap out of their trance-like state, they see several giant squid on the sub's sonar. The massive creatures hover just out of visual range, but seem to be darting about as if agitated by something.

The Manta's communications gear switches through several automated cycles and begins broadcasting on an opposing wavelength that **dampens** the strange signal. The heroes instantly sense some alien presence slipping from their mind.

A moment later, the equipment hums, then emits an uncomfortable THUMMM that rattles the undersea explorers to the bone! Seconds later, the giant squid rush to attack. Narrate the following as they attempt to grapple with the Manta.

A massive, gray-white shape erupts from the surrounding darkness. You brace yourself for the impact and reel as the Manta rolls 45 degrees starboard. You man the stun rays but hope Hau' electrified field works as advertised.

ZZZZAT!!! You can hear it even through the thick hull of the Manta! The giant squid falls away into the darkness, 60-foot long tentacles flailing wildly as it spins away.

You cut the dampening signal but the squid continue their assault. Another one slams into the Manta only to writhe away when the electrodes stun it into submission. One charge left!

Three of the creatures repeat the trick you saw earlier, somehow attracting luminants to create some sort of energy shield around their rubbery bodies. You don't know if that will stop the electrified field or not, but better safe than sorry! You engage the motors, rapidly pushing through the shuddering, glowing beasts and begin to ascend. Then something even stranger happens.

The giant squid attack, but this time they don't use the luminants to create armor. Instead, they gather the energy into their bodies and project it out of their massive eyes!

The eye-beams slam into the Manta (no damage this time; just dramatic effect). Give the heroes a moment to realize they're being **shot at…by the eye-beams of a giant squid!**

The Manta isn't prepared for this kind of attack, and the experiment has concluded, so it's best to flee the dangerous beasts!

THE CHASE

The chase is on! The Manta is a sitting duck in open water so fleeing upward is a dangerous option. There are mazes of trenches and luminant forests nearby though!

The heroes must now flee their pursuers through narrow canyons and gigantic luminescent flora! The chase ends when the heroes Flee, Force the giant squid away, or knock all three of them out. Then the Manta can safely head back up to their pod.

The squid stick together as one group. They don't try to grapple but simply fire their eye-beams in an attempt to disable their prey.

Complications represent crumbling sea walls or rock slides, disturbed by stray stun rays or minor seismic events. The giant plants fed by luminant energy may also be the source of Complications, exploding with spores, falling into the Manta's path, or even reaching out with long, sentient vines! The luminant "garden" is very much alive, so the GM shouldn't be afraid to portray it as such.

Note: The Manta's side-mounted stun rays may only be fired when the pilot makes an opposed maneuvering roll against the squid as an action (see **Fixed Side-Mounted Weapons** in the Chase rules of the *Savage Worlds* Adventure Edition).

- **GIANT SQUID (4):** The squid attempt to stay at Short Range to use their eye-beams. See their profile on page 25.

VICTORY & DEFEAT

If the sub is Wrecked, alarms blare and freezing sea water rushes in before the auto-pilot kicks in and pilots it toward the surface. Sensing victory, the squid swim off into the gloom.

If the heroes escape without Wrecking the sub, they gain a point of Conviction!

CHARACTERS & CREATURES

LUMINESCENCE

The luminant material issuing from the Marianas Trench can infuse plants and animals with various properties. Luminescence isn't magic, it's an energy source humans just don't understand yet. For purposes of the *game*, though, luminescence *is* essentially magic, and can bestow a number of strange abilities.

The most notable trait of luminescence is that it causes plants and animals to grow rapidly (over a few days), and to extraordinary sizes (though that doesn't happen in this preview). It also sparks photosynthesis in plants even without sunlight, allowing them to grow far beneath the "Midnight Zone."

Powering Up: When threatened, creatures of the abyss sometimes "attract" luminescent particulates from the surrounding sea that act as armor or allow them to channel the energy into short but powerful bursts.

"Powering up," as the sea corps call it, is very effective for these creatures but comes at great cost. After about 10 minutes, the creature must make a Vigor roll at –2 or it dies immediately. Otherwise it passes more slowly, usually several days or weeks later.

It's noted in the Savage Tales above when each of these conditions occur. If the GM wants to create her own adventures, powering up should become more common the closer the heroes get to the Challenger Deep, or if they attempt to disrupt the signal that emanates within.

- **ARMOR:** +4.
- **ENERGY BLASTS:** Range 12/24/48, Damage 3d6, RoF 3 (no Recoil), Heavy Weapon. Uses the creature's Athletics skill.

DEEP SEA ANGLER (GIANT)

These fish don't appear in this preview but can be used in your own adventures. They're also a good example of the kinds of guardians the Event has created.

The giant versions of these creatures are about the size of a Volkswagen, measuring 15' long from nose to the end of its tail. The *illicium* or "lure" emits a more concentrated version of the luminant energy blast.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+4, Vigor d10
Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d6
Pace: 2; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 13(2)
Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** The giant anglers have thick, scaly skin.
- **Aquatic:** Pace 8.
- **Energy Blast:** Range 12/24/48, Damage 3d6, AP 4, RoF 1, Heavy Weapon. Uses the creature's Athletics skill.
- **Size 4 (Large):** The fish are thick and about 15' long.

GIANT SQUID

Giant squid are common in the depths. What is *uncommon* is their ability and willingness to work together.

Giant squid seem to act as guardians of the abyss, gaining all the listed luminescent abilities when a foe seems too much for their natural abilities.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+6, Vigor d10
Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d6
Pace: 2; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 14
Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 8.
- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Ink Cloud:** Giant squid can spurt a cloud of black ink once per day. The cloud fills d4 connected spheres (use Large Burst Templates). Everything within is concealed in Pitch Darkness.
- **Size 7 (Large):** These giant squid are males, around 35' long counting their tentacles.
- **Tentacles:** Reach 3. Giant squid may make up to two attacks each round and add +2 to grappling rolls. They only use their "feeding tentacles" to attack, which are tipped with "tentacular clubs," causing Str+d4 damage.

OCEANUS FAMILY

The Oceanus family runs the Dark Water Syndicate and rules over its minions as

arrogantly as one might expect. They are the villains of the story, cartoonishly shallow on the surface with occasional and surprisingly deep interactions.

MARA OCEANUS

The matriarch of the family rules the company. Mara is tall, thin, strong, and utterly ruthless. She trains relentlessly, making her as much of a threat in hand to hand combat as she is in the board room — and she's a *killer* in the board room!

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6
Skills: Athletics d10, Boating d10, Common Knowledge d10, Electronics d10, Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Science d10, Shooting d10, Stealth d10, Taunt d12
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Arrogant, Mean, Ruthless (Major)
Edges: Ace, Aristocrat, Very Attractive, Calculating, Charismatic, Combat Reflexes, Counterattack, Dodge (Imp), Elan, Extraction (Imp), Humiliate, Killer Instinct, Martial Artist, Provoke, Strong Willed
Gear: Laser pistol (Range 12/30/60, Damage 2d6, AP 2, RoF 1, Shots 50).

MALCOLM & MEREDITH OCEANUS

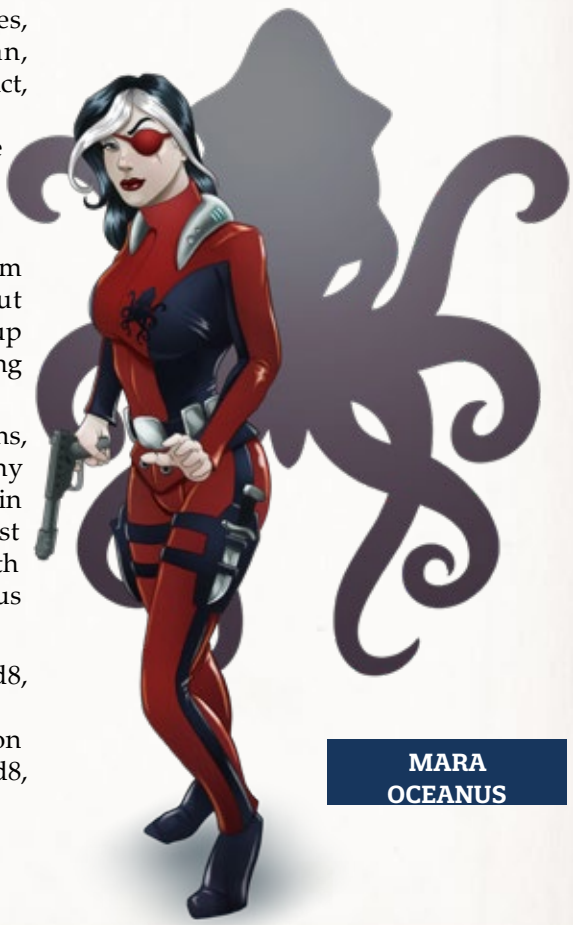
The Oceanus twins are true terrors. Malcolm appears more cruel on the surface but Meredith plays the long game — setting up her foes with false confidence before tearing them down utterly.

The twins are in their early to mid-teens, which should be adjusted to match any player character youths. As often happens in these kinds of series, the heroes might just find themselves attracted to either or both the Oceanus children, despite their obvious shortcomings.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Athletics d8, Boating d6, Common Knowledge d6, Electronics d6, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d8
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Curious (Meredith), Impulsive (Malcoln), Mean, Ruthless (Minor)
Edges: Aristocrat, Attractive, Calculating, Charismatic, Elan, Humiliate

DARK WATER GOON

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Athletics d6, Boating d6, Common Knowledge d6, Electronics d6, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Loyal, Mean
Edges: —
Gear: Laser Pistol (Range 12/30/60, Damage 2d6, AP 2, RoF 1, Shots 50).



