

Taking Action

SAVAGE INSIDER

For All Things Savage

CHARACTERS WITH HISTORY

By Eric Lamoureux

ZHÀNDÒU: CITY
OF WARRIORS

By Sean Bircher

SALVATION IN
THE SEWERS

By Morne Schaap

SAVAGE ARCHERY

By Richard "Zadmar" Woolcock

MUMMY TROUBLES

By Zach Welhouse



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Obatron Productions excitedly released its first issue of *Savage Insider* with the debut of Volume 2 in July of this 2014. *Rebirth and Reinvention* garnered feedback all over the place with comments on Facebook and Google+ pages for Obatron Productions, *Savage Insider*, Savage Worlds Fans, and other licensees. And those are just the ones I know of!

We are delighted by the responses we got. Besides having a 4.5-star rating on a 5-star scale at DriveThruRPG/RPGNow, and leading both Hottest Titles and Hottest Small Press for a time, we received many helpful remarks and [two reviews](#).

Morne S. conveyed, "I enjoyed reading about how the game is growing and I can't wait to play the High Space adventure. Overall a good read, good production values, and lots of inspiration and ideas for GMs."

Jason B. broke down his thoughts by appearance, content, kudos, and room for improvement. The summation at the beginning made us smile: "...I've always had a special affinity for the *Savage Insider*. Until now, though, it's never been a publication that I've really considered a 'must buy' (but I was all over the free issues). With the shift to Obatron I finally decided it was time to put a little money where my game was... and boy was it worth it!"

One item we acted on from the room to improve list should be apparent in this issue. Jason pointed out that the *SI: Rebirth and Reinvention* skewed heavily toward the GM. It was just the kind of thing we could work with. In fact, it even spurred one of our freelancers to cite it in his successful pitch for a feature. So we're taking action and putting our readers' input to use. You'll find more content that is applicable to players and not just GMs in the pages that follow.

In my last letter, I told you we're working on expanding our electronic formats and making the magazine available in print. We've not gotten to where we need to be on either front, yet, but neither are forgotten projects. To help us be successful in print, if you're someone who wants to walk into your Friendly Local Game Store and pick up an issue, please let them know we're being carried by Studio 2 Publishing and that you want to support your FLGS. And if you weren't one of the folks who participated in our pre-launch marketing survey,

please let us know the latter, too! Just send us the name and address of your FLGS and we'll add them to the list of stores we're contacting in 2015.

Also in 2015, we're taking what we learned from our debut issue and setting up this issue and making it easier for ourselves going forward. This will be the only other issue of Volume 2. We're resetting our production schedule to adjust for the realities of being a small shop, working with freelancers versus staff, convention schedules, and holiday happenings.

After this issue, each seasonal issue will come out in the third month of each quarter, containing each volume to a single year. Writing submissions and advertisements will be due mid-month of the second month of each quarter. Calls for writing submissions will go out in the first month of each quarter. Illustrations will be solicited after writing submissions are received and will be due on the last day of the second month of the quarter. We'll determine the plan for the bonus, Pay-What-You-Want issue at a later date.

Want to be mentioned in my next letter? Review us on DriveThruRPG/RPGNow, RPG.net, or any other RPG-related site and drop us a line with the link. You just might get quoted next. Thanks for reading and for sharing your opinions!

Want to get paid to write or illustrate for us? Check out our submission guidelines to see what we're interested in and what our rates are. Also check out the advertisement in this issue and sign up for our newsletter, ensuring you've flagged that you want to get messages when we're looking for contributors. We're changing things up and getting some automation underway on the backside to make our processes more efficient.

If you're a licensee or a company supporting Savage Worlds play by way of accessories, we might be able to offer advertising for trade.

Have a great day and happy reading!

Vickey A. Beaver,
Editor-in-Chief

Releases: July 1 - December 31, 2014

While extensive, it is possible that other products were released without our knowledge. Release dates are approximate. Visit publishers' websites for complete details, including how to buy.

Release Date	Title	Publisher	Setting	Type	Format
7/1/2014	Queen of the Lost Valley	GRAMEL	Beasts & Barbarians	Adventure	PDF
7/6/2014	Crossbows, Crafting, and Ka-ZOT!	Evil Beagle	Shaintar	Supplement	PDF
7/8/2014	Battle for Oz	Pirate Press	Battle for Oz	Core Setting Guide	PDF, Print
7/8/2014	The Guns of Dagerov	Melior Via	Accursed	Adventure	PDF
7/15/2014	Ghost Train	Pinnacle Entertainment	Deadlands	Fiction/Supplement	PDF
7/18/2014	Realm Guide #18: Jubbah, City of Monkeys	Triple Ace Games	Hellfrost Land of Fire	Supplement	PDF
7/22/2014	Weird War II reinforcements - Hail the Italians	Pinnacle Entertainment	Weird War II	Supplement	PDF
7/22/2014	This Town is Gonna Kill me	Fun Sized Games	Streets of Bedlam	Adventure	PDF
8/5/2014	Class Ring	Pinnacle Entertainment	East Texas University	Adventure	PDF
8/5/2014	Nox Germanica	Pinnacle Entertainment	Weird Wars: Rome	Adventure	PDF
8/5/2014	The Haunted Straits	Sneak Attack Press	Broken Earth	Adventure	PDF
8/10/2014	Mythic	Chimera Press	Mythic	Setting	PDF
8/12/2014	Among the Brave	Pinnacle Entertainment	Deadlands	Adventure	PDF
8/26/2014	Creature Feature: La Bruja	Pinnacle Entertainment	East Texas University	Supplement	PDF
8/26/2014	Western Town!	DramaScape		Supplement	PDF
8/27/2014	Realm Guide #19: The Al-Wazir Sultanate	Triple Ace Games	Hellfrost Land of Fire	Supplement	PDF
9/2/2014	Achtung! Cthulhu Guide to North Africa	Modiphius Entertainment	Achtung! Cthulhu	Supplement	PDF
9/2/2014	Judge Fool	Plain Brown Wrapper Games		Adventure	PDF

RECENT RELEASES

Release Date	Title	Publisher	Setting	Type	Format
9/15/2014	Nova Praxis	Void Start Studios	Nova Praxis	Core Setting Guide	PDF
9/16/2014	The Searchers	Pinnacle Entertainment/ Wendigo Tales	The Last Parsec	Fiction/Supplement	PDF
9/16/2014	Scrapped	Pinnacle Entertainment/ Wendigo Tales	The Last Parsec	Fiction/Supplement	PDF
9/16/2014	A Thule and His Money	Fabled Environments	Wellstone City	Adventure	PDF
9/16/2014	Ancient Ruins	Warning Label LLC	Cast of Cards	Accessory	PDF, POD
9/16/2014	17 Witches	Warning Label LLC	Cast of Cards	Accessory	PDF, POD
9/16/2014	ETU Custom Screen Inserts	Pinnacle Entertainment	East Texas University	Accessory	PDF
9/16/2014	Seeds of Discontent	Gun Metal Games	Interface Zero 2	Adventure	PDF
9/22/2014	Machinations	Void Start Studios	Nova Praxis	Supplement	PDF
9/23/2014	A Clear Understanding of Honor	Pinnacle Entertainment/ Wendigo Tales	The Last Parsec	Fiction/Supplement	PDF
9/23/2014	Shock Jock	Pinnacle Entertainment	East Texas University	Adventure/One Sheet	PDF
9/30/2014	Echoes	Pinnacle Entertainment/ Wendigo Tales	The Last Parsec	Fiction/Supplement	PDF
9/30/2014	ETU: Heroes of ETU Figure Flats	Pinnacle Entertainment	East Texas University	Accessory	PDF
9/30/2014	Set Rising	Savage Mojo	Suzerain Continuum		PDF
10/7/2014	How The Life Goes On	Pinnacle Entertainment/ Wendigo Tales	The Last Parsec	Fiction/Supplement	PDF

RECENT RELEASES

Release Date	Title	Publisher	Setting	Type	Format
10/7/2014	Fantasy Grounds' East Texas University Extension	Fantasy Grounds	East Texas University	Accessory	Other
10/14/2014	Fabricated Dreams	Pinnacle Entertainment/Wendigo Tales	The Last Parsec	Fiction/Supplement	PDF
10/14/2014	Brewhaha	Pinnacle Entertainment	East Texas University	Adventure/One Sheet	PDF
10/14/2014	Savage Worlds Test Drive Rules in Thai	Naxorn Srisomwongs and Battlefield Bangkok	Savage Worlds	Supplement	PDF
10/21/2014	The Valkyrie Smuggling Ship	DramaScape		Supplement	PDF
10/23/2014	Throwdown at the North Pole	Fabled Environments		Adventure	PDF
10/28/2014	Hell On Earth Reloaded Companion	Pinnacle Entertainment	Hell On earth	Supplement	PDF
10/28/2014	Hell On Earth: The Worms' Turn	Pinnacle Entertainment	Hell On earth	Plot Point Campaign	PDF
10/28/2014	Maggie's Ghost	Pinnacle Entertainment	East Texas University	Adventure/One Sheet	PDF
10/28/2014	Gladiators of the Dominion	GRAMel	Beasts & Barbarians	Supplement	PDF
10/28/2014	Nova Praxis GM Screen	Void Star Games	Nova Praxis	Accessory	PDF
10/28/2014	Super-Powered: 10 More HQ Add-Ons	Misfit Studios		Supplement	PDF
11/1/2014	Perilous Journey #15: Mission Alpha	Mystical Throne Entertainment	Mercenary Breed	Supplement	PDF
11/4/2014	The Jump	Pinnacle Entertainment Group	The Last Parsec	Soundtrack	MP3
11/11/2014	Aegis	Misfit Studios	Super Powers Comp. (2nd Ed.)	Accessory	PDF
11/11/2014	Doom Worm	Misfit Studios	Generic	Accessory	PDF
11/11/2014	Slime Dragon	Misfit Studios	Generic	Accessory	PDF
11/18/2014	Archetypes	Pinnacle Entertainment Group	The Last Parsec	Supplement	PDF

RECENT RELEASES

Release Date	Title	Publisher	Setting	Type	Format
11/18/2014	Horrors of East Texas University Figure Flats	Pinnacle Entertainment Group	ETU	Accessory	PDF
11/18/2014	Savage Characters, Volume 1	Dragonlaird	Generic	Accessory	PDF
11/18/2014	The Caliphate of Al-Shirkuh	Triple Ace Games	Hellfrost: Land of Fire	Supplement	PDF
11/25/2014	HOE Errata	Pinnacle Entertainment Group	Hell On Earth	Errata	PDF
11/25/2014	Kelley's Bane	Pinnacle Entertainment Group	ETU	One Sheet Adventure	PDF
11/30/2014	Hellfrost Action Deck	Triple Ace Games	Hellfrost	Accessory	PRINT
12/9/2014	Leviathan	Pinnacle Entertainment Group	The Last Parsec	Setting Book	PDF
12/16/2014	Scientorium	Pinnacle Entertainment Group	The Last Parsec	Setting Book	PDF



Tunse'al Setting Guide, Tunse'al Player's Guide, and Tunse'al Quick Starts and Side Tracks available through DriveThruRPG.com now and coming soon to your Friendly Local Game Store and Gen Con via Studio 2 Publishing.

Caravan of Troubles and *Usiku River* coming 2015.



Crowdfunding & More

While we normally focus on items that are coming out in the next three months, this edition of Upcoming Releases, with one notable exception, is all about the recent crowdfunding projects we've seen succeed for the Savage Worlds community.

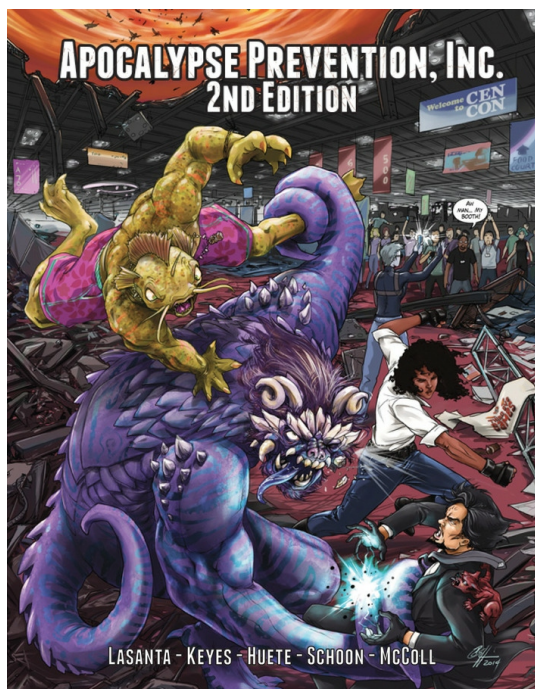
THIRD EYE GAMES

www.thirdeyegames.net

Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. - 2nd Edition

Third Eye Games launched *Apocalypse Prevention, Inc. – 2nd Edition* through Kickstarter. It closed on November 7, 2014 and its physical products are slated to be fulfilled the first quarter of 2015. TEG is bringing the “Action, Horror RPG with a Twist of Humor” up to date after gaining notoriety with its original release in 2008.

As agents for API, characters might find themselves entrenched in field combat, tapping into magic, or even mastering cybernetic implants, all while defending Earth from those who wish to destroy it and even the dimension in which it resides. With 20



races – 10 from the original and 10 demons created for the new – to choose from, variety is just one of the improvements coming to API. PDFs

for backers were projected to be delivered December 2014.

PINNACLE GROUP

www.peginc.com

ENTERTAINMENT



The Last Parsec

What an amazing ride! *The Last Parsec* funded on October 23, 2014 at 1,107% through Kickstarter, PEG promises a sci-fi “setting of planetary exploration and adventure.” Requiring both *Savage Worlds core rules* and the *Savage Worlds Science Fiction Companion* to play, you have the chance to portray any of eleven races found between the pages of *The Last Parsec* books (there are three to start with) or even to build your own using the SWSF Companion.

In addition to the RPG material, Shane Hensley and Cameron Dayton have each written short fiction for *The Last Parsec*, and it's [available at PEG's web store](#). They've made a [primer available immediately for free](#) whether you're a backer or not. [PDFs are available now](#).

FOUR-IN-HAND GAMES

www.steamscapes.com

Steamscapes: Asia

Not to be left out, Four-in-Hand Games [Kickstarted](#) *Steamscapes: Asia*, its follow-up to *Steamscapes: North America*. The project closed on October 28, 2014 with 106% funding. FiHG describes a different approach to steampunk than those familiar with the concept might expect: “It occurs on an Earth with a history identical to ours right up until 1770. From there, we take a very detailed alternative historical approach to creating our world, with a focus on realistic causality.” Airships and automation are still very much part of *Steamscapes: Asia*, but familiar places and faces might not hold the same historical roles they do in real history. *S:A* covers



an alternative history from about 1772-1872

with sections pertaining to China, Japan, and India as well as shorter accounts of Korea, Siam, Burma, and Malaysia. PDFs are expected late 2015.

JUST INSERT IMAGINATION

<https://plus.google.com/101441413304370353626>

Winter Eternal

New licensee Just Insert Imagination used IndieGogo to close out [its campaign](#) at 121% funding on October 6, 2014 for *Winter Eternal*, “A fantasy world locked in darkness and ice after the sun exploded.” Rather than being a traditional post-apocalyptic setting, the

characters face life as the people who descended from those who survived the devastation more than 100 years earlier. Magic and a variety of traditional fantasy races are at home on Ehlerac, the continent where the action takes place. After so much toil, a new day is dawning with the recent discovery of orange crystals, sunshards, which are key to launching a new age of industry and innovation. You can get a sneak peek of the world by reading *Salvation in the Sewers*, a short story set in *Winter Eternal*, in this issue. PDFs for supporters are expected April 2015.



DARING ENTERTAINMENT

www.daringentertain.com

War of the Dead

In news not related to crowdfunding, [Daring Entertainment](#) announced it has signed “an exclusive agreement with [Vorpil Edge Productions](#) to allow for the development and broadcasting of a live action web television series based on the *War of the Dead* setting.” Mike Dukes, VEP’s owner, is a role-player who has worked with Daring Entertainment in the past on product development and with Reality Blurs, another Savage Worlds licensee, as the art director. *War of the Dead* creator Lee F. Szczepanik, Jr. will work with VEP to ensure continuity between RPG material and the web episodes. [Read the full press release](#) at Daring’s website.



Mythic

Where the worlds of mythology meet as one from Chimera Press.



What is *Mythic*?

Take several of Earth's ancient cultures, transplant them onto a brand new world, then

make all their mythologies actually true - that's basically what the *Mythic* setting is about. It's a setting for gamers who want to adventure in a world of ancient legend, where mighty heroes pit themselves against terrible monsters, primal magics, and even the gods themselves.

Mythic is available through RPGNow.com and DriveThruRPG.com

To find out more about *Mythic* or Chimera Press, visit www.chimerapress.com.

Why We Created *Mythic*

I've loved roleplaying for a very long time, and I've loved mythology for almost as long. Unfortunately there just aren't many RPGs out there that use ancient mythology as the focus for their setting. So, I thought I'd put my two passions together and make a mythology setting of my own. It's something I've tinkered with on and off over the years but finally I decided to do it up properly and have it published for others to enjoy.

Influences

Ancient history was the primary influence on the setting. The three primary cultures in the setting take specific influence from the mythologies and cultures of the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Celts.

Research

In the early stages of the development of *Mythic* I spent a lot of time going through books and web sites

containing information about Egypt, Greece, and the Celts. I not only spent time polishing up on their myths, monsters, and heroes but I also looked up everything modern science knows about their culture. I learned everything I could about their fashion styles, language, and even forms of government - all to add that unique feel and style that makes each culture so easily recognizable. So, even though the setting is not based on Earth, the three cultures that make up the core of *Mythic* are still very similar to their real world counterparts.

Ideal Gaming Experience Provided

Mythic was designed with epic adventure in mind. It doesn't go so far as to make the heroes super-heroic, but your heroes aren't going to be spending the first few adventures clearing rats out of the basement of the local tavern. In *Mythic*, just like in the myths and legends the setting is based on, the storylines for adventures and campaigns GMs create for this setting should be big and world-changing right from the start.

However, even though *Mythic* is designed with epic adventure in mind, the setting is flexible enough that GMs can take it to super-heroic levels where the heroes become powerful demigods, or it can be dialed back to a more purely historic setting.

If Asked for a Comparison...

The main place where *Mythic* differs from those very few other settings that are also based on ancient myth is that *Mythic* doesn't just focus on one mythology. Instead, it brings several mythologies together into a single setting. This allows for some amazing combinations of heroes and adventures from vastly different mythologies all within the same campaign. Another big difference between *Mythic* and other setting books is that *Mythic* doesn't have a plot point campaign. Instead, the setting will be supported by an

entire line of adventures and fully developed campaigns.

Development Process

To a certain point, the process I used to design *Mythic* for publication is very similar to the one I use as a DM (dungeon master) when designing settings for a variety of roleplaying games I've run for my friends. For *Mythic*, it all started with a very brief description of what I wanted the setting to be about, in this case, a gritty setting based on ancient mythology.

With that description firmly in mind I began going through each of the sections in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook for races, Hindrances, Edges, equipment, and powers. The idea was to figure out what I wanted to keep, what wouldn't fit with the setting I had in mind, and what gaps needed to be filled. I then began working on the rules section of the setting book, writing out all the modifications and all the new stuff.

I decided very early on that I didn't want to have hundreds of new Edges, Hindrances, and Powers. The *Savage Worlds* rulebook already has tons of good stuff in it, and guaranteed about 90% of the new items I'd add to the setting book would never get used. So instead I decided to stick with a handful of new items that really fit the theme of the setting and filled certain gaps in what the *Savage Worlds* rulebook had to offer.

With the rules out of the way, I started working on the background for the three cultures I wanted to include in the setting book. This part was the toughest to write, but also the most fun.



Once everything was written, I copied it over into InDesign and began working on layout. I was still very new to InDesign so it was a learn-as-I-go kind of experience.

As I was working on layout, I submitted descriptions for the cover and interior art to a company that hooked me up with a couple of amazingly talented artists. When the artwork came in, I added it to the book, adjusting the layout as required.

With some finishing touches and a couple final proofreading passes the book was ready to release.

SPACE

IN THE FAR FUTURE

From reknowned author Patrick Taylor, High-Space launches your heroes into adventure at the speed-of-light! Everything you need to play epic science fiction: from new rules for Savage Worlds, to a galaxy-spanning setting.

"Wonderful space opera. Great rules, great art, and I love the "ships as characters" in the second book. This is now my go-to space book for Savage Worlds..." ★★★★★

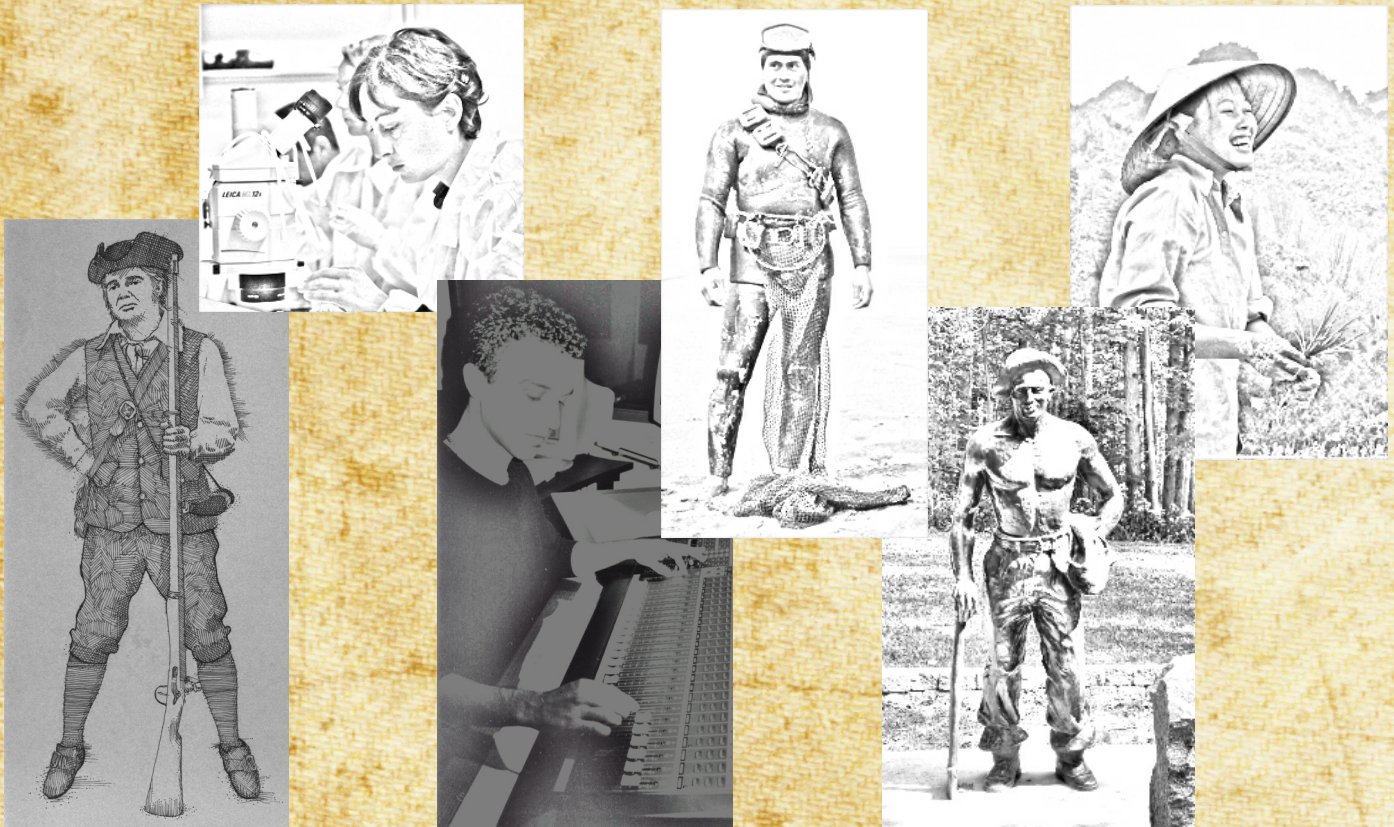
- Timothy S. at DriveThruRPG



HIGH
SPACE

BY PATRICK TAYLOR





Characters with History

Creating High-Ranking Characters

By Eric Lamoureux

Character creation is an important part of role-playing games. You need to decide the basics to shape who your hero is. It's then that you decide what his role and place will be in the universe and also within the group.

In this article I take a look at creating characters, but at a higher rank. In *Savage Worlds*, your character starts at Novice rank (0XP) by default. Starting at a higher rank, you create your character at 0 XP and then take Advances to reach the XP level and Rank wanted. The GM may also award additional starting money or equipment but there are no guidelines for this.

Creating a higher ranking character may be warranted due to character death in an ongoing campaign that has seen player characters (PCs) reach Seasoned or beyond. It can also be the requirement for a new, high-level campaign. While Novice characters may be fresh-off-the-farm heroes, higher rank characters should have had their fair share of

adventures and perils. The following two situations each frame some appropriate ideas and questions that relate to building a replacement character or coming into a new campaign at high Ranks. They may also help you consider how you can use Edges and skill increases to inspire your next *Interlude* scene.

So Your Character Just Died

Tough luck! Your group has been playing every week for six months. Everybody should be well on their way to Heroic rank by now. It's time to make a new character. Luckily *Savage Worlds Deluxe* has you covered. Everything you need is in the Advancement section under *Starting with Experienced Character*. Or is it really "everything"?

Looking around the table you realize there is something your character misses besides Advances: history. Sharon's character found this antique coin that, when flipped, lets her rearrange initiative cards. Steve's got punched in the guts by a bouncer so hard five games back that every time the group chases bad

GAME PREP

guys he gets winded first. Carlos' should have stopped playing cards with Mrs. Vaughn after he won a couple of hands; instead he went for the jugular and bled her dry. Now she's his enemy.

This is what happens when you play. Your character evolves. Your character influences the world around him and the world also changes him.

New Campaign Starts at Heroic

Your group is starting a new campaign and the GM says the challenges require Heroic Ranks. *Savage Suzerain* offers many campaign settings (realms) where characters start at Heroic or above by default. Again, starting at Heroic Rank only requires you to take the Advances needed to yield Heroic characters. But, shouldn't that character have lived? Surely he must have survived many perils and made friends along the way.

Since you're skipping the natural evolution that applying Advances throughout a campaign provides, you have to have another way to give life and history to that character. Merely Advancing a character through Attribute increases and new Edges creates a gap in her history by leaving out Hindrances and gear. Surely, your hero has picked up a bad habit along the way, suffered losses, or developed a few scars. She most likely has found, stolen, inherited, or purchased new gear, too.

So I started thinking about a *fun, fast, and furious* way to help players and GMs alike give depth to characters starting at a higher Rank. Many *Savage Worlds* settings have random adventure generators that use cards as a source of inspiration. You draw cards from a deck of playing cards and consult tables. I'm thinking about *Beasts & Barbarians* and *East Texas University* here, but it's become quite popular in other settings. I also paged through the *Traveler* book a few years ago. Friends also talked to me about its character creation system. You rolled on a bunch of tables and it would generate your life story. You could even die during that process!

I guess my itch for characters with history harkens back to the old days of gaming where much of the character creation process was randomly generated. Balance and optimization were foreign concepts to me at the time. Determined to scratch that itch, I went through Edges and Hindrances found in *Savage World Deluxe*, the *Adventure Deck*, and memories of

all the campaigns I've run. That led to the tables that follow.

Using a standard deck of cards, the following tables, *Interludes* from the *Savage Worlds* rulebook, and some creativity, you can add more to your character than just Advances.

The idea is to deal one card per Rank your character skipped. A Heroic character would be dealt three cards, for instance. The results on these tables were purposely left vague to provide inspiration instead of being decisive. Hindrances reference those found in the *Savage Worlds Deluxe* book. If a result points to a Hindrance that can be Minor or Major, use the Minor version by default unless the character had already chosen the same Hindrance during character creation. In that case, "upgrade" it to Major.

This will likely have some characters start better off than others. Ask yourself though, after six months of weekly games, can you say all the characters at the table are equally balanced? Haven't some of the characters made it out better than others?

If you don't like the result or the GM feels it doesn't fit his campaign, ignore a result or work with the GM to customize these tables. Most settings offer new Hindrances and Edges or similar perks and disadvantages. There is room in these tables to include them or to swap entries. If the Joker comes up, you have a few options. Maybe a lot has happened during this Rank in the character's life. Draw two cards and use both. Or perhaps luck smiled upon her. Again, draw two cards but pick the result you prefer.

