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THE SAVAGE WORLD OF SOLOMON KANE

BASED ON THE WORKS OF ROBERT E. HOWARD



SAVAGE WORLDS

The Savage World of Solomon Kane

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The tall, rangy figure shifted his weight to his back foot and moved his thin, sturdy rapier to cover his chest. The stranger was clad in somber black with a white shirt, dark overcoat, heavy leather boots, and wide-brimmed hat. His deep blue eyes gleamed in the light from the shaft above, steely and resolved as he watched his prey.

In front of him, the same light glittered off scales as large as dinner plates, shades of yellow and green, putrid, unholy. Twin yellow eyes glittered like gems, a cold, malevolent light devoid of human emotion. A long, drawn-out hiss showed the creature's displeasure at the wounds it had recently received.

Kane's rapier hand suddenly felt numb. He spared a glance at the wound in his leg caused by the fiend's barbed tail. Amid the telltale red of blood, Kane glimpsed black ichor—poison. The cavern began to swim, spiraling inward as Kane's vision blurred.

"Spawn of Satan!" Kane cursed, gritting his teeth, summoning his indomitable willpower to fight against the venom in his blood-charged veins. "Get back into the Pit from whence ye came."

Kane darted forward, driven by his fierce force of will more than the adrenaline coursing through his system, his rapier arm outstretched, moving as fast as lightning, a blur of shining steel driven by unconscious reflex rather than careful thought.

The creature snapped back, its serpentine form recoiling as the rapier point clattered harmlessly over the scales. Kane ducked as the massive, fanged maw of the beast lunged, missing him by a whisker.

Kane's rapier flashed left, nimbly blocking the barbed tail which had shot out of the shadows. Then he thrust forward again, angling upward beneath the scales. Kane felt the warm liquid flow over his hand but spared it no thought—flesh and blood the fiend was, but it was no ordinary beast, and the wound was as a flea bite to an elephant.

The creature attacked again, mouth and tail working in unison. Kane turned his body, parrying the barb and avoiding the fangs. The massive, flattened head struck his shoulder, forcing the Puritan to one knee.

"I grow weary of this game," Kane said without emotion. "I have a greater evil to judge."

Kane's other hand moved to his belt and drew out a heavy flintlock pistol. The wanderer raised the gun in an instant, bringing it level as the beast snapped its jaws closed, swallowing Kane's arm to the shoulder.

For a second that seemed as timeless as the cavern in which they fought, man and monster stared into each other's eyes. Were there any witnesses to the battle they would have found it hard to tell which was man and which was monster, for both exuded power beyond that of mortal reckoning in their cold, unblinking eyes.

Kane made no movement, yet the beast sensed a hidden danger. It tried to recoil, opening its mouth a fraction of an inch to release its deadly prize. Kane heard no explosion as he pulled the trigger, but felt the slight sting of powder burns in the enclosed space of the creature's jagged maw.

Eyes glazed, then the gigantic serpent slumped. Kane pulled his hand free, and immediately dropped the spent pistol.

Out of the shadows hurtled a figure, his dark cloak glittering like the reptile Kane had just killed, a dagger curved like an enormous fang in his hand. "You will pay for that, Puritan," the figure hissed, slashing wildly as his eyes glowed red with madness.

"I gave you fair warning, sorcerer!" Kane replied, parrying the dagger in a series of calculated maneuvers. "You have trafficked with the forces of Hell, and for that you must pay the ultimate price."

The sorcerer slashed wildly, his moves clumsy to Kane's eyes. But what he lacked in skill he gained in unholy zeal. Though Kane blocked every attack, he found himself retreating out of the circle of dim light filtering down from the cavern's roof.

Regaining the initiative, Kane thrust his rapier forward. The point struck close to the magician's dark heart. Kane stepped backward, expecting the sorcerer to fall. A glint of light flashed and the Puritan instinctively sidestepped. A glance at the sorcerer's robe revealed no sign of a cut.

Kane's eyes widened. "Fell sorcery!" he hissed. "What devils you summoned to protect you shall not prevail this day!"

The rapier slashed forward, clashing against steel. Blade locked on blade, eye locked on eye as both men threw their weight forward. Like two mountains they remained steadfast, neither giving an inch.

The eyes of the serpent were windows into its dark, inhuman soul. The eyes of the sorcerer were windows into madness all too human. Kane had seen such insanity before and he knew what must be done.

But it was the sorcerer who proved stronger. Drawing on his dark power, he shoved forward suddenly, causing Kane to shift weight to his back foot, his balance now off center. The knife slashed again, a crescent moon piercing the failing light. The blade stroked the Puritan's skin like a deadly lover, drawing a thin trail of blood.

Kane leapt back into the shadows. The sorcerer followed. Trafficking with demons was his first mistake. Following Kane was to be his last.

Kane thrust his rapier forward, a feint to conceal his true move. As the sorcerer moved to parry, he exposed his left flank. Kane lowered his shoulder and charged, knocking the fell magician backward. The sorcerer stopped suddenly, motionless, arms outstretched. Kane lowered his eyes. The barb of the serpent protruded from the man's stomach, a mortal wound.

"Mercy," the sorcerer whispered, his hands clutching at thin air like a deranged puppet. "Spare me!"

"Nay," replied the Puritan. "When you summoned this fiend to do your evil bidding, you chose your Fate. I shall end your life quickly, but only so the Creator may pass His eternal judgment on you the sooner." Kane's rapier flicked once and the light left the sorcerer's eyes.

"Thank you, my friend," he called into the shadows of the cavern. "Once again your magic has saved me." Kane did not profess to understand the ways of ju-ju magic, but instinctively knew his old friend, N'Longa, had somehow used his powers to slow the serpent's venom.

"N'Longa happy to help," the old shaman smiled, stepping into the light. "You kill snake good, but there many more dangers coming. Bad times move closer. Shadows and scales the future holds."

Kane's head slumped to his chest as he reloaded his pistol. "So much evil," he muttered. "My bones grow older, N'Longa. The road becomes harder to walk."

N'Longa laughed loudly, his outburst echoing like thunder. "You not old, blood brother! N'Longa many years older than you!"

N'Longa waited until the echoes died down. "But you right," he added. "Too much darkness for one man. Fear not, I summon others to fight the darkness. Soon they walk path too. Soon they follow the Path of Kane."



Introduction

Welcome to *The Savage World of Solomon Kane*. This book blends the fantastic adventures of Robert E. Howard's Solomon Kane stories with the Origins award-winning *Savage Worlds* roleplaying rules system.

Whether you're a fan of Solomon Kane who wants to read more detail on the Puritan's world, a roleplayer looking for something new and exciting, or just a fan of adventure stories in general, we've got something here for you.

If you're checking out this book, we assume you know a little bit about roleplaying games. If not, don't worry. The rules we've used in this game are quick to learn, fun to play, and easy to use.

For those who have played a roleplaying game before, you'll be glad to know that *Savage Worlds* was designed from the ground up to feature the kind of action found in the pulp stories of Robert E. Howard and other greats.

Players will find all the depth they need to create amazing heroes with epic powers—and tragic flaws. Game Masters will discover the rules were designed with a minimum of bookkeeping so that they can focus on writing awesome adventures, roleplaying memorable villains, and describing the action and excitement of Kane's world.

Whether your group consists of a couple of wanderers against a swarm of akaanas or a large band of heroes storming a depraved noble's dungeons, you can play out all the battles and adventures of Solomon Kane quickly and with a single set of rules.

In addition to the rules, *The Savage World of Solomon Kane* is a Plot Point™ book. That means we have a fully fleshed-out campaign ready to help the GM create a party, bring it together, and give it a common goal to stay that way. You'll find complete details starting on page 140. For you players, just know that you can make whatever kind of character you want—from a ruthless pirate to a wanderer much like the solemn stranger himself. All will soon have cause to walk the Path of Kane.

Contents Overview

Chapter One presents a short essay on Robert E. Howard's most complex hero. The chapter concludes with summaries of the Solomon Kane stories and poems.

Chapter Two explains everything you need to know to make a hero who fits into Kane's world and the Plot Point campaign, *The Path of Kane*.

Chapter Three details the various gear and weapons available to characters in this era, and includes details on the manufacture of firearms.

Chapter Four contains the *Savage Worlds* rules relevant to this setting. Everything you need to play this game is in this book.

Chapter Five covers the art of magic, both for players and for Game Masters who want to introduce grim necromancers or mystic shamans into their games.

Chapter Six marks the start of the GM's section. In this chapter we cover some of the basics of being a Game Master.

Chapter Seven covers takes a look at how to create adventures worthy of Kane, and includes an easy to use adventure generator.

Chapter Eight takes a look at the world in which Kane lived, providing GMs with an overview of the technology, science, and religious beliefs of the period.

Chapters Nine through Twelve are the meatiest sections of the book. We detail all the primary adventuring locations Kane and characters like him might explore. Africa, the Orient, the Old World, and even the New World are all covered here. Each section also includes ready to run adventures, as well as those required to complete the Plot Point campaign.

Chapter Thirteen marks the end of the book and covers the darkest subject of all—the terrible enemies and barbaric foes found in Kane's world. From foul witches to massive pythons and great apes wearing the bones of the dead, everything the GM needs to terrorize the heroes is right here.

So read on: *The Savage World of Solomon Kane* awaits!

Getting Started

Here's what you need to get started!

Read the Books

We strongly recommend you buy a copy of the original Solomon Kane stories, which are available in a single volume from Wandering Star at www.wanderingstarbooks.com, or from your favorite bookstore.

We've provided a short summary of all the Kane stories in this book for reference, but nothing really captures the feel of Robert E. Howard's hero and the dark world he lives in like reading the adventures first hand. As well as an excellent read, they'll help you grasp the sorts of tales your heroes can undertake.

Dice

The Savage World of Solomon Kane uses all 6 traditional gaming dice: 4-sided, 6-sided, 8-sided, 10-sided, 12-sided, and occasionally 20-sided dice. All of these are available from your favorite local gaming store, or online directly from Pinnacle at www.peginc.com.

Like most roleplaying games, the different dice are abbreviated as d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20. If you see something like 2d6, that means to roll two six-sided dice and add them up. The notation "2d12+2" means to roll two 12-sided dice, add them up, then add two to the total.

Players need only one set of these dice (though a few spare d6s is always handy). The Game Master might want a couple of sets so she can roll attacks for several villains at once.

Cards

You will also need a standard deck of 54 playing cards with both Jokers left in, which we call the Action Deck. The cards are used for initiative in combat and to help keep things moving fast and furious. You'll find an official set of *Savage Worlds* cards where you found this book, or directly from Pinnacle.

Figures and Battle Mats

Figures of some sort are very useful while running this game. Miniatures are available from several manufacturers, and cheaper full-color cardstock heroes and monsters can be found as well. In these rules, we assume you're using 28mm figures—the standard "large size" hobby gaming miniature.

Ranges for weapons, movement, and everything else are calculated for this size miniature on the table-top. If you're using larger or smaller figures, you may want to adjust your ranges to make things look a little more realistic. Solomon Kane has inspired many miniature makers, and it's not hard to find figures that look similar to the wanderer or others from his world with a little effort.

It's essential to have some kind of gaming surface as well, either a terrain board or a Chessex Battle Mat™. We recommend the latter. That way the GM can draw out the tactical situation with water-soluble markers so that everyone can see what's going on and make the most of their surroundings.

Mapping out a battle in this way can really help everyone to understand where their characters are, where their allies are, and what terrain features they might be able to make use of for cover or clever tricks and maneuvers.

A Little Imagination

As you decided to read this book, you are probably just like countless other gamers in the world. You've got a brilliant imagination bubbling with ideas and fantastic stories of what happens in the Solomon Kane universe outside of the published stories.

These easy to learn rules help you explore the dark wonders of this exciting world with a quick and easy game system that everyone—even your most casual gamer friends—can play and enjoy. Wargamers, roleplayers, and munchkins alike should find everything they're looking for here in one simple set of rules, and all the adventure they can handle in *The Savage World of Solomon Kane*.

Solomon Kane

Who is Solomon Kane?

Solomon Kane is a "landless wanderer" from the southern county of Devon in England in the late 16th century. He is tall, lean, and utterly somber in his dress and demeanor. If he has a role in life, it is to be the avenger of the persecuted and defender of the oppressed.