MARA OCEANUS

TESLA RANGERS

THE ROBOT WARS

Most say it started with the death of John Henry after his showdown against a steel-driving, tunneling robot. Other folks think it was sabotage by a shadowy cabal of nefarious scientists. The rest say it was bound to happen no matter what. Whatever the cause, humanity was not prepared for the cost when the robots that once stood as a symbol of America's bright new future, turned instead into a raving horde of rampaging automatons.

It was 1871, and a war-weary America was unprepared for a robot uprising that spread across the country like wildfire. Common townsfolk found it impossible to mount effective resistance against the bulletproof horde of fearless automatons. By the winter of '73, using heavy cannons and armor-piercing Gatling guns, humanity managed to push the robots west across the Mississippi.

A COUNTRY DIVIDED

For 11 years humanity has held that line. The east banks of the Mississippi have become a line of cannon-studded fortifications, while everything west of the Mississippi was ceded to the automatons. Life in the east struggles to survive in cramped confines. The people's hope dwindles. One crackpot inventor after another hawks his surefire way to disable the robots for good — only to fail miserably.

But now in 1883, one such scientist, Nicola Tesla, offers a real solution to stem that tide of despair. Fresh to our shores, Tesla has a load of experimental devices and a government contract to outfit a voluntary expeditionary force, cross the ol' Miss, and head deep into No Man's Land.

Hang on tight, hombre, as the *Tesla Rangers* ride out!

MAKING CHARACTERS

Tesla Rangers is a Western set in the Robot Apocalypse of 1883. The rangers themselves are made up of volunteers from all walks of life. One can play as any familiar Wild West or Victorian-era archetype, be they cowboy, gunslinger, aspiring writer, or more. No dedicated human is turned away. Heck, I hear they're even letting the clockwork cogs sign up. Use the standard rules for making characters, with the following changes:

COGS

Only one line of robot never went haywire and joined the uprising. The robots made by the Babbage Calculations Company, which had eschewed the innovations of steam piston brains or electrical diodes for the more elegant mechanical designs pioneered by its founder Charles Babbage. For whatever reason, this apparently spared the Babbage-built automatons the madness that infected the others. While production of all robots

ceased at the start of the war, these clockwork "cogs" remained loyal assistants. Many of them still function today, and players may choose to play them in Tesla Rangers.

- **CONSTRUCT:** Due to their mechanical nature, cogs receive +2 to recover from being Shaken; ignore 1 point of Wound penalties; do not breathe or suffer from disease or poison. Cogs don't heal naturally from Wounds, but instead must be repaired. Due to the intricate nature of their inner clockworks, Repairs made outside of a dedicated workshop or without the proper tools receive a −2 to the roll (on top of Wound penalties).
- **COGNITION FLYWHEEL:** Cogs can recalibrate their mechanical processors to raise any skill by one die type for a scene. Recalibration requires 10 minutes of preparation and the offset (lowering by one die type) of another existing skill is governed by the same trait.
- **SELFLESS:** Cogs are hard-coded to protect and serve. Therefore they risk life or limb for their friends without hesitation. All cogs have the Loyal Hindrance.
- **DEPENDENCY:** Cogs must receive one hour of upkeep every 24 hours or become automatically Fatigued each day until they are Incapacitated. The day after Incapacitation from lack of upkeep they cease functioning. Each hour spent receiving proper maintenance (winding gears, cleaning and oiling joints, etc.) restores one level of Fatigue. Cogs can't properly perform upkeep on themselves.
- **MISTRUSTED:** The general public doesn't see a difference between a cog and any other robots, even when assured of their loyalty. So cogs tend to be treated with suspicion and distrust out along the frontier, sometimes even in the ranks of the rangers themselves. All cogs have the Outsider (Major) Hindrance.

HINDRANCES

Doubting Thomas is not a Hindrance in Tesla Rangers. There is nothing supernatural lurking in the shadows, so not believing in magic is perfectly foundational.

All the other Hindrances from *Savage Worlds* function exactly the same in *Tesla Rangers*.

SKILLS

Shooting and Riding are added to the core skills to represent the basic training all heroes must go through to be accepted into the rangers. The Weird Science skill is called "Tesla Science," but its function is the same.

EDGES

Other than Arcane Background and Gadgeteer (see below), all the *Savage Worlds* Edges are available in Tesla Rangers, and function the same.

JOURNEYMAN TINKERER

REQUIREMENTS: Novice, Smarts d8+, Repair d6+

An hour of tinkering with a weapon lets you make a Repair roll and add one of the following bonuses with a success, or two with a raise: +1 Damage, +1 to hit, +1 AP, +1 RoF, +1 Parry, +1 Reach, or +5 base Range. This effect lasts for 48 hours or until a player rolls a 1 on a skill die to use the weapon, at which point the weapon returns to normal operation. Each bonus can only be taken once. Subsequent tinkering removes any prior effects.

GALVANIC ENGINEER (WEIRD SCIENCE)

REQUIREMENTS: Novice, Special

- **ARCANE SKILL:** Tesla Science (Smarts)
- **STARTING POWERS:** 2
- **POWER POINTS:** 15

While the advancement of Victorian-era, steam-powered robots might seem like magic, it ain't. At least not as the Tesla Rangers see it. The only Arcane Background available to players in this setting is a variation of Weird Science that folks call the Galvanic Engineer.

Galvanic Engineers are masters of the bleeding edge of Wired West technology. Constantly pushing the boundaries of the laws of science (and occasionally breaking them), Galvanic Engineers automatically have the Artificer Edge and must always use devices for their powers. Unless the inventor (or GM) decides otherwise, all damage-dealing galvanic devices count as Heavy Weapons and should use Trappings like magnetism, electricity, steam, or vibration.

Galvanic Coils: All Tesla Science devices run off a compact power source called a galvanic coil. Galvanic coils look something like a radio tube crackling with electrical energy. Starting inventors have three coils, and each coil holds 5 Power Points. Each device must have one or more available coils to function. Swapping charged coils from one device to another is an action.

Recharging: Galvanic Engineers recharge their coils by attaching them to a Teslic Dynamo — a device about the size of a toaster that collects electrical energy passively from the Earth's magnetic field. Teslic dynamos generate 5 Power Points per hour in the wilderness, or every 15 minutes when within 100 yards of a Tesla tower. Dynamos can also be used to transfer power points between coils (See **Tinkering** in *Savage Worlds*).

Malfunctions: If a character rolls a Critical Failure when using a device, it Malfunctions. All of the device's active powers terminate instantly and it loses 1d4 of its remaining Power Points, spread out evenly across attached coils.

Coils can be targeted with a Called Shot (−4) and have an equivalent Toughness of 4 if hit. Shaking a coil generates the same effect as a Malfunction. A Wound causes it to overload and explode in a Medium Burst Template, inflicting 1d6 electrical damage for each charge the coil still holds. Safety measures ensure that an overload is not instantaneous, however, so this explosion is subject to **Evasion** (see *Savage Worlds*). Alternatively, a character can attempt to toss the device away: Use the same rules as Evasion but substitute Athletics (throwing) for Agility. If successful, the hero can move the center of the blast 1d6" in a direction of their choice (2d6" with a raise).

GADGETEER

REQUIREMENTS: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Galvanic Engineer), Tesla Science d6+

This Edge is slightly different in *Tesla Rangers*. Instead of investing Power Points, a Gadgeteer must scrounge parts from the wreckage of non-functional robots (or any reasonable collection of spare parts; Game Master's call) in order to craft short-time or one-use devices. This allows her to use any power of her Rank or lower. This takes one

entire turn, during which she can do nothing else but make a Tesla Science roll at –2 (she cannot take Multi-Actions that round). The device requires a charged galvanic coil to function, and once its initial Duration is finished the makeshift device falls apart into its component pieces.

SETTING RULES

In order to capture the high-octane, over-the-top, cowboy vs. robots feel of a Saturday morning cartoon, the following Setting Rules are used for Tesla Rangers:

- Conviction
- Fast Healing
- Heroes Never Die
- High Adventure

NEW SETTING RULE

The following new Setting Rule is also in play:

CHEWING GUM & WILLPOWER

Sometimes a Ranger doesn't have the time to Repair things the right way. Player characters can spend a Benny to ignore the long repair time devices normally require, and make a "temporary Repair" roll as a action. Doing so returns the item to operation for the remainder of the scene, or until the durn fool operator rolls a 1 on their skill die to use the device, at which point it stops functioning again.

GEAR

All the standard firearms you might expect in a Western are still in use in Tesla Rangers, even though traditional ammo lacks the ability to punch through the cast-iron hide of most robots. Rangers and their crews have developed a standard "shake and bake" engagement tactic: using small-arms fire to set up robots (Shake them), then coming in for a kill shot from a ranger equipped with a more exotic weapon. Using a Galvanic Engineer's experimental device, or dragoon pistol with Heavy ammo, to deliver a Wound to the robot.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Use the *Savage Worlds* Wealth system to represent a ranger's ability to requisition proper gear and supplies for a mission. Every $100 worth of gear applies a cumulative –1 penalty to a Requisition check. Exotic weapons always require a separate Requisitions check. Consistently doing well on missions or receiving a lot of good press provides temporary boosts to a ranger's Wealth die.