Clubs

2-Poverty

3-Lame

4-Anemic

5-Bad Eyes

6-Ugly

7- The Mark of Fear (as per the Fright Table)

8-Hard of Hearing

9-10-Wanted

Jack-Ace- Permanent Injury (Roll on the Injury Table)

Diamonds

2-5-Knowledge skill d6

6-7-Common Knowledge (one field or area of interest)

8-Love interest/Family

9-10-Connections

Jack-Queen-Contact

King-Ace-Folk Hero (Can always find aid in a chosen locale)

Hearts

2-3-Exotic Item (a unique or rare item)

4-5-Minor Relic (gain the benefit of an edge in a specific situation or +1 bonus to a trait or damage)

6-7-Major Relic (same as Minor but without the specific situation restriction)

8-Trademark Weapon (Edge)

9-10-Fortune (Begin as Rich or Filthy Rich but no income)

Jack- -Queen-Magic Item (grants the effect of one power of equal or lower rank, activated with Spirit)

King- Ace-Renown (+1 Charisma to those who recognize you; 50% chance)

Spades

2-Phobia

3-Vow

4-Death Wish

5-Habit

6-Cursed (as Bad Luck)

7-8- Poor

9-10-Dark Secret

Jack-Mean

Queen-Ace- Enemy

Once the cards are dealt, the player(s) and GM can decide to flesh out those results during character creation complete with tweaks as desired.

What if you made this character during a game and want to join the group right away, or you're drawing a blank at the moment? Why not use those results for the next *Interlude* instead of drawing a card on the Interlude table? It might go something like this:

GM: Matt, the group is enjoying some down time at the local bar waiting for your handler to show up. Everybody is curious about the limp your character has. Can you tell us what happened to him?

Following is an example of how you might customize the tables to better suit your campaign.

The group is playing in an *Interface Zero 2.0* campaign. IZ 2.0 introduces new setting rules and Derived stats. Scott, the GM, feels the Renown result in the Hearts suite table doesn't really fit the campaign and that Street Cred is better suited for the gritty and underground feel. On the Spades suite table, he modifies the end results, keeping the Queen to King results for Enemy, but using the Ace result to insert the Appointed Monitor Hindrance from the IZ 2.0 setting book. Furthermore, Scott feels the Debt Hindrance in IZ 2.0 is very interesting and decides to swap the Poor result from the Spades suite table for Debt instead. All of sudden these tables have a lot more flavor. And it doesn't have to stop there!

Let's take a look at the players' side of things.

Matt and Interface Zero 2.0

Matt has to make a new character in his group's IZ campaign. Everybody has Heroic Rank characters at this point so he draws three cards (one for Novice, Seasoned, and Veteran rank.) He draws the Jack of Clubs, Four of Diamonds, and Eight of Hearts.

For Novice: Jack of Clubs, Permanent Injury. He rolls the Arm result, gaining the One Arm Hindrance.

Lucky Duke was a gun for hire in Chicago. On what seemed to be an easy job he was double-crossed by his fence. Someone wanted him dead. Overwhelmed by thugs waiting for him, he was left for dead and his arm so badly broken it had to be amputated.

For Seasoned: Four of Diamonds, Knowledge Skill at d6.

Fearing for his life, Lucky Duke fled to San Francisco where he knew he could disappear off the grid. He met with some shady street cybernetic surgeon who offered to install a cybernetic arm if Duke would do this one job for him. He agreed. Not only did he get a functioning arm, but he also got to spend a lot of time in the area. That's when Matt feels a Knowledge (Local – San Francisco) skill at a d6 seems very appropriate.

For Veteran: Eight of Hearts, Trademark Weapon.

Lucky Duke isn't ambidextrous and despite his name, wasn't so lucky when those thugs back in Chicago decided to pick which arm they'd beat to a pulp. He's a righty and had to learn how to shoot with

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his new arm. Matt likes the idea of Duke having a pistol that can be concealed inside his cybernetic arm. The same surgeon who installed his arm rigs a pistol to it. Perhaps it's something he can use as a Trick maneuver or even an advantage to gain The Drop on whoever stands in his way. So Lucky Duke spends a lot of time perfecting his new gun-fu shtick and gains the benefit of the Trademark Weapon Edge when using his concealable cyber-pistol.

Believing the man who wanted him dead so long ago has forgotten about him, Lucky Duke leaves San Francisco ready to turn a new page in his life and hopes to find more lucrative opportunities. That's when he joins the rest of the group: they are about to start a new job.

Janice and War of the Dead

Let's say Janice plays *War of the Dead*. Her table is about to reach an enclave settled by a group of bikers. During character creation she drew the Nine of Diamonds. That's a Connections result. To add a dose of role-play, the GM, April, asks for an Interlude in transit. Here's her chance to tell the rest of the group how she rode with the bikers five months back in Indiana and got to be pretty close with the leader. She looks forward to meeting up with the bikers and promises her group of survivors help will be found there.

Again, the story got more interesting and she found a way to influence it. Amy could reject Janice's idea, of course, but you can see the possibilities.

Edges you've picked with advancement can also be backstory springboards. Granted, you didn't pick a card when you picked the Edge, and the GM probably wants to deal a card for an Interlude, but maybe the result doesn't inspire you. Instead, see if the GM will let you focus on an Edge. For example, you could come up with a story about how your character trained for his Combat Edge. Who was his trainer? Is he still alive? How did your character find him?

You're starting a new character! What's her story? What makes her the awesome person she is today? Shuffle those cards and see what comes up. Or glance over the results and talk it over with your GM. She'll probably be thrilled

you want to invest that much time and thought into your character.

The whole process of interpreting Hindrances and Edges descriptions for creating highly Ranked characters differs from what happens during character creation only in that it happens all at once. Without a story behind each choice, characters are just a bunch of numbers, which might suit you just fine. However, giving your GM something to work with makes it easier for her to build a story arc around your character and might provide a different experience for you.

Given the way Savage Worlds works, even if all PCs aren't exactly equal, the effects of perks and disadvantages offered in these tables should be minimal in terms of game balance. You can draw cards, pick and choose, modify the tables, ignore results to better suit your campaign, or use these results to find inspiration for your next Interlude. This flexibility can make your characters and campaigns even more *fun, fast, and furious!*

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The Badass

More than a Swift Sword

The archetypal action movie or TV series hero isn't merely a Face or Fighter or Martial Artist; he's a charismatic tough guy who is as smooth with the ladies as he is dangerous in a fight. He's got the best car, the best clothes, and the arsenal he needs to get the job done. Whether it's John Shaft or James Bond, Aragorn or Han Solo, Michael Knight or even Jack Burton, he's a Badass.

Badass

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

Skills: Climbing d4, Driving (or Riding) d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d6, Shooting (or Throwing) d6, Stealth d4, Streetwise d6

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

Hindrances: One Major, Two Minor

Edges: King of the Hill or Operative [see below]

New Hindrances

Rival [Minor]

The hero has gotten on someone's bad side. While a Rival doesn't want the hero dead the same way an Enemy does, he does want to see the hero fail. He may challenge the hero's dojo on a regular basis or try to steal his cases; regardless of his method, he will inevitably turn up like a bad penny.

Once per adventure (not per session), the hero's Rival will make his move. He might tell the cops that the hero's got an arsenal in his van, demand a rematch at an inconvenient time, or even tip off the bad guys. Whatever he does, the Rival's move will cause the hero a major set-back.

Unlucky in Love [Minor or Major]

Theme from *Shaft* -- Isaac Hayes

*Who is the man
That would risk his neck for his brother
man?
(Shaft!)
Can ya dig it?
Who's the cat that won't cop out
When there's danger all about
(Shaft!)
Right on*

This character just can't make a relationship last. Whether it's falling into bed with contract killers assigned to murder him, a dangerous lifestyle that most people just can't live with, or enemies killing his lovers to get to him, this character has more heartbreak than most can handle.

Once per adventure (not per session), the hero's love life suffers a set-back. His lover betrays him to his enemies at an inopportune time, dies, or leaves him. Regardless of the details, the character suffers a penalty to his actions until he is able to confront and deal with this trauma. The penalty is -2 if taken as a Minor Hindrance and -4 if taken as a major Hindrance. Coping with his loss could mean hunting down the lover's killer, confronting her if she's a turncoat, or finding solace in the arms of another. In any case, the hero has found new love by the time the next adventure begins.

New Edges

Brute

Requirements: Background, Brawny, Novice

This character is incredibly large, standing head and shoulders over lesser men. His Toughness bonus

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increases to +2, and he can carry 10 times his Strength in pounds without penalty.

Flurry

Requirements: Combat, Quick Draw

This hero is as quick with the bow and thrown weapons as most are with their fists. The character may make rapid attacks with the bow, English long bow, throwing axe, throwing knife/dagger, and spear. Such attacks assume related weapons are available, the character is carrying them in a bandolier, multiple sheaths, or quiver. Attacks are resolved normally as per the rapid attack rules.

King of the Hill

Requirements: Background, Novice

This hero may not be rich and powerful in Wall Street terms, but he's got the sweetest ride in the Bronx, a hip bachelor pad, and enough firepower to take out the Mafia single-handed! The people of his neighborhood also know that he's the cat you go to when someone's messing with you, so even though he gets all the romance, he also gets all the trouble.

This variant of the Noble Edge bestows the same +2 bonus to Charisma, but it does not bestow an ongoing income or estates. Instead, the hero begins play with the essential gear of an action hero: a bitchin' ride, a cache of weapons, and stylin' clothes. The character automatically receives a vehicle appropriate to the setting (semi-truck, sports car, war horse, etc.) as well as three times the normal starting funds for the setting.

Like a conventional Noble, however, the King of the Hill has responsibilities. Because he's so well-known and respected in his neighborhood (or field of expertise), people always come to him for help. This frequently lands in the King of the Hill in conflicts with corrupt officials and organized crime.

Operative

Requirements: Background, Novice

You know her name. She's the woman they send when they want things done, a blunt instrument to break the grasping claws of villainy or a sharp sword

to cut the bonds of tyranny. This hero has the backing of a government or powerful cabal and access to everything she needs to win the fight. You know her name, and she'll make you say it.

This variant on the Noble Edge is beholden to an organization that funds his adventures. The hero gains a +2 bonus to Charisma from the cachet of her backers and her own daunting reputation, as well as three times the normal starting funds for the setting. Her organization will also assign her additional gear as appropriate for missions; this will invariably include a vehicle.

Like a conventional Noble, the Operative has responsibilities. In this case, it's to the goals of the organization or agency that commands her. The hero is constantly plunged into danger as she forwards the agenda of his organization.

Scary Muther

Requirements: Intimidation d8+, Seasoned, Social, Strong Willed

This hero casts a shadow across the room when he enters. His reputation makes people quake in their boots at the mention of his name. Crowds part before him.

This character can use Intimidation for a Test of Will against multiple opponents during combat. By taking a -2 penalty to the roll, the Scary Muther may target all opponents within a Medium Burst Template centered on himself; by taking a -4 penalty, the radius increases to a Large Burst Template.

Real Scary Muther

Requirements: Scary Muther, Veteran

The hero may now Intimidate a Medium Burst Template radius at no penalty and a Large Burst Template radius at -2.

Wiseacre

Requirements: Taunt d8+, Seasoned, Social, Strong Willed

This hero has a mouth that won't stop. Chattering on at a mile a minute, he leaves his friends roaring in

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laughter and his enemies gaping in disbelief. His one-liners knock 'em dead.

This character can use Taunt for a Test of Will against multiple opponents during combat. By taking a -2 penalty to the roll, the Wiseacre may target all opponents within a Medium Bust Template centered on himself; by taking a -4 penalty, the radius increases to a Large Burst Template.

Real Wiseacre

Requirements: Veteran, Wiseacre

The hero may now Taunt a Medium Burst Template radius at no penalty and a Large Burst Template radius at -2.

New Setting Rule

Three's a Crowd

Badasses inevitably live in worlds where one man can stand against many. If an Extra ganging up against a Wild Card rolls too low to hit the hero's Parry but high enough to beat the Parry of his comrades, then he accidentally hits one of his comrades instead. Resolve damage as usual.

Sample Badass: Walker... Jo Walker

Jo Walker is a woman you don't want to mess with. She enlisted with the Army to get out of Oakland at the age of 18 and volunteered for an experimental women's combat unit. She served with distinction behind enemy lines alongside the rest of the She-Devil Squad in Vietnam, but the squad was eventually disbanded by chauvinistic desk jockeys in the Nixon administration. She was discharged and returned to Oakland to found a youth center in her old neighborhood, hoping to give something back to her neighborhood and her country.

When a local hood tried to sell drugs to some of her kids, she broke his thumbs. When his gangster friends tried to extort some protection money, she broke their knee caps. When the local don had the youth center fire-bombed, she threw him off the Golden Gate Bridge. These days, everyone knows that the Greater Oakland Youth Center is off-limits, but that doesn't mean Jo Walker doesn't have her problems.

Jo Walker

Legendary Badass

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Driving d8, Fighting d12, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Streetwise d4, Taunt d6

Charisma +4 Pace: 6 Parry: 8 Toughness: 7

Hindrances: Heroic, Loyal, Unlucky in Love

Edges: Attractive, Brawler, Bruiser, King of the Hill, Improved Martial Artist, Real Scary Muther, Rock and Roll, Steady Hands, Strong Willed

Gear: chainsaw (2d6+4, a natural 1 on the Fighting die – regardless of the Wild Die – hits the user instead), leather coat (Armor +1), cherry red Pontiac Trans Am Firebird (Muscle Car; Acc/TS 30/56, Toughness: 12(3), Crew 1+1), S&W (.44) (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, Shots 6, AP 1, Revolver), switchblade (Str+d4, -1 to Notice if hidden).

Savage Tale: Frisco Freakout

A tripped-out vet has returned from Vietnam and proclaimed himself the **Di-Lặc**, the Buddha of the Apocalypse. His cult of troubled street kids and stoned bikers spells trouble for the Greater Oakland Youth Center.

- **Setting Rules:** Blood & Guts, Born a Hero, Fanatics, Joker's Wild
- **Characters:** The heroes are members of Jo Walker's highly specialized team of youth counselors: an eclectic assembly of kung fu masters, ex-Green Berets, and roller derby queens.

Act I: The Fires of Heaven

The Summer of Love has long since passed into a winter of discontent. Throughout the Bay Area, there's a burgeoning meanness, a sickness creeping in on the ocean fog. Scandal in the White House and the ugly end of the Vietnam War have created a fear of an

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uncertain future and a loathing for a damned, failing present.

In Oakland, word of a groovy new guru has hit the streets. Calling himself Di-Lăc, this wild-eyed hippie teaches his disciples kung fu and guides them on LSD-fueled spirit quests into the heart of darkness. He teaches that not only is The Man's corporate world hollow and worthless, but that all of society is meaningless. Life is a mere dream, a nightmare from which the only exit is not rejection of the world but its destruction.

While ugly rumors have been swirling about Di-Lăc for some time, the nihilism of his tenets comes crashing home when Willie Peters, an up-and-coming high school football star, goes berserk. The young man has been troubled for some time – trouble at home, a knee injury that threatened to sideline his career before it even began, pot – but it's still a shock when he comes into the Youth Center holding a lit Zippo and a glass jar filled with yellow crystals above his head.

"Nobody move!" shouts Willie Peters. His eyes are bleary from fumes or tears. His hair is matted, his clothes soiled, and his arms covered with scabs and raw scratches. "Nobody move or this whole place burns!"

"White phosphorus," whispers Jo Walker. She curses quietly. "Back in 'Nam that stuff was for incendiary rounds, signal flares, smoke bombs, and... And burning villages to the ground." She straightens up and strides over to Willie, but the boy turns and gestures with the jar.

"No! No! I ain't gonna listen to you! What have you ever told us but lies! How can you say there's hope in this world after all the people you've killed, all the hate that you've seen? I see that you are māyā, the bewildering darkness!"

An ecstatic look comes over the young man's face as he intones "In the darkness of māyā, I mistook the rope for the snake, but that is over, and now I dwell in the eternal home of the Lord." He shivers with pleasure or dread.

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Jo Walker snorts. "Well, one of you better talk to this fool, 'cause if I go near him I'm gonna whup his butt."

The heroes are faced with a dilemma. How do they get the dangerous incendiary away from Willie Peters? Do they talk him down (a Dramatic Task) or grab it from him (a combat round)? Characters with a military background know that if the flask breaks, then it will ignite whether or not Willie lights the phosphorus with his lighter. The resulting blaze will surely kill Willie and could easily burn down the Youth Center.

Regardless of how they succeed in disarming Willie, the characters have questions to answer. How did he procure the white phosphorus? While it can actually be distilled from human urine, the amount needed would be immense. Either Willie got it from someone with military connections or he got it from someone with an army of his own.

WILLIE PETERS

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



Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d4

Charisma +0 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 5 **Toughness:** 8*

Hindrances: Habit [Major; Cosmic LSD], Delusional [Major], Stubborn

Edges: Brawny, Liquid Courage [*effects of Cosmic LSD]

Gear: White phosphorus jar (chemical combusts on contact with air, doing 2d10 fire damage and igniting anything within small burst template; it burns for 2d6 rounds, igniting anything it touches).

If Willie is subdued, it will quickly become apparent that he is high on a drug that is giving him intense, vivid visions and inspiring homicidal urges. If sobered up, he will refer to it as Cosmic LSD and state that he received it from the Buddha of the Apocalypse.

Act II: Highway to Hell

Whether they succeed in saving Willie Peters or not, the heroes have heard him spout the half-digested

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mixed-up Buddhism that Di-Lặc preaches. A successful Streetwise roll reveals that the Buddha of the Apocalypse has gone on a retreat to Nirvana, his compound in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. A raise on the roll reveals that this compound is the former estate of a famous eccentric and features its own castle.

The players may seek help from the authorities, but they will be unsuccessful. If the heroes have no Connections to law enforcement, the police will simply dismiss their concerns out of hand, revealing an ugly streak of racism and apathy. Connections will offer what help they can, but their hands are tied; friends in the military and police will be able to accompany the heroes on a mission of vigilante justice, but they will not be able to bring the full weight of their departments to bear.

Investigating Di-Lặc alerts his followers. They have too many eyes and ears in the city to not hear that Jo Walker and her associates are hunting for their leader. Game Masters may want to spice things up with an attack by Drugged-Out Dropouts (one per hero plus one Extra), but they should refrain from making the characters expend too many resources.

DRUGGED-OUT DROPOUTS

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d4, Stealth d4

Charisma +0 Pace: 6 Parry: 5 Toughness: 6*

Hindrances: Habit [Major; Cosmic LSD], Delusional [Major], Stubborn

Edges: Berserk, Liquid Courage [*effects of Cosmic LSD]

Gear: Switchblade (Str+d4, -1 to Notice if hidden).

Once the heroes depart for Di-Lặc's compound they will be tailed and then attacked by the Devils of Heaven, a gang of outlaw bikers who have fallen under the so-called Buddha's sway. The Devils will trail the heroes until they are well out of the city before attacking. The heroes may attempt to lose them in an exciting car chase, try to ambush them at a

roadhouse, or whatever comes to mind. Disguising themselves as the Devils would allow the heroes to enter Di-Lặc's compound undetected. There are three bikers for every vehicle the heroes take.

DEVILS OF HEAVEN (OUTLAW BIKERS)

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d10*

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d8, Notice d4, Stealth d4

Charisma +0 Pace: 6 Parry: 5 Toughness: 7*

Hindrances: Habit [Major; Cosmic LSD], Delusional [Major], Stubborn

Edges: Berserk, Liquid Courage [*effects of Cosmic LSD]

Gear: Chain (Str+d6) or switchblade (Str+d4, -1 to Notice if hidden), chopped hog (motorcycle; Acc/TS 20/36, Toughness 8(2), Crew 1+1).

The path to the Sierra Nevada compound lies along twisty mountain roads with frequent zigzags and hairpin turns. It eventually leads to a chain link fence topped with barbed wire, high amid the pine forests of the mountains. The heroes have reached Nirvana.

Act III: The Last Days of the Law

Nirvana is a sprawling estate covering 200 acres. Most of the estate is undeveloped forest, with only the immediate grounds of the castle-like mansion being landscaped. Patrols of Drugged-Out Dropouts and Devils of Heaven armed with M-16s aimlessly wander the estate; they are all very high on Cosmic LSD and – while admittedly hostile – they receive a -2 penalty to Notice rolls. The five-man patrol of Drugged-Out Dropouts guarding the gates won't even bat an eye if the heroes ride on through disguised as hippies or outlaw bikers.

If the heroes attempt to breach Nirvana by going over the fence or sneaking through the woods, Game Masters are advised to run it as a Dramatic Task using the following guidelines to help narrate the trek:

- **Club:** The team encounters either a patrol of 2d4 Drugged-Out Dropouts (1-4 on d6) or 1d4+1 Devils of Heaven (5-6 on d6).

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Roll Stealth at -2 (they are active guards); combat is initiated if the roll is failed.

- **Diamond:** The team comes across a group of blissed-out cultists chanting mantras, babbling in tongues, or shrieking about their visions of “true reality.” While the cultists are lost in their own weird trips (inactive guards), a failed Stealth roll will snap them out of their haze and force a second Stealth roll with them now acting as active guards.

- **Heart:** The team stumbles across a group of cultists frolicking naked. They can easily steal their clothes and/or paraphernalia (as well as sneak away unnoticed) with an unmodified Stealth test; the frolicking cultists are very, very inactive guards.

- **Spade:** Distant chanting or sounds of revelry. No encounter.

Joker: The team encounters local wildlife (roll d8: 1-2 = 2d12 deer, 3-5 = 1d8 coyotes [as Dog/Wolf], 6-7 = 1d4 bears, and 8 = a mountain lion [as Lion]). Unless provoked, the animals flee.

After five rounds or five successes at the dramatic task (or after they have gotten directions while in disguise), the heroes are able to approach the castle. Inside, they find Di-Lặc exhorting his followers to abandon hope and embrace worthlessness, preaching that the world will end in fire and terror.

There is one Drugged-Out Dropout and one Devil of Heaven present for every Wild Card hero as well as one Drugged-Out Dropout for every Extra accompanying the heroes. While his minions are enrapt, Di-Lặc himself is paranoid and wary; he is an active guard and will make a Notice check every round if the characters attempt to approach him by stealth.

If he is attacked but not killed in the first round, Di-Lặc’s followers will go Berserk (as per the Edge) and fight to the death to save him. If he is somehow taken out in the first round, they will flee in terror.

The Fanatics setting rule is in play after the first round of combat.

Di-Lặc himself is a formidable foe. He is a former MACV-SOG Special Forces officer who saw some really heavy stuff while operating in Laos – a darkness that made him question all he believed. Returning to a country that hated and feared him for the very things he did to keep it safe, he went AWOL and fled to the desert. He found enlightenment in the wastes of the Mojave; he found purpose in raising an army to tear away the veil of māyā and end a corrupt world.

DI-LẶC (CHUCK MARLOWE)

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d12

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d12, Intimidation d10, Notice d10, Persuasion d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Tracking d8

Charisma +4 Pace: 6 Parry: 10 Toughness: 8

Hindrances: Heroic, Loyal, Unlucky in Love

Edges: Alertness, Assassin, Charismatic, Connections (Military), Danger Sense, Improved Block, Improved Martial Artist, Operative, Real Scary Muther, Strong Willed, Woodsman

Gear: Dog tags, survival knife (Str+d4; +1 to Survival), any gun he picks up from a fallen follower.

Di-Lặc will attempt to fight his way out of the room. If he is not stopped, he will flee to the woods and become the most dangerous game man has yet hunted. If he is stopped, his dog tags give hints of his story. The question remains of where he got his arsenal remains. Does he have friends still in the Special Forces community? Is he the patsy for a Communist plot? Is this just the beginning of the story?

Zip Line

By Vickey A. Beaver

RPGs are rife with danger and the need to get away quickly or pass an area undetected. Whether in the hands of the players' characters or the GM's, a zip line provides a different option than sneaking across a road or using disguises to blend in.

What It Does

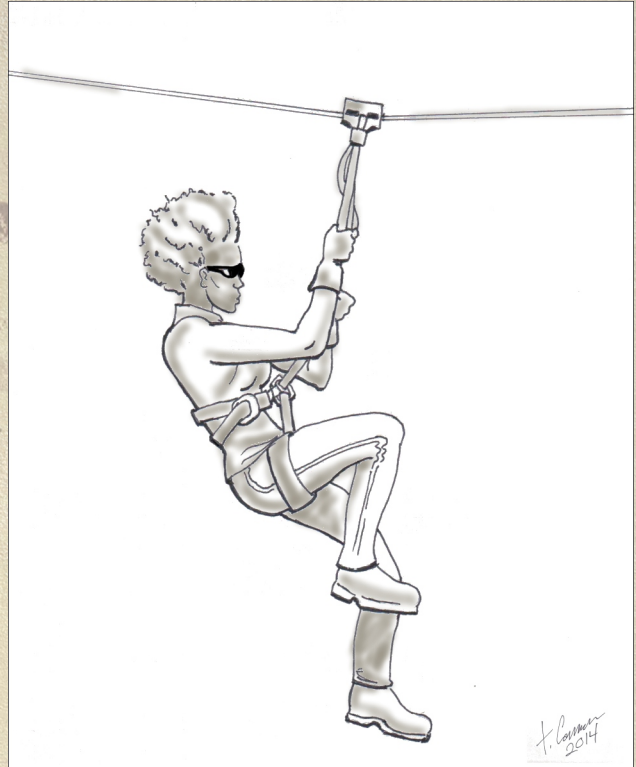
A zip line is a rope, modern line, or similar material secured to objects or structures at different heights, which allows the user to cross aerally from Point A to Point B in a hurry. It requires a decline for gravity or powered apparatus to propel the person to Point B. In either event, the person will be attached to the line by way of something as simple as a polished leather strap with handholds or as sophisticated as a harness working in conjunction with a wheel and brake system.

Unintended Consequences

Only when the line is being used does the character know for sure how well the whole thing is going to work. Given that there is no particular skill that would cover all facets of gauging the condition of the apparatus, securing it at both ends, and maneuvering it, there is an element of risk in its engagement.

When using a zip line, the GM should require more than one roll, but not necessarily every roll that's plausible; that would get tedious. The exact use of the line and its components should be considered.

Sufficiently staking spikes into cinderblock or stone might require characters' Strength rolls whereas how well they hold once three people have used the line might benefit from a roll by the GM. If the characters have to rely on momentum and gravity to get across, then Agility rolls might be in order, or even Strength if they have to hang on without a harness. The integrity of the line and apparatus would also be in the GM's arena, as would how strong a set of anchoring tree limbs or ancient turrets are. Following are



examples of potential reasons for GM rolls on a d10 while the line is in use.

Anchor Failure

1-2 – No problem

3-5 – Structural failure dislodges anchor and could draw attention to zip line

6-8 – One anchor comes free

9-10 – No problem

Line Issues

1-2 – No problem

3-5 – Line begins to sag, slowing or halting progress

6-8 – Line snaps

9-10 – No problem

Apparatus Failure

1-2 – No problem

3-5 – Components meant to glide along line fail

6-8 – Components meant to keep glider connected to

EQUIPMENT CORRAL

line fail

9-10 – No problem

Natural Phenomena

1-2 – No problem

3-5 – Any or all of lightening, rain, high winds, or similar occur

6-8 – Any one of earthquake, hurricane, blizzard, or similar occur

9-10 – No problem

Supernatural Interference

1-2 – No problem

3-5 – A supernatural being attacks the line or character

6-8 – A supernatural disruption affects the character (e.g. the line goes through a portal to another location or reality, sucking the person through when they zip into it or someone zips through a singularity that provides a glimpse ten minutes or even years into the future)

9-10 – No problem

Possible Use as a Scenario Seed

There's no reason random people can't happen to notice what's going on overhead. If they do, the heroes could be mistaken for villains, resulting in any number of chaotic outcomes. Perhaps authorities get involved who don't believe the heroes or maybe the witnesses turn vigilantes, convinced they're doing the right thing initiating pursuit.

Instead, they could be using zip lines during a robbery – getting back something stolen from someone else – when they discover they've been duped. After all, armed guards now have their sights on the party trying to get away.

Perhaps the mere position of such a thing – whether the group knows it or not – is illegal for whatever reason: temptation to use it for crime, more advanced technology than the party's station allows, imbued with outlawed magic, etc. The characters could be caught using it (or even having it), and then be forced to figure out how to get out of the predicament.