Solomon is driven to travel the world and seek his adventures for reasons even he doesn't understand. In Howard's own words:

> *All his life he had roamed about the world aiding the weak and fighting oppression; he neither knew nor questioned why. That was his obsession, his driving force of life. Cruelty and tyranny to the weak sent a red blaze of fury, fierce and lasting, through his soul. When the full flame of his hatred was wakened and loosed, there was no rest for him until his vengeance had been fulfilled to the uttermost. If he thought of it at all, he considered himself a fulfiller of God's judgment, a vessel of wrath to be emptied upon the souls of the unrighteous.*
>
> *—Red Shadows*

He is often seen as a religious fanatic or a warrior of God, and certainly Kane is a man of faith who calls himself a "Puritan," but his religious convictions are secondary to his own internal sense of justice. This may be controversial to Kane aficionados, but there are far more references to Kane's thirst for vengeance than Biblical verses in Howard's stories.

In fact, seeing the innocent suffer drives Kane into an almost berserk rage—filling him with a righteous conviction that frequently carries him through many battles that would otherwise spell his doom.

Kane's *nom de guerre* of Puritan is most likely more a political and philosophical statement than an allegiance to a particular religious sect. In fact, in Kane's time, the word Puritan was not quite what we think of today. It was a derogatory term for all those who had broken with the Catholic Church (Protestants). It is likely Howard intended the term more traditionally, however, for Kane is a stern and somber man, always depicted in the clothes traditionally associated with the Puritan pilgrims of the New World. (Even the word "Puritan" is typically left uncaptilized in current writings—we've chosen to capitalize it as Howard did for this book.)

Kane shares many traits of two of the great Puritan icons—John Calvin the originator and Oliver Cromwell the politician turned soldier who later personified (at least in popular myth) the ideal of piety, reverence, sacrifice, and perhaps most importantly, independent thought. The latter is key, for breaking with the church in the 16th century was no small feat. This idea of strong, independent men is the very essence of Kane, whose willpower is at least as potent as his skill with the sword and the pistol (more on this in a moment). Certainly to someone like Robert E. Howard, who was something of a stranger in his own town—writers of fantastic tales were not celebrated in 1920s Texas—this was Kane's most endearing quality.

Solomon Kane is not the brawny warrior most associate with Howard's stories, such as Conan or King Kull. Our wanderer's ability

with the sword and pistol are legendary, but he is no immortal. His most potent weapon is his rage. This is a trait most of Howard's heroes share. Impossible odds that seem to spell doom for the hero are met with a berserker's fury—often in combination with some fortunate event—to save the warrior's life.

This is no surprise—this is a staple of the pulp action stories Howard and others like him created. Perhaps more interesting is the *source* of his character's rage. Much has been written about the author's distrust—if not outright hatred—of civilization and all it brings with it. This was likely inspired by Howard's own observations when Cross Plains boomed with oil in 1925, bringing with it prostitutes, liquor, and numerous drifters of low morals.

Conan's distrust of civilization is obvious and plainly stated in many of his tales. His fear and loathing of sorcery derives from this as well, as the most powerful were usually firmly embedded in the rotting infrastructure of society. Liars and corrupt officials are also common in these tales, and are a further indication of Howard's view of "civilization." Even King Kull refutes the ancient laws of the kingdom he conquers in *By This Axe I Rule!* to show Howard's disdain for entrenched authority.

Those who know only the surface story of Solomon Kane often believe he is a tool of the church, or at least of Christianity. While our wanderer is certainly religious, it is obvious he has no love for organized religion. Kane is a Protestant, for one thing, which has its roots in Luther's protest against the Catholic Church. Kane also despises the Inquisition and spent time "on the racks of Spain." He never speaks of attending service, and it is likely few ministers would care to preach to one far more righteous than they. His very core—that of the wanderer—is anti-religious. In an age when the church was the social and spiritual heart of towns and villages, Kane has no use for community or settling. Instead, he spends most of his time in what he would see as *godless* lands—Africa, Cathay, and the New World.



Never do we see Kane proselytizing or attempting to convert. The "heathens" our wanderer meets in his travels are not likely to learn of Christianity from him. Instead, the Lord seems almost a non-denominational companion, a sort of ethereal friend Kane may speak with to ease his troubled mind or justify some terrible tragedy.

The portrayal of Kane in this essay stands in stark contrast to the popular image of him as a Christian crusader, a fundamentalist priest who carries the word of God to heathens at the point of a sword. Certainly Solomon is righteous—even self-righteous—and equally certainly a Christian. But the tie between these two aspects of his personality, and Howard's portrayal of him, is far more complex.

At his core, Kane is yet another of Howard's attacks on the corruptness of civilization. This time the point of the sword is inserted subtly, however, by one who—at first glance—appears to be a champion of society. "Religion" plays no part in Kane's stories—except at least as an "off-camera" foil in the case of the Spanish Inquistion, or the unseen "war" Solomon participated in as a Captain. Faith, however, is another matter entirely.

The illness of Howard's mother and his feelings of isolation in Cross Plains left our author often lonely and contemplative. Like Kane, Howard seems to have had little real interest in organized religion (though he had some connections to the social group that was the Cross Plains church). But his private conversations with "God," or at least some otherworldly power he hoped was still in charge somewhere in the Heavens, were very likely similar to those of his Puritan Wanderer as well.

In the character of Solomon Kane, we see one of Robert E. Howard's most vivid and intriguing characters; one who finds himself outside civilized society and at the same time its champion. A steadfast defender of the faith who simultaneously embraces heathen magic. In the few short stories we have of the somber Puritan, it is these contradictions that make Solomon Kane so heroic, and so human, and that make the savage world of Solomon Kane a world ripe for further adventure.

The Savage Tales of Solomon Kane

"You—who are—you?" her words came in gasps. "Naught but a wanderer, a landless man, but a friend to all in need."

—Red Shadows

Robert E. Howard wrote only a handful of Solomon Kane stories before his untimely death. For those of you who don't know these tales, or would like a quick refresher, we've summarized them here.

Skulls in the Stars

There are two roads to Torkertown.

So begins this tale of murder and madness on the moors of southern England.

Solomon, of course, takes the road less traveled. The one he is warned against.

A young boy tells him of the dangerous thing lurking along the "moor road," and advises him instead to take the perilous "swamp road," for the moor road is *"a way accurst and hath not been traversed by any of the countryside for a year or more."*

But the lure of such a dire fate is too strong for Kane, and he strides boldly into the moors.

Some time later, Kane hears a man's scream piercing the gathering darkness. He rushes forward only to see a horribly mutilated figure stumble toward him and fall dead at his feet. Moments later, a terrible specter approaches through the mist and attacks. The battle is one-sided—the spirit is intangible and neither Kane's pistol, saber, or vice-like grip has any effect. Eventually, Kane concentrates, believing his courage to be as tangible a force as the horror's hate. The two titans wrestle, and as they do so, Solomon begins to understand the thing's mad gibberings.

***

The following morning, Kane and a mob of villagers stood before the hut of Ezra the Miser. Kane rouses the hermit and confronts him with the terrible truth—that the macabre

murderer of the moor is none other than the ghost of Ezra's insane cousin—murdered a year ago to prevent him from telling of Ezra's cruelties.

With the wisdom of his biblical namesake, Solomon realizes the only way to satiate the phantom's bloodlust is to give it the one thing it desires—vengeance on Ezra himself. Kane is not typically an executioner if he can take a man alive, but this time the hermit's life must be sacrificed to rid the moor of the haunt once and for all.

Under the Puritan's auspices, the villagers drag the wailing Ezra into the fens and bind him to a rotting oak where he screams madly "Death! Death! There are skulls in the stars!" The jury leaves the miser to his fate—and hears the mad, cackling laughter of Gideon's ghost, and the final, tortured scream of his murderer.

The Right Hand of Doom

Roger Simeon was a necromancer of not inconsiderable power—and had a single friend named John Redly.

Redly boasts of the necromancer's capture and impending hanging at dawn in a local tavern, where he is overheard by Solomon Kane. Though the Puritan has no love of those who deal in black magic, he condemns John Redly as a treacherous soul who "betrayed him for a few filthy coins."

***

Later that night, as Kane lies sleeping in an inn near Torkertown, he is awakened by scratching sounds in a neighboring room. He rushes into the room and sees John Redly snoring soundly in his bed. Above his head hovers what at first looks like a huge spider. Before Kane can move, the thing drops onto Redly's neck and snaps it like a twig. The Puritan springs forward and discovers to his horror that the "spider" is a human hand!

That morning, Solomon Kane travels into Torkertown and learns that Roger Simeon the necromancer was indeed sent at dawn to the gallows. Before passing to the depths of Hell, however, Simeon had but one request, completed the night before. To have one hand lopped off at the wrist. What happened to the grisly limb nobody knows, but Roger seemed more than satisfied as the noose snapped tight around his neck.

Red Shadows

Solomon Kane comes across a ravaged girl somewhere in France. The girl dies in his arms naming Le Loup, "the wolf," as her slayer.

For weeks, Kane stalks the bandit and his followers, hiding by day and picking them off one by one at night. At last he prepares a trap—spreading tales of hidden gold in a hermit's cabin. The bandits enter—and Kane sets fire to the powder hidden within.

Le Loup and a few companions were not part of this expedition. They remain hidden in a cave, gathering their ill-gotten gains and preparing to flee the country. There is no honor among thieves, however, and Le Loup murders one of his remaining compatriots, just as Kane boldly walks into the hideout, having dispatched the rest of the gang.

Le Loup knows he is the sole survivor of his band. He asks why Kane's blood boils so hot. Solomon relays the tale of the girl who died in his arms. Le Loup asks if she was his wife and the pilgrim replies that he had never seen the girl before. The bandit is aghast:

"Nom d'un nom!" swore the bandit. "What sort of a man are you, Monsieur, who takes up a feud of this sort merely to avenge a wench unknown to you?"

The bandit parleys with the avenger, biding his time until he can knock over the cavern's sole candle. In the darkness, he slips out a hidden entrance and escapes.

An important character trait is brought out in this passage, for Howard now reveals:

"Kane could not have explained, even to himself, nor did he ever seek an explanation within himself. A true fanatic, his promptings were reasons enough for his actions."

Kane tracks the murderer down because it is right. His sense of right is offended. Though he feels the white-hot emotion of vengeance, he does not question why he acts on such emotions.

***

Years pass. The next we see of Kane, he's in Africa. He has followed Le Loup all the way across the Mediterranean.

Though it is likely Solomon has been here before, it is Howard's first exposition of the event and he spares a moment to explain that the Puritan and the Dark Continent are somehow linked. Perhaps it is the savage nature of their inner spirit that binds them.

Solomon ventures into the jungle and soon after is struck unconscious by some unseen figure. He awakes bound hand and foot on the floor of a hut. Sitting in the darkness nearby is a slight figure—N'Longa, the "ju-ju man." N'Longa has a proposition. If Kane will help him defeat the chief of the tribe, he will help Solomon with the "white devil" who aids him. Kane is soon after taken from the hut and brought before Chief Songa and his companion—none other than Le Loup.

The bandit once again expresses his amazement that Kane has pursued him so far to right a wrong committed against a total stranger. Solomon responds in kind. "Why have you fled from me across the world? You do not really fear me?" The bandit says that while he is confident he could best his pursuer in a fair fight, he has no desire to partake in such an event. He prefers to win his battles by guile and subterfuge. Le Loup's tone bears the slightest hint that he realizes Kane is his destiny, and that to fight him one on one will result in his early retirement to Hades.

Le Loup goes on to explain that he has supplanted the tribe's witch-doctor, N'Longa, and wormed his way into the cannibals' confidences. At a word, the cannibals and a massive champion named Gulka the Gorilla Slayer overcome Kane and N'Longa. The unlikely pair are then bound to a stake and set to be burned alive. As the bonfire begins, N'Longa droops—seemingly dead. Moments later, one of the tribe's previous human sacrifices rises awkwardly from the sacrificial altar—convulsing and jerking its way toward the chief and his white-skinned advisor. The zombie staggers toward Chief Songa and slays him before falling dead at the foot of the bonfire. The cannibals believe this is



N'Longa's magic and rush to put out the fire and free its victims as Le Loup slips away into the night.