Tesla Rangers Badge: These tin or brass badges feature a star set in a circular gear, and have become the symbol of law and order across the Wired West. Each ranger badge is crafted out of a gear harvested from the workings of the first robot they put down. Only rangers who have "earned their badge" can use Conviction.

EXOTIC WEAPONS

Dragoon Pistol: The standard-issue sidearm for all rangers. The Tesla Dragoon is a five-shot pistol built to be versatile to the needs of whatever the Wired West can throw at you. Every ranger gets one when they sign up. Additional Dragoons require a Requisition check. Dragoons are capable of using a variety of ammo cartridges to fit the needs of the mission (see below).

(Range 12/24/48, Damage varies, RoF 2, AP varies, 5 lb, $100)

Thunderbolt Rifle: The long-gun variation of the Dragoon is the Tesla Thunderbolt Rifle. These are not issued by default but can be requisitioned.

(Range 24/48/96, Damage varies, RoF 2, AP varies, 15 lb, $300)

Magnetic Harpoon: Magnetic harpoons feature a spring-loaded harpoon shaft fitted with an electromagnetic head. It's powered via a wire woven into the harpoon's tether. The harpoon sticks to any cast-iron robot hide until the charge is deactivated. Rangers are known to use the harpoon to lasso robots of Large Size or smaller, and as a sort of grappling hook to climb some of the bigger cast-iron beasts. (Range 12/24/48, RoF 1, Damage —, robots that are hit must roll opposed Agility vs. the ranger's Shooting or become Entangled. On subsequent rounds

Entangled robots must roll vs. the magnet's d12 + 2 Strength to break free. (5 lb, $80)

Bottled Lightning: This coffee-can-sized device is essentially a one-use galvanic coil grenade that causes 3d6 electrical damage in a Large Burst Template centered around the can. The damage continues into the next two rounds, causing 2d6 on the second round and 1d6 on the third before shutting off. This damage ignores Armor. (3 lb, $20)

Galvanic Knuckles: These oversized, rubber-lined gauntlets are outfitted with sparking electrical nodes along the knuckles that deliver quite a wallop when activated. Each gauntlet has three charges capable of adding +1d8 electrical damage to any unarmed Fighting attack, and also protects the wearer from potential self-electrocution. (5 lb, $120)

EXOTIC AMMO

Cast-Iron Cartridges: Oversized armor-piercing bullets made of densely cast iron. These hefty cartridges pack a wallop against most robots.

Pistol (Damage 2d6, RoF 2, AP 2, +3 lb/5 Shots, $30/15, HW).

Rifle (Damage 2d8, RoF 2, AP 2, +3 lb/5 Shots, $60/30, HW).

Magnetic Cartridges: Made of standard lead wrapped around a magnetized core, these bullets don't have the *oomph* of cast-iron cartridges, but they aid rangers with difficult shots. These bullets have been seen to curve to hit robots behind cover and around corners.

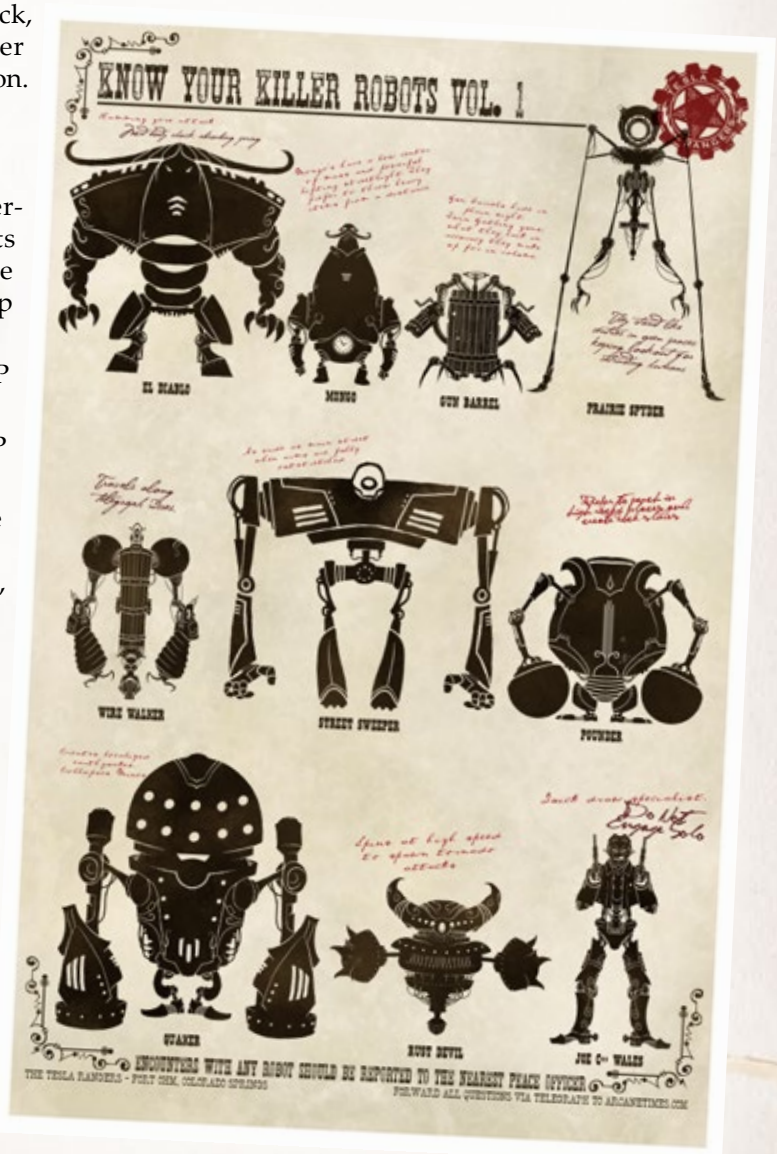
Pistol (Damage 2d6, RoF 2, +1 lb/5 Shots, $10/15, Ignores Cover for metal targets).

Rifle (Damage 2d8, RoF 2, +1 lb/5 Shots, $20/30, Ignores Cover for metal targets).

Teslic Cartridges: Experimental ammo fresh from the Tesla labs back east. These rounds look like glowing miniature radio tubes. Developed from the same tech as galvanic coils, each round has just enough juice to project one bolt of lightning. Once expended, the cartridges require charging at a ranger station, or with a Teslic Dynamo before they can fire again.

Pistol (Damage 2d6 + 2, RoF 1, +1 lb/5 Shots lb, $100/10, HW, Ignores Armor).

Rifle (Damage 2d8 + 2, RoF 1, +1 lb/5 Shots lb, $200/20, HW, Ignores Armor).



SAVAGE TALES

MILK RUN

The Tesla Rangers receive word via telegraph that deputies stationed in a nearby settlement, Uncanny Valley, captured a shootist robot by the name of Bot Masterson. The party must travel to the town to collect and escort the robot intact to Fort Ohm for study. For this task they are given an armored wagon to contain the gunslinger and some deputies. The journey to the township of Uncanny Valley is about three days' ride from Fort Ohm.

- **DEPUTIES (1 per ranger):** Use the Soldier from *Savage Worlds*. Each deputy is outfitted with a Winchester '76 (Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d8, RoF 1, AP 2) and 30 rounds of standard ammo, plus whatever weapons the players choose to hand off to them.

DAY ONE

The landscape outside Fort Ohm is made up mostly of plains with a few rolling hills. The dry, yellowing grass grows tall and wild as the posse moves farther away from the safety of the Tesla towers. As the wind shifts, it creates a rustling sound that makes the deputies jumpy. Dark clouds in the distance threaten to bring rain, but otherwise the ride is uneventful.

Diablo Canyon Shortcut

If the rangers decide to try to use El Diablo Canyon as a shortcut on their trip out to Uncanny Valley, they first come to the Old Canyon bridge, then into the canyon on the other side.

Leave El Diablo out of the bridge scene, and have a prairie spider lurking in the support struts under the bridge. Station its reinforcements on the far side.

DAY TWO

On day two the trail — such as it is — begins to wind between steepening hills. Around midday the rangers cross an overgrown rail line pointing due west, rusted and forgotten. A Common Knowledge roll allows the rangers to recall that it leads to El Diablo Canyon (see sidebar), a place the rangers are under explicit orders to avoid if at all possible. Their planned route takes them north around the top of the canyon, and then back to the south once they reach the far side.

AMBUSH

About six hours later, around the time the posse should start looking to set up their next campsite, they spy smoke rising up over the hill ahead. Just over the hill lies the wreckage of a supply wagon that has been ambushed by robots. Rangers who approach the ridge cautiously have a chance to make a Notice roll (−2) before reaching the site. If successful they spot something lying low in the grass. With a raise, they identify it as a prairie spider waiting to ambush the rangers. Otherwise the spider gets The Drop on the posse as they reach the ambush site. The spider activates its siren on the first combat round, giving rangers four rounds to try to put it down before killer robot reinforcements start showing up.

After defeating the robots the rangers can scrounge through the wreckage of the wagon to collect extra standard ammo. A Notice roll turns up 1d6 additional reloads per ranger, and a raise makes it 2d6.

- **KILLER ROBOTS (2 per Ranger):** See page 35.
- **PRAIRIE SPIDER (1):** See page 35.