Tripwire Trap

By Vickey A. Beaver

Tripwire traps are versatile tools in any RPG genre. Whether something devised by the players or set for their characters by the GM, they can be fairly innocuous or quite deadly.

What It Does

No matter how it is designed, the consistent result is that a wire is tugged, releasing a substance or triggering an event. The most likely – and simplest – way such a trap will be used is for the release of a substance.

When a person trips the wire, it tugs the release mechanism inside the ceiling, which releases a liquid (acid, oil, etc.), powder (irritant, marker, etc.), or vapor (knock-out gas, irritant, blinding vapor, etc.). Depending upon placement, the range and trajectory could be within a Cone Template or up to a Medium Burst as it makes sense for the released substances.

Possible Set-Ups

Tripwire traps can be set indoors or out. The main parts of any substance-releasing trap are the wire to be

tripped, rigging for the release of the substance, the containers filled with the substance, and sufficient anchor sites.

Indoors

Traps set inside a building or structure take advantage of walls, ceilings, and floors for anchorage and concealment. Doors are natural locations for tripwires, but they're not the only place to put them. In a cave, they can be stretched between stalactites, releasing vials concealed in mud crafted over them from above. An office full of desks, cubicle walls, and other heavy objects works well for tripping people sneaking up aisles and triggering substances stashed in drop-tile ceilings or HVAC ducts.

Outdoors

Traps might be laid out using trees along an established path, the walls of an alley, statues accenting a sidewalk, or parked vehicles in a lot. Containers holding the trap substances, perhaps motor oil or angry wasps, would be rigged overhead or even at ground level where they aren't likely to be seen.

Trap Substances

Liquids, powders, and vapors are ideal for specific results, but they aren't the only possibilities. Sometimes improvising is required, especially when you're looking for something not terribly difficult, time-consuming, or expensive to manage. Get creative! Use what's around. Fuel is often on hand whether by way of oil for lamps or gasoline for cars. Glass and heavy ceramics from windows or the tavern could be crushed up quickly. How about that hornet's nest or ash pile?

Unintended Consequences

It could be that someone or something triggers a trap early, potentially harming the wrong person or alerting the real targets of danger. Perhaps someone rolled double ones on a skill check that could involve the trap, maybe even the character setting the trap.

Traps may be set minutes or centuries in advance. The longer something has been disused, the more likely it will no longer function as intended. Sometimes that's good for the targets, sometimes that's not. If you feel the trap has been set long enough ago that something might have gone wrong, or something other than its age might compromise its integrity, roll a d20.

1-2: It works as expected.

3-6: The substance has leaked out of broken seals and is rendered impotent.

7-11: The substance has been intensified; add a d4 to damage.

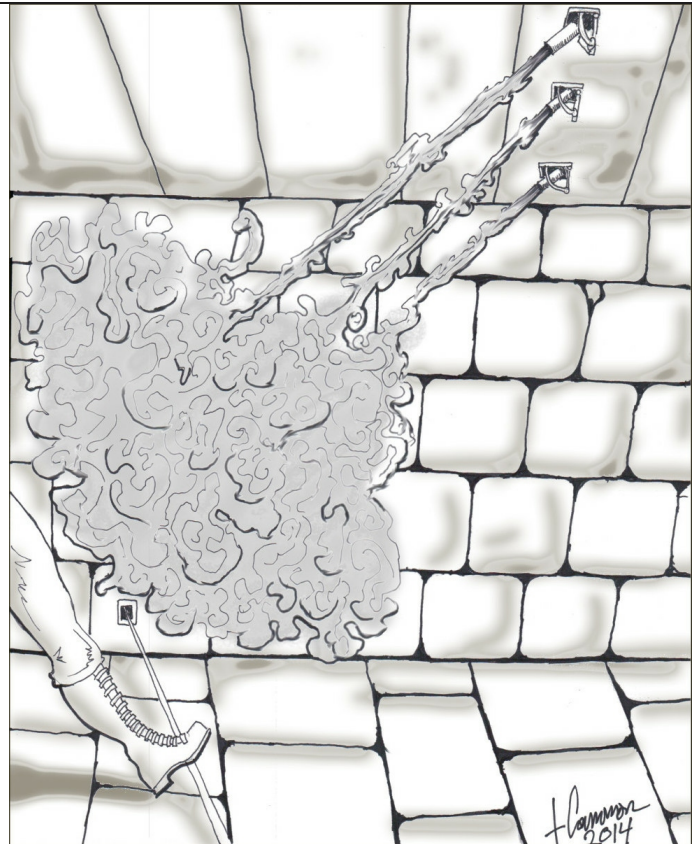
12-15: There's been structural damage surrounding the trap; targets must make two Agility rolls, one to avoid the substance and another to avoid the ceiling, branches, or whatever else is now falling on them with 2d10 possible damage.

16-18: A swarm of insects has taken up residence in the concealed areas of the trap; use the core rulebook for an appropriate swarm in addition to the normal effect of the triggered trap.

19-20: It works as expected.

Damage

If it makes sense to give the characters a chance to dodge the released substance, then Agility checks are in order versus the device's d10. Be sure to use any pertinent penalties (e.g. footing, lighting). If traps use



poisons and the like, use the core rules to guide you for results. If you're improvising the substances released, following is an idea of how to gauge the bodily effects.

Glass or other sharp objects: Few – 1d6, Many – 2d6, Ample – 2d8

Small stones and similar blunt objects: Few – 1d8, Many – 2d6+2, Ample – 2d8+2

Flaming substances: Lightly covered – 1d8+1, Half-way covered – 1d8+3, Drenched – 2d8+3

Possible Use as a Scenario Seed

The heroes could be challenged to find someone or something hidden by a master trap-maker. It could be that the person even sends them on a scavenger hunt of sorts, unbeknownst to them that they're being toyed with. That approach allows the GM to string out the scenario so that it could become part of a full campaign.

Another way to go about it would be to task a member of the party with being the master trap-maker. A patron might employ the person to devise a wide variety of traps with the help of everyone else in the menial labor of the endeavor. In the process, they may end up blamed for someone's death as a result of

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a trap and have to prove their innocence. Were they set-up by their patron or maybe framed by her rival?

Beyond Liquids, Powders, and Vapors

Other tripwire traps are much more involved. While not detailed here, you could have the traps rigged to

sound alarms, release explosives, drop the floor out from beneath the triggering entity, set swinging blades in motion, or even release crossbow-style bolts. You're limited only by what fits the game you want to play, what's available in the world, and what your GM allows if that's not you.

By Sean Tait Bircher of Wine and Savages

La Pantera: Swashbuckling Pulp Heroine

More than a character with an intriguing backstory, Sean Bircher has created three Ranks of La Pantera, Novice, Veteran, and Legendary, and gave her campaign models and adventures seeds supported by a full cast of Wild Cards and Extras.

The debut of the superhero is usually associated with the first appearance of Superman in 1938's *Action Comics* #1, but the American superhero tradition arguably begins with the 1919 publication of *The Curse of Capistrano* in *All-Story Weekly*. Masked, caped, and hiding a secret identity, Johnston McCulley's Zorro is the foundation upon which the pulp avenger archetype was built—and by which Batman, the most popular superhero in the world, is reputed to have been inspired.

Others have also been inspired by Zorro. Isabel Allende's popular novel *Zorro* (2005) introduced a secret society that Zorro belonged to called La Justicia. Dynamite Comics has utilized this invention in their Zorro comics to expand the scope of Zorro's adventures, so it would be easy to imagine a campaign about members of this secret society. One such hero is La Pantera, defender of the Yucatán.

LA PANTERA

The Yucatán Peninsula was the last part of Mexico to be conquered by the conquistadors, and its spirit has always remained strong. During the early years of Mexico's independence from Spain, the Republic of Yucatán is alternately a part of and sometimes independent from the Republic of Mexico. In the 1830s, the dictator Santa Ana seizes control of Mexico and tries to bend the Yucatán to his will.

He is opposed in his attempts by the heroine La

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Pantera. Clad in a dun-colored picador's costume accented by a jaguar-hide *chaquetilla* and wearing a veil that leaves only her beautiful eyes visible, La Pantera disrupts the plans of the Mexican-imposed governor, sabotages the soldiers of Fort San Miguel, and steals back the wealth Santa Ana is looting from her homeland. She is as stealthy and as dangerous as the cat whose name she bears.

La Pantera is secretly Doña Maria de los Soledad Delgado de Allende, widow of the wealthy planter



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Juan Rodrigo de la Banderas de Anda. Doña Maria's father was a forward-thinking member of the *Criollo* (born in the Americas but of pure Spanish blood) *intelligentsia* of Yucatán; when he saw the slaughter and rapine of the birth pangs of the Mexican War of Independence, he decided that his daughter should learn how to defend herself. She learned to fence from masters of *La Verdadera Destreza* who were sworn to secrecy, to ride from her father's *vaqueros*, and to pick locks from a duenna who had lived an adventurous life.

Yet if Santa Ana's shadow had not fallen upon her, Doña Maria might have never become La Pantera. She had found love with the *peninsular* (Spanish-born and Spanish-bred) fortune hunter and former bullfighter Juan Rodrigo, and they were married with her father's blessing; a son—Miguel Guillermo de la Banderas Delgado—was born to them a year later. Her husband was the first man she allowed to call her by the diminutive "Lola," and sometimes she yearns to hear that name again. When Santa Ana abolished the Mexican congress and seized power, her father and her husband rode to Mexico City to protest. The official word is that bandits killed them, but Doña Maria believes the dictator silenced them.

Altering one of her late husband's picador costumes into a disguise (adding the tanned hide of a jaguar her father had shot in his youth) and taking up her father's heirloom Toledo steel sword, Doña Maria became La Pantera. She has not found justice for her own tragedy, but she has won justice for many of those less fortunate than she.

At Novice

Novice Wild Card (Pulp Hero)

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d12, Lockpicking d6, Notice d6, Riding d10, Stealth d8, Streetwise d4, Taunt d6

Charisma: +0 (+2 to commoners and other women)

Pace: 6 **Parry:** 9 **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Dependent (her son, Miguelito), Outsider (woman in a man's world), Wanted [Minor]

Edges: AB: Super Powers, Acrobat, Noble, Thief

Gear: elaborate saddle, formal clothes, grappling hook and 100' rope, heirloom Toledo steel rapier (as molecular blade; Str+d4+2, AP 2), jaguar-hide *chaquetilla* (bullfighter's jacket; as leather armor; Armor +1), leather satchel (as backpack), lock picks, rawhide bullwhip (as flail; Str+d6; ignores Shield Parry and Cover bonus).

Super Powers

- **Animal Control (6):** Level 2 (Animal Companion); Janto, her palomino stallion (Wild Card riding horse)
- **Super Attribute (2):** Smarts +1
- **Super Edge (6):** Counterattack, Extraction, First Strike
- **Super Skill (6):** Fighting +2, Lockpicking +1, Notice +1, Riding +1, Stealth +1

The Panther's Lair [HQ 5]

- **Size:** Small **Location:** Underground **Condition:** Starter
- **Rooms:** None of note
- **Features:** Well-Hidden (-4 to attempts to find it)

At Veteran

Veteran Wild Card (Pulp Hero)

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d12, Lockpicking d8, Notice d6, Riding d10, Stealth d8, Streetwise d6, Taunt d6

Charisma: +0 (+2 to commoners and other women)

Pace: 6 **Parry:** 9 **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Dependent (her son, Miguelito), Outsider (woman in a man's world),

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Wanted [Minor]

Edges: AB: Super Powers, Acrobat, Elan, Improved Extraction, Noble, Steady Hands, Sweep, Thief

Gear: elaborate saddle, formal clothes, grappling hook and 100' rope, heirloom Toledo steel rapier (as molecular blade; Str+d4+2, AP 2), jaguar-hide *chaquetilla* (bullfighter's jacket; as leather armor; Armor +1), leather satchel (as backpack), lock picks, rawhide bullwhip (as flail; Str+d6; ignores Shield Parry and Cover bonus).

Super Powers

- **Animal Control (6):** Level 2 (Animal Companion); Janto, her palomino stallion (Wild Card riding horse)
- **Super Attribute (2):** Smarts +1
- **Super Edge (6):** Counterattack, Extraction, First Strike
- **Super Skill (6):** Fighting +2, Lockpicking +1, Notice +1, Riding +1, Stealth +1

The Panther's Lair [HQ 5]

- **Size:** Small **Location:** Underground **Condition:** Advanced
- **Rooms:** "Garage," Medical Center, Personal Quarters (+1)
- **Features:** Well-Hidden (-4 to attempts to find it)

At Legendary

Veteran Wild Card (Pulp Hero)

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d12, Lockpicking d8, Notice d6, Riding d10, Stealth d8, Streetwise d6, Taunt d6

Charisma: +0 (+2 to commoners and other women)

Pace: 6 **Parry:** 11 **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Dependent (her son, Miguelito), Outsider (woman in a man's world),

Wanted [Minor]

Edges: AB: Super Powers, Acrobat, Block/Improved Block, Dodge/Improved Dodge, Elan, Improved Counterattack, Improved Extraction, Improved First Strike, Level Headed, Noble, Steady Hands, Sweep, Thief

Gear: elaborate saddle, formal clothes, grappling hook and 100' rope, heirloom Toledo steel rapier (as molecular blade; Str+d4+2, AP 2), jaguar-hide *chaquetilla* (bullfighter's jacket; as leather armor; Armor +1), leather satchel (as backpack), lock picks, rawhide bullwhip (as flail; Str+d6; ignores Shield Parry and Cover bonus).

Super Powers

- **Animal Control (6):** Level 2 (Animal Companion); Janto, her palomino stallion (Wild Card riding horse)
- **Super Attribute (2):** Smarts +1
- **Super Edge (6):** Counterattack, Extraction, First Strike
- **Super Skill (6):** Fighting +2, Lockpicking +1, Notice +1, Riding +1, Stealth +1

The Panther's Lair [HQ 5]

- **Size:** Small **Location:** Underground **Condition:** State of the Art
- **Rooms:** "Garage," Medical Center, Personal Quarters (+1)
- **Features:** Well-Hidden (-4 to attempts to find it)

Supporting Cast



Wild Cards

MIGUEL "MIGUELITO" GUILLERMO DE LA BANDERAS DELGADO

La Pantera's young son knows nothing of his mother's one-woman war for justice; he only knows that he wishes he could see her more. Doña Maria knows she must keep her alter ego hidden. She does not worry that Miguelito will give away her secret, but instead that he will try to join her in her mission.

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d4, Notice d4, Persuasion d4, Riding d4, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: +2 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 5 **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Loyal, Stubborn, Young

Edges: Acrobat, Noble

Gear: formal clothes, slingshot (Range 4/8/16, Damage Str+d4, RoF 1).

GOVERNOR LUIS FRANCISCO DE LOS ALAMOS CONSTANTE-PEDILLA

The governor that Santa Ana appointed would be a man of integrity if only he wasn't so terrified of failing the dictator. Governor de los Alamos is a forward-thinking, learned man, but he has seen firsthand the price of failing General Santa Ana, and he simply does not have the courage to risk his life for his principles—especially not with Colonel Terrazo watching his every move. He has fallen in love with the widowed Doña Maria, but even there his courage fails him; rather than courting her directly, he piles gifts on her son Miguelito.

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

Skills: Climbing d4, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Law) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Riding d6, Shooting d4, Stealth d4, Streetwise d4

Charisma: +4 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 6 **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Yellow

Edges: Charismatic, Noble

Gear: formal clothes, rapier (Str+d4, Parry +1).

COLONEL ROBERTO TERRAZO DE GUZMAN

Comandante of the Fort San Miguel in Campeche, Colonel Terrazo is the whip Santa Ana wields against the Yucatán. He is a brute, interested only in his own advancement, and callous to the lives and safety of others. Whereas many foes treat La Pantera with a certain chivalry, Terrazo sees her only as a pest to exterminate. Thankfully, he is usually too busy

running the garrison to see to his plans in person.

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

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d4

Charisma: -4 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 8 **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Arrogant, Bloodthirsty, Vengeful [Major]

Edges: Berserk, Command, Improved Counterattack, Improved Frenzy, Improved Nerves of Steel

Gear: flintlock pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, 2 actions to reload), rapier (Str+d4, Parry +1), uniform.

LIEUTENANT JOSE MARIA AGUIRRE DE CAMPOS

The man usually assigned to chase down La Pantera is a preening, gangly martinet. His men dislike him for his strict military discipline, and the people hate him for his indifferent cruelty.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Battle) d4, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d4, Taunt d4

Charisma: +0 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 8 **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Big Mouth, Clueless, Code of Honor, Overconfident

Edges: Brawny, Command

Gear: flintlock pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, 2 actions to reload), rapier (Str+d4, Parry +1), uniform, war horse.

Extras

GENTLEMEN

There is great rivalry between the Mexican-born *Criollos* and the Spanish-born *peninsulares*, but the gently born and middle-class *intelligentsia* of the Yucatán are united by a sense of chivalry.

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

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d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6

Charisma: +0 or +2 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 7 **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Code of Honor

Edges: Rich or Noble (whether *Criollo* or *peninsular*)

Gear: formal clothes, rapier (Str+d4, Parry +1), riding horse.

GENTLEWOMEN

While women are allowed to own their own property under the Spanish/Mexican legal system (unlike in Britain during the same era), they are still living in a man's world.

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

Skills: Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Riding d6, Taunt d6

Charisma: +0 or +2 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 2 **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Outsider (woman in a man's world)

Edges: Attractive, Rich or Noble (whether *Criollo* or *peninsular*)

Gear: Formal clothes, riding horse.

LANCERS

The Mexican cavalry still employs the lance. The men assigned to Fort San Miguel know they have the short end of the stick: their commanders are terrible, their pay is always late, and La Pantera is constantly making fools of them—but it's still better than working in the fields.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d4, Riding d6, Shooting d6

Charisma: +0 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 7 **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Loyal, Poverty

Edges: Steady Hands

Gear: Flintlock carbine (Range 10/20/40, Damage 2d8, RoF 1, 2 actions to reload), lance (Str+d8, AP 2 when charging, Reach 2, only usable in mounted combat), rapier (Str+d4, Parry +1), uniform, war horse.

PEASANTS

Even though the Yucatán has one of the most progressive legal systems in the New World—the writ of *amparo* protects the rights of all citizens—it still stands on inequality between the rich and the poor. The Mayan-descended peasants suffer at the hands of *Criollos* and *peninsulares* alike.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d4

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

Hindrances: Outsider, Poverty

Edges: Improvisational Fighter

Gear: Improvised weapons, ragged clothes.

Campaign Models with La Pantera

The Trail of the Fox

The post-revolutionary period was a time of great upheaval throughout the former New Spain; coup was followed by counter-coup, the powerless rose to power and then became tyrants themselves; the missionaries were thrown off their lands; and the native peoples were suddenly at the whim of rich landowners. The Yucatán endured these woes as badly as any part of Mexico. It not only tried to form its own independent, forward-minded republic in opposition to the frequent despotism in Mexico, but also had its own civil war between the native Maya and those of Spanish descent. With its Mayan ruins, lush jungles, bountiful plantations, and gleaming beaches, La Pantera's Yucatán might even be a better setting for action-adventure than Zorro's California.

Sword and Sorcery

In its time, the Yucatán was a powerful stronghold

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of the Mayan civilization, which would allow the GM to explore pulp sword and sorcery ideas like lost cities and mystic cults in addition to the usual “hero of the people” tropes about stealing taxes and protecting the downtrodden. It would be easy to adapt *The Eye of Kilquato* to La Pantera’s setting. Additional jungle and Pre-Columbian sword and sorcery inspiration can be found in the swashbuckling settings *Pirates of the Spanish Main* and *The Savage World of Solomon Kane*. Perhaps La Pantera’s heirloom blade is made of enchanted steel. Her enemies might not only include corrupt officials, but also snake-like vampires, were-jaguars, Inca mummies, and bloodthirsty pagan gods.



Lost in Time

Who’s to say that Jose-Maria Barrabas was the first to find the tomb of Mictlanteuhtli? Super heroes in a modern campaign who find themselves battling the *Super Powers Companion* threat may want to research ways to battle the supernatural foe. Perhaps La Pantera fought the god or his cultists back in the 1830s? Modern heroes could travel back in time to meet the heroine, summon her spirit from the great beyond, or even bring her into the present; a GM could play out the story of La Pantera’s battle with Mictlanteuhtli as an interlude or side-quest in the campaign, allowing the players to assume the roles of La Pantera and her allies as they fight the death god’s cult.

Adventure Seeds

El Jaguar Strikes!

Doña Maria’s husband, Juan Rodrigo, is alive! When Juan Rodrigo and his father-in-law were captured by Santa Ana, they were given a choice between choosing his cause or death. Señor Delgado chose death, but Juan Rodrigo was forced to accept Santa Ana’s offer when the tyrant threatened Doña Maria and Miguelito. Now La Pantera’s husband hunts the shadows as the assassin El Jaguar,

eliminating Santa Ana’s enemies. What happens when he is ordered to hunt his own wife?

The Sixth Sun!

Ancient Mayan prophecies speak of a cycle of ages, the sun dying and being reborn. A masked leader has emerged among the Mayan peasants of the Yucatán, a leader who promises the beginning of a new age of prosperity for the Maya and doom for the *Criollos* and Spanish! Calling himself Kukulcan, this mystery man leads a pilgrimage into the jungles to find the lost city of Calakmul and from there to launch a revolution. Is he a saint or a madman, a patriot or an opportunist?

Terror of Terrazo!

Colonel Terrazo is forced to show his hand when Santa Ana threatens to demote him. Unwilling to lose face, the sociopathic colonel orders his men to wanton acts of violence and cruelty, hoping to force La Pantera to reveal herself. Lt. de Campos and Governor de los Alamos are torn between their loyalty to the state and their senses of honor as they behold the terror Terrazo has unleashed. Can La Pantera persuade these two flawed but honorable men to aid her, or must she confront Terrazo and the garrison of Fort San Miguel alone?

By David “The Savage Maven” Scott

Trapping-Fu

“Sir, your sword, it's not standard issue?” These words can take the place of a flashback hook for an epic tale of adventure. Before we get there, though, we must stop and think about a mechanic that every gaming system has had, but Savage Worlds puts into writing—trappings! Of course we all think of our powers list where they include suggested trappings, yet every Savage Worlds player sooner or later learns just how deep that rabbit hole can truly go. Let's go for a jaunt through our imaginations.

A trapping is far more than just a description of what something looks like; it starts with what something does outside the mechanics. Why does our captain's sword hilt extend so far past his hand? Where in the rule book can our character buy a specific make and model automobile? What does Fleet-Footed look like for our character, and what does that mean? These are all questions that come up and are answered by trappings. We can also take it much further than into the realm of how things work. How does our weapon grant us a bonus against giants, exactly? How did we get the ability to fly from that backpack?

Our captain's sword hilt is long enough for a second hand so that whenever he's deprived of his shield he can take a two handed grip for added control and damage. It was a modification he made when he was just a sergeant and saw his former lieutenant cut down trying to fight one handed after losing his shield.

What did we just change on the weapon? Its weight, its length, perhaps its mechanics to be +1 to hit and damage when using a second hand or an additional die type. More importantly, the character evolved and had a reason to have that modification made. Rather than the GM saying, “No, the book says the stats are what they are,” together with the GM we added a trapping and made the game come alive. Now the captain has a hand and a half sword or bastard sword,

and despite the lack of specific entry in the item list for that weapon, minor tweaks let it work.

For tonight's mission, what if our covert ops team needs a specific vehicle to get a job done, but the book doesn't have a listing for that year, make, and model? We use a trapping on the “car” entry to tell our story.

The average car has a cost and stats, so we modify that based on the vehicle type and then add in the description of the vehicle, complete with modifications. Sure, the GM has to approve it, but it's pulled from the players' imaginations and the GM to fit the story, not the rules. Now we have a car that might cost several times the list price—a luxury make from a well-known company with our modifications, such as drive flat tires, bulletproof windows and armor, and an upgraded motor—but looks identical to the car needed for the mission. Next we dig out the Chase rules and have that epic car chase to add excitement and action to the story with a wild ride!

A short sword has very specific stats in Savage Worlds but it can be easily used to represent numerous weapons from the Roman Gladius to the Spatha, from the 1800s cavalry saber to the mighty weapon found by a band of adventurers that glows to warn when enemies approach. Those special features are simply trappings on the standard short sword. The length, look, and weight can all be changed to fit the story and our characters. Our rogue in the streets of Alexandria can carry an Arabian Saber she stole from a guard while he was indisposed, and our Legionnaire serving above Hadrian's Wall is carrying a Gladius, but both come from the same stat line in the book and fit in different genres and settings.

Even if we consider different purposes for a weapon such as the Whinyard, which was a short sword that hung from a lanyard at the belt so it did not need to be drawn, we can accomplish this with a trapping that

the weapon can only be wielded while tied to the belt and grants the Quick Draw Edge mechanically. This weapon has a ring at the pommel, which is how the lanyard is attached, and a roll of 1 on the trait die causes the wielder to get tangled in his own lanyard, becoming Shaken. The appropriate use of trappings takes the standard item from the book and replicates a historical weapon quickly and easily.

Gear is not the only place we can apply trappings. Have you ever watched a movie and said, "That was so cool; I never thought of that,"

and then tried to replicate it in game? Dixie, a can-can dancer in a Deadlands setting, wants to kick an opponent in combat, then stand on stage and perform. Why not simply trap the dancer's Fighting skill as can-can dancing? Suddenly the dancer can use the skill for multiple applications that fit the character, and she doesn't have to explain why her character also learned to kick-box while spending all her time learning to dance.

What about people wanting to play epic high fantasy with mages capable of magic that can shake the world? Why not let the mage take Lockpicking with a magical trapping and simply call it an unlock spell? You want your mage to be able to summon food and drink? Then take a magically trapped version of Survival that allows him to conjure food, drink, and shelter for his companions as well as identify arcane herbs and plants within his arcane background, while losing the ability to be used for wilderness survival.

What about a skill such as Healing? Why certainly first aid is first aid in every setting, right? What if our Healing is trapped to the arcane background we chose as well? Suddenly all those "cure spells" we have been casting are really just a Healing check, saving our Power Points for when they are needed to pull out the big guns like Healing outside the golden hour or to fuel other powers. Now we have a reason to use our Healing skill during combat, maybe offering the price of a Benny or a

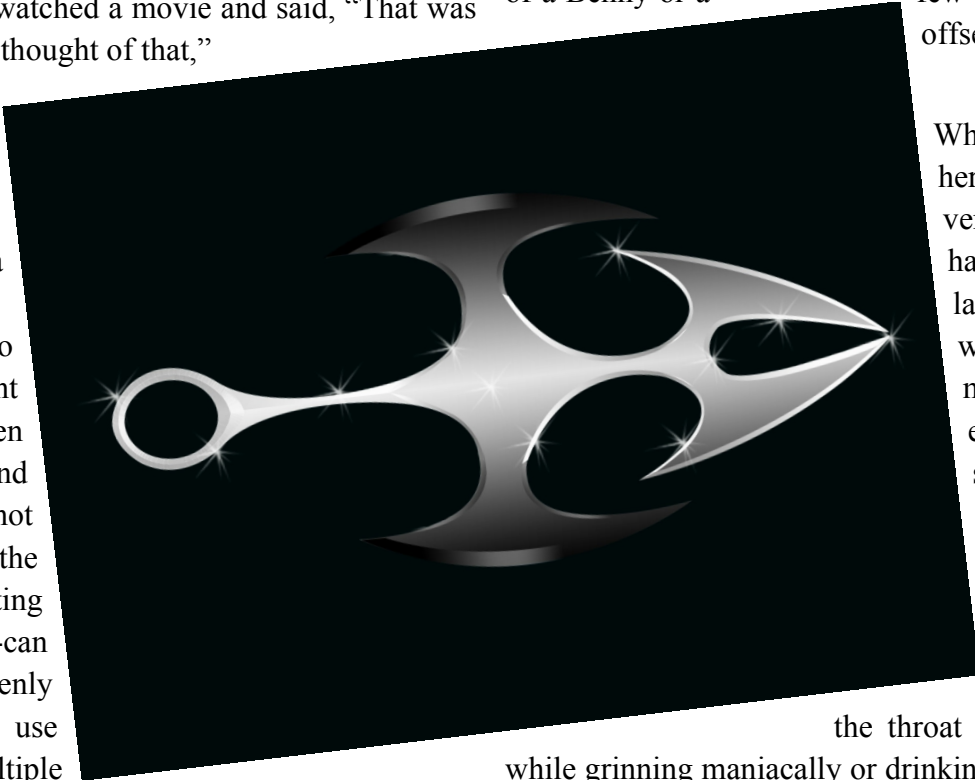
few Power Points to offset the benefit.