Kane follows and confronts Le Loup in a moonlit glade. The two fight an epic duel to the death, pitting the Puritan's steely will against the Frenchman's flashing blade. In the end, of course, Solomon's mettle is stronger and the long pursuit of the bandit comes to a bloody end.

But this deadly night is not over for our hero. As he cleanses his wounds in a nearby stream, Gulka the Gorilla Slayer—the tribe's strongest member and a loyal subject of Chief Songa—emerges from the jungle. Gulka stalks the hero, circling his prey warily as he prepares to strike. Solomon is exhausted from his battle with Le Loup and the heat of his intended pyre. He steels himself for a manly end, but knows his fate is sealed.

Just then Gulka pauses. At the edge of the moonlit glade appears a set of yellow, glaring eyes. The intruder is a monstrous gorilla—the mate of a large silverback Gulka killed cruelly

that day and left upon the roof-poles of his hut. The two square off, but fate intends revenge and Gulka's spine is snapped like a twig. The victorious gorilla then hurls the cannibal's remains into a nearby tree to mock the end of its own mate, and stalks back into the night and the high mountains where it lives.

Kane has an odd feeling about the night's events. He feels as if he's seen all this before. As if his soul is bound to this dark place, or perhaps to the savagery he's witnessed tonight. Perhaps, he feels, he is some sort of eternal champion, forever destined to walk the line between barbarism and civilization.

Rattle of Bones

Solomon travels through the Black Forest of Germany and chances across a French companion named Gaston l'Armon. The two check into an inn called the Cleft Skull, and are almost immediately overcome with misgivings for the innkeeper. Shown to their chambers, Kane discovers a secret closet in which a chained skeleton with an obvious gash in its skull is discovered.

L'Armon deftly cuts the corpse's chain and remarks, "Somehow, I will slay the man who kills me, though my corpse climb up forty fathoms of ocean to do it."

Kane turns and is surprised to see l'Armon with a pistol in his hands. His companion is Gaston the Butcher, whom Kane now remembers having seen some years past in Calais. Gaston disarms Kane, but before he can murder the Puritan, is slain himself by the innkeeper—another madman.

The innkeeper was imprisoned for some crime he did not commit and now wars against all men. The skeleton in the closet, he claims, is a vile sorcerer he murdered some years before. The fiend continues to rattle his bones—threatening vengeance, the innkeeper explains, so he chained him to the floor in this small closet.

The maniac makes to kill Solomon, but a cold wind blows out the room's only candle. Hideous laughter and the rattle of bones echoes from the closet and the innkeeper is pulled in. Kane fumbles to light a candle and throws open the secret door to find his treacherous host dead with the bony fingers of the freed skeleton around his throat. Gaston's vow to avenge his death by his own hand proved true—for his was the hand that freed the chained skeleton.

The Castle of the Devil

Kane continues his journey through the Black Forest of Germany and chances upon another companion—a fellow Englishman by the name of John Silent. Kane relates that this land is a cruel place, and that only hours before he passed a dying wretch on a roadside gallows and cut him free. Silent warns that these are the lands of Baron Von Staler, and that such an action was very unwise. Kane rebukes his companion and the two continue on their way.

Shortly they come upon the keep of Von Staler, which Kane says men call the "Castle of the Devil." Silent wishes to move on, but Kane is firm. He wants to confront this Baron. "It has fallen upon me, now and again in my sojourns through the world, to ease various evil men of their lives. I have a feeling that it will prove thus with the Baron."

(Howard's version ends.)

Death's Black Riders

This is the shortest of Howard's Solomon Kane fragments, yet also one of the most evocative.

Solomon Kane is riding through a dark forest (perhaps the Black Forest still) when he spies a black rider on a gigantic black horse galloping toward him. Kane seeks to let the rider past, yet catches sight of two burning eyes beneath the rider's cloak, and sees moonlight glint on steel.

Kane draws his pistol and fires at the black rider, point blank into the face, but to no effect. A wave of icy air engulfs Kane like a surging river, and Kane and his horse fall. By the time he recovers, the mysterious black rider has gone.

(Fragment ends.)





The Moon of Skulls

Solomon Kane is traveling over extremely rugged terrain in Africa. After an arduous trek and ignoring a corpse obviously posed as a dire warning, he meets a large tribesman who tells him he has entered the land of Negari, home of the Vampire Queen Nakari.

The tribesman is soon joined by many of his fellows who were hiding in the jungle nearby. At a narrow bridge of natural rock, the natives attack. Kane backs himself onto the bridge and battles them one at a time. Suddenly, a giant among the attackers comes forward and drives himself and Solomon off the narrow bridge and into the endless chasm below.

Kane manages to twist so that he lands on top of his foe, and luckily falls only a few dozen feet onto a narrow ledge. The other attackers cannot see in the growing darkness and take leave—believing the pair dead. Kane slowly regains his senses and detects hidden entrances in the ledge. He enters a dark, rubble-strewn cave and at once encounters a swarm of bats and what is perhaps a giant constrictor of some sort. The Puritan's steel will—and the point of his dagger—eventually drives the serpent away and he stumbles on through the darkness.

As Kane wanders through the caves, he eventually discovers a secret passage that leads up to what is obviously Queen Nakari's palace. Through a crack in the walls he sees the tribesmen flanking their beautiful but savage matriarch. Surrounding Nakari are gigantic statues of the beasts of Africa—and stranger things, images not likely carved by the current occupants. The tribesmen who serve her are beplumed and fit—elite guards that could easily rival the finest soldiers of Europe.

As Solomon Kane watches, the tribesman who led him to the bridge earlier is brought before the Queen and executed for failing

to bring the white stranger to her alive. The Englishman withdraws and explores the hidden passages within the palace, avoiding the natives until he eventually comes across a strange and mysterious room flanked by two elite guards.

The walls do not reach to the ceiling, it turns out, and Kane scales upward and over the guards into the room beyond. What he finds there is a complete and total shock to the Puritan adventurer.

Lying on a velvet couch is a red-haired, white-skinned woman—a prisoner of Nakari. This woman is Marilyn, and it is for her that Kane had ventured into the darkest heart of Africa.

Kane had fought a duel in England, and as his opponent lay dying, he revealed that he had sold a young heiress into slavery years prior. The slaver was a Barbary pirate named El Gar. Kane tracked down the reaver and slew him—after learning that the young girl had been sold to a merchant in Istanbul. From there he traced the child to the Levant and chanced upon a dying Greek sailor who claimed the girl's last location was somewhere on the West Coast of Africa. Natives there led Kane to the interior where he heard rumors of the Vampire Queen, and that she had taken a white woman for a slave. This journey took the wanderer years with nothing but the slimmest hope for Marilyn's safe return, but such is the will of Solomon Kane.

The details of Marilyn's experiences at the hands of Nakari are not revealed, but she hints they are gruesome indeed, and best left untold.

Queen Nakari enters Marilyn's chamber and Kane hides behind the tapestries. The Vampire Queen's keen instincts soon detect him, and Solomon strides boldly toward her with his pistol drawn. But Nakari is a born trickster. She pulls a cord, opening a pit trap and sending Kane crashing through the floor into the darkness below.

The Puritan wakes in a dark cell with Nakari standing over him. Now her true motives become known. Her inherited kingdom is crumbling. She has heard of the white man's "thunder sticks" and believes that troops armed with these weapons—and a strong king and queen to lead them—could restore Negari to its former glory. Kane refuses the Terrible One's advances, of course, and she leaves swearing that he will change his mind after rotting in the dungeon for a time—and hearing of Marilyn's torture.

Nakari sends for Kane some time later. As he is escorted through the ancient palace, Solomon spies one of the entrances to the secret passages he had used earlier. He tricks the guards by feigning illness and manages to overcome them before seeming to disappear through the walls like a white ghost.

Through the corridors Solomon wanders. A barred window offers him a vision of the Vampire Queen's vast city. Giant black stones, "far to the right and the left loomed up great black crags and beneath them there reared castles and towers of stone, of strange architecture—it was as if giants from some other planet had thrown them up in a wild and chaotic debauch of creation." Swarms of Nakari's subjects were even now gathering below, no doubt preparing for some dark ritual.

Solomon Kane continues his exploration and chances upon more ancient dungeons. Within, he finds a strange and unexpected prisoner. The captive is one of the old race—those men and women who built this strange city. "...have your eyes looked on the golden spires of Atlantis and the crimson walls of Mu?" he asks. The man then relates the tale of this age-old place; it was the last bastion of proud Atlantis, eventually brought low by the slaves they had taken from the far corners of the world. Interbreeding and training in the ways of war eventually led to a massive revolt. But the slaves had not been trained in the other skills of ruling and slowly fell into barbarism. The prisoner is the last of the old Atlantean priests, and Nakari is likely the last of the slave royalty.

Marilyn, the aged prisoner explains, will be sacrificed to Nakura's skull, the last remnants of a treacherous wizard who aided the slaves in their overthrow of Atlantis. Nakura is a god to the Negarians now, and Nakari believes that sacrificing Marilyn to him will restore

her former power. All this will occur on the "Moon of Skulls"—the next full moon, this very night.

Nakura's skull lies in the Tower of Death, and "speaks" to the people each full moon. This is a trick, the prisoner says, for a secret stair leads up to the skull and a priest of the Vampire Queen recites ancient gibberish to excite the ignorant worshippers below.

The old prisoner gives Kane a plan before finally succumbing to his lifetime of torture. Climb the stair, he advises, slay the speaker, and in Nakura's guise, tell the people to slay the Vampire Queen instead of Marilyn.

Leaving the dead priest, Kane hurries from the dungeons and races for the Tower of Death. But the dark labyrinth is difficult to navigate and Kane instead ends up in some other palisade across from the tower. Below him, the ritual has already begun. The natives are chanting, Nakari dances, and Marilyn lies upon the Black Altar where she will soon be sacrificed.

Solomon steals to the ground level, mad in his haste to save Marilyn or at least die by her side with honor. To his great fortune, one of the chieftains watching the ceremony stands with his back to Kane's door. In his waistband is Kane's pistol. The Puritan silently dispatches his foe in the darkness of the doorway just as the skull of Nakura begins to speak. Solomon rushes forward and fires at the skull high above—shattering it into a thousand pieces. The stunned worshippers below writhe in disbelief—the skull had been their god for untold centuries, and now is gone with a hurried crack of thunder.

Madness sets in and the natives begin to attack each other as well as the white intruder. Kane battles his way through the berserk mob to Marilyn, and regains his sword, which they had planned to use to slay her. Nakari herself then rushes from the crowd to slash Solomon with her terrible claws, but she is intercepted by a maddened giant who throws her from the altar onto the stones below.

The wanderer rushes to Marilyn's side and is finally about to be overwhelmed when a massive earthquake strikes. The great Tower of Death suddenly begins to sway; it topples into the crowd, crushing scores and sending the cavorting madmen scattering from its shadow. What happens next is a blur, but the Puritan battles his way through the crumbling city and into the wilds beyond before passing out exhausted from his trials.

He awakes on a bluff overlooking dense jungle below; Marilyn at his side. Though he is battered and bleeding, Solomon feels reinvigorated by the success of his years-long quest. "To England," Kane exclaims as he begins to lecture Marilyn on faith and the power of the Almighty who delivered them both from the terrible empire of Negari.

The One Black Stain (Poem)

St. Julian's Bay, 1578. Sir Francis Drake is holding a mock court to try what he calls the "rebel captains," one of whom is Sir Thomas Doughty. Kane steps forth and proclaims that while the traitor may be worthy of death, Drake's court is a mockery of justice. Drake attempts to make Kane execute the traitor, but Solomon's steel gaze easily counters the demand of his "one-time friend." Still, Drake throws the "Puritan knave" in irons and he is taken into the brig of his flagship.

Later that night, Kane easily overpowers his guard—it appears that Drake's men are demoralized at executing their shipmates. Slipping into the admiral's cabin with a dagger in his hand, Solomon intends to administer final justice. Drake sees Kane enter the room but makes no attempt to stop him from his murderous deed. Solomon realizes Drake is already dead inside and quietly leaves the room.

The Blue Flame of Vengeance

The tale begins with Jack Hollinster and Sir George Banway engaged in a duel over a girl named Mary Garvin. The fight ends with first blood, though both men are willing to push it to the death if not for the interference of their seconds and a local magistrate.