DAY THREE: UNCANNY VALLEY

Early on the third day, the rangers spy the top of the lone Uncanny Valley Tesla tower. Farmers in the fields around the town wave at the rangers as they pass. A small crowd gathers outside the local ranger's office as heroes arrive. Children ask to play with the rangers' badges and Tesla devices. The townspeople are happy to see the heroes and are glad to have Bot Masterson off their hands. There are no rangers stationed in Uncanny Valley, just a couple of deputized locals to run the lockup and monitor the telegraph lines.

The locals warn their visitors to be careful talking with the robot, saying, "It has a way of getting inside your head." If anyone asks how it was captured, locals explain that they think it broke the perimeter when the town's Tesla tower was down for maintenance, then got trapped when it fired back up.

BOT MASTERSON

See **Shootist** on page 36, but add the following Special Abilities:

- **Fuzz Box:** While outwardly pleasant and accommodating, there is a barely audible buzzing harmonic in Masterson's speaker unit that unnerves humans. He receives +2 to Taunt and Intimidation rolls. If rangers can find some way to muffle or drown out the buzzing, or block their ears, Masterson's bonus is negated. Cogs are immune to this effect.
- **Devil's Tongue:** Masterson can make a Persuasion roll (d8) versus a target human's Spirit to activate the *puppet* power. The Duration of the effect is 5 rounds and cannot be extended. Targets who fight off control before the end of the Duration are left with a ringing in their ears that makes them Distracted for one round, but immune to the effects for 1d4 hours. Bot uses his Devil's Tongue tactically, waiting for a moment alone with a ranger or at a time of the most confusion. Cogs, by their nature, are immune to this effect.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

While in the areas protected by a Tesla tower energy field, Masterson seems lethargic and scattered. He's slow to react and speaks in a slurred, almost drunken speech pattern. Once outside the tower limits, however, this effect fades. Masterson then becomes very talkative, and tries to engage any rider willing to respond to a robot.

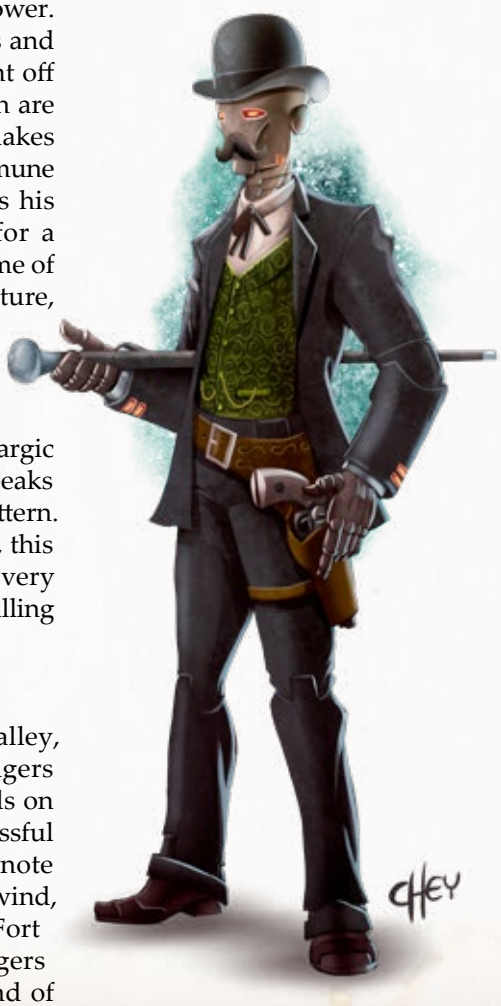
RUST STORM

About three hours out of Uncanny Valley, the wind begins to pick up. The rangers clearly see the source: those dark clouds on the horizon have gotten closer. A successful Survival check allows the rangers to note that the clouds are moving against the wind, blocking their intended route back to Fort Ohm. A raise on the roll tells the rangers this is a rust storm, a violent whirlwind of metal shavings and debris usually kicked up by rust devils. The rangers also spot a beaten and beleaguered rail line uncovered by the winds. It runs east-west and points back into this side of El Diablo Canyon. Turning east into the spires of El Diablo Canyon baffles the winds, and provides better protection.

If the posse decides to push into the storm in order to find the rust devils, it's a Dramatic Task that requires an appointed leader to roll Survival. He must acquire six Drama Tokens in order to reach the eye of the storm, where a trio of rust devils await the group. Each failed roll forces each posse member to make a Vigor check or take a level of Fatigue.

If they opt for the protection of El Diablo Canyon, or give up and fall back, the rust devils give chase but stop at the edge of the high canyon walls.

- **RUST DEVILS (3):** See page 36.



EL DIABLO CANYON

El Diablo Canyon is a maze of offshoots and dead ends. Luckily the rangers have a rail line to follow. As they make their way deeper into the canyon, however, they feel a greater sense of unease — as if something is stalking them through the winding passageways.

Only if the rangers call a full stop and find a way to shut up Bot Masterson can one of them get enough quiet to hear the mechanical footsteps of something very large echoing through the canyon. Unknown to them, their pursuer is the very El Diablo from which the canyon gets its name — a massive, bull-headed drilling robot! If they continue at a regular pace, El Diablo easily follows, biding its time until they are trapped at the Old Canyon Bridge ahead. If they attempt to pick up the pace or lose their pursuer, he gives a short chase before dropping back. He knows where they're heading…

OLD CANYON BRIDGE

One way or the other, the rangers finally arrive at a rickety old railroad bridge spanning a deep gorge. Scattered crates and mining supplies surround the worksite on the far (east) side as if abandoned mid-shift. The bridge creaks and groans as the wind blows across its skeletal structure. The wooden rail ties are cracked and rotting. The bridge is four yards wide and 100 yards across from end to end. Crossing it safely requires walking the horses single file. El Diablo returns once most of the rangers are on the bridge, or when at least half remain on his side. El Diablo focuses his attacks on the rangers on his side of the gorge, while the rangers on the east side have to deal with the gun barrels hiding there!

The bridge cannot support the full weight of El Diablo. If the crew manages to lure it out into the middle section, the structure collapses at the most dramatically appropriate time.

Once El Diablo and the all the gun barrels are dealt with, the rangers are free to ride the rest of the way back to Fort Ohm unhindered. If they arrive with Bot Masterson in fully operational condition, the heroes get a boost of one die type to their requisitions for the following month.

EL DIABLO: See page 34.

- **GUN BARRELS (1 per 2 rangers):** See page 34.

BESTIARY

The Wired West is full of all kinds of infernal, bloodthirsty contraptions. This list is just a handful to help you get started. When designing your own, try to take a moment and figure out what its original purpose was and imagine how those once-useful features have now been turned against humanity.

EL DIABLO

Built by a mining company to bore tunnels for rail lines, El Diablo resembles a minotaur from legends of old. It stands over eight feet tall with a massive bull-like head topped with dual drilling horns. Its lower torso incorporates a shock-absorbing spring meant to minimize the transfer of vibration from the drills and prevent cave-ins.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12
Skills: Athletics d8, Common Knowledge d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d12, Notice d10, Persuasion d4, Stealth d4
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 14 (4)
Gear: —
Special Abilities:

- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; ignores 1 point of Wound penalties; does not breathe or suffer from disease or poison.
- **Drilling Horns:** Str+d6.
- **Fearless:** Robots are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Heavy Armor +4:** A robot's cast-iron hide makes it immune to lead bullets and other common small-arms fire. Normal weapons can Shake a robot, but only Heavy Weapons or Heavy Ammo can deal Wounds.
- **Ramming Drills:** +4 Damage with drilling horns if El Diablo can charge at least 6" before attacking.
- **Size +2:** El Diablo stands over eight feet tall.

GUN BARRELS

Originally designed as sentries to defend mining claims, these hermit-crab-like robots now infest the ghost towns and other abandoned settlements across No Man's Land. They hide in water barrels, player pianos, crates, and other innocuous bric-a-brac until a human approaches, then spring out with twin Gatling gun arms, spraying

the area like a lead sprinkler as they skitter around their prey.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d4, Vigor d4
Skills: Athletics d8, Common Knowledge d4, Fighting d4, Notice d10, Shooting d8, Stealth d10
Pace: 4; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5 (1)
Gear: Gatling arms ×2 (Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d8, RoF 3, AP 2).
Special Abilities:

- **Armor +1:** Iron skin.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; ignores 1 point of Wound penalties; does not breathe or suffer from disease or poison.
- **Fearless:** Robots are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Gatling Arms:** Gun barrels prefer the "spray and pray" method of targeting. Use the **Suppressive Fire** rules from *Savage Worlds*. A single gun barrel can attack two Medium Burst Templates per turn (one for each arm), which can overlap. Roll separately for each template. Due to their piston-stabilized arms, gun barrels do not suffer Recoil.

KILLER ROBOT

Sometimes you just need a catch-all "killer robot" to throw at the posse. Use these stats to fill out any generic horde of nameless automatons.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d10, Vigor d6
Skills: Athletics d8, Common Knowledge d4, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (4)
Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; ignores 1 point of Wound penalties; does not breathe or suffer from disease or poison.
- **Fearless:** Robots are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Heavy Armor +4:** A robot's cast-iron hide makes it immune to lead bullets and other common small-arms fire. Normal weapons can Shake a robot, but only Heavy Weapons or Heavy Ammo can deal Wounds.