Intimidation? What if our intrepid hero isn't great with verbal threats but has learned sign language really well? That might make that skill even more useful since now she intimidates even those who don't speak her language. A slash across

the throat with our thumb

while grinning maniacally or drinking a cup of warm blood from a kill becomes an extremely powerful intimidation tactic when we allow ourselves to think outside the generic definitions of our skill list. A savage with the ears of an enemy around his neck that he gestures to in order to intimidate an opponent becomes a legend that proceeds the character, even a hook to bring down the Orc with the elf ear necklace.

Trappings can even apply to those fancy Edges and Hindrances we take to help flesh out our characters. Ever felt like the one you wanted is missing from the list or what's there doesn't quite fit your character? Perhaps you wanted to play a closeted meta-human rights character in a game where meta-human racism is rampant and required for social standing. Bet that would fit really well with Loyal, only due to trappings



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your character won't leave a meta-human (rather than friend) behind. Honor could be altered so that the character must follow the dictates of “social norms” toward meta-humans while in public. In playing a crazy fool who loves to fly and has a new “schtick” to bring to the mission every session, take the Habit Hindrance. Trap it so his personality is in a constant state of flux and makes him appear insane for -1 Charisma, and then pity the fools at your gaming table as his antics steal the show!

So far we talked mostly about very serious trappings. What type of tone are we setting with our story? Perhaps we want a comedy in the style of cartoons or slapstick so our Fleet-Footed Edge now causes our legs to spin at the knee in a great dervish of locomotion. Could this possibly let us travel across water or uneven terrain as our wheel of feet is not affected the way a single step would be? Perhaps your character's Fighting skill is to open a dimensional door above her opponent and drop an object on his head. Classic anvil in a pocket dimension. Using Stealth trapped with obscuring tricks while being chased now lets her lift the road and drag it into a wall, and forcing her pursuer to run into the wall.

In a gritty 1930s drama we need all of our threats to end in lines such as “*capisce*” and so we take Intimidation and all threats are delivered with a cheesy mob movie accent. Add in that we must include at least one word in Italian and our hero needs a name with the word “the” in the middle. Jimmy the Fish, Sonny the Squid, Johnny the Ax. Tying multiple parts of the character together is a hallmark of trappings. Or perhaps we have learned to pick locks from an enforcer who never had time for that and always shot a perfect square around the lock, so we trap our Lockpicking skill to be the usage of our trusty tommy-gun. Now we have a no-good thug named Johnny the Square who

has a tendency to show off his tommy-gun and a need to intimidate people with genre specific slang. We just tied together two quirks, two skills, a name, and a background with our trappings!

Trappings are our window dressings. Trappings let us put up walls and structure to make what we play a game but still let us tell the story we wish to tell with fully rounded characters. People talk about how Savage Worlds can't do something, usually saying it's “too generic.” We need to stand up, take ownership, and say it's not that it can't, it's that it lets us do it for ourselves. Together we can be the trappers that bring our world alive in game!

“Yes, my sword was made by my father, the greatest swordsmith to ever live,” your character says back to the soldier. After a moment's contemplation he adds, “If you want, I can tell you the tale of how I hunted the man who killed my father. How I saved the king and queen, prevented a war, and my sword not only served our great country, but acted as the evidence that I am the great war hero who leads our armies!”





By Richard "Zadmar" Woolcock

Savage Archery

The archer is a staple of fiction and mythology, and can be a fun character to play. In this article, I discuss the archer's pros and cons, describe some of its available tactics, and offer additional rules and abilities for increasing its versatility.

Overview of Ranged Combat

At first glance, ranged weapons appear to have a much higher chance of hitting than melee weapons, rolling against TN 4 instead of Parry. However, their effectiveness rapidly decreases when factoring in lighting, range, and cover. Furthermore, melee fighters can use Wild Attack and Gang Up to significantly boost their offensive capabilities, while ranged fighters have only the Aim maneuver.

Even when enemies have no cover available, they can still crouch or fall prone, imposing a -1 or -2 penalty to hit, and if they're able to move into close combat, your character will no longer be able to fire the bow *at all*.

On the other hand, melee fighters kept at a safe distance enable your character to shoot without being counterattacked. Perhaps the target is in close combat with someone else and can't charge without provoking a free attack, or maybe he needs to cross Difficult Ground (at half Pace) to reach your character. Shoot him from a treetop, from behind a barricade, from the other side of a river, or even at a distance from the back of a fast horse. Make him work to reach your character!

Ranged combat can be very effective, but it requires tactical thinking and clever use of terrain. As long as you control the distance, you have a good chance of victory; but if your character gets pinned down, the odds will be heavily stacked against him.

Tips and Tactics

One useful fact to remember about the bow: your character usually holds it in her offhand because she uses her main hand to draw the string. This means a right-handed character can hold a melee weapon in her right hand and a bow in her left, and when she needs to shoot, she can simply drop the melee weapon as a free action.

But even without a melee weapon, most GMs allow a bow to be used as an improvised weapon. Although this gives a -1 penalty to Parry, it's still better than the -2 penalty for being an Unarmed Defender.

If an opponent is behind cover and your character can't hit him, consider going on Hold and interrupting him when he tries to move. Alternatively, Taunt or Intimidate him, or use a trick to distract him—even if he can't see her, he can probably *hear* her.

Building an Archer

The obvious choice when playing an archer is to raise the Shooting skill, but Fighting is also worthwhile for the Parry bonus in case a foe manages to get too close. You should also consider which Edges to take later on to ensure you'll be able to meet their requirements. Here are some core Edges to contemplate:

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Arcane Background can be used to represent specialized fighting techniques rather than magic; you just have to apply the appropriate trappings. For example, you might take Arcane Background (Super Powers) with the Bolt power, give it the trapping “trick shot,” and call the arcane skill “Expert Archery.” The Additional Bolts option would allow you to shoot up to three “arrows” per round without penalty, while the Additional Damage option might represent firing two arrows at once.

Assassin applies to ranged attacks as well as melee, and is a good fit for a sniper, particularly when combined with the Stealth bonus of **Thief** or **Woodsmen**.

Counterattack and **First Strike** might seem strange choices for an archer, but they can be used to deal with foes who engage you in melee combat. Don’t forget, you can withdraw from a *Shaken* foe without provoking a free attack.

Dodge provides a good defense against other ranged fighters.

Extraction allows you to escape from close combat and can be combined with **Fleet-Footed** for hit-and-run tactics.

Giant Killer is a great way to boost your damage against bigger foes. Unlike melee and thrown weapons, which directly use Strength, bows inflict a fixed 2d6 damage, and this can make it difficult to injure particularly tough opponents. Fortunately, the tougher monsters are often quite big, and this Edge can help compensate for your low damage.

Improvisational Fighter negates the attack and Parry penalty for using your bow as an improvised weapon. While you’d probably rather keep your distance, sometimes close combat is unavoidable. Coupled with **Trademark Weapon** (which applies to both ranged *and* melee attacks), your bow can become a rather effective melee weapon.

Marksmen is a great choice for an archer, but it prevents movement, which can make it difficult to maintain a safe distance from your enemies.

Martial Artist isn’t an obvious choice, but it negates the Unarmed Defender penalty, so you no longer have to risk using your bow as an improvised weapon.



Quick and **Level Headed** improve your initiative, which is always useful when trying to outmaneuver someone, and the increased chance of drawing a Joker is the perfect complement for **Dead Shot**.

Rock and Roll isn’t normally useful for an archer, but makes an excellent choice for characters using the new repeating crossbow described in this article.

Steady Hands negates the “unstable platform” penalty when shooting from horseback or a moving vehicle, and also reduces the penalty for shooting while running, making it a potent choice for a mobile archer.

Famous Bowmen

There are many tales of master bowmen performing incredible feats of skill and daring. The following three examples are all valid starting characters who use some of the new Edges described in this article.

Egil

Rank: Novice

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Shooting d12, Stealth d4, Taunt d6

Charisma: – **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 6 **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Gear: Leather jerkin, short bow (composite bow, medium pull), short sword

Hindrances: Code of Honor (acts like a gentleman), Loyal (would give his life for his friends), Vow (protect the innocent)

Edges: Fast Shooter, Stab and Shoot

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Background: A renowned hero and master archer from Germanic mythology, in one tale, Egil defended an entire keep against an army of giants (hopefully after reaching Veteran rank and taking the Giant Killer Edge!).

Robin Hood

Rank: Novice

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d4, Shooting d10, Stealth d4, Survival d6, Tracking d6

Charisma: +2 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 5 **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Gear: Leather jerkin, long sword, longbow (self bow, heavy pull)

Hindrances: Heroic (hero of the people), Poverty (gives to the poor), Vow (steals from the rich)

Edges: Born to the Bow, Noble (with trappings)

Background: The iconic hero and outlaw of English folklore, Robin Hood stole from the rich and gave to the poor. Although not a “Noble” in the traditional sense, his band of merry men are his troops and family, Sherwood Forest is his domain, the lands and common people are his responsibility, and the Sheriff of Nottingham is his bitter rival.

William Tell

Rank: Novice

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d4, Shooting d12, Swimming d4, Taunt d4

Charisma: – **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 5 **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Gear: Dagger, heavy crossbow (standard crossbow, heavy pull), leather jerkin

Hindrances: Arrogant (thinks he’s the best), Stubborn (refuses to be bullied), Vengeful (avenges himself against those who wrong him)

Edges: Brawny, Crossbow Speed Shooting, Precision Shooting

Background: A famed crossbowman, the legends describe how William Tell was once forced to shoot an apple off his son’s head after offending a tyrannical nobleman. When asked why he’d drawn two bolts from his quiver instead of one, Tell answered that he would have used the second bolt on the nobleman if the first had struck his son!

Designing a Bow

Each bow and crossbow consists of both a *type* and a *pull*. Select one of each to determine the stats of your weapon.

Bow Types

Bows can be reloaded as a free action, but cannot be fired while prone. For the sake of simplicity, they are divided into three broad types: self, composite, and compound.

Self bows are typically made from a single piece of wood, either straight or recurve in shape, and are often as long as the archer is tall. They require an Agility roll to ready, and suffer a –2 penalty when fired from a mount (in *addition* to the Unstable Platform penalty). Stringing or unstringing the bow requires an Agility roll as a normal action; the bow should be unstrung after a few hours’ use and before being stored.

Composite bows are traditionally made from horn, wood, and sinew. As the bow is drawn, the horn on the inside compresses while the sinew on the outside stretches, providing greater power and draw length than a self bow the same size. However, the convenience of carrying a smaller bow must be weighed against the greater cost and production time. Composite bows are strung and unstrung the same as self bows.

Compound bows are modern weapons that use a system of pulleys to bend the limbs, moving effort away from the bowstring. This reduces the Strength requirement of the bow by 1 die step, and allows the bow to be left strung between uses. Compound bows are more resistant to temperature and humidity than self or composite bows, but they are also much more

Type	Damage	Price	Ready	Min Str.	Period	Mounted
Self	2d6	40%	Unwieldy	Pull	Ancient	–2 penalty
Composite	2d6	100%	Normal	Pull	Ancient	No modifier
Compound	2d6	100%	Normal	Pull -1	Modern	No modifier

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difficult to repair in the field; even adjusting or replacing the string is difficult without a bow press.

Crossbow Types

Crossbows are mechanical weapons consisting of a horizontal bow mounted on a stock. They can be fired while mounted or prone, and their Strength requirement is reduced by 1 die step (e.g., a character with Strength d6 can use a heavy pull crossbow without penalty). Traditional crossbows use bolts, which are short, dowel-type projectiles without fletching, but modern crossbows are usually designed to shoot arrows instead.

Standard crossbows are of ancient design, although they didn't reach Europe until the Middle Ages. The stats provided here can also be used for compound crossbows and other modern variants. Standard crossbows require a normal action to reload after each shot, and their weight is double that of a bow.

Arbalests are large, steel crossbows. They are extremely powerful and very slow to reload. Arbalests always have heavy or great pull, and they inflict 2d8 damage rather than 2d6. Their range increases by 3/6/12, and their weight is three times that of a bow. Arbalests require three actions to reload, and cannot be reloaded while moving or mounted. This weapon could also represent the Ancient Greek gastrophetes, or "belly shooter."

Repeating crossbows are some of the earliest mechanical weapons from the Orient. Although weaker than standard crossbows, they are capable of discharging two bolts every three seconds. Repeating crossbows always have light or medium pull, their range reduces by 2/4/8, and their damage decreases to 2d4+1, but they gain RoF 2 and use a magazine of 12 bolts. When used full-auto they consume four bolts, roll two Shooting dice, and suffer the standard -2 recoil penalty. It's possible to modify a repeating crossbow to always discharge two bolts at once; this increases the damage to 2d6, reduces the range by another 1/2/4, doubles the ammo consumption for

single shot and full-auto, and allows use of the Suppressive Fire maneuver.

Pistol crossbows are smaller weapons designed to be used one-handed, although they still require both hands to reload (as a free action) after each shot. Pistol crossbows always have light or medium pull, their range reduces by 3/6/12, and they inflict 2d4+1 damage.

Drawstring Pull

Each bow and crossbow has a pull rating representing the effort required to draw the string, with the more powerful weapons requiring better quality construction. A higher pull also requires stiffer arrows with more spine to give the correct amount of flex when shot, and this reduced flexibility increases the chance of the arrow breaking on impact.

You should only roll again to see if an arrow has broken if you rolled 1 on the Shooting die or if it has a soft arrowhead. The type of die rolled to see if the arrow has broken is determined by the shaft and is referred to as the "breakage die."

Accessories

Many accessories are available to the modern archer, ranging from cases, covers, and stands, to side rods, wrist-trigger releases, slings, and silencers. This article only covers a few basic items with low-end prices; you may wish to do some additional research to add flavor to your character concept.

A **finger tab** is a simple leather patch that protects the fingers, and costs \$3. Some archers prefer a three-fingered **shooting glove**, which costs \$10.

An **archery bracer** protects the inside of the forearm from the bowstring and arrow fletching, and also keeps loose clothing out of the way. A basic model costs \$5.

An **optic scope** can be fitted to a modern crossbow, reducing range penalties by 2. A simple model costs \$50 and has Weight 1.

Type	Range	Damage	RoF	Weight	Period	Reload
Standard	Normal	2d6	1	Double	Ancient	1 action
Arbalest	+3/6/12	2d8	1	Triple	Medieval	3 actions
Repeating	-2/4/8 (-3/6/12)	2d4+1 (2d6)	2	Double	Ancient	1 action
Pistol	-3/6/12	2d4+1	1	Normal	Medieval	Free action

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Pull	Range	Min Str.*	Arrow Break Weight**	Cost***
Light	9/18/36	d4	Roll of 1, 2, 4, or 6	\$200 (\$80)
Medium	12/24/48	d6 (d4)	Roll of 1-3, 6, or 9	\$250 (\$100)
Heavy	15/30/60	d8 (d6)	Roll of 1-3, 5, 10, or 15	\$500 (\$200)
Great	18/36/72	d10 (d8)	Roll of 1-4, 8, 16, or 24	\$1000 (\$400)

* Crossbows and compound bows reduce the Strength requirement by 1 die step.

** The weight doubles for standard and repeating crossbows, and triples for arbalests.

*** Self bows only cost 40% as much as other bows and crossbows.

popular. For modern arrows, only use this option for basic wooden shafts; decent wooden arrows should use the same stats as a footed shaft.

Footed shafts are made from two different types of wood. Harder wood near the head of the arrow makes it more likely to survive impact, while softer wood for the rest of the shaft reduces the weight and allows the arrow to maintain flexibility.

Fiberglass shafts are cheap and durable, but prone to splintering. Their heavy weight also reduces their accuracy at longer distances: the archer suffers a -3 penalty (instead of -2) at medium range, and a -6 penalty (instead of -4) at long range. Fiberglass shafts are a popular choice for young archers, as well as for bowfishing arrows.

A **stabilizer** can be fitted to a compound bow, keeping the bow steady and dampening vibrations. A simple model costs \$50 and reduces range penalties by 1, but the archer now suffers a -2 penalty to Shooting if he moves and shoots on the same round.

A **bow sight** can be mounted on the riser of a compound bow, reducing range penalties by 1. A basic model costs \$20 and has Weight 1.

Designing Arrows

Arrows consist of multiple components, and their length depends on both the archer and the bow. To keep things simple, this article focuses on just the shaft, head, and fletching. If you wish to track encumbrance, the normal rule is Weight 1 for every 5 arrows or bolts.

Arrow Shafts

The shaft of the arrow can be made from various materials, each with its own pros and cons. The price of modern arrows can vary dramatically, and the costs given here are only rough approximations. If you prefer more accurate prices, use an online archery shop (the same applies to bows and accessories).

Wooden shafts can be made from cedar, bamboo, or other lightweight woods, although heavier woods such as ash and hickory are also

Aluminum shafts are generally heavier than wooden and carbon shafts. They have a tendency to bend, although they can usually be straightened again afterward.

Carbon shafts are more durable than wood and don't bend like aluminum, although they can sometimes shatter.

Arrowheads

The arrowhead is the part of the arrow designed to hit the target, and may be inserted directly into the shaft, loosely attached, or firmly anchored with glue or twine.

Shaft	Price*	Breakage Die	Period	Range Penalties
Wooden	\$0.50 (\$3.00)	d6	Ancient	Standard
Footed	\$1.00 (\$6.00)	d8	Ancient	Standard
Fiberglass	\$3.00	d8	Modern	-0/-3/-6
Aluminum	\$4.50	d10	Modern	Standard
Carbon	\$6.00	d12	Modern	Standard

* When two prices are given, the higher price is for modern settings.

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Pile arrowheads are simple points with the same diameter as the shaft, usually a metal cone, although sometimes the shaft itself is sharpened to a point.

Soft arrowheads are designed to bend on impact, preventing enemy archers from shooting your own arrows back at you, and they are often used in large battles. You should always check to see if these arrows have broken, although if the Shooting die *didn't* roll 1 it means only the arrowhead is bent, and the shaft can be recovered.

Bodkin points are simple spikes, but when forged from hardened metal they are highly effective at penetrating armor. They grant the archer AP 1 when used with a medium pull bow, and AP 2 when used by a heavy or great pull bow.

Broadheads have a sharp cutting surface designed to cause serious tissue damage and bleeding, making them devastating against unarmored or lightly armored foes. They inflict +1 damage on a raise if used by a medium pull bow, and +1 damage on even a *normal* success if used by a heavy or great pull bow.

Blunts are unsharpened heads designed to stun rather than kill. They usually inflict nonlethal damage, but if you roll 1 on the skill die and still hit, the damage is lethal.

Fire cage arrowheads have a tiny cage that tapers off to a point and can hold flammable material. This material can be lit as a normal action. If a flaming arrow hits a flammable target, roll to see if it catches fire.

Forked arrowheads have crescent-shaped blades, and an exceptionally skilled archer can use them to slice through ropes (although this still requires a

Called Shot at –4). Crossbow bolts sometimes have sickle-shaped heads that work the same way.

Signal arrowheads consist of a perforated bulb of horn or wood, and produce a loud whistling sound when shot. It's not uncommon to tie a message to the shaft before firing it into an enemy fortress or camp.

Bowfishing arrowheads are barbed. They attach to heavy shafts without fletching, and a hole through the shaft allows a line to be connected. A character armed with bowfishing arrows can use his Shooting skill in place of Survival when collecting food near water.

Quarrel heads are usually square with a four-sided point. They fit to bolts and can only be fired from crossbows. They have AP 1 when used with a medium pull crossbow, and AP 2 when used by a heavy or great pull crossbow.

Fletching

The fletching usually consists of three or four half-feathers connected to the rear of the shaft, which stabilize the arrow and provide natural spin. Modern arrows typically use three plastic vanes, while traditional arrows use bird feathers, often from a goose or turkey.

The fletching can be cut in a number of different ways, and is usually designed to complement the arrowhead. A low fletching improves the range, while a higher fletching stabilizes the flight, particularly when using larger arrowheads.

No mechanical modifiers or additional costs are listed here for different types of fletching, but it is recommended that you personalize your arrows by describing their appearance, as well as the type and color of their fletching.

Arrowhead	Fitted	Price	Special
Pile	Arrow	Normal	Standard arrowhead for target arrows
Soft	Arrow	Normal	Always check for breakage, instead of only on a 1
Bodkin	Arrow	Double	AP 1 (medium pull), AP 2 (heavy/great pull)
Broadhead	Arrow	Double	+1 damage (heavy/great), on raise (medium)
Blunt	Either	Normal	Nonlethal damage, unless roll 1 on Shooting die
Fire cage	Arrow	Triple	Light as normal action; flammable targets catch fire
Forked	Either	Double	Can make a Called Shot at –4 to cut ropes
Signal	Arrow	Triple	Produces an audible whistle
Bowfishing	Arrow	Double	Can be used to catch fish
Quarrel	Bolt	Double	Square-headed crossbow bolt, works like a Bodkin

New Edges

Born to the Bow (Background)

Requirements: Novice, Strength d8

The strongest archers start training at a young age and practice

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regularly throughout their lives, strengthening both their muscles and bones. When using a self or composite bow penalties are halved for medium and long range. On a raise at short range, roll d8 or d10 (for heavy and great pull respectively) instead of d6 for the bonus damage. This Edge doesn't work with crossbows or compound bows.

Crossbow Speed Shooting (Combat)

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8

When using an arbalest or standard crossbow, you can reload as a free action, although there's still only one reload action per round. When using a repeating crossbow, you have the option to use the Double Tap maneuver instead of a full-auto attack. This Edge provides no benefit when using a bow or pistol crossbow.

Fast Shooter (Combat)

Requirements: Novice, Shooting d8

You're able to loose two arrows in rapid succession when firing a bow. This allows you to make an extra Shooting attack per round at a -1 penalty to all Shooting rolls. Both attacks must be made at the same time (Wild Cards roll two Shooting dice and one Wild Die), but they don't need to target the same foe. This Edge cannot be combined with the Aim maneuver or the Marksman Edge, and doesn't work with crossbows.

Fast Shooter, Improved (Combat)

Requirements: Veteran, Fast Shooter

You're able to loose up to three arrows in rapid succession when firing a bow. This allows you to make either one extra Shooting attack per round without penalty or two extra Shooting attacks per round at a -2 penalty to all Shooting rolls. All attacks must be made at the same time (Wild Cards roll two or three Shooting dice and one Wild Die), but they don't need to target the same foe. This Edge cannot be combined with the Aim maneuver or the Marksman Edge, and doesn't work with crossbows.

Precision Shooting (Combat)

Requirements: Novice, Shooting d10

When shooting someone with a bow or crossbow while using the Aim maneuver or the Marksman Edge, the Innocent Bystander rule only applies to you on a critical failure. You may choose to either halve the penalty for making a Called Shot, or halve the penalty for cover (rounding fractions down).

Stab and Shoot (Combat)

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8

In the heat of battle, you've been known to stab one foe with an arrow before notching and firing it at a second target. Make a Fighting roll at -1 against an adjacent target: if successful, your arrow inflicts Str+d4 damage, plus any modifiers for the arrowhead. You may then make a Shooting roll at -1 against any valid target within range. You can move normally between making the two attacks if you wish. This Edge cannot be combined with the Aim maneuver or Marksman Edge, nor with any maneuvers or Edges that grant additional attacks or target multiple opponents. This Edge doesn't work with crossbows.



New Hindrance

Reckless Shot (Major)

When making ranged attacks, you focus on your target to the exclusion of all else, causing a lot of collateral damage. Your reputation for "friendly fire" is well known, giving you a -2 penalty to Charisma when dealing with those who recognize you. When fighting in a Mass Battle, you give your side a -1 penalty to morale.

Always use the Innocent Bystander rule when rolling 1 on a Shooting or Throwing die. If the attack succeeds despite the 1, you hit both your intended target *and* an innocent bystander, applying the same damage roll to both; whoever is hit first (determined randomly if it's not clear from their position) is treated as an obstacle—just subtract their Toughness from the damage before applying it to the second victim. If you roll snake eyes on a Shooting or

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Throwing roll, you automatically hit a random bystander with a raise, and cannot spend a benny to reroll the attack.

You can never take the Precision Shooting Edge.

Botching the Shot

Critical failures are normally left entirely up to the GM's discretion, but this optional rule can make a fun alternative for groups who fancy something more defined.

Upon rolling a critical failure, the archer suffers a mishap, although she has at least *some* influence over her fate: she may either use her current initiative card or draw a random card from the deck to determine the outcome. Expert archers can therefore take Quick or Level Headed to reduce the average severity of their mishaps.

The result is based on a combination of suit and rank. On clubs (♣) you injure yourself; on diamonds (♦) you damage your weapon; on hearts (♥) the mishap is so embarrassing, you suffer a penalty to resist Taunt checks for the remainder of the scene; and on spades (♠) your shot is so bad, you manage to hit or stun a random ally or innocent bystander (but never an enemy—a botch should never be beneficial for the person who rolled it). The card rank indicates the severity of the mishap: high rank might simply mean the head falls off your arrow as you're about to shoot, while low rank could indicate you've snapped your bow or even shot yourself with a ricochet.

Rank Outcome

2–4 ♣ Suffer 2d6 damage. ♦ Bow breaks. ♥ –4 to resist Taunt. ♠ Shoot ally or innocent with either headshot (4♠), raise (3♠), or both (2♠).

5–7 ♣ Become Shaken and drop bow. ♦ Bow damaged (d6 hours and Repair roll to fix). ♥ –3 to

resist Taunt. ♠ Shoot ally or innocent with normal success.

8–10 ♣ Become Shaken. ♦ Break bow string. ♥ –2 to resist Taunt. ♠ Ally or innocent becomes Shaken.

Jack–King ♣ Become Shaken unless wearing an archery bracer or using a crossbow. ♦ Arrow breaks. ♥ –1 to resist Taunt. ♠ Ally or innocent becomes Shaken.

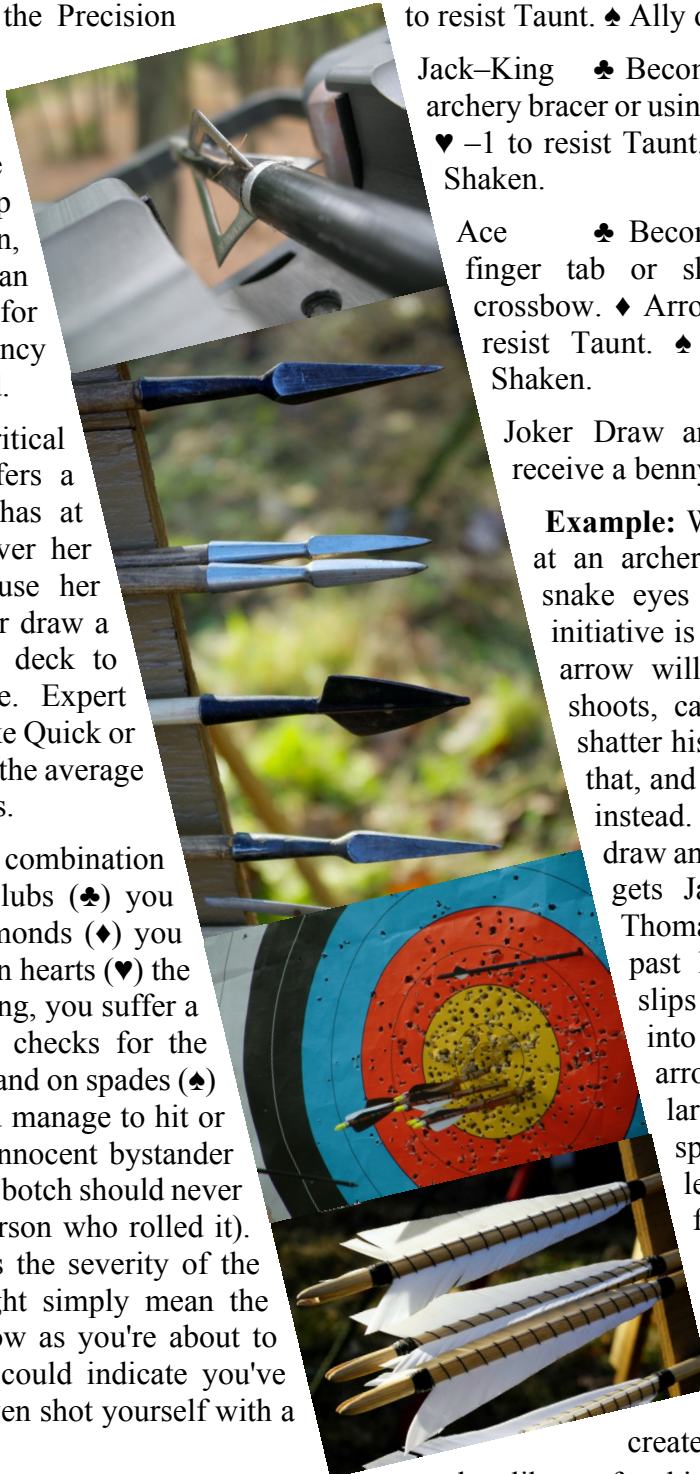
Ace ♣ Become Shaken unless wearing a finger tab or shooting glove, or using a crossbow. ♦ Arrow bent or damaged. ♥ –1 to resist Taunt. ♠ Ally or innocent becomes Shaken.