Jack, the younger, poorer man, leaves the duel and wanders along the beach, cursing to himself. He is overheard by a tall, rangy stranger sitting on the rocks—Solomon Kane. The Puritan has spied what he claims is a pirate ship belonging to a renowned reaver named Jonas Harkrader, though better

known as the Fishhawk. He explains this to Hollinster, warns him of his cursing, then sets quickly off on his way.

Later that night, a local peasant comes to Jack's window and tells him that Mary has been taken by his rival, George Banway. Jack follows the man to Sir George's manor—and is betrayed. The peasant cudgels Hollinster and all goes black.

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Young Hollinster awakens in the cellar of Banway's manor. Sir George has taken Mary as well, and has surrounded himself with pirates led by the notorious Fishhawk. Banway, it seems, is one of their "Brotherhood," and intends to help them sell the loot taken from a recent act of piracy. He intends to turn Jack into a "red ruin," and Mary will be his plaything for two months while the pirates take to sea and avoid any local authorities.

Just then, a dark shadow breaks across the gathered buccaneers—a tall, rangy shadow topped with a wide slouch hat. Solomon Kane has arrived.

To avenge the death of a girl he had once held upon his knee as an infant, he has chased the pirates from the Spanish Main to Portugal and England. Kane has Harkrader in his sights, but the pirate appeals to the Puritan's one weakness—his pride. He goads him into a duel and Solomon accepts. The Fishhawk wisely chooses daggers as his weapon—avoiding the champion's deadly aim with the pistol and incredible skill with the rapier. A terrible and bloody knife fight ensues. Kane wins through sheer determination, and slowly presses the point of his blade through Harkrader's breast and into his heart.

The pirates make their play, but Solomon has armed Hollinster in the interim. The two rescue Mary and break away, bolting the cellar door and trapping the rest of the cutthroats below. The trio avoids the rest of Harkrader's guards by moving into the manor. Unfortunately, George Banway has a secret passage within and is able to surprise them. Jack shoots him with one of Solomon's pistols, but it has no effect. Banway grabs Mary and disappears back into the secret portal. Kane reasons it must run to the sea, for the lord of this house has long trucked with smugglers. He and Hollinster race to the coast.

At the beach, they find Banway and the remaining pirates boarding longboats. Mary is bound within one of the craft. They rush the fiends and Jack engages Sir George in swordplay. Though Jack is outmatched, he manages one solid blow on his rival's ribs—only to discover he is wearing a mail shirt. Banway retaliates and Jack retreats wounded. Now the noble must deal with Solomon. The battle continues, but this time it is obvious Kane is the master. The wanderer feels almost guilty at defeating such an amateur, but soon enough pierces his left eye and leaves him dead on the sands.

Kane leaves the young lovers on the strand—wandering once more toward the inevitable call of righteous adventure.

The Hills of the Dead

Kane finds himself in Africa once again. He ascends a tall cliff is met by his friend from Red Shadows, N'Longa. The witch doctor gives Kane a magic, cat-headed staff and tells him that if he wants the ju-ju man, he need only sleep with the staff across his chest.

Despite his Puritan background, it is in this tale that Solomon Kane realizes magic is a powerful weapon, and despite his deep reservations, he must accept this lesser evil.

> *"God have mercy on my soul for delving in barbaric magic," said he, "but demonry must be fought with demonry, mayhap."*

Kane presses on, wandering toward some unknown destination but inexplicably drawn to the Dark Continent. "…she has drawn me, and with the dawn I go to seek the heart of her."

A few days (or perhaps weeks) later, Kane is stalking through a curiously quiet grassland when he spies a young girl, Zunna, running from a lion. He fells the beast with a single shot. Zunna's village is too far to make by sunset, so the Puritan decides to shelter for the night in a nearby cave. Zunna objects,

claiming the hills are far more dangerous than the lions, but Solomon has had enough of superstition.

Zunna's warning proves true, however, as the adventurer is soon attacked by two hideous undead natives. Kane overcomes the creatures by driving his staff through their chests and turning them to dust. Zunna explains that there are hundreds of these "vampires" in the hills. They were created by ancient masters who used them to battle their rebellious slaves—Zunna's people.

Kane prays, trying to figure out how to defeat an entire nation of vampires. Finally, he agrees to use black magic against itself. He lies with N'Longa's staff across his chest and is soon met by the ju-ju man in his dreams. N'Longa instructs Solomon to send Zunna home and return with her lover. She does so, and her lover sleeps with the magical staff. N'Longa transfers his consciousness into the lover's form, and sends the native and Zunna into limbo for a time.



The ju-ju man and Solomon trek to the top of a high crag and gaze down upon the plateau below. There they see a vast, gray ancient city—the city of the dead. N'Longa explains that the vampires dwell in the caves for fear of being trapped in the collapsing stones of the crumbling city, but still retreat to its high walls when they are occasionally attacked by the surrounding spearmen.

As the two old friends meditate on this problem, the sun begins to set. Suddenly, they are swarmed. The fighting is desperate and Solomon is nearly ripped to pieces as he clears a path up the mountain. Death, it seems, is looming near when N'Longa's plan finally bears fruit. Swooping from out of the darkening sky comes thousands of vultures. They descend on the vampires and begin picking them to pieces. The things run for the safety of their city, but N'Longa is not done. He hurls a flaming brand to the grassland below his vantage point and watches as fire sweeps through the tall grass. The vultures and the fire make short work of the horrible undead.

Solomon and N'Longa return at last to the slumbering Zunna and her lover. N'Longa explains to Kane that he is far older than the Englishman would believe, and that not all magic is black. Were he evil, N'Longa explains, would he not keep this fine young body instead of his old tired shell? Kane will never truly embrace this magic, but neither does he condemn it.

Africa still calls to the wanderer, and he sets out on his way once again.

"Defy man and God, but you may not deceive the vultures, sons of Satan! They know whether a man is alive or dead!"

Hawk of Basti

Solomon Kane comes across an old brother in arms, Jeremy Hawk. Kane sailed with his friend Sir Richard Grenville, while Jeremy was on John Bellefonte's ship. Hawk tells of his adventures on the Spanish Main, in which Bellefonte died and he became captain. From there he was chased by a Spanish warship and put ashore somewhere on Africa's coast. He traveled far—eventually alone as his mates died—and came upon a strange city where

natives were ruled by "a curious and ungodly race." The city was called Basti, and the cruel masters the Khabasti.

Hawk fooled the natives into believing he was a minor god thanks to some simple sleight of hand, but was himself even more amazed at the very real black magic of their high priest, Agara. The Khabasti were so cruel to the slaves that Hawk eventually led them in revolt. His rebellion was successful, and he ruled over them for a short but prosperous time. Agara survived the first revolt, however, and returned with his loyalists. With the aid of black magic, the Khabasti were victorious and drove Hawk from the city. He had been on the run ever since. Solomon agrees to return with Hawk to retake the city.

"But I wish no earthly throne of pride and vanity. If we bring peace to a suffering race and punish evil men for their cruelty, it is enough for me."

Shortly, Hawk's pursuers burst into the clearing. Most are African natives, but some are taller with different skin tones and features. Kane feels he has seen these men before—or some like them. Hawk fires one of Solomon's pistols at the leader of the warband and blows his brains out. The rest are shocked and bow down to their former king.

(Fragment ends.)

The Return of Sir Richard Grenville (Poem)

Kane sleeps beneath a tree and dreams of Sir Richard Grenville's return. His former captain informs him that the hounds of Doom are free. The two companions fight side by side, as in days of old. Pistols roar, sabers flash, and horrible things race at them through the night. The pair are victorious. In the end, Kane, as always, stands alone—the phantom of his dream fading back into the eternal night.

Wings in the Night

Kane remains in Africa, somewhere east of the Slave Coast, when he comes across a ruined village. Bones and loot lie everywhere, and he ponders what could have happened here. Two grim clues present themselves. The thatched roofs of the huts are torn as if something ripped them apart from above, and a tawny skeleton lies impaled on a broken limb some 60 feet above the ground. As he ponders the scene, Kane comes across a hideously mutilated native tied to a large stake. The unfortunate man tells Solomon that a priest named Goru bound him here for the pleasure of the akaanas. Finally, the wretch dies, screaming only:

"The wings! The wings! They come again! Ahhhh, mercy, the wings!"

Solomon Kane leaves the village—a group of cannibal hunters who have pursued him for days finally discovering his trail. He heads into the dark hills beyond the village, feeling his cowardly pursuers slinking behind him all the while. Finally, the hunters sense an advantage and attack. Kane wrestles in the darkness with one of the savages, but at the height of the battle, something swoops down from high above and snatches the screaming cannibal into the air.

Kane sleeps and dreams of the horrible things. The following morning he sets off, determined to destroy this threat which he feels lurks in the black hills beyond. To his great surprise, one of the things attacks him in the broad daylight. It flies from the sun but is quickly brought down by a single shot from Solomon's pistol. He examines the dead creature and believes it to be nothing short of a winged demon from Hell itself. The terror has humanoid features, with a beaked mouth and terrible jagged teeth. As he surveys the thing, another suddenly attacks. This one grievously wounds Solomon, tearing half his scalp and gashing him horribly as they fly high into the air. The Puritan stabs the horror over and over with his dirk, and the thing eventually plunges to the earth with its mangled victim in its grasp.

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The wanderer awakes weeks later in the village of Bogonda, where he is being cared for by a small tribe of Africans. One of those caretakers is Goru, who the man on the stake claimed had bound him there. Goru cares for Kane and explains that his tribe is not native here. They came to this plateau a hundred



and fifty years earlier, fleeing a civil war. They battled their way through a thousand miles of jungle, past the terrible cannibals Kane had encountered, and onto the grassy plateaus. Here they hunted lions and the many wild goats and pigs that roamed there. Soon they learned why this game had gone untouched by the nearby cannibals for so long. It was the lions that kept away the winged creatures of the black hills.

The hideous akaanas struck selectively at first, but quickly learned the Bogondi's arrows were little threat to them unless fired en masse. Soon they were mercilessly murdering the tribesman just out of bow-shot, cruelly taunting the refugees with their bloody toying and feasting.

A party of the Bogondi went into the black hills to slay the things, and found cliffs honey-combed with caves. They were wiped out by the akaanas and the Bogondi removed themselves to two villages, Upper and Lower Bogonda.

Goru's people then attempted to leave this Hellish place by battling their way through the cannibals, but the savages gathered and blocked their escape in a pitched battle that lasted the better part of a day. All the while, the terrible akaanas circled in the skies above, laughing at the slaughter and picking off any isolated combatants for their own pleasure.

The akaanas did not seek the complete destruction of the Bogondi. Instead, they kept them much like cattle, snatching only occasional strays and staying away from the village. The bat-people were dying out now, Goru said, but they were still too strong for his remaining warriors. And even if they were victorious, the cannibals would simply sweep up the plateau and finish them.

But doom was nigh. The tribesmen had been forced to eat many of the pigs and goats that were the natural prey of the akaanas, and the vengeful, hungry monstrosities were turning to Bogondi flesh more and more. The Lower Bogondis finally revolted against their akaana masters and slew one of them. Vengeance came swiftly. A hundred or more of the creatures descended on the village and decimated it. Now only Upper Bogonda was left, and Goru believes it is doomed. As a last desperate measure, the remaining tribesmen drew lots and sacrificed one of their own in an effort to appease the akaanas. This was the unfortunate soul Kane found bound in the ruins of the lower village.

As he contemplates the predicament, Kane realizes it was these creatures that gave rise to the legend of the harpies. He determines his presence here is keeping the cowardly predators at bay, and vows to remain as long as he continues to offer the Bogondis some measure of protection.

It is not to be, however. Soon after, Kane awakes to hear the sounds of slaughter. The akaanas are attacking. He slays six of the things in a red madness with pistols, rapier, and bare hands. The villagers manage another eleven, but in the end, the winged terrors are too much. All of the Bogondis are slain, and Goru's severed head is left mounted above his hut.

Solomon swears vengeance for these unfortunate people. Day and night he toils to transform Goru's hut into a death-trap. Kane slays all the game on the plateau and allows the lions back to devour whatever's left, depriving the flying hunters of their prey. Finally, he slaughters a buffalo and butchers it in Goru's hut. The starving akaanas descend and cautiously enter the building to feast. Kane strikes—locking the door and setting fire to the thatch walls. The ancient harpies scream and finally die in a smoldering Hell, eliminated from the world and leaving only the myths they spawned.