PRAIRIE SPIDER

These robots resemble 15-foot-tall, long-legged, knobby-kneed tripods supporting a central underslung eye-sphere. Originally built as moon towers for night working rail crews, they now act as lookouts for the robot forces in No Man's Land — either lying low in the deep, wild prairie grass or sidling up to abandoned windmills and water towers and attempting to blend in with struts and piping.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d4, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d10, Stealth d10
Pace: 12; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 12 (4)
Special Abilities:

- **Burning Eye:** Prairie spiders have one central eye that serves as both a floodlight and primary weapon. When the iris is wide open, the eye removes all Illumination penalties in a Large Burst Template within 24" of the spider. When it focuses the eye, however, the light becomes a terrible heat ray. While in this mode, use a Small Burst Template to indicate where the prairie spider is focusing its attention. Check all flammable objects touched by the heat ray to see if they burst into flame. Characters seared by the eye take 3d6 damage, which may be Evaded.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; ignores 1 point of Wound penalties; does not breathe or suffer from disease or poison.
- **Fearless:** Robots are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Heavy Armor +4:** A robot's cast-iron hide makes it immune to lead bullets and other common small-arms fire. Normal weapons can Shake a robot, but only Heavy Weapons or Heavy Ammo can deal Wounds.
- **Sentry Alarm:** Prairie spiders have a blaring siren capable of alerting all nearby robots to human incursion. When humans are spotted, the tripod begins to wind up its siren horn, which takes 1d4 rounds to reach full volume. Once at full volume, all humans in 24" of the spider must make a Vigor check or be deafened (−4 to Notice rolls requiring hearing, no benefits from Leadership Edges). Cowpokes who critically fail this Vigor check are Stunned as they drop to the ground in pain.
- **Size 3:** Prairie spiders are thin-bodied and stand about 15' tall.

RUST DEVIL

Outside of the dust storms they kick up, these robots resemble horned, spinning tops with outstretched spokes that end in massive, spiked cannonballs. Each one of the spokes is actually a very powerful electromagnet a rust devil uses to summon up a whirlwind of debris and metal shavings. Their original purpose was the clearing of brush and vegetation.

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6
Skills: Athletics d10, Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d10, Stealth d6
Pace: 12; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9 (4)
Special Abilities:

- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; ignores 1 point of Wound penalties; does not breathe or suffer from disease or poison.
- **Fearless:** Robots are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Heavy Armor +4:** A robot's cast-iron hide makes it immune to lead bullets and other common small-arms fire. Normal weapons can Shake a robot, but only Heavy Weapons or Heavy Ammo can deal Wounds.
- **Reap The Whirlwind:** Str+d6. Opponents hit by the rust devil's spinning metal fists must make a Strength roll (at −2 if the Devil gets a raise) or are hurled 2d6" away. Anyone that strikes a hard object (such as a wall) takes an additional 2d4 nonlethal damage.
- **Rust Storm:** Despite their nickname, these robots don't "rust" objects as much as erode them. At the end of a rust devil's turn, all adjacent characters automatically take 2d4 damage from the cloud of sand and debris around them. This damage ignores Armor. In fact, armored cowpokes who take a Wound from the rust storm also lose 1 point of armor from all their gear.

SHOOTIST

A frightening development from the latter days of the robot wars, shootist 'bots are the most "human" of all the killer robots. Made in our image, they are cunning and cruel, often toying with any persons unlucky enough to stray into their territory. Each shootist is of a unique design. Going by their own names, like "Wired Bill," "Bot Masterson," and the wooden-framed "Oak Annie" (who is immune to electrical attacks!). It is unclear if these are names we gave them in the war or ones they picked for themselves. When adding a shootist to an adventure, make sure it has its own personality and quirks.

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6
Skills: Athletics d8, Common Knowledge d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d10, Persuasion d6, Shooting d12, Stealth d10, Taunt d8
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (4)
Hindrances: Vow (Major—Kill all humans)
Edges: Ambidextrous, Marksman, Rapid Fire, Two-Gun Kid
Gear: Pistols ×2 (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 2, AP 1).
Special Abilities:

- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; ignores 1 point of Wound penalties; does not breathe or suffer from disease or poison.
- **Fear (−2):** Cowpokes who get caught by the steely gaze of a shootist must make a Fear check at −2.
- **Fearless:** Like other robots, shootists are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Heavy Armor +4:** A robot's cast-iron hide makes it immune to lead bullets and other common small-arms fire. Normal weapons can Shake a robot, but only Heavy Weapons or Heavy Ammo can deal Wounds.

YOU CAN FIND MORE OF CHEYENNE'S BRILLIANT WORK AT WWW.ARCANETIMES.COM, OR HIS AMAZING, THREE-TIME HUGO AWARD WINNING COLORING ON GIRL GENIUS!

THE LOST CITY OF ASTLA

The *Lost City of Astla* is a fantasy setting with science fiction themes powered by magical forces. Imagine all the tech you wish — now imagine it's powered by arcane arts. It's also a troubled world with two warring factions and only one side is aware the war still wages. This is Astla.

A WORLD DIVIDED

Thousands of years in the past, Astla was no different than many other worlds. Lush forests and deep green seas covered the globe and the people lived their lives to the fullest. Magic was a thing whispered about in fairy tales and told as bedtime stories. The humans of Astla occasionally waged war with one another, traditions were formed, children were born, new generations inherited old settlements. Life was lived and the people left a relatively small footprint on their surroundings.

But as their numbers grew, humans began to expand. Civilizations grew closer to the massive wooded areas of the world, and a whole new realm of possibility opened up as they met their neighbors for the first time. Those who had existed long before humans were birthed by the Gods, beings connected to the woodlands and the energies of the world around them. The humans called them elves, and they wanted what they had: magic and wonder, advanced designs fed from the powerful energies of the earth. The elves tried to take the path of peace, explaining that the world must be respected and a balance kept within nature lest dire consequences be suffered. But the humans only wanted power and talks of peace collapsed as elves denied them tools of war.

The humans waged war on those who would not submit to their demands. They became a constant source of harassment for the elves, sneaking in under the cover of night and stealing resources. The elves had no policies for this and being peaceful in nature hesitated to destroy them, always holding on to hope that they would learn from their mistakes. They viewed the humans as children and vastly underestimated their resourcefulness. A few elves were even persuaded to aid the humans, thinking if they taught them of the world's power, they'd respect it more. This would be the downfall of Astla.

As decades passed, the humans devoured knowledge and created larger cities, used the knowledge granted them and made weapons of war. Each creation drained yet more power from the earth — warping the climate and wildlife. They paid no mind to dwindling bodies of water or sickening forests, ignored the desert-like environment slowly evolving around them.

A small faction of elves realized this battle could not be won and in secret used their resources to escape the hell their home had become. A ritual raised a protective dome

around their city and lifted it from the ailing forests to the stars above. With them they took a great many samples of flora and smaller fauna and vowed not to return until the humans had died out. They watched. They waited. They protected what bits of the world they could from their observation rooms, thwarting humans as they strove to grow yet more powerful, build larger cities, and conquer a world that had already given up on fighting back. The elves called themselves "the Watchers."

ASTLA TODAY

Today Astla is vastly different than it was in that long-lost era of lush flora. It is a world primarily populated by wounded deserts, sprinkled with crumbling cities that are no longer fully powered. Humans remain, though many survive only by scavenging the ruins of the once proud elves for artifacts to sell their neighbors in exchange for food and fresh water.

History tells that the elves fled this place like cowards and took the magic with them, leaving the humans to die of disease and starvation and the earth in ruins.

The truth is, the elves are still very much alive, and while they may have abandoned the human race, they are unable and unwilling to leave the orbit of their home world. They watch, still holding on to hope that one day the humans will change and the planet will heal.

THE LOST CITY OF ASTLA

A shining beacon of hope adrift above the planet of Astla, the Lost City is crafted of living wood from ancient, sentient birch-like trees who willingly formed shelter for the Astlatians. The living city protects itself and its inhabitants to the best of its abilities.

Technically, the Lost City has all one needs to survive. It is a work of art with intricately detailed runic walls, a central library, dining galleries, gathering halls for those would play and sing, places of worship, and personal homes for each family. Unfortunately, while the sun still shines in space, it can't replace the feel of a cool open breeze or the smell of fresh air. This peaceful retreat provides

shelter, food, and all other requirements of basic life, yet after centuries of survival it has become less home and more prison to many of its inhabitants.

THE LIBRARY OF KNOWLEDGE

A place of study and education, this large area contains all the written knowledge of the Astlatians. Comfortable chairs clothed in warm cremes and browns provide a relaxing place to study while sturdy dark wood tables of intricate design offer larger spaces for group projects.

Far in the back of this community room are glass cases meant to hold the rarest of books. Many tomes remain here but many spaces are empty, holding nothing but a brief note of the book's last known location. Occasionally, a new book arrives as Watchers come and go on the surface, stealthily retrieving that which belongs to them from the humans below. Such instances have become more and more rare in recent times.

THE GRAND HALL

The Grand Hall was once a place of merriment for special occasions. A raised, round dias resides in the center of this circular room, and six chairs form a circle facing outward, allowing for petitions to be brought to the Astlatian Council or for special guests to enjoy gatherings from a place of honor. Balls were hosted here and holidays celebrated. Woven banners of bright colors still grace the walls and the floors remain polished and clean, but rarely is the hall used for its intended purpose. Today its floors are scattered with people and craft projects. Small groups sort foodstuffs while friends lounge around playing games and chatting amongst themselves. The Grand Hall has become the central gathering point for the people who reside within the Lost City.