Joker Draw and combine two cards; you receive a benny as compensation.

Example: While demonstrating his skills at an archery tournament, Thomas rolls snake eyes and misfortune strikes. His initiative is 3♦ (bow breaks); perhaps the arrow will slip from the string as he shoots, causing him to dry loose and shatter his bow? Thomas doesn't fancy that, and decides to risk a random card instead. He draws a Joker, so he has to draw and combine two more cards: he gets Jack♦ and 4♠. In his haste, Thomas carelessly draws the string past his anchor point, the arrow slips from the rest, and he shoots it into the belly of his own bow! The arrow shatters (J♦) and one of the larger fragments hits a nearby spectator in the throat (4♠). At least Thomas receives a benny for drawing a Joker—not much of a consolation prize, but better than nothing.

GMs, this is a great way to create a multidimensional archer the likes of which the PCs may aspire to emulate...or whose gear they may wish to duplicate!

Not the GM? Double-check that yours will let you use these great new tools to create an out-of-the-ordinary archer.



Salvation in the Sewers

A short story set in the RPG world of Winter Eternal by Morne Schaap of Just Insert Imagination.



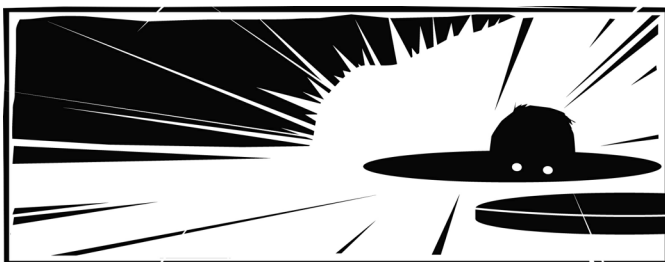
Meekul ducked as Bree flew over his head, landing with a splash behind Meekul and Ru as he slid into the sewer wall. The dead thing hissed and held the blanket-covered bundle closer to its chest.

“This not good, Meekul” Ru whispered, his rusted dagger shaking in his clenched fist. As the

dead things’ eyes reflected the light of the glowstone lantern, Meekul agreed. They were going to die down here and their bodies would never be found.

Greensnot Street was silent. The rope bridges between the rickety buildings swayed in the wind, but nothing moved down below. Though it was long after midnight, the usually busy streets were empty. Goblins were staying at home, doors were locked, and patched or ragged curtains were drawn. For weeks, babies and children had been disappearing and the goblins were scared. Traps were set and Browncloaks patrolled the area, but so far nothing has been caught. Some fanatics believed it was a minion of Thalrec, the god of death and darkness, come to punish non-believers. But few listened to them. The goblins could feel the tension in the air; a predator had moved into the area and no one felt safe.

It was late at night on Moor Day, the second day of the week. The curtains in a window looking out on the street kept fluttering, spilling golden light on the grey stone.



“I tell you, I saw it last week.” Meekul said as he peered outside again. “Something spooky-fast moved in shadows and then down into sewer it went.” Outside the little abode a black hole in the ground showed where the open sewer entrance was.

“You sure you not dreaming?” Ru wondered as he crunched a beetle between his teeth. He had an old cloth bag balanced on his round belly and was enjoying his late-night snack. Meekul glared at him before turning back to the window.

“This be true,” he muttered. Behind him, Bree was practising with his prized, but blunt short sword. He was picturing himself as a heroic Browncloak, notreally listening to the other two. Suddenly, Meekul hissed and waved them over to the window.

“I see movement!” he whispered. With their faces pressed against the cold glass, the three friends scanned the street. After a minute Bree shook his head and started to turn to go back to his sword practice. Then something moved in the shadows across the street. A nightmare skittered out of the dark towards the open sewer. It had long, spindly white limbs, nasty-looking claws, and a mouth filled with sharp teeth. It was clutching a bundle to its chest. The three goblins stood and stared slack-jawed out the window.

“What is that?” Bree whispered.

“Don’t know, but that thing is eating our babies,” Meekul replied as the creature sniffed the air. With a final shake of its head, it jumped down into the sewer and disappeared.

“We find Browncloaks, “ Ru said as he backed away from the window.

“No time!” Meekul yelled as he ran to his bundle of belongings in the corner. “Nasty thing could be munching on baby legs soon!” He grabbed his sling and ammo and headed to the door. “Well?” he prompted the others as they stood unmoving by the window.

Bree asked after a brief pause, “But what if nasty thing munch on our legs?”

STORIES TO INSPIRE



Ru waved his sword around halfheartedly, any visions of heroic Browncloaks long gone.

Meekul pulled himself up to his full height. "We are here now. We have no choice. Little one die without our help." Meekul looked each of his friends in the eye. They glanced at each other and nodded.

"No baby munching tonight," Bree said as he lifted his short sword again. Ru ran to his pack and threw it over his shoulder. He grabbed an old dagger from the table and walked up to Meekul saying simply, "Let's go."

The three goblins rushed out the door and into the cold night. They wrapped their old cloaks around them as they went. They slowed down as they approached the open manhole and stopped to stand in a circle, staring at the dark hole in the street. They could hear the trickle of water far below them. Meekul swallowed and tried not to think of what could be waiting at the bottom of the ladder. He clenched the handle of the flickering glowstone lantern between his teeth and started to climb down.

The whole way he expected something to grab him, but after what felt like eternity, he made it safely to the bottom. A few minutes later his friends stood beside him. They peered around the tunnel for signs of the monster.

A small stream was flowing from left to right. They tried not to notice what trash was floating along the quick-moving water; there wasn't time for a quick snack now anyway. Strange noises echoed along the corridor and they inched a little closer to each other.

There were ice patches on the walls and in places on the floor as well. Ru spotted the broken ice on the ground to the left. "Nasty went this way!" he said, pointing down the dark tunnel. Meekul lifted the lantern and took the lead, his friends following close behind.

They walked for about 10 minutes without any sign of monsters or babies. Suddenly they noticed the echo

of soft keening in the tunnel and it was getting louder. "We must hide!" Bree gasped. "I know what makes scary noise." The goblins looked around frantically.

"There!" Meekul pointed to a shadowy alcove along the wall. They crowded into the small space as Meekul closed the shutters on the lantern.

The darkness allowed their eyes to see what they could not in the light. All three saw what came crawling along the tunnel in hues of orange and red. Bree slapped his hand over his mouth to keep from screaming. He hated spiders, especially ones as big as a wagon. The sewer spider crawled along the ceiling, making a noise as if it were singing to itself.

It stopped for a moment and the goblins tensed. Then it moved along and disappeared back the way they had come. Giddy with relief the goblins sagged to the floor laughing and slapping each other on the back.

As Meekul opened the shutters again, he noticed a small sock on the ground by his feet. Bending down to investigate it, he spotted an opening in the wall behind them. He turned to his still giggling friends.

"We go this way now. Monster close." he said as he hunched down and entered the smaller tunnel. Ru and Bree looked at each other. The thought of other monsters close by sobered them quickly. They rushed down the smaller tunnel, afraid to be the one walking in the rear.

The passage was dirty, and their heads almost scraped the roof as they walked hunched over. A smell hit them. The stench of rotting flesh overpowered their noses. Ru spat on the ground. "Methinks we found monster home." he growled.

The group emerged into a large, open area. Bones and scraps of cloth littered the ground. A large centipede crawled out the eye socket of a goblin skull as they watched. Bree almost jumped forward to grab it, but his fear was stronger than his hunger. Water dripped from the roof and small rivulets ran down the walls around to them. Meekul's lantern light couldn't reach the edges of the cavernous room. He crept forward.

A loud hiss made them jump as out of the shadows stepped the dead-but-not-dead monster from the street. It still clutched the bundle to its chest as it flitted a long tongue between its fangs. Meekul heard

Ru drop his weapon. As he glanced his friend's way, the open-mouthed goblin was busy retrieving it.

For a moment they just stared at each other, then the monster rushed them.



"YAAAAAAAH!" Bree cried as he charged forward, short sword raised. The dead thing back-handed him and he went flying over the heads of his companions. He grunted as he crashed to the ground, bones went flying everywhere as he slid along the slippery ground. There was a thud as Bree struck the wall and the little goblin didn't get up.

In the blink of an eye the fiend was on Meekul and Ru. They managed to dodge swipes from his one clawed hand and tried to move around the monster. Ru raked it across the ribs with his dagger, just to be slapped to the ground.

It twisted around and grabbed Meekul by the throat. Its fetid breath washed over Meekul as it lifted him towards its face. They looked each other in the eye and all Meekul could see was hate. Then, with a hiss, it hurled the little goblin at the wall. Meekul crashed into the slimy stone wall and dropped to the floor. The room spun around him and his legs felt like jelly. He tried to get up but his feet would not obey any commands. He fell down with his back against the wall, shaking his head trying to clear it.

Then the world around him went quiet. A small white flame formed on the wet stone floor in the back of the room. It flickered and danced through puddles as it slowly moved closer, growing in size and brilliance. When it came to stop in front of Meekul, he had to shield his eyes.

He squinted at the flame and suddenly he could see the figure of a human woman within it. She knelt next him and even through tear-filled eyes he could see her kind smile.

"The Lady of the Dawn!" he gasped.

"Get up, brave little one." Her voice was like a million small bells, chiming in harmony. "Follow me

and we will bring light to dark places." Meekul nodded dumbfounded, the radiance of Ihlanar making him forget everything else. With a pop, she suddenly disappeared and the real world rushed back in.

Meekul looked around the room. The monster was pressing Ru to the floor with its free hand. It was trying to take a bite out of the goblin and Ru was straining to keep its jaws away. Bree was trying to get up, his eyes unfocused and dazed. Meekul pushed himself up and stumbled to where the ghoul was hunched over.

"This ends now!" he yelled and thrust his palm towards the thing. Bright white light exploded from Meekul's hand and eyes. The ghoul howled and writhed in pain. It dropped the baby on Ru's chest and clawed at the tiny flames forming all over its body. They grew bigger and started consuming the dead flesh. The white flames spread quickly across its body, burning as it went, but not touching cloth or anything else. It screamed as the flames reached its head and burned out its bulging eyes. The scream got louder and louder until in an instant, it stopped as the body turned at once to ash. The flames ceased and darkness and silence crashed back into the chamber like a blow from a frost giant.

"Whoa." Ru whispered as ash drifted around him. "What was that?"

Meekul lit the area once more with the glowstone. "Methinks religion found me," he said as he stared at his palm. In the center was a brand of a stylized torch, the symbol of Ihlanar. "What happens next?" he wondered softly.

"We go home now?" Bree asked from behind him with a shaky voice. Meekul smiled and lifted the small kicking bundle off Ru's chest.

"We go home," he said as he opened the blankets and wiggled his fingers at the baby inside. The baby goblin snapped at him with a big mouth full of teeth and Meekul decided it might be safer to keep his hands away from the little biter on the way back.



By Sean Tait Bircher of Wine and Savages

Zhàndòu: City of Warriors

A setting for *wuxia* action, Zhàndòu – the City of Warriors – sits on the outskirts of a medieval Chinese-style nation. It is home to rival martial arts schools, a menacing sorcerer, an ambitious governor, and daring heroes who oppose tyranny and injustice.

Wuxia

Known to Western audiences from Ang Lee’s “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon” and Zhang Yimou’s “Hero,” “House of Flying Daggers,” and “Curse of the Golden Flower,” *wuxia* is the genre of Chinese martial arts fantasy, filled with gravity-defying leaps, mystical powers, and heroes who live by their own code. Though “*youxia*” – the term for *wuxia* protagonists – is often translated “knight errant,” the genre is more comparable to the ballads of Robin Hood or American westerns than to medieval tales of chivalry. *Youxia* are outsiders who have forsaken the conformity of Confucianism for a personal code of honor – the Martial Code or Code of *Xia* – that puts them at odds with society; the heroes of *wuxia* are more concerned with maintaining their personal integrity and perfecting their martial arts than they are with defending feudal lords or achieving worldly riches.

The world of *wuxia* is divided between conventional society and the *jianghu* (literally “river-lake”) or *wulin* (“world of martial arts”). *Jianghu* is usually used to describe the underworld of beggars, criminals, martial artists, mystics, and the sundry dispossessed; it has connotations of Robin Hood’s greenwood. *Wulin* is more strictly the world of martial arts schools and brotherhoods; *wulin* is considered an honorable term, but it fails to grasp the countercultural implications of *wuxia*. Regardless of the term used to describe the martial arts world, it is a staple of the genre that society is corrupt and conventional authority is ineffectual while the *jianghu* is the true home of honor and integrity. The army and constabulary cannot keep the peace; only the swords and fists of wandering martial artists can save the day.

With the caveat that the world is divided between dishonorable society and the noble *wulin*, many

kinds of stories fit within the *wuxia* genre. There are tragedies of lovers torn apart by their codes of honor, sword and sorcery tales of martial heroes versus monsters, mysteries of wandering lawmen, epics of outlaw armies saving local peasants, and *bildungsroman* of students becoming masters. They are united by the presence of mystical martial arts and the Code of *Xia*, but are otherwise as diverse as science fiction and fantasy.

Savage Worlds for Wuxia

Savage Worlds players and game masters will find that many familiar plots and tropes easily adapt to *wuxia*:

- *Deadlands: Reloaded* contains rules for mystical martial arts.
- *The Flood Player’s Guide* (free) contains additional Edges and weapons. (https://www.peginc.com/freebies/DL_Reloaded/TheFloodPG.pdf).
- The core rules of Savage Worlds Deluxe embrace more martial arts options than previous editions, so game masters may simply consider modeling the mystical side of martial arts through the use of Arcane Backgrounds.

Several fan-produced works for various editions have addressed adapting the high-flying “wire fu” of *wuxia* to Savage Worlds:

- *Savage Wuxia: Wire-Fu Powers for the Savage Worlds Roleplaying Game* (<http://www.savageheroes.com/conversions/SavageWuxia.pdf>) by Brian Reeves (also available in Shark Bytes vol. 4, issue 2 --

<http://savagepedia.wikispaces.com/file/view/Volume+4,+Issue+%232+Players.pdf>).

- *Savage Wuxia!* by William J. Scott III (<http://www.wjs3.com/rpg/sw/Savage%20Wuxia!.pdf>).
- *Oriental Adventures Toolkit* (<http://www.hardpoints.de/SWOrientalAdventures.pdf>) by Peter Lustig.
- A collection of *Savage Worlds Deluxe* pre-generated martial arts characters by Sean Bircher at www.wineandsavages.blogspot.com under the title *Savage Worlds Martial Artists Aren't All the Same*.

The Code of Xia

The Code of *Xia* unites heroes and villains of the *wulin*, providing a common set of principles that allow even the purest *youxia* to sympathize with and see herself in the basest villain. This code gives cause to the righteous, but often leads to tragedy. The Code of *Xia* informs the Code of Honor Edge in *Savage Worlds wuxia* games.

Similar to how the Super Karma rule in the *Super Powers Companion* allows characters to take an additional Major Hindrance at character creation to reflect the turbulent lives of super heroes, so might game masters allow *wuxia* heroes to take Code of Honor in addition to the usual one Major and two Minor Hindrances.

The Eight Principles of the Code of *Xia* are:

- **Benevolence:** *Youxia* should defend the weak; heroic *youxia* believe this requires serving the humble, while villainous *youxia* believe it means controlling them.
- **Courage:** *Youxia* are brave in the face of danger; this doesn't mean they have to be foolhardy, but many are.
- **Glory:** A *youxia* may not necessarily seek worldly fame, but she does seek the respect of her peers; like an Old West gunfighter, the *youxia* cannot back down from a challenge.

- **Individualism:** The *youxia* must follow her own code first and foremost; lord and family come second. This emphasis on self places the Code of *Xia* at odds with societal norms.
- **Justice:** Heroes pursue justice against those who prey on the weak, while villains see this principle as an excuse to avenge crimes against themselves. *Youxia* of all stripes are compelled to address slights to their honor.
- **Loyalty:** While loyalty to the emperor, lord, and family is unimportant to many *youxia*, loyalty to one's friends, master, and students is a core of their beliefs.
- **Poverty:** A *youxia* needn't turn her back on material wealth, but it must never be her overriding motivation. Many *youxia* lead lives as landless wanderers, owning nothing more than their clothes and weapons.
- **Truthfulness:** Heroes equate truthfulness with honesty and fairness in their dealings with others, but villains only see the value of truthfulness as being true to themselves.

The City of Warriors

On the far western edge of the Heavenly Empire sits Zhàndòu. A bustling caravan town that sits where the winding Xuánlǜ River intersects the Great Spice Road, Zhàndòu is a lawless place compared with the bureaucratic interior of the great nation.

Despite the presence of an imperial governor and his army garrison, the caravan masters must often turn to hired swords to protect their expensive wares. This has given rise to a prominent *jianghu*: an underworld of martial artists and mystics, criminals and heroes.

The Great Spice Road extends leagues upon leagues east and west from Zhàndòu. It carries caravans laden with spices, incense, and delicate porcelain west from the Heavenly Empire to barbarous lands, and bears the gold and jewels of the barbarians east to the Imperial Capital. The western length of the road vanishes into stony desert while the eastern extent of the road breaks off into

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innumerable paths leading through the bamboo-covered mountains of the Empire.

The Xuánlù River begins several days' journey north of the city at the mountain spring-fed Lake Pipá. The cold waters of the deep, dark lake flow swiftly southward before slowing at the broad yet treacherous ford where Zhàndòu grew up. Toll bridges manned by Imperial soldiers allow passage over the rock-strewn ford, but many merchants try to save money by hiring porters to wade the river.

Zhàndòu itself sits on the eastern bank behind high stone walls that protect it from bandit attacks and the rare sandstorms that make it this far across the desert. It is shaped roughly like an arrowhead pointed at the heart of the Heavenly Empire. The main army garrison is based in the fortress that guards the river (the broad base of the arrowhead), while a smaller garrison is stationed at the governor's palace at the far side of the city (the point of the arrowhead). The central section of the arrowhead is where the caravanserais, inns, merchants, and storehouses that form the heart of the city lie.

Society

THE GARRISON

The fortress that guards the Xuánlù ford is commanded by **Garrison Commander Luo Ben**, a grizzled, one-eyed weary man. Commander Luo offended a powerful Imperial eunuch two decades ago and was assigned to Zhàndòu as his punishment; Luo knows that he has been condemned to a lingering death far from the comforts of the capital and drowns his sorrows in women and wine.

His apathy has ruined the morale of the garrison, which hardly stir from the confines of the city; bandits routinely attack caravans within eyesight – even bowshot – of the toll bridge guards, but the army will not come to their defense unless the caravan masters have bribed the soldiers to intercede.



GARRISON COMMANDER LUO BEN

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Gambling d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Notice d6, Riding d6, Taunt d6

Charisma +0 Pace: 5 Parry: 5 Toughness: 8

Hindrances: Enemy [Major; a powerful eunuch], Mean, Obese

Edges: Code of Honor, Command, Liquid Courage, Martial Artist, Noble

Gear: Wine-stained bejeweled robes, little-used and rusting *jian* (as longsword; Str+d8), ready cash for gambling and whoring.

ZHÀNDÒU SOLDIER

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Gambling d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Riding d6, Shooting d4, Taunt d4

Charisma: +0 Pace: 6 Parry: 5 Toughness: 7(2)

Hindrances: Stubborn, Yellow

Edges: Brawler

Gear: chain hauberk (+2 Armor), crossbow and 10 quarrels (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP2, 1 action to reload), *dao* (as short sword; Str+d6).

The Governor's Palace

The governor's palace on the far eastern end of Zhàndòu is a newly-built addition to the city walls, constructed to accommodate the Imperial governor and his private guards. It is luxurious and fashionable compared with the rest of the city, but it is home to dark secrets far more dangerous to the city than Commander Luo's apathy.

Governor Shi Nai'an is ambitious and shrewd, but not nearly as shrewd as he thinks he is. He could be governing from a more pleasant location further toward the interior of the province, but he has vague plans of forging an alliance with the desert bandits to challenge the Emperor. To that end, he uses unscrupulous merchants to communicate with the bandits while he seeks allies among the garrison and *jianghu*.

What Shi Nai'an doesn't realize is that his ambitions are not his own. His chief concubine, **Zhou Da-ji**, is a *húli jīng* – a nine-tailed fox spirit – in the service of the sorcerer Yuán Méi. Zhou Da-ji urges the foolish governor along even as she spies on the warriors of the *wulin* and corrupts Shi Nai'an's guards. To protect her investment, she has given the governor a ring of *Summon Ally* that acts of its own will if the governor is attacked.

Shi Nai'an is guarded by retainers of the Shi family, not imperial soldiers. A rivalry has developed between the two factions, but it does not run nearly as deep as the contempt between the lackadaisical soldiers and the righteous *wulin*.



GOVERNOR SHI NAI'AN

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

Skills: Fighting d4, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Riding d4, Shooting d4, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6, Taunt d6

Charisma: +2 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 4 **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Greedy [Major]

Edges: Filthy Rich, Noble, Strong Willed

Gear: formal robes, jewelry, ring of *Summon Ally* (summons a bodyguard with a Spellcasting skill of d8; 15 power points).



ZHOU DA-JI

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Occultism) d8, Lockpicking d8, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Spellcasting d8, Stealth d12, Taunt d6, Throwing d8

Charisma: +4 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 7 **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Vengeful [Major], Cautious, Loyal

Edges: AB: Magic, Assassin, Danger Sense, Improved Level Headed, Martial Artist, New Power, Power Points, Very Attractive

Gear: Exquisite robes for playing the concubine and plain peasant's garb for disguises, steel hairpins (as throwing knives; Range 3/6/12, Damage Str+d4, RoF 1).

Special Abilities

- **Power Points:** 15
- **Powers:** *bolt* (globes of foxfire), *confusion* (swirling foxfire), *disguise* (places a bamboo leaf on her head), *puppet* (seduction)
- **Shape-changer:** Zhou Da-ji's natural form is that of a wolf-sized nine-tailed fox; when she is in that form, use the Dog/Wolf stats from *Savage Worlds Deluxe*. Transforming into

human form requires a Spellcasting roll; a success means she has failed to hide her tails, while a raise means she has completely hidden her true nature.

SHI FAMILY GUARD

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Gambling d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Taunt d4

Charisma: +0 **Pace:** 5 **Parry:** 5 **Toughness:** 7(2)

Hindrances: Overconfident, Vow [Minor; serve the Shi family]

Edges: Brawler

Gear: chain hauberk (+2 Armor), crossbow and 10 quarrels (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP2, 1 action to reload), *ji* (as halberd; Str+d8, Reach 1, 2 hands), *jian* (as long sword; Str+d8).

The Jianghu

THE MERCHANT QUARTER

The Merchant Quarter of Zhàndòu occupies the majority of the city's area. It is filled with caravanserais and the businesses that cater to the masters, porters, and guards. There are inns, taverns, and bordellos; there are grocers, blacksmiths, and tailors. It is also where the martial artists of Zhàndòu's *jianghu* make their living as beggars, bodyguards, teachers, and thieves.

The House of Xiang

The most prominent caravanserai is the **House of Xiang**. It is a large complex close to the fortress. It contains a *guǎn* (training hall), living quarters, stables, and storage buildings.

Master Xiang Kairan is not only a commercial power in the city, but also the *wulin mengzhu* – the acknowledged leader of the local martial artists. He is a master of the Tiger Fist style and teaches that to his employees.

The Tigers of Xiang are widely acknowledged as the true force of order and justice in Zhàndòu City – riding out to fight the bandits when the garrison abandons caravans to their fate – but this has led to them becoming arrogant and boastful. Xiang Kairan is not a young man. While he increasingly turns his thoughts to the afterlife, his students are getting out of

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control. It may soon be time for a new *wulin mengzhu*.



XIANG KAIREN

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d12, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Riding d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8, Taunt d8, Throwing d8

Charisma: +2 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 8 **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Bad Eyes, Hard of Hearing

Edges: Brawler, Bruiser, Charismatic, Command, Connections (*jianghu*), Fervor, Improved First Strike, Improved Frenzy, Improved Martial Artist, Rich

Gear: Rich, but not ostentatious, formal robes; the master of the Tiger Fist style prefers to fight unarmed, but will wield a *ji* or *jian* when fighting bandits.

TIGER OF XIANG

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Streetwise d6, Taunt d6

Charisma: +0 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 6 **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Arrogant, Code of Honor

Edges: Brawler, First Strike, Frenzy, Martial Artist

Gear: *ji* (Str+d8, Reach 1, 2 hands), *jian* (Str+d8).

Wang's Invincible Dragons

The **Invincible Dragons** are an up-and-coming group of guardsmen who are rivals to the House of Xiang. The Invincible Dragons utilize Wang's defense-oriented Dragon Scale style to plunge themselves into danger and emerge unscathed.

Lady Wang Zhiyi is intent on elevating her fighting style to prominence; she encourages her students to be exemplars of the wuxia code in order to spread the honor of her school. The Tigers of Xiang laugh at the Invincible Dragons for being prudish and haughty while the Dragon Scale students accuse the Tiger Fist practitioners of being rude and uncouth; duels and barroom brawls between the schools are becoming increasingly common.



WANG ZHIYI

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

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d12, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Riding d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6, Throwing d8

Charisma: +2 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 10 **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Stubborn

Edges: Attractive, Command, Connections (*jianghu*), Improved Block, Improved Counterattack, Improved Dodge, Improved Martial Artist, Rich

Gear: *dao* (Str+d6), distinctly feminine formal robes, tortoiseshell ornaments.

INVINCIBLE DRAGON

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Streetwise d6

Charisma: +0 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 6 **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Code of Honor

Edges: Block, Counterattack, Dodge, Martial Artist

Gear: *dao* (Str+d6), *ji* (Str+d8, Reach 1, 2 hands).

Other Notable Merchant Quarter Businesses

The House of Falling Blossoms

The preeminent establishment of the city's truncated red lantern district is the second home (some would say the true home) of Commander Luo and his top officers. **Madam Zheng Pei-pe**i is hopelessly in love with the disgraced warrior, though one would hardly guess it from the way she berates his laziness.

The top dancer, **Lian Bing-bing**, is renowned for her beauty and grace, but is secretly the infamous thief, Jade Leopard. Madam Zheng thinks of Mistress Lian as her own child; if she knew the daring burglar was wheedling secrets from her beloved Luo Ben, it would break the madam's heart.

JADE LEOPARD (LIAN BING-BING) [WILD CARD]

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d8, Lockpicking d10, Notice d10, Persuasion d8, Stealth d10, Streetwise d8, Throwing d8

Charisma: +4 **Pace:** 7 **Parry:** 6 **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Curious, Greedy [Minor]

Edges: Alertness, Code of Honor, Fleet-Footed, Improved Extraction, Martial Artist, Quick, Thief, Very Attractive

Gear: staff (Str+d4, Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands), five throwing knives (Range 3/6/12, Damage Str+d4, RoF 1).

Inn of Wandering Winds

Chau Li, the unfortunate proprietor of the Inn of Wandering Winds, finds himself in an unenviable predicament: his wine and food are so good that his inn is the favorite watering hole of Zhàndòu's *wulin*, but the gathering of the Tigers and Dragons in one place means it often becomes a battleground between the factions.

Wandering *youxia* newly come to Zhàndòu are usually directed to the Wandering Winds by the city guards – who then wager on how long it will be before the newcomer finds herself in battle with one school or the other. Chau Li would be happy to pay someone with food and board if they could just stop the fighting.

Temple of the Monkey Buddha

Most private homes have shrines dedicated to the ancestors and the gods, but there is only one temple worth the name in Zhàndòu – and it's barely worthy. The Temple of the Monkey Buddha is a small, ramshackle place attended by only one old priest. **Monk Chan** is a small, wizened, smiling fellow who patiently sits outside his temple day in and day out, begging for alms and bestowing blessings. Few would guess that he is the most formidable martial artist in the city; fewer still would imagine that he is the Monkey Buddha. The lucky and the generous, though, might earn his respect and guidance; Lian Bing-bing is one of his students, though he despairs of her integrity.