The Footfalls Within

Kane is still in Africa when he comes across the unfortunate remains of a dead slave. He tracks the woman's prints and comes upon a slave train of a hundred shackled natives. Driving them are 15 Arabs and some 70 native warriors. The Puritan's blood boils as he watches the slavers abuse and whip their prisoners. He shadows them for hours, trying to formulate a plan to save these poor souls—driven by memories of his own time in slavery aboard a Turkish galley.

But Kane cannot hold his ire for long. When one of the slaves falters and is about to be raped, he strides forth from his hiding place and slays a number of the butchers. Inevitably, he is captured, of course, and finds that the slave train is run by sheikh Hassim ben Said. He has heard of Kane's exploits and promises to sell him into slavery for a very high price—most likely to one of the Puritan's many enemies.

As the group marches along, one of the warriors discovers what ben Said believes is an old tomb—perhaps full of riches. He drags his spearmen and Solomon into the jungle and waits anxiously while one of his men cracks open the door. To his horror, Solomon realizes this is no crypt—it is a vault intended to keep some terrible monster at bay. As the door cracks open, an amorphous thing of blood and death roils out over the assembled crowd. Kane bursts free and barely manages to slay the monster with N'Longa's staff.

As he theorizes about the Thing's origin, he realizes this was likely sealed here by King Solomon himself, perhaps with the very staff he now holds.

The Children of Asshur

Kane has taken refuge from a raging storm in a peaceful village. He awakes to sounds of battle. He reaches for his weapons and is struck a terrible blow from a tall, bronze-skinned man.

The wanderer awakes several hours later. He finds the village is in ruins, with corpses strewn everywhere. Solomon stalks off into the jungle—his weapons gone—and spies the torches of the attackers heading into the high hills, obviously leading slaves.

The next morning the Puritan follows and discovers a wide road leading onto a cliff-flanked plateau. Atop this mountain, to his amazement, is an incredible walled city. Soon

Kane is discovered by one of the inhabitants and attacked without warning. For once the foe is Solomon's equal in combat and strength. Only the Puritan's will prevails, and the two engage in a bloody fight that sends them tumbling down a steep embankment to land in a broken and bloody heap.

Solomon wakes many days later, his wounds bound and clean, and food and wine within his reach. Around his wrists, however, are golden chains. His captors seem to be the king of these strange people (Asshur-ras-arab) and a fawning priest (Yamen). They keep him chained for days in various rooms within the king's palace, where he is sometimes able to make out the vast, colorful, and curiously gigantic architecture. On the walls he sees murals telling tales of these people's ancient history—of battles with Africans, Persians, and even antediluvian Europeans.

Some time later, Kane is brought to a throne room where he is drugged and used in vile trickery. Yamen proclaims that Kane is some sort of oracle of the god Baal, and that he has bid the rebellious prince Bel-lardath be flayed alive. The event takes place in the public square far below, and Kane is informed of his deed by his attendant, a slave of the native people from the villages far below.



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Solomon now knows that he is a captive of the Assyrians in a city called Ninn, and that he is being used as a puppet by the false-king Asshur-ras-arab and his corrupt priest.

One morning as Kane languishes in his cell, a massive attack is waged against Ninn by one of the tribes with whom they frequently war, the Sulas. The natives are decimated by arrow fire from the walled city and finally broken by the might of the Assyrians. However, Kane's attendant is of the Sulas, and the defeat drives him mad. He leaps upon Yamen's back and plunges a dagger between his shoulder blades. A massive guard pulls the slave back but stumbles into Kane—giving him the break he has waited for these maddening months. The wanderer kills the guard before stealing the key to his chains and escaping.

His plan is to slip through the chaotic streets below, but his path is blocked by a terrible scene. A great lion has somehow broken loose in the streets and is about to seize upon a young noblewoman. Solomon comes to her rescue and kills the beast. The priests of Ninn gather about and scream for his capture, but a young nobleman protects him and offers Kane his sword.

(Fragment ends.)

Solomon Kane's Homecoming (Poem)

Solomon returns to his home of Devon, now likely in his 60s. He tells the locals of his incredible adventures—how he has slain a vampire queen, seen dead men walk in the moonlight, and fought alongside his beloved Richard Grenville. He waxes mournfully about an unknown lady, "Bess," and regrets that he "caused her tears."

No sooner has Solomon said that he'd like to rest peacefully in Devon, than he catches some ill wind off the ocean. Without another word, he sheathes his Spanish blade and wanders off into the night upon some new and strange adventure.

Characters

"A strong man is needed to combat Satan and his might. Therefore I go, who have defied him many a time."

—Skulls in the Stars

YOUR hero doesn't need to be a Puritan wanderer, though you can certainly stride that path if you like. Solomon Kane's world is full of many different types of heroes. Swashbuckling pirates or honorable soldiers, wise men from forgotten cities in Africa, French musketeers, Arab merchants, and American Indians all belong here.

One's goal, demeanor, and manner need not match that of our titular hero either. What matters is that whatever character you create, he or she is an icon of her type. If you create a zealous Inquisitor, play him as such! Insist on strapping infidels to the rack and forcing confessions from their lips. If you play an American Indian, show his savage and brutal side as well as his nobility. Play your hero to his fullest, and don't be afraid to be a stereotype—at least on the surface.

Don't be afraid to play a slightly villainous adventurer either. The nature of the *Path of Kane* Plot Point campaign means there is room for all types. The wicked may be redeemed, or at least serve a greater good before their final judgment falls.

Below are a number of character ideas that make sense to play in Kane's world. These are just some ideas intended to spark your imagination, not an exhaustive list from which you have to choose. If you have a strong idea of the kind of hero you want to create, you should go with that, even if we haven't included it here.

Antiquarian: The antiquarian is interested in ancient artifacts, especially those alleged to contain strange powers. Whether they be relics of long-dead saints or ju-ju fetishes, the antiquarian isn't afraid to explore new lands in search of powerful and mysterious objects.

Bandit: The world of Solomon Kane is a harsh one, and banditry is rife. A bandit may be a former soldier fallen on hard times, a gentleman highwayman who only robs those who can afford his price, an outcast forced to live outside society who must take by force what he needs to survive, or simply a spineless cur who preys on the weak to save himself from having to work for a living.

Escaped Slave: The colonial powers have transported many slaves to the New World to work on the plantations and in the mines. Life is very hard, and more than a few run away to seek a better life elsewhere.

Explorer: The powers of the Old World are stretching their influence across the continents. Many explorers are known to be roaming the lands, mapping features and searching for new wonders. Great fame and fortune awaits those who reveal the blank regions of the map.

Hunter: In many cultures, hunting is still the primary method of food acquisition. Often operating alone, these trackers are more at home in the wilderness than in the cities.

Inquisitor: The Inquisition was founded to seek out heresy, witchcraft, and other such Devilry. Inquisitors are often driven by intense religious zeal, and use questionable methods to extract confessions before they "purify" their victims in a funeral pyre.



Merchant: The land blockade of the great Ottoman Empire has forced the European nations to seek new trade routes to the Indies and Cathay. Part explorer and part sailor, merchants are among the first to visit these new lands and encounter the wonders—and horrors—which dwell there.

Missionary: The European powers all consider the natives of the new worlds to be Godless savages. The missionary is dedicated to enlightening the natives, and teaching them the ways of civilization.

Musketeer: The advances in musketry have revolutionized European warfare, and are largely responsible for the demise of the armored knight. While a soldier must close with his foe, the musketeer dispatches his enemies at range, and with weapons that penetrate even metal armor with ease.

Native: The lands the white man now treads were not previously empty wastelands. Indigenous peoples have inhabited them since time immemorial. Although Europeans consider them primitive, the natives are at one with the natural world, and are fierce and savage warriors.

Noble: Whether a European noble with land and a castle, or a native princess, a noble is from the upper echelons of her society.

Officer: Leaders of fighting men, whether at sea or on land. They are usually given their commission due to their wealth or birth, or more rarely earn their position by rising "through the ranks."

Penitent: The penitent seeks atonement for some earthly sin, hoping she can redeem herself before the Reaper comes to claim her soul.

Pirate: True pirates are thieves looking to get rich off the hard-earned fortunes of others. Most are able seaman of course, but aren't necessarily good fighters. Pirates rarely attack crews who can fight back, preferring to prey on the weak for easy plunder instead.

Privateer: Those who hunt pirates with official commissions from rulers or shipping organizations are called privateers. Theirs is a dangerous job, for pirates fear the noose and rarely surrender without a fight.

Sailor: Mankind has sailed the seas since the days of antiquity. There are many strange things living in the ocean, and it is not without reason sailors are considered a superstitious bunch.

Shaman: Magic is a real and potent force in the world, yet it requires the practitioner to walk a line between light and darkness. Shamans, also known as witchdoctors or juju men, invoke their powers through spirits, whether ancestral, elemental, or from some darker plane of existence.

Sorcerer: The sorcerer is the Western equivalent of the tribal shaman. They are not fantasy-type wizards but instead work their will through rituals and charms. Some invoke angelic powers; others walk a darker road and traffic with unholy spirits.

Spy: Nations have always spied on their rivals, seeking to unlock their secrets, uncover weaknesses, and thwart potential aggressors with advanced knowledge of their plans. The spy relies on her wits and guile to infiltrate other lands.

Swordsman: A swordsman may be a bully or show off, using his skills for his own ends, or a protector of the weak, willing to lay down his life for a noble and just cause. Some prefer flashy styles, others, like Kane, are functional (yet deadly) in their sword play.

Treasure Hunter: Rumors of vast treasure hordes—such as that of the fabled city of El Dorado or the lost mines of King Solomon—are common. Those who gain some clue to their location search the world relentlessly for these treasures.

Vengeant: The vengeant has been driven to seek revenge for some wrong done against her or her loved ones. She may perhaps have lost a friend to the Inquisition, been falsely imprisoned by a corrupt noble, or suffered at the hand of some unnatural beast. Her lust for revenge knows no bounds.

Warrior: Warriors may be simple barbaric fighters or trained soldiers. Armed with spear and shield and decorated with war paint, or sword and musket and dressed in armor, they defend their people against vicious beasts and marauders, and wage war against their nation's rivals.

Making Characters

Creating awe-inspiring heroes for *The Savage World of Solomon Kane* is easy. The only thing you need is a copy of the character sheet found at the back of this book or on our website, www.peginc.com. Once you have your sheet, follow these steps to make your hero.

Note you will occasionally see a reference to your hero's "Rank," which is a measure of how experienced he or she is. This section assumes you're starting as a "Novice." Your hero will advance to Seasoned, Veteran, Heroic, and Legendary... if he survives long enough!

If the GM wants to start your party at one of these higher Ranks, see page 69.

1) Race

All player characters in The Solomon Kane RPG are humans. In the *Savage Worlds* game system used in this book, humans start with one free Edge (see page 33).

2) Traits

Characters are defined by attributes and skills, collectively called "Traits," and both work in exactly the same way. Attributes and skills are ranked by die types, from a d4 to a d12, with d6 being the average for adult humans. We'll tell you exactly how to use them in just a bit, but for now, just remember that higher is better!

Attributes

Begin your character by purchasing his attributes. All heroes start with a d4 in each attribute, and have 5 points with which to raise any or all of them. Each die type above a d4 costs 1 point. Raising a d4 to a d6, for example, costs 1 point. Raising the attribute another step (to a d8) costs another point.

You're free to spend these points however you want with one exception: no attribute may be raised above a d12.

Here's more information on your hero's attributes and what they'll be used for during the game.

- **Agility** represents your character's nimbleness, quickness, and dexterity.
- **Smarts** is a measure of how well your hero knows his world and culture, how well he thinks on his feet, and his mental agility. See the sidebar on Common Knowledge on page 26 for another important use of the Smarts attribute.
- **Spirit** is your character's emotional side, reflecting his inner wisdom and willpower. Spirit is very important as it helps your hero recover from being rattled when injured.
- **Strength** is raw physical power and general fitness. Strength also determines your hero's damage in hand-to-hand combat.
- **Vigor** represents endurance, resistance to disease, poisons, and how much pain or physical damage a hero can shake off.