WATCHERS' DEN

A small portion of the Astlatians are Watchers. These are the guardians, those who descend to the planet's surface to asses their world, the humans, and occasionally retrieve that which was stolen from them during those early years of war.

Watchers spend most of their time sequestered in their dens, magically scrying the world from afar and plotting their next missions, thwarting humans where they can. They study the art of Death, ensuring none on the surface who see them live to tell the tale. They assassinate those who seem the most harmful to nature, leaders who are deemed unworthy, and warmongers. They deal in death in the name of peace and healing. The Watchers have appointed themselves judge, jury, and executioner. Few remain who care to argue the point.

Watchers keep to themselves, as the task they took on so long ago makes the city's inhabitants uncomfortable. Few desire to know what happens on the surface. Most prefer to ignore their existence entirely. Their rooms are connected to the Den, creating a small community of like-minded individuals separated from the larger population.

DINING HALL

The Dining Hall was once home to grand feasts. Gatherings of the Astlatian nations occurred here, the first celebration between humans and elves was hosted in this very hall. Now it serves as the cafeteria for the inhabitants of the city. Community meals are hosted here twice a day and all foodstuffs cycle through the hall. The Astlatians have devised a system by which work equals trade for meals and necessities. Each member of the community must spend a set amount of time working in the large garden rooms to ensure all are fed, and in return they are guaranteed sustenance themselves.

HEALER'S GALLERY

The Astlatian elves are a hardy people and rarely fall physically ill, but when they do, they are taken to the Healer's Gallery. More often than not, the healing that occurs here is along the lines of mending bones or the occasional scrape from general work and life.

A handful of beds line the walls of this mostly empty room should patients need to stay long term, and the aura of the room is one of peace. Murals of forest life and warm sunshine grace the walls and the lighting is nearly always dim and soothing. The only oddity in the space are ominous black curtains hanging over a door in the far right corner of the room. This heavily warded entryway leads down a darkened hall to what the healers term the "Dark Rooms." No one save the healers are allowed entry.

THE DARK ROOMS

The whispered about space. The hall of no return. The Dark Rooms. These few spaces down a dimly lit hall contain the unspoken depression of a druidic people surviving in space. The Dark Rooms are accessible only by the station healers and contain Astlatians whose minds have cracked during the long stint away from their birth places. Healers call this the wasting, and as of yet, there is no cure.

Not everyone is cut out for life in the stars. It takes its toll, year after year, and for some no amount of magical gravity or walks in confined garden spaces can replace the feel of their homeland beneath their feet or lifting their face to the sun on a warm summers' day.

A disease of the mind, the wasting starts slow, beginning with bouts of confusion, lost items, or forgotten appointments. This can last years and is difficult to diagnose. Later, paranoia sets in, then a deep, obsessive desire to leave the station and return to the true world. Eventually patients must be locked away for their own safety and to prevent harm to others or themselves as they try to escape.

THE HEART OF ASTLA STATION

At the very center of Astla Station is a shrine. More doors than walls, this octagon shaped room is home to the most precious of items, the heart of the station. A golden altar populates a round dias in the room's center and an array of colorful pillows litter the floor, allowing for comfortable spots to meditate.

This is where the living seeds of the city are kept. Magically infused seeds are the source of the city's power. Each station inhabitant takes their turn here, meditating and channeling energy into these powerful artifacts to ensure their home is sufficiently powered. There are a minimum of two individuals in the room at all times.

ASTLA

The surface of Astla is a far less peaceful location than that of the station. Humans continue to wage war with one another, many living in the ruins of cities whose names are long forgotten, or making homes in desert caves. Small villages dot the desert-like lands, where smatterings of trees and pools of water still exist and windstorms are a common nuisance.

The flora and fauna of Astla have altered over hundreds of years. Creatures adapted to better withstand the new climates, though many more died out entirely. Much of the delicate plains plant life is gone forever, replaced with hardy cactus breeds and spindly flowers with short life spans. Patches of forest remain scattered about the planet's surface, remnants of elf homes that still cling to the old days and refuse to give in though their borders shrink more each year and elves no longer live there.

There are two major points of trade, Elfmeet and Center City. In either place the people can trade for foodstuffs, clothes, blankets, water, and even the occasional magic powered rifle or unrusted sword.

ELFMEET

Elfmeet is a thriving human city built amidst the ruins of the once Astlatian capital. It is one of the few places on the planet where an abundance of grass, trees, and fresh water can still be found. The city itself is laid out in a circular pattern with many old outbuildings acting as homes for the people. Residents here fare better than most, but it's a hard life and someone is always waiting in the wings to step into a vacated space.

Trade occurs in human crafted dwellings. Caravan carts gather in a massive, unnatural clearing at the city's center.

This empty space is the focal point of many human legends. The clearing represents what once resided there. The elven halls and council chambers, the places in which humans first hoped to negotiate peace and trade with their neighbors. In the time before, before the elves fled to parts unknown and took a large portion of their city with them. According to human history, it was they who drained the planet of its resources in the process.

CENTER CITY

Center City is a rambling collection of buildings pieced together from scavenged bits, built in the center of Astla's largest desert. In the middle of this cobbled metropolis is all that remains of an expansive lake system nestled amidst a stand of ancient trees that refuse to let go of life.

Humans who reside here have learned to survive the overexposure of sunlight, minimal water allotments, and the harsh reality of not enough food to go around. Grown food, such as fruits and vegetables are a precious commodity experienced by few. Most survive on the flesh of local cacti and small desert hares caught in hunters' traps.

The hierarchy of Center City is as shifting as the sands that surround it. Most leaders assume their roles by brute force and hold their positions until another stronger person comes along. Led by dictators who care little for the people and more for what they can gain, it's an environment of everyone looking out for themselves. Mercenaries, thieves, and weapons dealers are common here. The most sought after, and wealthiest, are those rare few humans who have studied the Astlatian magics and have even a slight ability to craft enchanted weapons.

THE CAVE SYSTEMS

Amidst the shifting sands are several winding cave systems that remain intact despite the numerous changes on Astla. The peaceful reside here. Those who want nothing more than to live their lives, shying away from raiding and wars. While the caves can be dangerous and incredibly cold, it's preferable for those who are unable or unwilling to participate in the dangerous surface politics.

Life here is simple with few if any finer things available. Family spaces are often designated by nothing more than an outline built with rocks and pebbles and most things are shared among all the residents of the cave system.

Education is nonexistent. Few have anything beyond the most rudimentary math skills and almost no one can read. Stories are the favored way to remember histories and many a night is passed around the community fire listening to the elderly spin tales of the days of old.

Outsiders give the caves little thought, considering them nothing more than a dumping ground for the homeless and hopeless. Yet, overall, the people here are happier and friendlier than any others on Astla's surface.

THE WOOD

The forests of Astla are small and seemingly shrinking more each year. A few stands of once-proud trees still cling to life in various places around the world. The two largest wooded areas left are those surrounding Evermeet and Center City. The people give little thought to the diminishing forests. The Astlatians consider this to be the greatest tragedy of all.

While not true of all, many of Astla's trees are far more than just wood to be harvested. They are the keepers of Astlatian history, vessels of memories for their people. Elven homes were crafted only of willing trees who bent their shapes, with aid from the magic of elves, to provide a protective family space and each home retained the memories of its family. Memories could be accessed by any Astlatians who knew the proper meditations. Now the few homes that remain have fallen to death or retain vile memories no Astlatian wants.

The great trees, the old ones, still stubbornly cling to life. Repositories for the history happening around them — if any ever arrive to retrieve it.

CHARACTERS

There are three playable races in *The Lost City of Astla:* Astlatian elves, humans who call themselves "the People," and the rare Half-Born who are a mix of both.

ASTLATIANS

Astlatians are tall, willowy, and dark-skinned. Most have hair and eyes in shades of teal, turquoise, or white. They are virtually ageless in nature so long as they are connected to their place of birth and can live as long as 1000 years in less than ideal circumstances.

The Astlatians have been a part of Astla since before even the oldest of trees can recall. Helpmates to the land, they believe themselves to have been created at the time the world itself was birthed. For thousands of years they lived in harmony with their surroundings, aiding the land, ushering in the seasons, and respecting the world they called home. In return the land granted them secrets, magics to be used for the betterment of their people.

Many yet live who remember the times of old on the planet's surface. They hold out hope those days will return.

- **AGILE:** Astlatians are graceful and agile. They start with a d6 in Agility instead of a d4. This increases maximum Agility to d12 + 1.
- **HEALING HOME:** Astlatians possess deep ties with their birthland, those who are within 10 miles of their place of birth may make a natural healing roll once per day.
- **LOW LIGHT VISION:** Astlatian eyes amplify light. The People claim they can see stars in the elves' eyes. They ignore penalties for Dim and Dark Illumination.
- **NATURE'S ALLIES:** Astlatians have an inherent dislike of mechanical objects. They shun most mechanical items and have the All Thumbs Hindrance.
- **RACIAL ENEMY (Human):** Astlatians suffer a –2 penalty to Persuasion rolls when dealing with humans and may become hostile with little provocation.

THE PEOPLE

The humans of Astla are often barbaric in nature. They call themselves simply "the People," and like all races, there are good and bad among them. Most are simply victims of their own culture.

Humans in *The Lost City of Astla* are made using the standard rules for character creation.