MONK CHAN (THE MONKEY BODHISATTVA)

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d12, Spirit d12, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Climbing d12, Faith d12, Fighting d12+2, Notice d6

Charisma: -2 **Pace:** 5 **Parry:** 11 **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Heroic, Elderly, Small, Ugly

Edges: AB: Miracles, Adept, Improved Martial Artist, Martial Arts Master (x5), Master (Fighting), Master of Arms, New Power (x5), Power Points (x5)

Gear: staff (Str+d4, Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands).

Special Abilities

- **Power Points:** 35
- **Powers:** *banish* (Buddha's name), *boost/lower trait*, *deflection*, *healing*, *pummel* (Buddha's Palm technique), *smite*, *speed*
- **Shape-changer:** Monk Chan is the Monkey Bodhisattva, a common macaque who watched the monks of Heaven-Piercing Mountain for a thousand years until he attained enlightenment. His true form is a wrinkled, hairy simian; it's hard to tell the difference between that and his human disguise these days.

Beyond the City

The Bandit Wastes

Marring the western horizon are the broke, stony hills that house the bandit clans that threaten the Great Spice Road. Dissolute exiles from the Heavenly Empire, these lawless men bow only to brute strength. Dozens of bands exist in the Wastes – stealing from each other as often as they raid the caravans – but the worst are the Devil Wolves led by Desert Cobra.



DESERT COBRA

The dashing bandit chieftain known as Desert Cobra is a mystery to both his allies and enemies. It is evident from his manners and demeanor that he is nobly-born, but he fiercely exults in his chosen role, abandoning his quiet reserve to laugh and sing as he rides into battle. The quickest way to win his admiration is to best him in battle, and he has been known to challenge handsome and beautiful *youxia* simply to test their skills.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d10.

SURVEYED

Skills: Fighting d10, Persuasion d8, Riding d10, Streetwise d8, Stealth d6, Shooting d10, Taunt d6

Charisma: +2 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 7 **Toughness:** 8 (1)

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Wanted [Major], Enemy (occasional Imperial assassins), Outsider

Edges: Attractive, Berserk, Frenzy, Martial Artist, Noble, Steady Hands

Gear: heirloom *jian* (Str+d8+1), hides and desert robes (as leather armor; Armor +1), nomad's bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1).

DESERT BANDIT

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Streetwise d6

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

Hindrances: Wanted [Major], Outsider

Edges: Steady Hands

Gear: *dao* (Str+d6), nomad's bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1).

Lake Pipá

The source of Melody River is the cold and forbidding Lake Pipá, a lake so deep the waters appear black. It can only be reached after an arduous climb high in the mountains, yet it was once home to a city now lost, for the lakeside is littered with ruined temples and homes. Behind the falls that feed the lake is a maze of dark caverns; within lives Hong Hēi Húzi, the Dark Sorcerer whose schemes threaten Zhàndòu.



HONG HĒI HÚZI

Hong Hēi Húzi long ago sold his soul to the Ten Demon Kings for powers beyond mortal ken; he is as powerful a martial artist as he is a wizard. The Dark Sorcerer is a terrifying figure – tall and muscular, with a ferocious black beard and unkempt hair – who lords over a hellish domain of strange beasts and fell spirits. His goal is not to use Governor Shi Nai'an to overthrow the Emperor – the governor stands no chance of raising an army powerful enough to challenge the whole empire – but to use the governor's rebellion as a tool to break the peace of the Heavenly Empire and plunge the nation into chaos.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d12, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Arcana) d12, Notice d8, Spellcasting d12+2

Charisma: -4 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 10 **Toughness:** 9

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Bloodthirsty

Edges: Brawny, Harder to Kill, Improved Martial Artist, Improved Tough as Nails, Master (Spellcasting), Master of Arms, New Power (x5), Power Points (x5), Soul Drain, Wizard

Gear: *Yu Fao*, a magical *jian* (Str+d8+3)

Special Abilities

- **Power Points:** 35
- **Powers:** *bolt* (*chi* lightning), *burrow* (melds into the walls of his caverns), *deflection*, *entangle* (beard tendrils), *fly*, *havoc*, *puppet* (glowing red eyes), *summon ally* (demonic servitors)

Savage Tale: *Outfoxed*

Passersby and visitors to the House of Falling Blossoms are surprised to see the governor's concubine, Zhou Da-ji, visiting the pavilion. Inside, she calls for the services of Lian Bing-bing; the clientele is shocked when the young beauty dances for and waits upon the sly Da-ji. The observant are disturbed to realize that Bing-bing is frightened of the concubine. Her lovely sword-dance ends with an uncharacteristic fumble, as the blade clatters to the floor.

Youxia who have befriended or are courting Lian Bing-bing might pursue the embarrassed entertainer to her room. There they discover her weeping. Prying the truth from her, they learn that not only is she the burglar called Jade Leopard, but that Zhou Da-ji has learned this too! The cunning courtesan is exploiting Bing-bing's precarious situation to extort the girl to steal a treasure guarded by Wang's Invincible Dragons.

The merchant Hung Wei has hired the Invincible Dragons to guard a shipment containing a powerful enchanted *jian*, *Yu Chang*. Hung Wei has the sword ensconced at the bottom of a crate of porcelain tea sets. It is intended as a bribe for the bandit chief Desert Cobra, and Wang Zhiyi has no idea Wei has hidden the sword in his goods.

A detachment of one dozen Invincible Dragons will accompany Hung Wei's caravan to the oasis city of Gūdāndehú (Lonely Lake) in two days. The journey to Gūdāndehú takes a week through treacherous hills and burning sands.

The players' *youxia* might try several approaches:

- Help Jade Leopard in burgling the Invincible Dragon storehouse.
- Approach Wang Zhiyi about the sword and secure it from her.
- Steal it from the caravan either on the journey to Lonely Lake or after it has reached the oasis.
- Confront Zhou Da-ji.

Zhou will not reveal her true fox nature if her secret is unknown to the *youxia*; she will instead threaten the governor's vengeance (while secretly plotting her own supernatural revenge). Da-ji caught Jade Leopard trying to pilfer some jewels, and the thief is unaware that the courtesan is a *húli jīng*. Zhou Da-ji herself secretly desires the sword Yu Chang in order to assassinate her own master, the sorcerer Hong Hēi Húzi.

YU CHANG

Enchanted *jian* (Str+d8+1)

Special Abilities

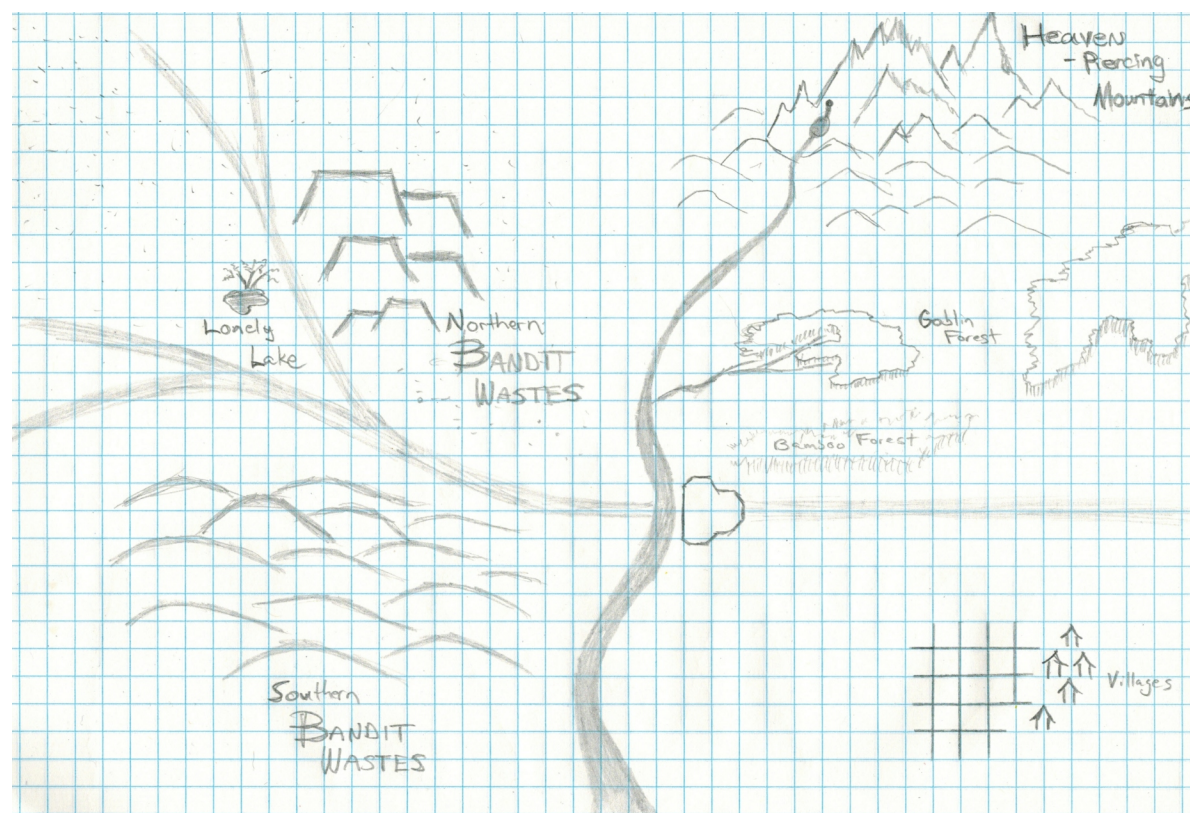
- **+1 Fighting**
- **+1 Damage**
- **Power Points: 10**
- **Powers:** *invisibility* (cast at d8 Spellcasting or wielder's skill if higher; *Yu Chang* must be drawn and held)

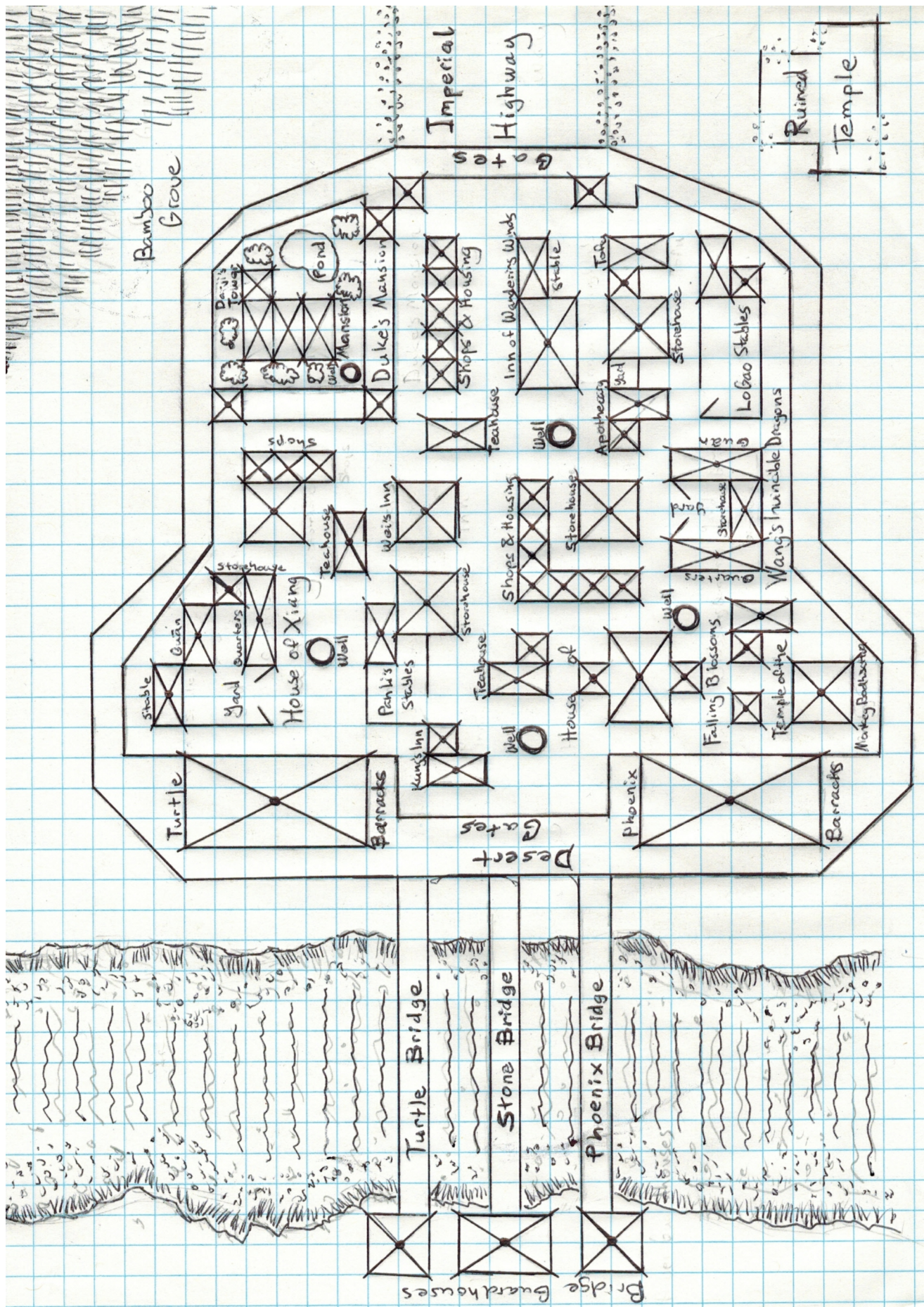
Adventure Seeds

Blind Tiger: Wang Zhiyi is secretly Xiang Kairan's long-lost daughter. She hoped that he would recognize her when she came to challenge his supremacy, but his deteriorating eyesight and hearing mean he has not noticed the resemblance between his rival and his late wife. Wang is too proud to declare herself to her father, but her students have heard of a rare herb that restores the senses. She will notice if any of her students leave to search for it, but perhaps the players could intervene? Unfortunately, it grows on the shore of Lake Pipá.

A Murder of Crows: Strange *youxia* have been drifting into town. Masters of strange weapons, like the flying guillotine, they appear to be Imperial

assassins. Are they after Desert Cobra? Is he a long-lost Imperial heir? Or have they gotten wind of Shi Nai'an's treachery? The governor is taking no chances, and hires the heroes to investigate.





By Brian Reeves

The Damned

An Adventure of Survival Horror

There's something in the old castle, something ancient and powerful, and the Nazis want to get it first.

In this adventure, the characters are a hastily-assembled Special Ops team in World War II, sent to stop the Nazis from finding a mysterious relic. This adventure was designed as a “survival horror” one-shot compatible with the *Weird Wars: Weird War II* setting, but with some modification it could be worked into any ongoing campaign. Characters with knowledge of the supernatural will probably have a much better chance of making it out alive, but GMs who wish to enhance the survival horror aspect will find it easier if the characters don't know what to expect.

To use this adventure, you will need a copy of the *Savage Worlds Deluxe* rulebook. It will be helpful to also have a copy of the *Savage Worlds Horror Companion*, and if this is to be used with *Weird Wars: Weird War II*, a copy of that sourcebook. A squad of pre-generated characters suitable for this scenario can be found for free on the Pinnacle web site (<http://www.peginc.com/product-category/weird-wars/>).

Background

In 1191, as the Third Crusade raged in Israel, a small contingent of Knights Templar out of Lyon, France, made an amazing discovery. When the siege of Acre ended and the city was captured, several Templars discovered a hidden catacomb beneath the Citadel that led into a sealed chamber. There, among other relics dating back to the days of Christ, they found a simple wooden cup inscribed with words in Aramaic declaring it the Cup of Christ — the Holy Grail. Some of them wanted to return it immediately to King Philip, claiming it to be rightfully his, but others dissented, believing such a thing as the Holy Grail to be more important than the hierarchies of man. They argued it must be kept secret. They fell to blows, and eventually only seven remained, these being the ones who wished to hide it from the world.

Fleeing Acre under dark of night, on their way back toward France they decided to stop in a secluded valley of the Austrian Alps, south of Salzburg. Using funds plundered from Acre, they built a highly-defensible, remote castle on a steep ridge overlooking a tiny town far from any major roads. It was there they built an abbey and began their own order, a branch of the Knights Templars they dubbed Chevaliers du Graal, the “Knights of the Cup.” Their secret remained for decades, the sacred Grail sealed away in a vault of their own design deep beneath the fortress.

One day, things went bad. A new Templar named Šimun, a reformed robber who joined the church to avoid prison, was enticed by the rumors that the Holy Grail held the key to eternal life. Šimun's struggle with his inner demons had already been lost, so after he advanced high enough to learn the secret of their order, he crept past the guards and into the chamber where the cup was kept, filled it with holy water, and drank. He expected to feel the warmth of God fill him with immortality. Instead, he felt the fires of judgment. The water turned to blood in his mouth. His evil soul had cursed both himself and the cup, which now granted him only damnation. He choked to death on the ground, his whole body stiffening and burning with his sin, and when at last he perished, he rose once more as a creature of undeath — a vampire!

Before the rest of his order could call to arms, he slaughtered most of them in their sleep, only to be driven back into the vault by the rising sun. The last remaining members of the order spent the day in prayer and research, finally unearthing a nearly-forgotten rite for banishing the undead, but when they went down into the vault they discovered Šimun already awake and waiting for them. It was there they died, and the order died with them.

For many years after that, Šimun left the castle by night to feed in the nearby village. But each year he grew feebler, and superstitions drove the villagers away until the valley was abandoned and the castle forgotten. When at last there were no people on which to feed, Šimun's unholy body disintegrated. Still,

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these many centuries later, he clings to undeath in the form of a Blood Mist, too weak to leave the grounds and too steeped in the power of evil to die.

Some weeks ago, a German platoon took Lyon. In an old church, they discovered a reference to the Templars who never returned and the small order they had established. The author of some of the texts matched those from other scholarly works the Germans had already captured and examined. Hitler's chief investigator of the occult suspected he might have found the hiding place of the Holy Grail. He ordered a nearby platoon to reroute into southern Austria and find the valley of the old Chevaliers du Gral castle, secure it, and search it from top to bottom.

The communiqué delivering this message was intercepted by the Americans, and when brought to the attention of the top brass, the situation was immediately flagged for a mission. With almost no time to scramble a proper response, the colonel in charge of running the mission pulled several specialists from the Italian front to form a task force to send into the area.

Survival Horror

The *Savage Worlds Horror Companion* offers great tips on creating and maintaining the right atmosphere for a horror scenario. Here are a few more suggestions for keeping the players on their toes.

Once the characters are in the castle, use it against them by having sounds carry through the empty hallways, letting them find evidence of a recent gun battle, drained corpses, haunting whispers which turn out to be the wind, rats skittering in the dark, and so on. The characters should get the idea that something is terribly wrong shortly after they make it inside the castle, but they shouldn't actually see anything for a little while. Give them time to get themselves good and lost.

Characters can easily outpace the Blood Mist, but it can pass through small openings and cracks, and can't be stopped by closing doors. Trap the characters, separate them, confuse them. Let the batteries drain

slowly out of their flashlights. Surprise them with animated corpses, which rise a couple of hours after being drained by the Blood Mist or with scattered jumpy Nazis. Keep the characters on the move. Keep things quick. Don't be afraid to kill, or nearly kill, the characters. Once the sunrise comes, they'll have a chance to catch their breath, but there are many hours until sunrise.

Don't forget to call for Fear checks whenever appropriate, particularly the first time the characters encounter any of the supernatural horrors in this adventure. Subsequent exposure usually requires another Fear check only when circumstances have changed (such as a character being isolated or trapped). If Šimun regains his vampire form, this will require a new Fear check, as the characters will only be accustomed to his Blood Mist form.

Setup

The adventure begins with the characters already airdropped onto the mountain slopes just above the castle.

Just a couple of days ago, you were pulled from your squad without warning or explanation. Flown to the American base in northern Italy, you were escorted into a war room where several other men were seated. An office entered and introduced himself as Col. Sutton. "I understand your looks of confusion," he said. "You've been carefully chosen from a rather small pool of potential candidates operating in this theater to form a task force. We recently intercepted a German communique that gave us some pause. Seems the Germans have taken a keen interest in a site just across the border in Austria. They're after something they call Das Behälter, 'the container.' What it is we don't know — your guess is as good as ours. But we do know they're scrambling to get there. Our eyes and ears have reported a platoon was pulled away and sent there on a moment's notice, so whatever it is, they want it bad. That means we want to keep them from getting it. You'll be dropped in under cover of darkness near the coordinates. Locate the Germans,



Adapting the Adventure

Though this adventure is designed with *Weird Wars: Weird War II* in mind, it could be used in most settings with only minor changes. The presence of the Nazis, or a similar force of armed enemies, adds to the peril in the old halls of the castle, but in the end this is a “trapped-in-the-haunted-house” story, so Game Masters who want to focus on the vampire could replace them with other threats, like more animated skeletons.

Achtung! Cthulhu: This adventure can be easily fit in the *Achtung! Cthulhu* universe. The characters are assembled by Section M to infiltrate the castle and determine what has the Nazis so interested in an old ruin.

Modern Horror: A team of mercenary relic hunters or soldiers from a current “threat” country make a good replacement for the Nazis. The characters could still work for the military or be occult investigators who have caught wind of the enemy mission.

Realms of Cthulhu: There were no Nazis in the 1920s (or the 1880s), but there was no shortage of suitable thugs who might serve in their place. The investigators might have caught a blurb in the newspaper of a medieval historian who recently published a paper on a rare branch of the Templars, only to be found murdered in his flat. Following the leads brings the characters to Castle Gral just as the historian's murderers arrive.

Fantasy: Though it might seem like a totally different genre, the existence of a castle that contains an unstoppable horror, enemy treasure hunters, and an ancient relic makes for an easy conversion. Eliminate the tank and all other high-tech items, and have the bridge collapse on its own as the characters are almost across. Replace all the Nazis with armed opponents, like an evil adventuring party, mercenaries working for an unscrupulous baron, or a band of orcs, and swap the Grail with any suitable powerful magic artifact.

see what it is they're after, and get it if you can or destroy it if you can't."

That was less than twelve hours ago, and now you find yourselves on skis high in the Alps on a forested ridge overlooking a moonlit valley, your parachutes abandoned in the snow atop the mountain. From here, your binoculars have picked up some lights and activity a few hundred feet below around what appears to be the crumbling ruins of an ancient castle perched atop a rocky column. It looks like the Germans have set up their defenses on a stone bridge leading to the castle. Though the area around the bridge is lit up by floodlights, the dense forest crowding on all sides should give you plenty of cover to get close.

Approaching the area requires Stealth checks. The cover of darkness grants +4 to this roll. The forest runs right down the slope to the old castle and gives plenty of hiding places. The place is incredibly old and appears abandoned. Trees have grown out of the ground right near the bridge itself, some of which have been recently cut down to allow for vehicles to move into the area. Two half-tracks are parked near the foot of the bridge, and a sandbag barrier has been erected between them to block movement onto it. The bridge itself is narrow and perilous, but appears stable enough for foot traffic. At the other end are two more sandbag barriers with a mounted machine gun positioned near an old gatehouse.

There are two German soldiers at the foot of the bridge and two more at the head. Additionally, a Panzer IV tank has been hidden just to the side of the bridge (-2 to Spot). It is manned by one soldier, and starts up if there is obvious trouble.

If at any time a single loud noise is created during this fight (such as from the tank's gun, a bazooka, or even a grenade), it starts an avalanche on the slope above, which takes five rounds to reach the area and fills the entire space. Anyone still in this location takes 6d6 damage and is swept over the cliff unless they succeed in a Strength or Agility check (player's choice). The bridge collapses under the weight and impact. After it is gone, crossing the chasm is impossible without proper equipment.

Note: Players who are reluctant to send their characters across the bridge can be encouraged by pointing out that it is the safest place here. The avalanche pours over the side of the cliff on either side of the bridge, but is unlikely to cross it.

Nazi Soldiers (5): See Cast of Characters

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PzIVJ Tank

Acc/TS: 5/10; **Toughness:** 20/15/14 (8/3/2); **Crew:** 5; Heavy Armor, Tracked; **Weapons:** German 75mm gun, MG34 bow, MG34 coax.

Castle Gral

The ruins of the old Templar castle are a maze of windswept halls, empty rooms, collapsed floors and walls, and twisting passages. No map is provided, in part because there is little of note within the castle other than the specific areas mentioned, but also because the ruins are disorienting and mazelike. Instead, the castle is presented as a flowchart with major points of interest. As long as the characters have the ability to move slowly and cautiously through the ruins, they are in no real danger of getting lost. But if they are chasing an opponent, being chased, separated from their fellows, or have lost their light source, it becomes much harder to find the way. In these conditions, the soldiers must make a Tracking roll or become lost, making another Tracking roll every five minutes. Failure means they can't find their way out of the area in which they became lost. If they roll a 1 on their Tracking die, they will lose an extra ten minutes finding their way back. If they get a Raise, they find their way back easily and can no longer become lost in this area.

Moving around the castle takes time — this place is big! Traveling from one area to the next eats up about 5 minutes, while characters can expect to spend about ten minutes traversing an area. These times are halved if the characters are running, but that puts them at -2 to Tracking, Notice, and similar checks.

At the time the characters arrive, there are five hours until sunrise. Eight German soldiers have fallen to the Blood Mist. There are still nine Germans within the castle, scattered into three terrified and lost groups of three apiece. The location of the Blood Mist is unknown.

First Contact: After the characters have been in the castle for half an hour, wherever they are they hear the sounds of a raging gun battle elsewhere in the distance. A few minutes later, they run into a pair of terrified German soldiers who are nearly insane with fear, babbling about the “nebel,” though not immediately attacking the PCs. The characters will have about a minute with the Germans before the Blood Mist arrives. It will target whomever is closest,

but the German soldiers are too rattled to make smart choices and end up being prime targets.

Note: This encounter allows the characters to witness the danger of the Blood Mist and to discover its immunity to their weapons. It also brings the Blood Mist closer to completing its material form.

The Courtyard

There's not much left of the old gatehouse but tumbled stone and an archway that once must have held a solid door. On the other side is a snowy courtyard lit only by moonlight. You can see quite a number of boot prints crossing to a gaping, black doorway in the face of the castle itself.

A sniper has been positioned in an old archer tower on the wall overlooking this courtyard (he is located in the battlements area). He has partial cover and anyone attempting to reach him must scale the wall (requiring two Climbing checks) or pass through the upper floors of the castle to reach his nest.

Entry Hall

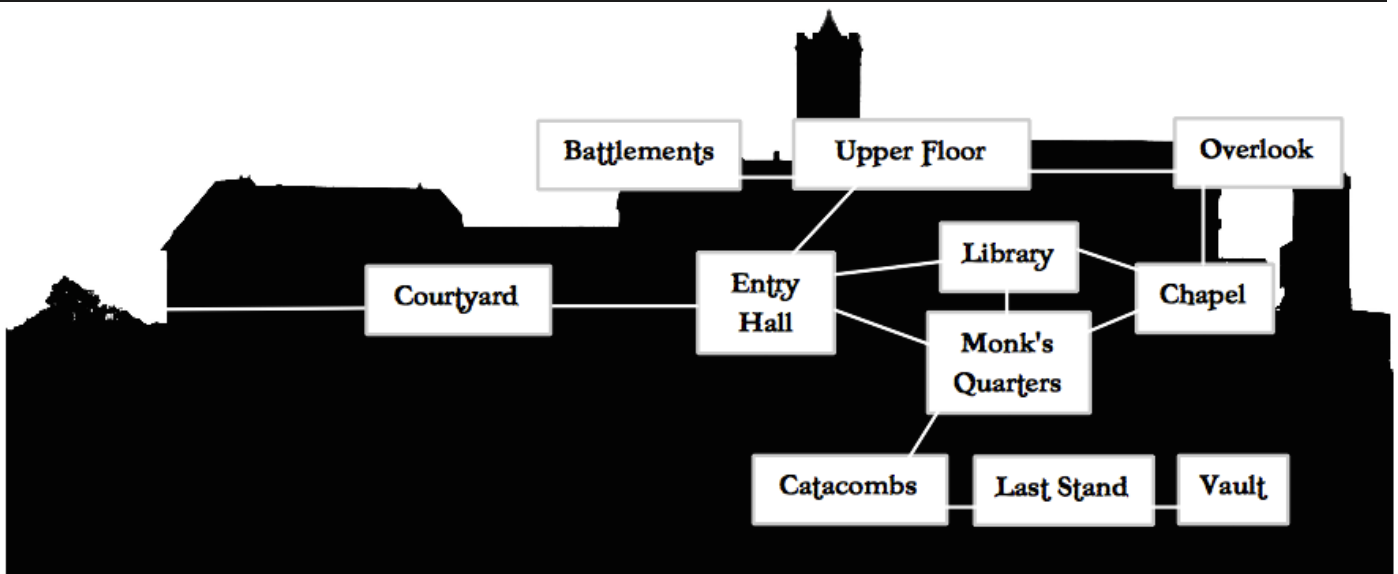
What must have once been a grand entry hall is now a tumbledown chamber of ruined stone. A broad staircase leads to upper levels and darkened halls lead forward and to the right. The Germans have constructed another sandbag gun nest at the base of the stairs.