Skills

Skills are learned trades such as shooting, fighting, scientific knowledge, professional abilities, and so on. You'll find a complete list on page 48. These are very general skills which cover all related aspects. Shooting, for example, covers all types of handguns, ship weapons, and other ranged weapons.

You have 15 points with which to buy your skills. It costs 1 point to buy a skill at d4. Each extra die type costs another 1 point as long as the skill is equal to or less than the attribute it's linked to (listed beside the skill in parentheses). If you exceed the attribute, the cost becomes 2 points per die type.

As with attributes, no skill may be increased above d12.

Example: As the Fighting skill is linked to Agility. A character with a d8 Agility can buy Fighting for one point per die type to d8. Buying a d10 costs 2 more points, and a d12 costs another 2 points.

Derived Statistics

Your character sheet contains a few other statistics you need to fill in. Each is described below.

Charisma is a measure of your character's appearance, manner, and general likability. It's 0 unless you have Edges or Hindrances that modify it. Charisma is added to your

Persuasion and Streetwise rolls, and is used by the Game Master to figure out how the nonplayer characters of the world react to your hero.

Pace is how fast your character moves in a standard combat round. Humans walk 6" (on a tabletop—each inch represents 2 yards) in a round and can move an additional 1d6" if they run (see page 72 for more information). Write "6" on your character sheet beside the word Pace.

Parry is equal to 2 plus half your hero's Fighting (just 2 if a character does not have Fighting), plus any bonuses for certain shields or weapons. This is the Target Number (TN) to hit your hero in hand-to-hand combat.

Certain Edges and arcane powers can boost Fighting above a d12. When this occurs, halve and round down any pluses. So a d12+1 gives a Parry of 8.5, rounded to 8.

Toughness is your character's damage threshold. Anything over this causes him to be rattled or worse. Like Parry, Toughness is 2 plus half your hero's Vigor, plus any Armor (use the armor worn on his torso). Vigor above a d12 is factored just like Fighting and Parry.

Example: Kane's Charisma is +2. His Pace is 6 just like everyone else. He has a d12+2 Fighting, so that gives him a Parry of 9. His Vigor is a d8 and he doesn't wear any armor, so that's a Toughness of 6.

3) Edges & Hindrances

Great heroes are far more than a collection of skills and attributes. It's their unique gifts, special powers, and tragic flaws that truly make them interesting characters.

Characters can take special abilities—Edges—by balancing them out with character flaws—called Hindrances. You'll find a complete list of Edges and Hindrances in the next section.

You can take one Major Hindrance for your hero and up to two Minor Hindrances. A Major Hindrance is worth 2 points, and Minor Hindrances are worth 1 point each. Your Hindrance points can then be spent to gain additional advantages for your character, as follows.

For 2 points you can:

- Raise an attribute one die type.
- Choose an Edge.

For 1 point you can:

- Gain another skill point.
- Gain additional money equal to your starting funds (if you start with £5, you gain an additional £5).

4) Gear

Next you need to purchase equipment. The world of Solomon Kane features many locales, from the Far East to the New World. Where your hero hails from determines exactly what currency he carries, but we use British pounds as the standard because Kane was an Englishman.

A list of some common gear and weapons can be found in the next chapter (page 64). Every character begins the game with £5.

Encumbrance

Use the following rules only if how much a person can comfortably carry becomes an issue during your heroes' adventures.

A character can carry five times his Strength die type in pounds without incurring any penalties. This is called his "Load Limit." A character with a Strength of d8, for example, can comfortably carry 40 pounds. (Ignore normal clothes when figuring weight.)

Carrying too much weight inflicts a –1 penalty for every additional multiple of your Load Limit. The penalty applies to all Agility and Strength totals, as well as skills linked to either of those two attributes.

A hero with a d8 Strength, for example, has a Load Limit of 40 pounds. He can carry 41–80 pounds at a –1 penalty to his Strength, Agility, and related skill rolls. He could also carry 81–120 pounds at –2, or 121–160 pounds at –3.

Characters cannot regularly carry weight that inflicts a penalty of more than –3. They may be able to lift greater weights (up to a –4 penalty) for a few short steps at the discretion of the GM, however.

5) The Path of Kane

This next section assumes your Game Master is using *The Path of Kane*, the Plot Point campaign detailed in Chapters 9 to 12 of this book. If that's the case, every hero has already crossed paths with Solomon Kane and he or she is now considered a "Wanderer." The time is the early 1600s, and Kane has completed the events detailed in the poem *Solomon Kane's Homecoming*. His hair is white now and his skin weathered, but he has lost none of his passion for fighting the good fight.

The Wanderers are not an official order of any sort, but a collection of very special souls—some pure, some still striving—who have been touched by our rangy Puritan and begun a journey that will lead them from the highest mountains to the darkest jungles. Some may have fought beside Kane in a previous battle, like John Silent. Others may have been rescued by him, or simply encountered Kane and been inspired by his presence. Another might even have been a dastardly villain given a chance to atone for his misdeeds (these reluctant heroes can be particularly interesting characters to play!). This may have happened as recently as a week ago (most likely in Devon if that's the case), or decades ago when Solomon was younger (but certainly after he came into possession of the strange cat-headed staff he now carries). Spend a few moments deciding where your character met Kane, and why he became a Wanderer.

Whatever the circumstances, after your hero's encounter with Solomon Kane, he was visited in his sleep by a strange African shaman who he eventually came to know as N'Longa. The "ju-ju man" seems to know Kane well, and perhaps may be connected to him through the strange cat-headed staff. At least that is the feeling you get from the strange dreams.

N'Longa has nudged your character onward, slowly and subtly in some cases, with near-perfect directions in others, until your hero finds himself on the shores of Devon, England, where the campaign in this book begins.



If your character wouldn't willingly follow N'Longa's urgings, he was eventually forced here by terrible nightmares, sleepless nights, and incredible runs of supernaturally bad luck. These ill omens cease only when you finally follow the ju-ju man's direction—though your actions remain free to you otherwise.

To be clear, N'Longa's black magic will lead your adventurer to be in certain places, but it will never force him to act. That is up to you and how you want to roleplay your Wanderer.

After you've determined why your hero or heroine wanders and what Solomon Kane meant to him or her, finish with any history or background you care to create. What's your hero's nationality? Does he have family? Does she have a home, or is she truly a wanderer? What is his religious background?

These extra details help your GM to weave stories that include elements of your hero's background, making your adventurer's tales more compelling and exciting.

Skills

Below are the skills available in *The Savage World of Solomon Kane*. You'll notice that most skills are very generic to keep the game simple and fast-moving. It doesn't matter whether you're firing a pistol or a musket or even a bow, the Shooting skill sums up your ability to aim and fire whatever weapon your hero is accustomed to.

Note that some terms in the skill list may not make sense just yet, but they will after you've become familiar with the rest of the rules.

Skill List

Boating (Agility)

Characters with this skill can handle most any boat, from rowboats to galleons. They generally know how to handle most common tasks associated with their vessels as well (nautical navigation, tying knots, and so on).



Climbing (Strength)

This is the skill characters use to ascend walls, trees, or cliff-sides. No roll is usually needed to ascend ladders, ropes, or trees with lots of limbs unless the GM feels there's a good reason for it (if wounded or being chased, for example).

Those who have a high Climbing skill are those who frequently climb cliffs, walls, and other difficult surfaces.

Characters about to ascend a difficult surface must make a Climbing roll every 10" (20 yards). The skill roll is modified by the conditions below.

During combat, characters ascend at half their Strength die (in inches) per round if using ropes or with decent hand- or foot-holds.

See the Falling rules on page 92 should a character suffer a mishap.

Climbing Modifiers

Situation	Modifier
Climbing equipment	+2
Scarce or thin handholds	–2
Wet surface	–2

Driving (Agility)

Driving allows your hero to maneuver wagons or coaches.

Fighting (Agility)

Fighting covers all hand-to-hand (melee) attacks, and is a critical skill for almost all characters.

At first glance, it may appear that all heroes are more or less the same—two competent fighters might both have a d10 Fighting, for example. This is true, but it's the swordsmen's Edges that truly set them apart. Look closely at the Combat Edges later in this chapter and you'll quickly see many ways to differentiate your warrior from the rest.

The TN to hit an opponent is his Parry (2 plus half his Fighting).

Gambling (Smarts)

Gambling is mostly a vice of civilization in the world of Solomon Kane, but the practice is widespread and legal in most countries, if not actually approved of by society.

Should your adventurer find himself in a game of chance, use this simple method to simulate about a half-hour of rolling dice or playing cards.

First have everyone agree on the game stakes. £0.05 (one shilling) is recommended for a typical game. Now have everyone in the game make a Gambling roll. The lowest total pays the highest total the difference times the stake. The next lowest pays the second highest the difference times the stake, and so on. If there's an odd man left in the middle, he breaks even.

Cheating: A character who cheats adds +2 to his roll. The GM may raise or lower this modifier depending on the particulars of the game or the method of cheating. If the player ever rolls a 1 on his skill die (regardless of his Wild Die), he's caught. The consequences of this depend on your opponents, but are usually quite harsh.

Guts (Spirit)

Guts reflects a hero's bravery. Characters are often called on to make Guts checks when they witness grisly scenes or encounter horrific monsters. The GM should see page 93 for the effects of failure.

Healing (Smarts)

Healing is the art of stopping wounds and treating existing injuries. Such skills are primitive in Kane's time, so do not expect overmuch from those who might claim to be physicians. See page 86 for information on healing and wounds.

Intimidation (Spirit)

Intimidation is the art of frightening an opponent with sheer force of will, veiled or overt threats, or sometimes just really big guns. This is an opposed roll between the hero's Intimidation and his opponent's Spirit. See Tests of Will on page 81 for the game effects.

Investigation (Smarts)

A character skilled in Investigation knows how to make good use of libraries, journals, old manuscripts, or other written sources of information. Getting information from people uses the Streetwise skill instead.

Knowledge (Smarts)

Knowledge is a catch-all skill that must have a focus of some sort, such as Knowledge (Occult) or Knowledge (Science). The player can choose the focus of his hero's knowledge, which should reflect his background and education. An alchemist, for example, might have Knowledge (Chemistry). The skill can be taken multiple times with different focuses to reflect different areas of expertise.

General focuses such as Science are acceptable, but the GM should give a bonus to a character who has a more relevant focus, such as Knowledge (Biology).

Some suggested Knowledge focuses are: Area Knowledge, Gunsmith, History, various languages, Science, or Navigation.

Lockpicking (Agility)

Lockpicking is the ability to bypass locks. It is also used to disarm the catches and triggers on traps, unless a more relevant skill seems appropriate for a particular trap.

Lockpicking also covers picking pockets and palming small items.

Notice (Smarts)

Notice is a hero's general alertness and ability to search for items or clues. This covers hearing rolls, detecting ambushes, spotting hidden weapons and even scrutinizing other characters to see if they're lying, frightened, and so on.

Persuasion (Spirit)

Persuasion is the ability to talk or trick others into doing what you want. Nonplayer characters (NPCs) start at one of five different attitudes: Hostile, Uncooperative, Neutral, Friendly, or Helpful. A successful Persuasion roll improves the NPC's attitude one step, or two with a raise. Failure, on the other hand, decreases their attitude by a step, or two if a 1 is rolled on the Persuasion die (regardless of the Wild Die).

Persuasion is always modified by a hero's Charisma.

The GM has more detailed information on nonplayer characters and their reactions on page 127.

Repair (Smarts)

Repair is the ability to fix weapons, such as firearms, and other mechanical devices. Characters suffer a –2 penalty to their rolls if they don't have access to basic tools when using this skill.

Riding (Agility)

The Riding skill allows a traveler to mount, control, and ride horses, camels, and other animals, even under the most difficult of circumstances.

Note that mounted heroes use the *lowest* of their Fighting or Riding skills when fighting from horseback. See the additional rules for horses and other beasts on page 81 for more information.

Going Native

Although Howard often describes the tribesmen of Africa as uncivilized or barbaric, he also notes their kindness to strangers (as witnessed in The Children of Asshur) and timeless nobility.

What's more, not all "savages" are what they seem. N'Longa at first appears to be a dark magician who dabbles in ungodly arts. Yet over time, Kane comes to learn that N'Longa is not only very wise, but is also a champion of light, just as surely as Kane is, fighting against the darkness with the tools of his culture.