THE HALF-BORN

Astlatians and the People generally despise each other, but of course there are exceptions. Half-Born with a dominant human side may choose a free Novice Edge of their choice as usual. Those who lean more toward their elven ancestry get a d6 in Agility (which also increases their Agility maximum to d12 + 1).

- **LOW LIGHT VISION:** Half-born ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- **OUTSIDER (Minor):** The half-born find themselves ostracized by both the Astlatians and the People.

NEW BACKGROUND EDGE

THE LOST

REQUIREMENTS: Novice, Astlatian

Those who suffer the affliction of the Wasting are immune to any and all mind-affecting powers due to the already damaged state of their minds. This includes *empathy, mind link, mind reading, mind wipe, puppet,* and any power with a mind-altering Trapping.

Those with the Wasting should also ensure one of their Hindrances is Death Wish, Driven, or a Vow to return to the place of their birth. Which one depends on their personality and how they seek to reconcile this intense and insatiable longing.

GEAR

Generally, any gear and equipment from *Savage Worlds* that's appropriate before the 15th century is available for the people of Astla. Common weapon are swords, axes, maces, crossbows and the like. Armor is made of leather or metal. Financial transactions are made with coins or bartering.

Luxuries such as running water and electricity no longer exist on Astla, though the elves once had such novelties powered by magic and still have versions of it on their station today.

The fire arms of Astla are unique and powered by magic, but use the rules for lasers listed in *Savage Worlds*.

ARCANE BACKGROUNDS

The following arcane backgrounds are available in Astla.

GIFTED

Humans and Astlatians rarely mate, but when they do, their offspring occasionally exhibit incredible abilities. Not all half-elves are gifted, but all gifted are half-elves.

All gifted are creatures of both the cities and the woods, and their powers reflect it.

Power List: *Arcane protection, beast friend, burrow, damage field, darksight, disguise, drain Power Points, elemental manipulation, entangle, farsight, fear, mind link, mind reading, shape change, sloth/speed, stun, wall walker.*

MAGIC (WARLOCKS / WITCHES)

While they may have different titles, the warlocks and witches of the humans and elves are much the same. They use the energies of their dying world to warp the reality around them to their own desires. These powers are displayed by use of gestures, words, and runes that require many years of study to perfect.

Power List: All but *banish, divination, empathy, fly, growth/shrink, healing, illusion, intangibility, mind link, mind reading, mind wipe, puppet, relief, resurrection, and zombie.*

MIRACLES (HEALERS)

Every world has its healers, those with soft hearts and a desire to aid those in pain. Astla is no different. The magic for healing is considered a gift by all races and healers are revered and considered off-limits in times of war.

Power List: *Arcane protection, beast friend, blind, boost/lower Trait, confusion, darksight, deflection, dispel, divination, empathy, environmental protection, healing, light/darkness, protection, relief, resurrection, slumber, smite, sound/silence, speak language, stun, warrior's gift.*

WEIRD SCIENCE (ENGINEERS)

Some have dedicated themselves to the craft of war. These engineers spend long hours tinkering with and improving the weapons of the world. Many of these individuals are the sole source of knowledge for creating energy pistols and other weapons that makes use of Astla's magic.

Power List: *All but healing, relief, and resurrection.*

PSIONICS (PSILOCKS/PSIWITCHES):

Psilocks and psiwitches are those who have developed extraordinary mental skills and possess evolved minds able to perform seemingly magical feats with little more than a thought. They are rare and often feared by others.

Power List: *Beast friend, blind, bolt, boost/lower Trait, confusion, darksight, disguise, drain Power Points, empathy, fear, illusion, mind link, mind reading, mind wipe, object reading, puppet, speak language, stun, telekinesis.*

SETTING RULES

The following Setting Rules are in play for *The Lost City of Astla.*

- Conviction
- Fanatics
- High Adventure

SAVAGE TALES

SAVING THE LOST

Silvia Shiningstar, an Astlatian healer, is desperate to cure the lost. Her Twin brother Solace was recently diagnosed with the wasting and she has a plan to cure him. Unfortunately, it requires a trip planet-side, transporting a paranoid sibling with a death wish who insists on going, and negotiating with the only people who can provide safe travel — the watchers.

GETTING THE PARTY TOGETHER

Silvia is looking for help. Her twin brother is only a few weeks away from being committed to the Dark Rooms forever and she's convinced she can save him by returning him to a holy place on Astla. She isn't the first to think of this, but she is young and reckless enough to want to try it. Silvia whispers to those who will listen and offers what payment or future favors she can for help sneaking off the station.

The party has gathered to do so. Let them decide why. Maybe they're friends of Silvia, or perhaps they just want to get back to Astla for other reasons. Either way, there are two ways off the station.

PATH ONE

Rayiu Deathbringer is a novice watcher who's made some mistakes. His reputation among the other grim scryers is poor; mostly he is known for drinking too much wine. Rayiu is desperate for change and wants more than a planet-side foray every few years.

With some Networking, the party finds Rayiu and convinces him to help.

"Yes. I will help you. But I want something in return, of course. Nothing is ever truly free.

Have you ever noticed that the watchers never get the wasting? They want you to think it's because of all their training and hard work or dedication to daily meditations. But it's not true. I've heard them talking. It's Astla. It's because we go planet-side. We aren't meant to live up here in all this black. But if everyone knew that…well…we'd be there, wouldn't we? Humans be damned.

Rayiu lost his mother to the Dark Rooms last year and wants to further the cause. His request is only that the travelers return with an urn of dirt from his mother's birth place — the same area as the twins — as he's been confined to the station for attempting to go after it the last time he was planet-side. He doesn't believe this will cure her, but he thinks it might provide her some small measure of peace.

Assuming they agree to his terms, Rayiu leads the party down a long hallway to a locked door.

"Come. There's a special room. Like a storage closet. Creepy, with no windows. That's where it happens. You close your eyes and the next thing you know you have dirt beneath your feet."

Pulling two keys out of his pocket he unlocks the door and hands one of the characters the other. It's a small gold key decorated with runes. He also gives them a folded piece of parchment and presses it into the hands of whoever seems the most trustworthy.

"I had to lift this from Giera. It wasn't easy. Hours of boring stories before he finally fell asleep! Use this key to unlock the door. Stand in the middle and recite the words on the scroll.

Whatever you do, remember where you arrive. You must stand in that exact spot and read the spell again to return home."

As promised, the party enters the room and finds themselves on Astla.

PATH TWO

If the party does any manner of snooping around the watchers, they encounter Feirrin Stormchild, the youngest watcher on the station. She's never been planet-side but has

been an apprentice to the watchers for the last decade. While she could probably have graduated to a novice watcher by now, she's not particularly motivated to do so and the elders consider her slow. She isn't. She's just lazy and unmotivated.

Her tasks around the watcher's den are simple things, cleaning, running errands, and providing food and drink. The one task that falls to her that she truly hates is removing the arcane devourers from the station hull. Every week a few novices are tasked with battling the parasites that leach onto the station and attempt to drain it of energy. This week the task falls to Feirrin and her friends who would much rather attend the lunar costume party in the Grand Hall. If the characters agree to aid her, she agrees to show them how the transportation closet works.

"I'll meet you at the healer's hall an hour before the Lunar party. Don't be late!"

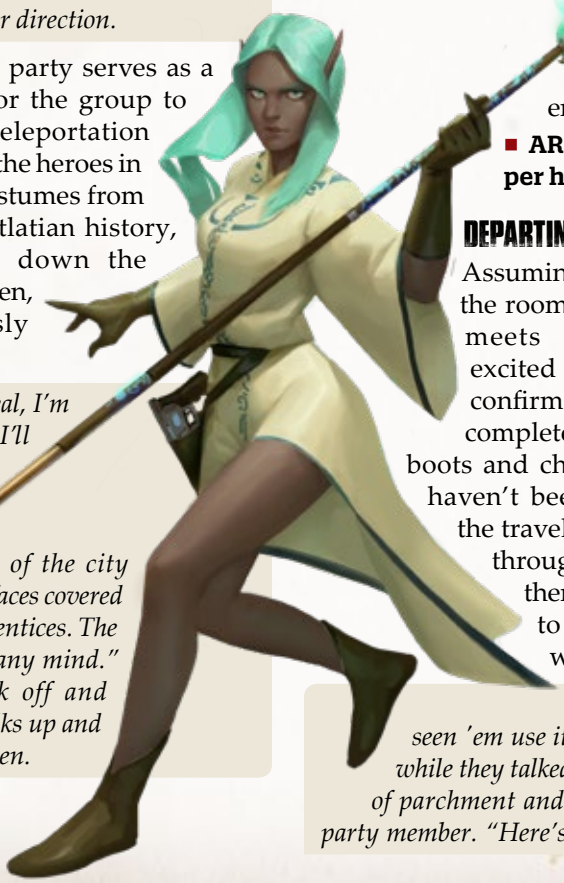
PLAYING DRESS UP

Feirrin arrives at healer's hall with an armful of clothes and out of breath.

"Here, put these on!" she demands while shoving clothes in their direction.

The lunar costume party serves as a perfect distraction for the group to gain access to the teleportation room. After dressing the heroes in a variety of festive costumes from various points in Astlatian history, Feirrin leads them down the hallway toward the den, whispering furiously as they go.