The gun nest is currently manned by two German soldiers. There is also a machine gun on a tripod, and one of the soldiers lays down suppressive fire on the area just inside the doorway while the other radios for help. If captured, they only know that there are twenty soldiers in their platoon, and the only one who knows what they're doing is the sergeant. The others have gone deeper into the castle but haven't reported back in a while.

German Soldiers (2): See Cast of Characters

Upper Floor

The roof is missing in many places here, collapsed over the centuries into mounds of rubble, letting the icy wind whistle through the halls and pile snow against the walls. It's hard to tell what these rooms once held, but in some toward the center you see old stone bed frames and privy closets. You see German boot prints in the snow from time to time. From here you can reach the forward castle battlements or an overlook in the rear.



Repair, etc. — left up to the GM) can spot structural weaknesses that grant a +2 to the roll as people cross the area. Actually repairing it would take time and resources the soldiers don't have.

Overlook

A round tower peers out over the valley below. From here the drop is precipitous, easily hundreds of feet down to the pines that crowd the base of the cliff below the castle. The wind tugs and shoves at you in a dangerous way. A fall from here would be undeniably fatal. A stairwell leads down, while a gaping archway leads into the ruinous upper floor of the castle.

It's easy to get cornered up here. If the Blood Mist or any German troops are pursuing the characters, passing by here gives them a chance to pin down the characters.

Battlements

The years have made these battlements unsafe. Crumbling chunks of masonry have broken away and fallen a hundred feet to the base of the castle spire, leaving gaps, cracks, and outright holes. From here you can look down into the courtyard, which glows softly under a blanket of moonlit snow. A door in a tower wall leads into the upper floor of the castle.

Unless already handled, the German sniper is up here, tucked behind a wall of crenellations. He is only a couple dozen feet from the entrance but reaching him requires an Agility roll to maneuver across a shaky and narrow patch of wall.

German Solder (1): See Cast of Characters

Not far from the dining hall, you spot a dank archway. Beyond it is a steep and narrow staircase leading downward. Empty shell casings are scattered all over the floor. Nearby are three bodies in German uniforms. Upon seeing them you can tell something is terribly wrong. They look like they've been desiccated, drained of all fluids. Their pale skin clings tightly over their bones and their eyes and mouths are open frozen forever in a scream.

The Germans have already discovered this and have gone downstairs in search of the Grail. Some were chased back up by the Blood Mist and slaughtered here.

Library

A broad, dusty room forms the center of this area. Though it has been stripped by robbers long ago, great oak shelves sagging under the weight of rot and years tell you this was once a library. Now, a faint dusting of snow covers everything, blown in through the missing windows. From the rafters comes the fluttering of wings. Bloody, black feathers rest all over the middle of the room as does a dead bird. From here, halls lead toward the front and back of the castle, or another section of this floor.

Any loud noises disturb a flock of ravens that roost in the rafters. They panic, filling the air with a confusion of flapping wings and drifting feathers. Anyone in the room must make a Spirit check or become Shaken. After three rounds, the ravens flee through the open windows.

Chapel

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This towering, grand chapel sits quiet as a tomb. Sweeping arches lift to the heavens, the once-lovely stained glass windows are shattered and windblown. Stone pews point toward an altar and font, though any trappings which might have once existed are gone. Even the crucifix has been torn down from its bolts and carried away. All that remains is a dusty, haunted chamber.

The characters might think this place is safe from the Blood Mist, but it isn't. The chapel has been desecrated and is no longer holy.

Catacombs

It's clear you've entered some sort of sepulcher. These narrow, claustrophobia-inducing halls are lined with the bones of the dead resting in narrow niches. They branch off, rejoin, and seem to circle back on themselves in a spiraling confusion of passages. From each niche the gaping skulls of the long-dead monks seem to watch you. You can almost hear their voices.

It is easy to get turned around in this area. The characters must make a Tracking check to pass through this area regardless of how slow and careful they are being. If they are moving quickly, this roll is made at -2.

The first time characters enter this area, they are met by three pale and staggering German soldiers who have been turned to zombies by the Blood Mist. Seeing them triggers a Fear check.

The Blood Mist has the ability to animate dead. Meeting up with it in this area could be particularly hazardous.

Zombies (3): See Cast of Characters

The Last Stand

The Catacombs end at a broad stairwell that descends to a heavy portcullis. Remarkably, the bars are still intact, though the door it once sealed has rotted off the hinges. All around the floor are old remnants of armor and swords, candles, censers, and tattered bits of scrolls. It looks like some sort of ritual took place here, perhaps one that ended in violence.

As soon as the characters reach this place, five skeletons emerge from the dark corners. They each wear Templar tabards — a red cross on a white field — and wield old swords. Seeing them triggers a Fear check.

Getting the portcullis open requires heavy weapons, but nearby the characters find some explosives, which do 6d6 damage, the Germans brought down here for that very purpose. The portcullis has 15 Toughness.

If the characters inspect the scrolls, they discover some old consecration rite written in Latin. Characters who know Latin can read it, and anyone else may try (-4 Smarts) to decipher enough of the words to perform the rite. "Destroying the Blood Mist" follows with details on the purification ritual

Templar Skeletons (5): See Cast of Characters

Vault

At the bottom end of these subterranean passages is a small but ornate room, painted with images of the Last Supper, Christ, Mary, and a host of angels and saints. Unlit candles are perched on shelves and candelabras, and three rows of stone benches form ranks in the middle of the floor. On the far side, a holy water font rests beside an elaborate altar upon which you can see a dusty cup lying on its side as if dropped. More bones of slain Templars are scattered around this chamber.

The bones animate into four more skeletons as soon as the characters enter. Wherever the Blood Mist is, it immediately knows that this vault has been entered and comes this direction, arriving in one minute (10 rounds).

Templar Skeletons (4): See Cast of Characters

Destroying the Blood Mist

The Blood Mist is invulnerable to mundane damage, making it almost impossible to fight. One way to defeat it is to wait until it has claimed enough victims to reform into a vampire (it needs twenty, and has already claimed eleven), then kill it with sunlight or a stake through its heart (see *Savage Worlds Deluxe*). Another way is to get the Holy Grail, the focus of the Blood Mist's curse, away from the area. Throwing it from the castle will suffice if more desirable results fail.

A third possible method is to attempt the purification ritual found on the scrolls in the "Last Stand" area. The rite itself is a Dramatic Task (see *Savage Worlds*). It cannot be performed until the candles are lit and arranged in the sign of the cross, and the censer is burning. At that point one person must read from the scroll, making a Knowledge (Occult) check each round.

Other characters who understand Latin may cooperate on this roll. No matter where the Blood Mist is at this time (or Šimun, if he has regained his vampire form), it converges on the room during the third round of the ritual and attempts to thwart the ritual. If they are victorious, the curse placed upon the Holy Grail when it was blasphemed by Šimun ends; he dissipates (or crumbles to dust, if in vampire form) and his spirit is freed. If there are still Germans in the castle, they will still need to be dealt with, of course.

If Šimun consumes enough blood to regain his vampire form, he has new, more powerful abilities at his disposal, but he also has a host of new weaknesses which the characters may exploit. There are plenty of crosses and splintered wood here and there in the castle, and windows to let in the morning sun.

Conclusion

There are many different ways this adventure can end. The outcome depends largely on how successful the characters are in achieving their goals and eliminating their opponents, and also on what sort of tone the GM wishes to set.

Unless the characters succeed in evading or destroying the vampire in either his Blood Mist or physical form, their best outcome will be to simply escape this death trap. Reinforcements can be sent in, but by then the Germans might possibly have escaped with the Grail or perished somewhere in the castle with it.

In the latter case it could take months to locate it in the crumbling passages. It is also possible the characters might elect to simply destroy the Grail, a less desirable ending, but better than dying. Any surviving Germans who also escape might attempt to pursue the characters down the snowy slopes, a chase sequence which could be even more exciting if both groups are once more on skis, firing at one another while trying to dodge trees and other hazards.

If the characters return victorious — whether or not Šimun was destroyed — the Grail is promptly removed from their possession to be studied by “top men.” It is probably the last they hear of it.

On the other hand, if the characters fill the Holy Grail with holy water and drink it, who knows what fate could await them...

Cast of Characters

GERMAN SOLDIER

These soldiers are battle-hardened and are fervently loyal to the Fatherland.

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Pace: 6 **Parry:** 5 **Toughness:** 8 (3)

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d4.

Gear: Helmet (+3), Knife (Str+d4), MP40 (12/24/48; Damage: 2d6, ROF 3, AP1, auto) or Kar98 rifle (Range 24/48/96; Damage 2d8, AP2), Ruger (10/20/40; 2d6-1, semi-auto), 4 grenades (5/10/20; 3d6, medium burst), binoculars, flares (3).

Hindrances: Loyal.

GERMAN ZOMBIE

Recently deceased and starting to reek, this animated corpse still wears its Nazi uniform and helmet.

Attr: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Pace: 4 **Parry:** 5 **Toughness:** 10 (3)

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4.

Gear: Helmet (+3)

Special Abilities

• **Claws:** Str.

• **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.

• **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; no additional damage from Called Shots (except to the head); immune to disease and poison.

• **Weakness (Head):** Shots to a zombie's head are +2 damage.

TEMPLAR SKELETON

These dried old bones of Templars have been animated through some dark power.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Pace: 7 **Parry:** 6 **Toughness:** 10 (3)

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d4.

Gear: Breastplate (+3), longsword (Str+d8).

Special Abilities

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- **Bony Claws:** Str + d4.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; no additional damage from Called Shots; immune to disease and poison.



ŠIMUN, BLOOD MIST FORM

A Blood Mist appear as a white, thin patch of fog that moves in strange ways, unbidden by wind. As one drains the blood of its victims, its color begins to deepen into red, and the faint outline of its physical form can be seen deep within. This Blood Mist has the additional power to reanimate the dead.

Attr: Agility d10, Smarts d4, Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10

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

Skills: Notice d6.

Special Abilities

- **Blood Drain:** Blood Mists drain the living blood every round from their victims, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone in the template. Damage is applied to the least armored location (victims in completely sealed suits are immune).
- **Immunity:** Blood Mists suffer no damage from mundane attacks. Magic items, including weapons, and supernatural powers affect them normally. They can be temporarily driven off by tactics such as sucking them into a vent, intense heat, or pelting them with a strong stream of water, which typically scatter the mist for 1d10 minutes.
- **Weakness (Sunlight):** Blood Mists begin to evaporate if exposed to direct sunlight, suffering 2d10 damage per round until they are totally destroyed.
- **Weakness (Holy Symbol):** A character may keep a Blood Mist at bay by displaying a holy symbol. The Blood Mist cannot enter a radius equal to one half the character's Spirit die (centered on the holy symbol, which must be held). A Blood Mist who wants to directly attack the victim must beat her in an opposed test of Spirit.
- **Zombie:** The Blood Mist can imbue occult life in the bodies of the slain. When a corpse is touched by the Blood Mist, it rises as a zombie (if fresh) or a skeleton (if not) within 1d4 rounds. These animated dead are permanent.



ŠIMUN, FULL VAMPIRE FORM

In his vampire form, Šimun is a young, handsome man with long hair and even longer fangs. He is old, and centuries as a Blood Mist have sapped much of his strength.

Attr: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d12+1, Vigor d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Throwing d6.

Special Abilities

- **Claws:** Str + d4.
- **Frenzy:** Vampires can make two attacks per round with a -2 penalty to each attack.
- **Level Headed:** Vampires act on the better of two cards.
- **Invulnerability:** Vampires can only be harmed by their Weaknesses. They may be Shaken by other attacks, but never wounded.
- **Sire:** Anyone slain by a vampire has a 50% chance of rising as a vampire themselves in 1d4 days.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; called shots do no extra damage (except as described in Weakness (Stake Through the Heart)).
- **Weakness (Sunlight):** Vampires catch fire if any part of their skin is exposed to direct sunlight. After that they suffer 2d10 damage per round until they are dust. Armor does not protect.
- **Weakness (Holy Symbol):** A character may keep a vampire at bay by displaying a holy symbol. A vampire who wants to directly attack the victim must beat her in an opposed test of Spirit.
- **Weakness (Holy Water):** A vampire sprinkled with holy water is Fatigued. If immersed, he combusts as if it were direct sunlight (see Weakness (Sunlight)).
- **Weakness (Invitation Only):** Vampires cannot enter a private dwelling without being invited. They may enter public domains as they please.
- **Weakness (Stake Through the Heart):** A vampire hit with a called shot to the heart (-4) must make a Vigor roll versus the damage. If successful, it takes damage normally. If it fails, it disintegrates to dust.

By Zach Welhouse

Mummy Troubles

Where a Plot to Awaken the Respected Dead Unwinds

What kind of world is it where spirits of the respected dead are awoken from their slumber to serve as pawns and meat shields? Not one for which Anubis, Egyptian god of the dead, has much sympathy. However, this is the world the PCs find themselves in—a modern world of technology, secret government agendas, and hidden magic.

The Red Scarves, a cabal of magically-inclined terrorists, are the source of Anubis' ire. They've up and stolen his sacred mummies to be muscle in their global crime spree. Worse, they've holed up in San Francisco's Financial District, home to thousands of potential casualties.

The jackal-headed god's first agent of retribution, an unbalanced cultist by the name of Ms. Met, went rogue after liberating the mummies. To her way of thinking, the terrorists had a good plan, they just had their doomsday weapon pointed at the wrong country. With the help of her new mummy army, Ms. Met picked up where the sorcerers left off. In four hours, Jerusalem will burn. The PCs, their handlers, and other influential parties do not want this burning to occur.

Local police have Ms. Met surrounded at the Nakatomi Telecommunications pyramid, but the pyramid's a big place. Nobody's doing anything rash until the experts arrive. Or the PCs.

The PCs are Anubis' second group of agents. Their task is to break into the Nakatomi Telecommunications pyramid and stop Ms. Met. Following their success, they must use Met's jeweled ankh to escort the spirits of the honored dead to a proper resting place.

The biggest problem here isn't going to be stopping Ms. Met—it'll be dealing with the feds. The FBI is about to launch its biggest mummy bust yet,

and they aren't going to just hand over their evidence to a bunch of yahoos.

Luckily for the PCs, there's a mole in the FBI's ranks with a daring proposition: help her spirit the mummies to Guatemala and she'll do what she can to distract the FBI. Better yet, it's for a good cause! A religious aid group (and not a cult, thank you very much) sponsored by Ek Chuaj—Mayan god of warriors, merchants, and chocolate—is in the market for a few good spirits... And there's even a signing bonus!

Anubis doesn't need his mummies to be anywhere in particular. As long as the spirits are at peace and receiving the honor and respect that's due to them, they're free to go where they please. It's up to our heroes whether working for Hector and STINGER is good enough for the honored dead.

Jumping in Headfirst

Since this adventure is all about action, there's no need to load the players down with all the facts. Unless they *need* to know more, just tell them they've been hired by a shadowy figure to steal a truckload of mummies from some terrorists. Once stolen, the mummies must be honored according to their sacred roles.

The PCs gather in an abandoned coffee shop close to the Nakatomi Telecommunications pyramid. All office buildings nearby have been evacuated, so there are plenty of places to hide from the cops. A shadowy figure ripples from the shadows and steps into view, arms up in surrender.

"Now, before you all go doing something rash, I know someone who might be interested in making your job a little easier."

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The figure introduces herself as Inspector Lopez, FBI. She has an eye for bargains, and she's ready to cut a good-faith deal. Off the record, she's also one of the chosen people of Ek Chuaj and a recruiter for his benevolent association, STINGER. She needs someone to steal the mummies from Ms. Met so the FBI doesn't burn them as part of its occult cover-up.

Lopez explains that she had a deal with a Red Scarf known as Mustafa. He was going to turn the mummies' jeweled control ankh over to her in exchange for sanctuary. He hasn't responded, and the FBI's elite agents are closing in. She can get our heroes inside to do their thing and hold off the FBI, but they'll owe her a favor: namely, transporting the mummies to the lost city of Cival in eastern Guatemala. If the deal needs any sweetening, she'll explain about Hector and STINGER's goals.

Naturally, transporting a truckload of mummies over the Mexican border while being chased by the civil authorities is a tall order. There are a few ways to play this. On one hand, Lopez knows of two spirit roads that will lead close to Cival. One of them is two miles dead south of the 26th floor of Nakatomi Telecommunications. The other is in a warehouse next to Pier 3 on the waterfront.

If the deal's good for all parties, Lopez hands over a jade scorpion's stinger. This is a single-use talisman that teleports a single band of warriors to the scorpion's body in the pyramid's loading dock.

Ground Zero: Nakatomi Telecommunications

In 1997, the Nakatomi Corporation bought into the dot-com hype and constructed a 26-story glass pyramid in the Financial District. By the next year, the lowest four floors had become a bustling shopping arcade. The rest of the building was devoted to offices and R&D space for the next generation of internet-savvy gadgets. Most of the products are chintzy garbage, but the building does contain a number of high-end computers connected to powerful wireless transmitters. The Red Scarves had to grab a target that ripe.

Ms. Met liked the pyramid. It made her think of dead slaves and stones being pushed up ramps. She also liked the launch codes the mummy-abusing terrorists had acquired. The Red Scarves, not so much. Their bodies litter the pyramid, as gaudy as you like.

If Ms. Met isn't stopped within four hours, she will press a button. An unnamed U.S. military satellite will launch the Star-Slaying Spear of Three-Tongued Yuru into the heart of Jerusalem. The explosive shock will kill hundreds. Thousands more will perish when Yuru breaks free of his prison in Earth's core and tunnels up to retrieve his weapon. Israel-U.S. relations will snap under backroom accusations by Mossad psychics. After all, the U.S. had promised it could handle Yuru.

When the PCs arrive outside the pyramid, the police are already on hand. Several SWAT teams are on standby for drastic action and choppers are in the sky. The mood is tense: no one knows why the Red Scarves want museum curators across the country to kill themselves on national television.

Anyone without a badge is quickly escorted outside the three-block safety cordon. As far as anyone knows, the Red Scarves are inside with a bomb. Bombs? Nuclear? Nobody knows! If the government doesn't meet their demands, there will be a lot less California to protect.

What If Nobody Trusts Lopez?

They'll have a much harder time getting to Ms. Met, but then there's the breaks. In addition to Ms. Met's defenses, they'll have to get past a well-armed SWAT team and local police to reach the jeweled ankh. On the escape route, they won't have Lopez running interference for them. Double the number of pursuers.

Without Lopez's bargain, there's no reason to track down Cival, right? Wrong! After finding something to do with a truckload of mummies (which may be an adventure in itself), Anubis has another job for the PCs. This one involves recovering the Lens of Anubis from the San Francisco Museum of Natural

History. Too bad Inspector Lopez snatched it up for STINGER and sent it to Cival a few months ago...

Paging Ms. Met

The communication equipment required for Ms. Met's plan is located in the ValuFun R&D lab on the pyramid's 20th floor. All elevators are operational, so getting there isn't a problem. Mummy guards stand at regular intervals, but they are focused on mopping up the last of the Red Scarf defenses and confounding police spotters outside.

The elevators open into a sparse foyer marred by a garish brass sphinx behind bullet-proof glass, key-carded entry doors. A mummy lookout is slouched behind the food cart in the corner. It shambles to warn Ms. Met if the floor is breached.

Ms. Met lounges in the R&D lab, contemplating Armageddon. As soon as she's warned the floor's been breached, she gets on the phone to monologue at the police. If they don't call off their impudent pups immediately, she'll send the state to the bottom of the sea—that kind of stuff. All the while, one finger's on the launch button and one hand's wrapped around the jeweled ankh. Ms. Met has immediate access to two mummies for every PC and scores more throughout the building. Every three rounds she has control of the jeweled ankh, another four mummies join the fray from nearby elevators.

Oh, if Ms. Met does end up launching the cosmic spear, that's an excellent follow-up adventure. Yuru (whoever he is) isn't planning to put down his spear without a fight.

Escape!

The two primary routes of escape for anyone hoping to transport large quantities of mummies are through the air or on the city streets. Other options are possible, like breaking into the sewer system, but none of those involve hotwiring a semi or stealing a couple helicopters!

Nakatomi Telecommunications currently has two helicopters parked on its 24th floor helipad. Those

won't fit very many mummies at all. Luckily, a successful Knowledge: (Occult) check reveals more compact vessels for storing the mummy spirits. Mr. Nakatomi's collection of Chinese pottery that's on display in the 25th floor penthouse would do the trick, but there are less classy ways to do it. For example, hot glue and a lot of cell phones.

The basement loading dock holds three semi-trucks that were abandoned when the Red Scarves took over. Any one of them has enough room in back to hold many mummies. Hotwiring a semi requires a Repair check. Failure means the hero can get the truck going, but not until police have already burst into the room and started firing.

Escaping via the skies is a simple matter of avoiding the two police helicopters and the FBI's black ops chopper. Throwing them off the trail may require ducking into some narrow streets, but getting to the portal isn't exactly heavy lifting. If the heist could use a little more heat, consider stocking the surrounding buildings with a few police snipers. As soon as anyone approaches the helicopters, they open fire; the Red Scarves kept no hostages. Apart from its elevation, the gate to the spirit road is exactly as described below.

Steering a semi full of mummies through a police barricade is slightly difficult. Give your wild-eyed crazies a round of surprise actions while the garage door to the surface is opening. Then the four cops at the barricade start shooting. The chase is on!

This is a Standard Chase, as described in *Savage Worlds Deluxe*. It lasts for six rounds. The first round, when the semi tears away from the Nakatomi pyramid, two police cars are in pursuit. Every round thereafter, an additional car will join the chase. If the police are dealt a red card for their initiative, a sniper in a police chopper is able to get a clear shot on the runaway truck.

The opposition will quickly pile up. It's in our heroes' best interests to get to the warehouse by Pier 3 quickly! Any obstacles that pop up during the chase

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should be reminders that San Francisco is a highly populated city. Jaywalkers, cross traffic, and out-of-order bridges are all worth considering.

If the PCs' vehicle is still operational at the end of the chase, it barrels into the warehouse by Pier 3. The gateway to the spirit road flares like a magnesium garland of skulls at the approach of a cargo of mummies, allowing access. The road stays open to interlopers for 1d4 rounds after the PCs pass through.

If our heroes miss the spirit roads and hoof it to Cival through the solid world, they've got their work cut out for them. A team of five FBI agents will dog them every step of the way. A truck full of mummies can very easily be mistaken for a drug-smuggling rig, even in countries where the FBI doesn't have jurisdiction.

Riding a Spirit Road

Spirit roads are paths into the Between Places. Earthly logic holds little sway here, where the sky is heavy and green. Whether the spirit roads are a backdoor to Xibalba or an extra-dimensional null-space, one thing is certain: a hero's greatest enemy will be himself. Outsiders have trouble comprehending the alien nature of the road; community and human connection are the only protections.

Every day of travel along the spirit road requires a successful Spirit check, with a -1 penalty for each minor Hindrance and a -2 penalty for each major Hindrance. Failure results in a level of Fatigue. The Fatigue can be avoided by sharing a secret of Tragedy or Desire with another PC, as per the Interlude rules.

Traversing a spirit road requires one day, during which time no fuel is consumed. Anyone who strays from the desolate stretch of nightmare highway is asking for a different sort of trouble than what's covered by this adventure. This isn't to say it's off-limits, but there's nothing in the unworldly wastes to interest a crew of long-haul mummy-truckers.

Cival

Cival is protected from outsiders by a series of two-dimensional holographic screens that project the image of untouched jungle. Locating the city without being seen by a team of STINGER agents requires a successful Stealth roll at -4.

Subsonic deterrents add an extra layer of defense: anyone who isn't wearing specialized earplugs within the city is at a -2 penalty to all Notice rolls and actions that require intense concentration. On the plus side, it also keeps out insects!

Inside the holographic perimeter, Cival is as well groomed as a tropical resort. The three remaining pyramids from the city's Mayan heyday frame a central courtyard where smartly dressed psychics talk about spiritual decay with stranded helicopter pilots. Scientists in white coats manifest spirits over the sparkling lagoon, occasionally dodging pop flies from a nearby baseball game. Nobody comments on the eight armed guards, who repay the courtesy by staying out of sight.

The lower levels of the pyramids are inscribed with fresh carvings celebrating the wisdom of the Mayan pantheon. One reoccurring motif is the cyclical nature of life. Unlike what Western media commonly reported, 2012 was not the Mayan end of the world. Rather, it would have been the end of one specific calendar cycle, except the interpreted year was a little off; the calendar cycle will end sometime within the next few years.

According to STINGER doctrine, the next cycle will begin with wide-scale blurring between the realms of man and gods. Without specialized training, everybody thrust into this new interim state will panic and squander the potential riches of the age. Hector wants as many mummies as he can headhunt because of their status between the two worlds: the spiritual form inhabits and controls the physical body, but can detach from it when necessary. These spiritual guides will ease the admixture of worlds, earning golden glory for Ek Chuaj (and STINGER) in the process.

Under Hector's leadership, Cival is equal parts cult, paramilitary organization, and legitimate hope for the future. Although the blurring of the worlds they're preparing for only has even odds of happening, it isn't an out-and-out villainous scam either.

Soon after the PCs arrive, they're welcomed by Hector Jacobs, director of STINGER. He provides them with specialized earplugs, lodgings, and as many simple comforts as they'll take. He's cheerful, complimentary, and more than willing to take those troublesome mummies off their hands. For the greater good of the world, as well as the personal enrichment of the mummies, of course. If the mummy spirits were transported in special containers, Hector provides them with preserved Mayan bodies as soon as possible. Then he begins the hard sell. This is a good time to roll out the STINGER mission statement if it hasn't come up yet.

As the days go by, more and more mummies willingly become agents of STINGER. The conversion rate is most rapid among the eldest of the mummy spirits, who have been promised artifacts of great power for their cooperation. A successful Social Conflict reveals Hector will craft these bribes from the patched-together souls of any mummies who refuse his offer. For every ten mummy spirits who join STINGER, Hector pays the PCs one jade axe. In addition to being archaeological artifacts from pre-Columbian times, the axes can wound creatures who are vulnerable only to magic. Wielders of these axes identify themselves as allies of Ek Chuaj, and as a result, receive preferential treatment in Cival.

Hector's Bargain

In the central pyramid's innermost chamber, Hector wows his closest allies with the secret of STINGER's power. In addition to its vast mineral wealth, STINGER counts on the Lens of Anubis. This etched crystal disc has the power to focus the energy of sentient spirits into spiritual constructs. Its most common use is transforming spirits who displease the

organization into tools for those with firmer loyalties. The Lens can also burn hot and fast, allowing a single wielder to transform spirits into Power Points.

Maybe Hector trusts our heroes and wants to give them spiritual armor made from reconstituted mummies. Maybe nobody's willing to hand over a truckload of ancient spirits to an organization called STINGER; digging deeper and deeper leads to the secret of the Lens. Maybe Rahotep, youngest of the mummy spirits, asks our heroes to look around the city for any sign that he's about to make the biggest mistake of his unlife.

Roughly a third of the mummies the PCs bring to Cival would see Hector's use of the Lens of Anubis as high sacrilege. The insult to their patron is enough to drive them to kill. It's possible that our heroes interrupt an exchange between Hector and one of the loyalists. The clash could destroy an irreplaceable archaeological site or injure STINGER innocents.

Appeasing these mummies requires a little creative thinking. What is the best way to honor a knot of revered, ancient souls? Returning them to their



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homeland to be honored would do the trick, as would finding them superior bodies to inhabit. Anything else will require a successful Social Conflict.

Alternately, the PCs may throw their lot in with STINGER, swayed by Hector's rhetoric and jade axes. Keep the action going with a midnight raid masterminded by a band of six mummies out for revenge—and their five FBI dupes!