Although Kane is a European, there is nothing to stop you playing an African, Indian, Chinese, or Aztec hero. A wandering ronin, for example, would make a strange and fascinating alternate version of Kane. As might a shaolin priest or monk.

In the Solomon Kane stories, civilization is corrupt and immoral. Barbarism, though savage and ignorant, is more noble.

Shooting (Agility)

Shooting covers all attempts to hit a target with a ranged weapon such as a bow, pistol, or musket. The basic Target Number to hit is 4 as usual, though there are a number of important modifiers, like range modifiers, that frequently come into play (see page 73 for details).

Stealth (Agility)

Stealth is the ability to both hide and move quietly. In many Solomon Kane adventures, knowing exactly when your hero has been spotted and when he's evaded detection can be critical.

Here are detailed rules for how to sneak up on foes and infiltrate enemy lines.

Start the process by figuring out if the "guards" your heroes are sneaking up on are "active" or "inactive."

Inactive guards aren't paying particularly close attention to their surroundings. The group need only score a standard success on their individual Stealth rolls to avoid being seen. Failing a Stealth roll in the presence of inactive guards makes them active.

Active guards make opposed Notice rolls against the sneaking characters' Stealth skills. Failing a roll against active guards means the sneaking characters are spotted.

Apply the following modifiers to all Stealth rolls.

Stealth Modifiers

Situation	Modifier
Crawling	+2
Running	–2
Dim light	+1
Darkness	+2
Pitch darkness	+4
Light cover	+1
Medium cover	+2
Heavy cover	+4

The Last Step: Sneaking to within 5" of a foe (usually to get close enough for a melee attack) requires an opposed Stealth roll versus the target's Notice, whether the guard is active or inactive.

Movement Rate: Outside of combat, each Stealth roll covers moving up to five times the character's Pace. In combat, the Stealth roll covers only a single round of movement (see page 72 for more on movement).

Stealth for Groups: Out of combat, make only one Stealth roll for each like group of characters (this is called a group roll—see page 67 for more information). Use the lowest movement rate to determine how much ground is covered as well. The guards also make a group Notice roll to detect their enemies.

Once a combat breaks down into rounds, all Stealth and Notice rolls are made on an individual basis.

Streetwise (Smarts)

Streetwise characters are able to gather information from the street, taverns, or other contacts through carousing, bribes, or threats.

Finding written information in ancient archives, secret diaries, and the like is instead covered by the Investigation skill.

Streetwise is always modified by a hero's Charisma modifier.

Survival (Smarts)

The Survival skill allows a character to find food, water, or shelter in hostile conditions and environments.

A character may only make one roll per day. A successful roll finds sustenance for one person, a raise on the roll finds food and water for five adults. Large beasts count as two adults. Children and others with small appetites count as half.

Those who benefit from the roll do not have to make Fatigue rolls for the day for food, water, or shelter.

Swimming (Agility)

Swimming determines if a character floats or sinks in water, as well as how fast he can move within it. A character's Pace in normal water is half his Swimming skill in inches per turn (round up). Choppy water is treated as difficult terrain and halves this rate.

This is the fastest a hero can move in the water. Heroes may not "run" while swimming for extra movement!

Should it become important, a character can hold his or her breath for 5 x their Vigor in seconds, or half that time if they weren't prepared.

Characters who fail their Swimming rolls are often in serious trouble. See page 90 for rules on drowning.

Taunt (Smarts)

Taunt is a test of will attack against a person's pride through ridicule, cruel jokes, or one-upmanship. This is an opposed roll against the target's Smarts. See Test of Wills on page 81 for the effects of a successful Taunt.

Throwing (Agility)

The Throwing skill governs all sorts of thrown weapons, from powder bombs to knives and makeshift spears. Throwing works just like the Shooting skill, and uses all the same modifiers (see page 73).

Tracking (Smarts)

Tracking allows a character to follow the tracks of one or more individuals in any type of terrain. Each roll a hero makes generally covers following the tracks for one mile, but the Game Master may adjust this dramatically for more specific or small scale searches.

Apply the following modifiers to each Tracking roll.

Tracking Modifiers

Situation	Modifier
Tracking more than 5 individuals	+2
Recent snow	+4
Mud	+2
Dusty area	+1
Raining	–4
Tracking in poor light	–2
Tracks are more than one day old	–2
Target attempted to hide tracks	–2

Common Knowledge

Instead of forcing characters to have dozens of background skills they rarely need, such as cooking or dancing, we use the concept of "Common Knowledge." Your hero knows the basic history of his land, common etiquette, how to get around geographically, and who the major players in his locality are. This is called "Common Knowledge," and is covered by your hero's Smarts attribute.

If a character's background (as defined by his Edges and Hindrances and the notes you made about his past) suggests he should know something about a subject, the GM may let you add +2 or more to your roll. If the subject is foreign to a character, you'll subtract 2 or more from the roll. Characters with no particularly appropriate background receive no modifier.

Anytime the Game Master asks for a Common Knowledge roll, roll your Smarts. If you know what the roll is for, feel free to mention any pertinent background information you think might affect the result. The Game Master should then decide if your hero's expertise is relevant to the matter in hand, and grant bonuses to or subtract penalties from your total, as he sees fit.

Example: *Solomon Kane finds himself at a ball in the court of Count Finster of the Black Forest. Kane's Common Knowledge tells him how to properly address the Count, how to conduct himself at the feast, and even how to perform the most common dances. No roll is required for these tasks.*

Years later, Kane is adventuring among the river tribes of Africa. Some ferocious beast has slain a young girl and Kane is on its trail. He finds the creature's tracks easy enough and the GM asks for a Common Knowledge roll to identify what made them. Kane's player mentions that he's battled lions and other great cats before, and rolls a total of 7 on his Smarts roll. The GM, knowing that the creature is actually a shape-changing jackal, thinks Kane's extensive travels in the Dark Continent probably means he's seen jackals and their tracks before, and gives him a +1, for a total of 8. That's a success with a raise, so Kane not only recognizes that this is the print of a jackal, but also that it is far larger than he's ever seen before.

Specific Knowledges

Sometimes a character might want more detailed or specific knowledge than simply relying on his or her Common Knowledge. This is encouraged and adds a whole new level of expertise to the character's information.

For instance, while a naval officer understands basic navigation and wind patterns as Common Knowledge for his background, actually putting them into practical use requires the Knowledge (Navigation) skill.

Likewise, while all characters know the history of their homeland as Common Knowledge, knowing the history of foreign lands requires the Knowledge (History) skill.

Knowledge of a particular region outside one's homeland is also handy. For instance, locals might know the swamps of West Africa are home to vicious snakes. Someone with a specific knowledge of that area can make a roll to see if he knows a safe route through the swamps, or the specific area the creatures call home.

Hindrances

Hindrances are character flaws and physical handicaps that can, on occasion, make life a little tougher for your hero. Some Hindrances are subjective (such as Overconfident). They're there to help you roleplay your character, and might even net you more bennies! (We'll tell you more about these later, but for now, just take our word for it, you want them!)

A character may take one Major Hindrance and up to two Minor Hindrances. You're free to take more if you think they fit your hero's description, but you don't get additional points for them.

Allergy (Minor/Major)

Your character suffers an aversion to a common condition or substance, such as cheese, pollen, dust, etc. Exposure to that substance (generally within 1" of it) inflicts a –2 penalty to all your hero's Trait rolls for the Minor version, and –4 for the Major version.

All Thumbs (Minor)

Characters with this drawback suffer a –2 penalty to the Repair skill at all times. In addition, when the hero uses a mechanical device, including a firearm, a roll of 1 on his skill die (regardless of his Wild Die) means the device malfunctions and is broken. The damage usually requires a Repair roll at –2 (or –4 if it's a hero with All Thumbs doing the repairing) and 1d6 hours to fix by someone with appropriate skills and tools.

Anemic (Minor)

Your hero is particularly susceptible to sickness, disease, environmental effects, and exertion. He subtracts 2 from all Vigor rolls made to resist Fatigue checks, poison, disease, and the like. See page 88 for a description of Fatigue.

Arrogant (Major)

Your hero believes he is better than those around him, whether due to social standing, his skill with a rapier, or his ability to charm those of the opposite sex. Worse, he makes sure everyone around him knows of his superiority on a regular basis.

Winning just isn't enough for your hero. He must completely dominate his opponent. Anytime there is even a shadow of a doubt as to who is the better, he must humiliate his opponent and prove he can snatch victory any time he wishes. He is the kind of man who disarms an opponent in a duel just so he can pick the sword up and hand it back with a smirk.

Arrogant heroes always look for the "master" in battle, attacking lesser minions only if they get in the way.

Bad Eyes (Minor/Major)

Your hero has one eye, or his vision just isn't clear. With spectacles, there's no penalty and the Hindrance is only Minor. Should he lose his glasses (generally a 50% chance when he's wounded), he suffers a –2 penalty to any Trait roll made to shoot or Notice something more than 5" (10 yards) distant.

If the character cannot wear spectacles for some reason (typically because he's from a "primitive" culture), Bad Eyes is treated as a Major Hindrance. He must subtract 2 from Trait rolls made to attack or notice things 5" or more away.

Bad Luck (Major)

Your hero is a little less lucky than most. He gets one less benny per game session than normal. A character cannot have both the Bad Luck Hindrance and the Luck Edge.

Big Mouth (Minor)

There are many fools who cannot keep the secrets with which they are entrusted. Your hero is one of them. He reveals plans and gives away things best kept among friends, usually at the worst possible times. Sometimes this is because he cannot resist bragging, other times it might be the result of too much wine and the company of a comely lass.

Blind (Major)

Your hero is completely without sight. He suffers a –6 to all physical tasks that require vision, which is most everything, and –2 to most social tasks as he can't "read" those he's interacting with as well as others.

On the plus side, Blind characters gain their choice of a free Edge (in addition to the points gained for taking this Hindrance) to compensate for this particularly deadly drawback.

Bloodthirsty (Major)

Your hero revels in carnage and cruelty. He never takes prisoners unless under the direct supervision of a superior. The savage hero suffers –4 to his Charisma, though this may be ignored by those who don't know his reputation.

Branded (Minor)

The character was caught committing a crime at some point in the past. He escaped the noose but received a brand labeling him a criminal. He suffers –2 Charisma because of the brand and the social stigma associated with it.

Cautious (Minor)

Some folks gather too much intelligence. This character personifies over-cautiousness. He never makes rash decisions and likes to plot things out in detail long before any action is taken.

Clueless (Major)

Your hero isn't as aware of his world as most others. He suffers –2 to Common Knowledge rolls.

Cocky (Minor)

Some heroes, and villains, just don't know when to brag and when to act. Your character suffers from this affliction.

The hero must spend the first round of any combat announcing how great he is, or pronouncing the doom of those who oppose him. If for some reason your hero must act instead, it costs him a benny.

A villain with this Hindrance never delivers a finishing blow to a foe. Instead, he leaves them to die, or orders his minions to finish them while he stalks off well out of earshot. Inevitably, these foes survive, escape the trap, defeat the minions, and so on.

Code of Honor (Major)

Honor is very important to your character. He keeps his word, won't abuse or kill his prisoners, and generally tries to operate within his culture's particular notion of proper gentlemanly or ladylike behavior.

Curious (Major)

Curious characters are easily dragged into any adventure. They have a primal need to unravel any mystery they come across, and are consumed by their desire when stymied.

Death Wish (Minor)

Having a death wish doesn't mean your hero is suicidal—but he does want to die after completing some important goal. Maybe he wants revenge for the murder of his family, or maybe he's dying from disease and wants to go out in a blaze of glory.

He won't throw his life away for no reason, but when there's a chance to complete his goal, he'll do anything—and take any risk—to achieve it.

This Hindrance is usually Minor unless the goal is relatively easily fulfilled (very rare).

Delusional (Minor or Major)

Your character believes something that is considered quite strange by everyone else. Minor Delusions are harmless or the hero generally keeps it to himself (the Papists are behind everything, firearms are tools of the Devil, and so on).

With a Major Delusion, he expresses his view on the situation frequently and it can occasionally lead to danger (all clergy are evil, daily bleedings are good for one's health, and such like).

Dependent (Major)

Your hero has someone to whom he is completely devoted, and he will do anything to protect them. This may be his wife or sweetheart, one of his children, or even a pet or follower.