"OK, so here's the deal, I'm going to get you in, I'll show you where the gear is, and you can get those disgusting creatures of the city walls. Just leave your faces covered and pretend to be apprentices. The guards won't pay us any mind." She leaves her mask off and doesn't stop as she walks up and opens the door to the den.



Once inside, Feirrin hurries down the hall, pausing at the fourth door on the left.

"These are the apprentice rooms, once you're done come back here and wait, I'll leave the party a little early and help you get to the transportation room."

Feirrin hands each hero a pair of boots and shows them how to operate bubble charms with a command word. These fascinating trinkets, when activated, create a field of energy and oxygen for a short time so they can operate in the strange vacuum outside.

"You only have an hour before you gotta come back in, ok? You can walk around just fine out there with the boots and you won't fall off, but you can't breathe without the bubble charms."

Once they're suited up, Feirrin leads them to a large portal shaped window and points to a lever. *"When you're ready to go outside just pull the lever and say* aperi ianuam. *There's one on the other side too. Remember, one hour!"* With that last reminder she darts off to join the party and leaves the characters to their task.

Once outside the problem is obvious. Several large arcane devours are stuck to the side of the city-ship, feeding hungrily on the energies it provides.

- **ARCANE DEVOURERS (1 per hero):** See page 47.

DEPARTING THE STATION

Assuming the party returns to the room as instructed, Fierrin meets them, bubbly and excited from the party. After confirming the task has been completed, she collects all the boots and charms to be sure they haven't been stolen and guides the travelers down the hall and through a locked door. From there the party follows her to a small, nondescript wooden door.

"So this is it. I've seen 'em use it and I've nosed around while they talked." She pulls out a piece of parchment and hands it to the closest party member. "Here's the words you have to

say when you leave. You have to say the same words to come home. I think in the same spot too." With that she unlocks the door, pockets the key, and darts off down the hall. "Nice knowing you!"

The closet is a nearly empty room with a few rotting shelves in it that house extra robes, scented candles that smell as if they've gone rancid, and a variety of shelved bones, presumably for study. Standing in the middle of the room and reading the text on the parchment transports the party to the planet.

PLANET-SIDE

The party's first glimpse of the planet is rough, gray stone walls. They arrive in a medium sized, dark cavern, dimly illuminated by two glowing blue orbs directly overhead.

As soon as one of the characters moves in any direction, one of the orbs floats down in front of them and zips off to the north a dozen feet before pausing. If the characters follow the orb it leads them out of the area, and up a hallway. After a few twists and turns the party arrives at the cave. There they can see out into a scraggly, well-lit, wooded area.

A visible shimmer hangs over the entry way. It is not harmful in any way and can be passed through without incident. Turning around to look behind, however, reveals a large, solid boulder. This is an illusion. The characters can walk in and out as many times as they like.

Silvia pulls a scroll out of her bag and with a few whispered words, summons a small purple light into being.

"This mote will lead us to our birthplace"

Following the tiny bright light leads the group deeper into the thin forest. The journey is wondrous at first after the confines of the city-ship. After a day's travel the wonder begins to wear off and Solace seems no better than before. He complains of the heat, the air, and his aching feet constantly.

VISITORS IN THE NIGHT

As night falls and travel becomes more difficult Silvia calls for the group to make camp. This is a new experience for most of the team, and it's not likely to be a comfortable night.

HOME

Four more days travel into denser woods sees the party to their destination. The GM should feel free to throw in an occasional encounter with desperate wildlife. Use the profiles for bears or similar creatures, perhaps reimagined with different colors, feathers for fur (or vice-versa), and other strangeness.

THE VILLAGE

A large circle of standing stones stand guard in a small village constructed similarly to those on Astla Station. Living trees sprout out of rooftops and the vegetation here seems lusher and healthier than any that's been seen before. Vines envelop what little remains of the architecture, and any personal items decayed to dust long ago.

In the village center stands a giant tree wrapped around a door. The purple mote zips to the tree and hovers there.

"This is it!" Silvia exclaims

Passing through the door gives a slight chill, but causes no harm. The opening leads down wooden stairs and deep within the tree's roots. Eventually it opens into a single octagon similar to Astla's Heart. The floor is dirt and the altar is stone. Power emanates from within.

"We must rest here for a time, Solace and I. You may explore while you wait. Don't go far please."

EXPLORING

The party can wander the village to explore their ancient history. Each home is a beautiful creation, somehow attached to a living tree. The area itself exudes peace and tranquility even in its overgrown state. A search of buildings reveals minor items of interest but nothing of actual value. A few buildings still have working light globes but the power that remains in them is much dimmer than those on Astla station.

If a character with an Arcane Background rests against the great tree, she has visions of days past. It is a glimpse into a time when the village was vibrant and filled with life. She sees children playing and parents laughing as they watch.

After several hours, Silvia and Solace exit the tree together. Silvia carries a small urn and clutches an item in one of her hands. For the first time, Solace looks somewhat at peace.

"I have it." Silvia waves. "The tree has gifted me one of the village heart seeds and I have soil from our village of birth."

AMBUSH

Of course nothing is ever this easy. A band of hunters have spotted the elves and watched them from afar. When the group emerges from the village, the hunters surround them and demand whatever artifact they retrieved from within. They promise to let the elves go if they surrender their "treasures," but have no intention of doing so — elven slaves fetch astronomical prices in Center City.

- **HUNTERS (12):** See **Hunters** on page 48. The hunters are led by a Wild Card named Marloon, a crafty and clever veteran of many wars and skirmishes.

AFTERMATH

The task complete, the heroes can either choose to return to the station and face possible punishment if they've been discovered, or stay on Astla to explore.

Regardless, Silvia wishes to go home. Her duties as a healer press on her and she desperately wants to find a cure for the wasting, or at least a way of improving the lives of those suffering.

Solace accompanies her, but his peaceful aura begins to fade the further from the village they go. Soon, his depression and paranoia return in full force.

If the party returns to the station, the twins thank them and offer healing items for future excursions. What happens next is up to you, and a tale for another day…

CHARACTERS & CREATURES

This section contains creatures found in the Astla setting. Many creatures and animals from the *Savage Worlds* Bestiary are also appropriate to use as you see fit.

ARCANE DEVOURER

These gray, winged, space rays feed off the magical energy of the Astlatians and their city-ship.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6
Skills: Athletics d8, Fighting d6, Notice d4, Stealth d6
Edges: Arcane Resistance
Pace: —; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Special Abilities:
- **Flight:** Devourers have a Flying Pace of 24".
- **Tail Lash:** Str+d6.

CACTITE

Cactites cling to the roofs of desert caverns, flinging their needles towards foes, then dropping down from above to drain their prey's blood for sustenance. Many cave dwellers hunt these creatures in order to sustain themselves.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d10
Skills: Athletics d10, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Shooting d10, Stealth d8
Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (2)
Special Abilities:
- **Armor+2:** Thick, leathery skins.
- **Needles:** Cactites punch with thorny fists for Str+d4 damage, or hurl up to three spikes in a single turn as one action with no Recoil penalty (Range 4/8/16, Damage 2d4, RoF 3).

DESERT HARE, SMALL

Desert hares evolved from the adorable fluffy bunnies that once roamed these forests in great numbers. While they maintain the same builds of their long dead ancestors, they now have thicker hides, thin wiry hair, and the ability to store water in their bodies. Desert hares can go up to a full week without a water

source. Thanks to their prodigious ability to procreate, they are the prime food source of the People.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d4–2, Vigor d6
Skills: Athletics d10, Notice d6, Stealth d8
Pace: 12; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 2
Edges: Acrobat
Special Abilities:
- **Environmental Resistance (Heat):** Desert hares are resistant to heat, reducing damage from heat sources by 4. They also receive +4 to resist heat hazards or powers.
- **Size –3 (Small):** Desert hares are normally less than a foot high.

DESICCATION LEECH

These strange, three foot long creatures wander the wastelands in search of water, ideally to be sucked from a living creature. They have little other motivation than their unending thirst.

Whatever fluids they ingest are funneled from the stomach through a secondary organ and finally deposited into a second stomach as vital water. Those desperate for something to drink can rip open a leech and (carefully) remove this sac.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d4
Skills: Athletics d4, Fighting d4, Notice d4, Stealth d6
Pace: 2; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4 (2)
Special Abilities:
- **Armor (+2):** The leech's thick, leathery hide provides 2 points of armor.
- **Bite:** Str+1. The leeches have lamprey-like mouths that can take off fingers if one is careless in handling them.
- **Size –2 (Small):** Desiccation leeches are 3' long and about 6" thick.

HUNTERS

The hunters encountered outside the Astlatian village are hard men and women who subsist for days without food or water, hunting for survival, profit, or just because they like to kill things.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Athletics d8, Common Knowledge d6, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Survival d10
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8(2)
Edges: Marksman, Woodsman
Gear: Leather armor (+2), bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1), short sword (Str+d6).

IMPERIAL SCORPION

Significantly larger than the average scorpion, these creatures of nightmare are often deadly to the People. Many hare-hunters and leech-wranglers have fallen to their deadly sting.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10
Skills: Athletics d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d10
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 14 (4)
Special Abilities:
- **Armor +4:** Thick chitin.
- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Poison (–2):** Those Shaken or Wounded by the scorpion's tail are injected with a lethal poison (see Hazards in *Savage Worlds*).
- **Size +3:** These creatures are up to 9' long, and weight upwards of 900 pounds.
- **Sting:** Str+d4.