If anyone confronts Hector with charges of villainy, he steps up to the plate and proves his favorite god's reputation for cutthroat business practices. Hector readily agrees having an army of spiritual guides will put him a few rungs up the ladder in the new world order, but in the process he's helping people. What's more, he's making use of resources that Anubis was content to leave in museums for the past hundreds of years. What one person calls stealing from a god, other people call optimizing unproductive resources. Furthermore, who lost the mummies and the Lens of Anubis in the first place? Besides, most of the mummies are fine with his deal. If they don't squeal, who does that leave, and how much jade will it take to buy them off?

Turning down Hector's deal results in an unhappy day for everyone involved. He is legitimately sorry about eradicating the wrinkles in his plan, but won't hold back any of the powers at his disposal.

Countdown to Crisis

Regardless of the whys and the hows, conflict is inevitable. Explosion follows conflict. In the final act, contrive to have the Lens of Anubis damaged. At this point, it blazes like the eye of an angry god, shooting off a corona of stone-scorching heat (5d6 damage; Agility check for half damage). Cracks form across the Lens as it begins pulling in mummies and converting them to explosive energy. In five rounds, it's going to blow—and no one will want to be around for that!

Treat the Lens of Anubis overloading as a Dramatic Task. The three obvious ways out of this one are carrying it somewhere safe (Vigor),

hightailing it away from what promises to be a pyramid-crushing explosion (Strength), or halting the process with an esoteric ritual (Knowledge). PCs are wily though, so be generous toward their chosen skills. Skill checks that seek to preserve the Lens of Anubis have a –2 penalty due to the complicated nature of the artifact.

Any PC whose Action Card is a Club is struck by an arcing bolt of heat for 2d6 damage. If this turn's skill roll applied to the Dramatic Task fails, the PC loses one die type of Spirit to soul drain.

Any combination of seven successes over the course of five rounds will avert the danger. The Lens may still explode, but the PCs will be long gone. If the Dramatic Task fails, the Lens explodes catastrophically and everyone in the scene takes 6d8 damage.

When all is said and done, the PCs have traveled a long way from home. They've made new enemies and new allies. They may have even attracted the attention of an ancient god of death. The wisdom of this last one is left as an exercise for the reader.

Behind the Scenes



Ms. Met

Ms. Met's problem is that she cares too much.

It's too bad that the object of her affection is death. Lack of motion. Lack of thought. It delights and mystifies her. Even the gods are temporary intermediaries in her grim communion. Her birth in Cairo means nothing next to her death atop the Nakatomi pyramid.

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

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Notice d10, Piloting d6, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Streetwise d8, Taunt d8, Throwing d6

Charisma: –2 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 6 **Toughness:** 5 or 6

Special Abilities:

- **Bolts of Decay:** 12/24/48, 2d6 damage. Ms. Met can throw an additional bolt every round with a successful Vigor check. Failure leaves her Shaken.
- **H&K G3 (.308):** 24/48/96, 2d8 damage, 20 shots, AP 2, Auto.
- **Combat Reflexes:** +2 to recover from being Shaken.
- **Improved Dodge:** Attacks are at -2 to hit.
- **Improved Nerves of Steel:** Ignore two points of wound penalties.
- **Mooks:** Once per round, Ms. Met can make a successful Agility check to avoid all damage from an attack. The attack destroys a controlled mummy within 6".
- **Jeweled Ankh:** The jeweled ankh allows its holder to issue mental orders to all mummy spirits within a quarter mile—that's fifty if casualties have been light. Resisting a command requires a successful opposed Spirit check. Moreover, it allows the wielder to attach or detach mummy spirits to prepared corporeal bodies with a successful Knowledge (Occult) check. Most mummies obey Ms. Met without resisting for fear of being cast adrift.



Hector Jacobs

Hector's a middle-aged archeologist of Cuban descent. During his fieldwork on the Yucatán Peninsula, he found that he had a special talent for the ancient Mayan language. The ruins told him secrets that were refused to his colleagues. The words had elected him as their prophet.

While he's in Cival, Hector often carries the Lens of Anubis on a loop in his breast pocket for safekeeping.

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

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d6, Healing d6, Knowledge (Archeology) d10, Knowledge (Occult) d10, Notice d10, Persuasion d10+2, Spellcasting d10+2, Survival d6, Throwing d8

Charisma: +2 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 5 **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities:

- **Charismatic:** +2 Charisma.
- **Linguist:** Hector's fluent in the ten languages that make the most sense for your campaign.
- **Glock (9 mm):** 12/24/48, 2d6 damage, 17 shots.
- **Grenades:** 5/10/20, 3d6 damage, 4 shots, MBT.
- **Lens of Anubis:** The Lens of Anubis chews up unprotected souls (e.g. mummies) within 10" and converts them into raw spiritual energy. This allows anyone with Spellcasting the following Powers: *Barrier*, *Blast*, *Boost Trait*, *Deflection*. Consuming a mummy requires a successful Spellcasting check opposed by the mummy's Spirit. That provides Hector with PP equal to the mummy's Spirit die (e.g. 10) and destroys the mummy.

The Lens of Anubis can also be used to create burial wrappings. For 15 PP, the Lens focuses shredded souls into powerful protective garb. These weightless bandages provide +2 Toughness. Any mummy garbed in burial wrappings gains additional powers (see Enhanced Mummies).

Mummies

These spiritual beings were once Egyptian nobles. Upon dying, their souls were bound to their physical remains with prayers and charms. Free-floating mummy spirits won't last very long, as brittle and ancient as they are—a few days at most.

Mummies shamble and flail like you'd expect, but they can also vacate their corporeal shells to drain the life from those who oppose them.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d8, Knowledge (Occult) d6, Notice d10, Persuasion d6, Stealth d6

Charisma: 0 **Pace:** 5 **Parry:** 6 **Toughness:** 8

Special Abilities:

GREAT ADVENTURES

- **Bash:** 2d8 damage. Mummies are surprisingly fast when they get within striking range, and count as being armed.
- **Explosives:** One in six mummies has armed itself with explosives taken from the Red Scarves. They only use these as a last resort, as doing so destroys the mummy's body. 5d6 damage, MBT.
- **Breath of the Desert:** 12/24/48. The mummy leaves its body in a rush of hot, dry air. The burden of ages weighs down on everyone in a MBT, who must make a successful Vigor check or be Shaken.

Enhanced Mummies

These mummies have agreed to help STINGER and have been enhanced by the Lens of Anubis.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d8, Knowledge (Occult) d6, Notice d10, Persuasion d6, Stealth d6

Charisma: 0 **Pace:** 5 **Parry:** 6 **Toughness:** 10 (8)

Special Abilities:

- **Bash:** d10+d8 damage. Mummies are surprisingly fast when they get within striking range, and count as being armed.
- **Explosives:** One in six mummies has armed itself with explosives taken from the Red Scarves. They only use these as a last resort, as doing so destroys the mummy's body. 5d6 damage, MBT.
- **Breath of the Desert:** 12/24/48. The mummy leaves its body in a rush of hot, dry air. The burden of ages weighs down on everyone in a MBT, who must make a successful Vigor check (-2) or be Shaken.

Police Officers

They're just doing their job, man.

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

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d8, Investigation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Streetwise d8

Charisma: 0 **Pace:** 6 **Parry:** 6 **Toughness:** 10 (6), ignore AP 4 for bullets or 8(6)

NORMAL OFFICERS:

- **Kevlar Vest:** +2 Toughness/+4 vs. bullets. Resist AP 4 for bullets.

- **Glock (9 mm):** 12/24/48, 2d6 damage, 17 shots.

SWAT:

- **Kevlar Vest:** +2 Toughness/+4 vs. bullets. Resist AP 4 for bullets.

- **Riot Helmet:** +4 Toughness to head. 50% effective.

- **H&K G3 (.308):** 24/48/96, 2d8 damage, 20 shots, AP 2, Auto.

FBI (Includes Inspector Lopez, who is [Wild Card]):

- **Kevlar Vest:** +2 Toughness/+4 vs. bullets. Resist AP 4 for bullets.

- **Glock (9 mm):** 12/24/48, 2d6 damage, 17 shots.

- **Barrett (.50) w/bipod:** 50/100/200, 2d10 damage, 11 shots, AP 4, Snapfire, HW.

- **Marksman:** If they don't move in a turn, they get a free use of the Aim maneuver.

STINGER Agents

What does STINGER stand for, anyway? These men and women are working to ensure the future isn't a spiritual disaster. Possibly scientists or spiritualists, all are awfully fond of Ek Chuaj. Some are armed with automatic rifles or shotguns, while the scientists and spiritualists have a 50% chance of carrying a pistol.

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

Skills: Fighting d6, Knowledge (Occult) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Taunt d6

Charisma: +1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5 or 6

Special Abilities:

- **Glock (9 mm):** 12/24/48, 2d6 damage, 17 shots.

- **Pump Action Shotgun (12g):** 12/24/48, 1-3d6 damage, 6 shots, Shotgun.

- **H&K G3 (.308):** 24/48/96, 2d8 damage, 20 shots, AP 2, Auto.

Semi Truck

A big, big truck with lots of cargo space. The trailer is Toughness 14 (2).

Acc/TS: 5/30; **Toughness:** 16 (4); **Crew:** 1+1.

Police Car

Fast, resilient, loud.

Acc/TS: 20/45; **Toughness:** 11 (3); **Crew:** 1+3.

Helicopter

Eyes on the skies!

Acc/TS: 20/50; **Toughness:** 11 (2); **Crew:** 1+3.

Convention Connection January - April 2015

Assembled by Robert L. and Vickey A. Beaver

Descriptions are as described on event websites and were accurate as of this printing. Conventions are listed alphabetically by state and then in chronological date order. Events with [SW] are those where Savage Worlds games are expected.

UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA

ANIME *LOS* *ANGELES*

WWW.ANIMELOSANGELES.ORG/WP

01/09–01/11/15, Los Angeles

Anime, cosplay, tabletop and video gaming, and more.

CAVECON - WWW.POLYCON.ORG

01/17–01/18/15, San Luis Obispo

Smaller winter version of PolyCon, a place to gather to enjoy gaming and fun at the Central Coast of California. Presented by students and alumni of California Polytechnic State University.

DUNDRACON - [HTTP://DUNDRACON.COM](http://DUNDRACON.COM)

02/13–02/16/15, San Ramon

DunDraCon is happy to have kids of all ages in attendance at our conventions, and we try to provide events and attractions that will appeal to a wide range of ages.

ORCCON - WWW.STRATEGICON.NET

02/13–02/16/15, Los Angeles

Our conventions offer the chance to play, watch and

buy a variety of board games, card games, miniatures, roleplaying, collectables, and computer games.

CONDOR - WWW.CONDORCON.ORG

03/13–03/15/15, San Diego

ConDor is a science-fiction media and literature convention, put together by the California Association for the Advancement of Speculative Media (C.A.A.S.M.). It has authors, agents, TV shows, costumes, dealers, artists, actors, games, dances, and concerts.

SPRING MINICON - WWW.POLYCON.ORG

4/25/15, San Luis Obispo

A smaller version of PolyCon, this convention provides the gaming community with a place to gather to enjoy gaming and fun. It is presented by students and alumni of California Polytechnic State University.

COLORADO

GENGHIS CON - [HTTP://DENVERGAMERS.ORG](http://DENVERGAMERS.ORG)

02/12–02/15/15, Aurora [SW]

Our mission is to promote the design, development, study and play of simulation games, including board games, wargames, fantasy, science-fiction and role-playing games, sports games, computer games and miniatures, as an educational recreational and social activity; to coordinate with groups and persons in the region having similar interests.

FLORIDA

CONVENTION CONNECTION

RECON - WWW.HMGS-SOUTH.COM

04/23–04/26/15, Orlando

Over 100 games from experienced game masters: some of the best historical gaming around, historical miniatures gaming & tabletop games of all kinds.

GEORGIA

GNOMECON - [HTTP://GNOMECON.ORG](http://GNOMECON.ORG)

03/06–03/08/15, Savannah

GnomeCon, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to education, literacy, and creativity through the spectrum of the science-fiction / fantasy multi-genre culture, hosting yearly conventions and events which highlight these important aspects.

ILLINOIS

BRUCE CAMBELL'S HORROR FEST - WWW.WIZARDWORLD.COM/WIZCON.HTML

03/06–03/08/15, Chicago

With the focus on horror, fans can expect to see some of their favorite genre stars, directors and writers from great television shows, movies, graphic novels and comics. It's a celebration of all things horror, and Bruce will be inviting some of the many superstars he's worked with over the years.

INDIANA

INDIANAPOLIS COMIC CON - [HTTP://WWW.WIZARDWORLD.COM/WIZCON.HTML](http://WWW.WIZARDWORLD.COM/WIZCON.HTML)

02/13–02/15/15, Indianapolis

Join fellow fans as they converge on Indianapolis to celebrate the best in pop culture: Movies, Comics, Toys, Video Gaming, Games, TV, Graphic Novels, Horror, Wrestling, MMA, Original Art, Collectibles, Anime, Manga & More! Indianapolis Comic Con is brought to you by the group who produces the most widely attended Comic Con tour!

WHO'S YER CON - WWW.WHOSYERGAMERS.ORG

4/17–19/15, Indianapolis

Who's Yer Gamers has been promoting hobby

gaming in Indiana since 2008. Wherever there are Hoosiers without wood for sheep, or a dragon to slay, we'll be there. We will now have over 30,000 square feet of gaming space available, and look forward to giving our attendees even more of what they love about WYC!

KENTUCKY

CONGLOMERATION - WWW.CONGLOMERATION.INFO

01/09–01/11/15, Louisville

ConGlomeration is Louisville, Kentucky's own fan-run multimedia science fiction and fantasy convention.

LOUISIANA

NEW ORLEANS COMIC CON - WWW.WIZARDWORLD.COM/WIZCON.HTML

01/09–01/11/15, New Orleans

See Indianapolis Comic Con entry for description.

MASSACHUSETTS

ARISIA - WWW.ARSIA.ORG

01/16–01/19/15, Boston

New England's largest and most diverse science fiction and fantasy convention

TOTAL CONFUSION - WWW.TOTALCON.COM

02/19–02/22/15, Mansfield

Total Confusion has over twenty years of experience bringing great gaming moments to players in the New England area and beyond. TotalCon is always held the weekend after Presidents Day in February for four days (Thursday-Sunday). It was started in 1987 at the Yankee Drummer in Auburn, MA by Wes Carpentier, who still attends TotalCon each year and is a permanent VIP at the convention.

PAX EAST - [HTTP://EAST.PAXSITE.COM](http://EAST.PAXSITE.COM)

03/06–03/08/15, Boston

Originating from PAX, which sprang up from video gaming, PAX East offers gaming for tabletop RPGs, board games, and more.

MICHIGAN

CONFUSION – [HTTP://CONFUSION.STILYAGI.ORG](http://confusion.stilyagi.org)

01/16–01/18/15, Dearborn

ConFusion is a science fiction convention based in the Metro Detroit area.

WINTERCON

[HTTP://METRODETROITGAMERS.WORDPRESS.COM](http://metrodetroitgamers.wordpress.com)

01/25/15, Rochester

Held at Oakland University, this one-day convention offers nearly all events included in the low-price admission for all-day gaming.

MARMALADE DOG – [HTTP://MARMALADEDOG.ORG](http://marmaladedog.org)

02/06–02/08/15, Kalamazoo

Marmalade Dog is a gaming convention held by the Western Michigan Gamers Guild (WMGG) each year. The convention features role-playing games, card games, board games, miniature wargames and a variety of other events.

AMBERCON – [WWW.AMBERCON.COM](http://www.ambercon.com)

03/26–03/29/15, Detroit

Ambercon is a broad-spectrum diceless gaming and indie gaming convention! They've got superheroes, musketeers, characters from various fictional settings, SOE operatives, cowboys, and, of course, Amber-based games... "you name it, we'll game it!"

NEBRASKA

PRETZCON – [WWW.PRETZCON.ORG](http://www.pretzcon.org)

04/10–04/12/15, Omaha

PretzCon is a nonprofit, family-run gaming convention offering a fun, safe environment for gamers of all ages to play. At PretzCon, you'll find board, card, dice, and role-playing games. Play your favorite games or take the opportunity to try something new.

NEVADA

LAS VEGAS COMIC CON

[WWW.WIZARDWORLD.COM/WIZCON.HTML](http://www.wizardworld.com/wizcon.html)

04/24–04/26/15, Las Vegas

See Indianapolis Comic Con entry for description.

NEW YORK

RUNNING

GAGG

[WWW.GENESEO.EDU/GAGG/RUNNINGGAGG](http://www.geneseo.edu/gagg/runninggagg)

– 01/30–02/01/15, Geneseo

Running GAGG is a convention run for gamers by gamers, working to make a weekend of fun enjoyable by the most experienced role-player to the merely interested novice.

SIMCON – [WWW.SIMCON.ORG](http://www.simcon.org)

03/27–03/29/15, Rochester [SW]

SIMCON is the longest-running gaming convention in New York State! Proudly student-run by URSGA (University of Rochester Simulation Gaming Association), SIMCON is an annual gaming convention held at the University of Rochester. Their goal is to provide a weekend-long opportunity for gamers of all genres: board gaming, war gaming, tabletop role-playing, collectible card gaming, miniature gaming, etc., to get together and enjoy their hobbies. SIMCON features local vendors as well as special guests from all over.

UBCON – [HTTP://UBCON.ORG](http://ubcon.org)

04/11–04/13/15, Amherst

Although there is a strong emphasis on gaming, over the years UBCon has evolved and accrued many other interests and fans, and today it celebrates the same core concept of coming together to celebrate common interests. In the past, more than 1,600 gamers, cosplayers, LARPerS, NERFers, and role-players have attended.

NORTH CAROLINA

RALEIGH

COMIC

CON

[WWW.WIZARDWORLD.COM/WIZCON.HTML](http://www.wizardworld.com/wizcon.html)

03/13–03/15/15, Raleigh

– See Indianapolis Comic Con entry for description.

MACE

WEST

CONVENTION CONNECTION

[HTTP://WWW.JUSTUSPRODUCTIONS.COM/INDEX.PHP/
JUSTUS/MACEWEST/2/4/4](http://www.justusproductions.com/index.php/justus/macewest/2/4/4)

03/20–03/22/15, Asheville [SW]

MACE West is born of a demand by some Hickory region gamers who felt that the MACE concept would do well in Western North Carolinas area.

OHIO

CLEVELAND COMIC CON –
[WWW.WIZARDWORLD.COM/WIZCON.HTML](http://www.wizardworld.com/wizcon.html)

02/20–02/22/15, Cleveland

See Indianapolis Comic Con entry for description.

OREGON

PORTLAND COMIC CON –
[WWW.WIZARDWORLD.COM/WIZCON.HTML](http://www.wizardworld.com/wizcon.html)

01/23–01/25/15, Portland

See Indianapolis Comic Con entry for description.

PENNSYLVANIA

MEPACON FALL – [WWW.MEPACON.COM](http://www.mepacon.com)

04/24–04/26/15, Hilton Scranton

Over two-hundred hours of gaming in Mid-Eastern Pennsylvania with the premier meet-up of gamers of all stripes. From dedicated role-playing fans to the casual board game player, MEPACON delivers multiple tracts of entertainment for all ages. Experience three-days of jam packed entertainment with hosted gaming sessions, contests, game auction of new and vintage games, miniature painting and access to the latest and greatest games provided by on site vendors.

SOUTH CAROLINA

SCARAB – [WWW.S-C-A-R-A-B.COM](http://www.s-c-a-r-a-b.com)

01/16–01/19/15, Columbia

SCARAB (South Carolina Area Roleplayers and Boardgamers) is a group of gamers based in the Columbia, South Carolina region. They travel to retailers, conventions, and meetups to demo a variety of games. They host a gaming convention annually.

TENNESSEE

CHATTACON – [WWW.CHATTACON.ORG](http://www.chattacon.org)

01/30–02/01/15, Chattanooga

Chattacon is an annual Speculative Fiction convention.

MIDSOUTH CON – [WWW.MIDSOUTHCON.ORG](http://www.midsouthcon.org)

03/20–03/22/15, Memphis

MidSouthCon has become the Mid-South's premier multi-genre convention. It covers a diverse section of fannish culture that includes Science Fiction, Fantasy, Science, Comics, Horror, Education, Costuming, Anime, and Gaming. We have over 100 authors, editors, publishers, scientists, artists and other guests, with past attendance of over 1700 people.

MTAC – [HTTP://MTAC.NET/](http://mtac.net/)

04/03–04/05/15, Nashville

MTAC (Middle Tennessee Anime Convention) is an annual convention that produces events related to Anime, Manga, and relevant Popular Arts, providing enthusiasts and the public at large with a forum for patronage and education thereof. Established in 1999, MTAC has been steadily growing annual event based in Nashville, Tennessee.

TEXAS

IKKiCON – [WWW.IKKICON.COM](http://www.ikkicon.com)

01/02–01/04/15, Austin

IKKiCON LLC is a Japanese Animation and Pop-Culture Convention.

CHUPACABRACON – [WWW.CHUPACABRACON.COM](http://www.chupacabracon.com)

01/09–01/11/15, Austin

ChupacabraCon features RPG, tabletop, board, and card games.

MAG CON – [WWW.MAGCON.ORG](http://www.magcon.org)

04/11–04/12/15, New Caney

A school fundraiser offering a huge, FREE Board Game Library, RPGs, Miniatures, Board Games,

CONVENTION CONNECTION

Door PRIZES! There's free, convenient parking, a flea market, concessions, and affordable admission. The Pacific Northwest's Premier Science-Fiction and Fantasy Convention.

VIRGINIA

MARSCon – www.marsson.net

01/16–01/18/15, Williamsburg

MarsCon is a weekend long party for people who enjoy Science Fiction and Fantasy. It's a chance to gather with 1,200 or so of your closest friends and talk science fiction, fantasy, cosplay, gaming, your favorite author, or whatever else.

GUNS OF AUGUST – <http://wbconventions.org>

02/06–02/08/15, Williamsburg

This family-friendly convention appeals to a wide variety of gamers. Primarily featuring historical miniature wargames, it also showcase a board-gaming room with many of the most popular titles, as well as science fiction-based and role-playing games.

MYSTICon – <http://mysticon-va.com>

02/27–03/01/15, Roanoke

The original MystiCon took place over July 4th weekend in 1980 and has been revived in Roanoke, VA. The location and time of year that MystiCon takes place is one that fans, family and friends alike have come to rely on for an awesome weekend of Sci-Fi, Fantasy, and Pop Culture.

RAVENCon – www.ravencon.com

04/24–04/26/15, Richmond

A weekend celebrating the genres of Science-Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror. Mystery fits well here, too.

WASHINGTON

GAMESTORM – www.gamestorm.org

03/19–03/22/15, Vancouver

GameStorm is the Pacific Northwest's premiere social and strategic game convention.

NORWESCon – www.norwescon.org

01/09–01/11/15, SeaTac

WISCONSIN

MADISON COMIC CON – www.wizardworld.com/wizcon.html

02/27–03/01/15, Madison

See Indianapolis Comic Con entry for description.

FIRE & ICE GAME CONVENTION – www.fireandiceconvention.com

04/02–04/05/15, Manitowoc

IRE & ICE is a little game convention with BIG fun for everyone. The average attendance is between 300-400 gamers from all over Wisconsin and the Midwest!

PLATTECon – www.plattevillegaming.com/plattecon

03/06–03/08/15, Platteville

PlatteCon has lots of traditional table top games like roleplaying, board games, collectible card games, and even a room dedicated to video games on several different gaming systems.

GARYCon – www.garycon.com

03/26–03/29/15, Lake Geneva

Gary Con is an annual gaming convention and living memorial to E. Gary Gygax, the father of role-playing games. It is a time for family, friends, and anyone whose life was changed as a result of the work of Gary Gygax to gather, remember, and toss a few dice around.

ODYSSEY CON – www.odysseycon.org

04/10–04/12/15, Madison

Odyssey Con 15 celebrates the rise of the zombie in fiction and media. A Zombie Prom is planned the Saturday of the convention.

NO BRAND CON – <http://nobrandcon.org>

04/24–04/26/15, Eau Claire

Hailing itself as Wisconsin's premiere anime

CONVENTION CONNECTION

convention, No Brand Con offers a wide array of gaming.

CANADA

GOTTACon - www.gottacon.com

02/27–03/01/15, Victoria, BC

Trading card games, RPGs, board games, video games, minis, workshops and panels.

ENGLAND

RAIDERS OF THE GAME CUPBOARD - www.raidersofthegamecupboard.co.uk

1/3/15, Burton upon Trent, East Staffordshire

One day gaming convention featuring board games, roleplaying, CCG, and many, many more. Quarterly.

CONCEPTION - www.conceptionuk.org

01/28–02/01/15, Christchurch, Dorset

Conception is a major roleplaying game convention on the south coast of England. Held every year since 2,000 it has raised over £100,000 for charities both local and nationwide.

ITALY

PLAY: THE GAMES FESTIVAL - www.play-modena.it

04/11–04/12/15, Modena

PLAY offers a range of games with a special focus on events and brand new gaming areas.

SCOTLAND

CONPULSION - www.geas.org.uk/conpulsion

04/03–04/05/15, Edinburgh

RPGs, LARPs, Board Games, CCGs, and more!



Ages ago, man, elf, dwarf, and all
toiled together. In time, truth - mixed with
clever - lies turned the races against each
other. Too late, the treachery was revealed.
Only man remained on the island nation.
Decades have passed, but the dead are not
content to let bygones be bygones. Their
souls are not free, and now they seek...
retribution.

At Obatron Productions, we love playing games springing from rich settings that let us use what we want and allow us to put our own spin on the world in which our characters reside.

We create setting materials to enable you to do the same. Retribution is a supernatural take on traditional fantasy where your characters may find their purposes aligned with those of the dead, or they may well be the next targets for the dead's wrath.

Coming to Kickstarter May 2015, you'll have a chance to back at a variety of levels to help us bring Retribution to you, the online marketplace, and brick-and-mortar stores.

Obatron
PRODUCTIONS



**Jane Rembrandt, Talented
Illustrator, Game Master**

Rank: Seasoned

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10 Spirt d6,
Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Collaboration d6, Communication d6,
Game Mastery, d6, Illustration d10, Notice d8,
Persuasion d4, Role-play d8

Charisma: 0 **Pace** 5 **Parry:** 2 **Toughness** 5

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Loyal (Minor),
Phobia (Minor): Tardiness

Edges: Alertness, Charasmatic, Jack-of-All
Trades, Marksman, Inspire, Quick Draw,

Gear: Amazingly Well-Painted Minis,
Charcoal Pencils, Dice, Drawing Pad, GM's
Screen, Laptop, RPG Books, Wacom Tablet.



**Rakim Frost, Creative Writer, Ace
Gamer**

Rank: Novice

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10 Spirt d6,
Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Collaboration d6, Communication d8,
Creative Writing d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d8,
Role-play d8

Charisma: 0 **Pace** 5 **Parry:** 2 **Toughness** 5

Hindrances: Code of Honor, Loyal (Minor),
Phobia (Minor): Tardiness

Edges: Connections, Investigator, Linguist,
Nevers of Steel, Storyteller

Gear: Detailed Character History, Dice,
Dictionary, Spiral Laptop, RPG Books,
Notepad, Pens, Thesaurus.

Fae Nightmares

Modern Urban Fantasy with a North American feel
for the Savage Worlds Role Playing System.



Coming Soon

Check out www.DarkSmileGames.com for more information

SAVAGE INSIDER

For All Things Savage

Now accepting pitches for all FIVE Volume 3 issues!

1: Endings & Beginnings, 2: Uprising, 3: Master Plans, 4: Free for All, and 5: Holiday Centerpiece

Keys to a Good Pitch:

1. Clearly has read submission guidelines and has familiarity with *Savage Insider*.
2. Correlates with a feature or otherwise appropriate content.
3. Includes estimated word count.
4. Is convincing that the creator can do a good job with the pitched piece.
5. Received by 2/13, 4/15, 7/15, 8/15, and 10/15 for issues 1-5, respectively.

*Rates for Writing:

Rates vary according to feature being written and length of edited work. For example, a few hundred words for an Equipment Corral item might pay \$5 whereas a few thousand for a full-featured Great Adventure could yield \$90.

*Rates for Illustrations:

Rates vary according to level of detail, size, and location within the magazine. Quarter-page, black-and-white sketches might be \$5 where a detailed, full-color cover would be \$75.

Sign up for the Obatron Productions newsletter to be notified electronically when there are calls for submissions and other news for *Savage Insider* and Obatron Productions.

Contributors need not be previously published to be accepted.

****Rates are subject to increase.***