The Dependent is a Novice Rank character, and while scrappy in her own right, just isn't up to par with English musketry, or any other soldiers. For whatever reason, this doesn't stop the dependent from getting involved

frequently. She constantly requires saving, reveals secrets, or otherwise causes your hero no end of grief. Of course, every now and then, they might just save the hero's life as well, but such instances should be rare.

If the Dependent ever dies, your hero is grief-stricken for the rest of the campaign. He receives only one benny at the beginning of each game session (but Luck and other bonuses apply normally). Relief comes only after ultimate revenge. He cannot simply fight the one who murdered his dependent, he must hunt them down and kill them, and then only after making them pay. Only when honor is satisfied, and bloody justice has been done, is the benny restriction lifted and the Hindrance "bought off."

Doubting Thomas (Minor)

Some people don't believe in the supernatural until they're being consumed by some darksome beast. Doubting Thomases are skeptics who try their best to rationalize supernatural events. Even once a Doubting Thomas realizes the supernatural exists, he still tries to rationalize any weird events by following red herrings or ignoring evidence.

Doubting Thomases suffer –2 to their Guts checks when confronted with undeniable supernatural horror.

Elderly (Major)

Your hero is well past his prime. His Pace is reduced by 1, and his Strength and Vigor drop a die type to a minimum of d4, and cannot be raised thereafter.

On the plus side, the wisdom of his years grants the hero 5 extra skill points that may be used for any skills linked to Smarts.

Enemy (Minor or Major)

Someone out there hates your hero and wants him dead. The value of the Hindrance depends on how powerful the enemy is and how often he might show up. A Minor Enemy might be a lone bandit out for vengeance. A Major Enemy might be an emissary of the Vatican, acting with full papal authority, who believes your character is responsible for some terrible slight.

If the enemy is one day defeated, the GM should gradually work in a replacement, or the hero may choose to buy off the Hindrance by sacrificing a leveling opportunity.

Glass Jaw (Minor)

Your hero has a glass jaw and can't take a solid hit. He suffers a –2 penalty to Soak rolls.

Greedy (Minor/Major)

Your miserly hero measures his worth in coin. If a Minor Hindrance, he argues bitterly over any loot acquired during play. If a Major Hindrance, the character fights over anything he considers unfair, and may even kill for his "fair share."

Habit (Minor/Major)

Your warrior has an annoying and constant habit of some sort. Maybe he blasphemes frequently, or emits odious gases. This kind of Minor Habit irritates those around him but isn't dangerous. He suffers a –1 Charisma.





As a Major Hindrance, it is a physical or mental addiction that is debilitating, and possibly even deadly. This typically involves drug use or chronic drinking. A character who doesn't get his fix must make a Vigor roll every 24 hours thereafter. The first failed roll makes the character Fatigued (see page 88); the second Exhausted. The third and final result is a coma for hard drug use, or a bad case of the shakes for things like alcohol (–2 to all actions). Medical care may ease the symptoms. Otherwise the victim must live with the penalties for 1d6 days. Afterwards, the hero must buy off the Hindrance by sacrificing an opportunity to level up, or he eventually falls back into his dependency.

Hard of Hearing (Minor or Major)

Characters who have lost some or all of their hearing have this disadvantage. As a Minor Hindrance, it subtracts 2 from all Notice rolls made to hear, including waking due to loud noises. A Major Hindrance means the hero is deaf. She cannot hear and automatically fails all Notice rolls that depend on hearing.

Heroic (Major)

Your hero never says no to a person in need. She doesn't have to be happy about it, but she always comes to the rescue of those she feels can't help themselves. She cannot turn away those in need, regardless of the risk to her own well-being.

Illiterate (Minor)

For one reason or another, the character cannot read or write. Once he is Seasoned, the hero may choose to buy off the Hindrance by missing a leveling opportunity.

Jingoistic (Minor/Major)

The character dislikes people from other cultures and believes his own culture to be far superior—a jingoistic Englishman, for example, dislikes Frenchmen and Spaniards

as much as he does the Welsh, Scottish, or Irish. He cannot help belittling other cultures at every opportunity. A character taking the Minor version has –2 Charisma among other cultures. The penalty increases to –4 for the Major Hindrance.

In both cases, the character may not use Command Edges with "foreigners" until he has worked with them for at least one week.

Lame (Major)

A past wound has nearly crippled your hero. His basic Pace is reduced by 2 and he rolls only a d4 for running rolls. A character's Pace may never be reduced below 1.

Loyal (Minor)

Your character is extremely loyal to those he has chosen to adventure with. He will never leave a friend behind if there's any chance at all he could help.

Mean (Minor)

Your hero is ill-tempered and disagreeable. No one really likes him, and he has trouble doing anything kind for anyone else. He must be paid for his troubles and doesn't even accept awards graciously. Your hero suffers –2 to his Charisma.

Obese (Minor)

Particularly large people often have great difficulty in dangerous physical situations. Those who carry their weight well have the Brawny Edge (see page 34). Those who don't handle it very well are Obese. A character cannot be both Brawny and Obese. An Obese hero adds 1 to his Toughness, but his Pace is decreased by 1 and his running die is a d4. His Size is +1.

Obese characters may also have difficulty finding armor or clothing that fits, fitting into tight spaces, or even exploring a cramped tunnel or corridor.

One Arm (Major)

Whether by birth or battle, your hero has lost an arm. Fortunately, his other is (now) his "good" one. Tasks requiring two hands, such as Climbing, suffer a –4 modifier.

One Leg (Major)

With a peg or crutch, One Leg acts exactly like the Lame Hindrance, reducing Pace by 2 and running rolls are now a d4. Without some sort of artificial support, the character's Pace is 2 and he can never run. The hero also suffers –2 to Traits that require mobility, such as Climbing and Fighting.

A character with one leg also suffers a –2 penalty to his Swimming skill (and Pace).

Outsider (Minor)

In a society mainly made up of only a few types of people, your hero isn't one of those types. A female explorer in a man's world and a native of Africa living among Europeans are both outsiders. People are also likely to raise prices on the Outsider, ignore pleas for help, and generally treat him as if he's of a lower class than the rest of their society.

In addition to the roleplaying effects above, your hero's Charisma suffers a –2 modifier among all but his own people.

Overconfident (Major)

There's nothing out there your hero can't defeat. At least that's what he thinks. He believes he can do most anything and never wants to retreat from a challenge. He's not suicidal, but he certainly takes on more than common sense dictates.

Pacifist (Minor or Major)

Your character despises violence. Minor pacifism means he only fights when given no other choice, and never allows the killing of prisoners or other defenseless victims.

Major Pacifists won't fight living characters under any circumstances. They may defend themselves, but won't do anything to harm sentient, living creatures. A Major Pacifist might also fight with nonlethal methods, such as with his fists. Such characters only do so when they're obviously threatened, however.

Phobia (Minor or Major)

Phobias are overwhelming and irrational fears that stay with a hero for the rest of his life. Whenever a character is in the presence of his phobia, he subtracts 2 from all his Trait tests as a Minor Hindrance, and 4 if the fear is a Major Phobia.

Note that phobias shouldn't be too obvious; everyone should be afraid of bloodthirsty vampires, for example, so it's not a phobia—it's common sense. Instead, a phobia usually centers around some other element the mind focused on during whatever encounter caused such a fright. Remember, phobias are irrational fears.

Poverty (Minor)

It's said a fool and his money are soon parted. Your hero is that fool. He starts with half the usual money for your setting and just can't seem to hang onto funds acquired after play. In general, the player should halve his total funds every game week or so.

Quirk (Minor)

Quirks are minor faults that rarely cause serious trouble, but certainly establish your character's identity. Perhaps your daring fencing master always slashes his initials in the clothes of the foes he's defeated. Or your priest quotes pertinent passages from the Bible instead of giving straight answers to important questions.

Small (Major)

Your character is either very skinny, very short, or both relative to his particular culture. Subtract 1 from your character's Toughness for his reduced stature. His Size is –1.

Stubborn (Minor)

Your hero demands that things go his way. When they don't, he responds poorly. Some become violent, others are petulant, and some simply never relent.

Ugly (Minor)

Whether he was born unattractive, carries himself poorly, or suffered some disfiguring wound or illness, your wanderer is considered less than appealing by most. His Charisma is lowered by 2, and he is generally shunned by members of the opposite sex.



Vengeful (Minor or Major)

Your character always attempts to right a wrong he feels was done to him. If this is a Minor version, he usually seeks vengeance legally. If it is Major, he'll kill to see it done.

Vow (Minor or Major)

The character has a vow of some sort. Whether it's Major or Minor depends on the Vow itself. Some may have Vows to particular cause, to the Hippocratic Oath, to rid the world of slavers, and so on. The danger in fulfilling the Vow and how often it might come into play determines the level of the Hindrance.

Whatever the Vow, it's only a Hindrance if it actually comes into play from time to time and causes the character some discomfort.

Wanted (Minor or Major)

Your hero has committed some crime in his past and will be arrested if discovered by the authorities. The level of the Hindrance depends on how serious the crime was and how often the authorities (or their agents) are likely to come into play.

Yellow (Major)

Not everyone has icewater in his veins. Your hero is squeamish at the sight of blood and gore and terrified of coming to harm. He subtracts 2 from all of his Guts checks.

Young (Major)

Children are sometimes forced to go on dangerous adventures through unfortunate circumstances. Think carefully before you choose this Hindrance, however, for your character starts at a significant disadvantage.

Young heroes are generally 8–12 years old. They have only 3 points with which to adjust their attributes and 10 skill points. On the plus side, youths like these have a fair amount of luck. They draw one extra benny at the beginning of each game session. This is in addition to any additional bennies gained from such things as the Luck or Great Luck Edges.

If the character should live long enough to mature, the Hindrance doesn't have to be bought off, he's already paid the price for the Hindrance by starting at a disadvantage. He stops getting the extra benny when he reaches 16 years of age however.

Edges

Below is a list of Edges. The Edges are grouped by type here to help during character creation (an alphabetical list of Edges can be found on page 50). Unless an Edge's description specifically says otherwise, it may only be selected once.

Requirements: Below each Edge is the minimum Rank that you must have to purchase it. A Novice character can't buy a Legendary Edge, for instance. A hero may always purchase an Edge of a Rank lower than his. Some Edges list Wild Card as a requirement. Such Edges cannot be chosen by NPC Extras.

Improved Edges: Some Edges also have improved effects if you purchase additional "levels" in them, such as Attractive and Very Attractive, or Rich and Filthy Rich. To buy an Improved Edge, you must have all previous versions of an Edge. You must choose Rich before buying Filthy Rich, for example.

Background Edges

These Edges are hereditary and background advantages that may usually be purchased only during character creation.

If a player has a particularly good reason for picking up a Background Edge during play, he should talk it over with the GM. If she agrees that it makes sense, the character may choose the Edge when leveling just like any other. A hero might be allowed to choose the Attractive Edge, for example, by cleaning herself up, getting a new wardrobe, and paying more attention to her looks.

Alertness

Requirements: Novice

Not much gets by your hero. He's very observant and perceptive, and adds +2 to his Notice rolls to hear, see, or otherwise sense the world around him.

Ambidextrous

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+

Your hero is as deft with his left hand as he is with his right. He may ignore the –2 penalty for using his off-hand.

Arcane Background

Requirements: Novice, Special

This is the Edge your hero must purchase to have any sort of supernatural ability. This is very rare in the world of Solomon Kane.

See page 97 for further information on Arcane Backgrounds.

Arcane Resistance

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d8+

Your character is particularly resistant to magic, whether by nature or due to some mysterious past. He adds +2 to his Trait rolls when resisting opposed powers. Even friendly arcane powers must subtract this modifier to affect the resistant hero.

Improved Arcane Resistance

Requirements: Novice, Arcane Resistance

As above but the hero's resistance bonus is increased to 4.

Attractive

Requirements: Novice, Vigor d6+

Your hero or heroine is very handsome or beautiful. His or her Charisma is increased by +2.

Very Attractive

Requirements: Novice, Attractive

Your character is drop-dead gorgeous. His or her Charisma is increased by +4 total.

Berserk

Requirements: Novice

Immediately after suffering a wound (including a Shaken result from physical damage), your hero must make a Smarts roll or go Berserk.

While Berserk, his Parry is reduced by 2 but he adds +2 to all Fighting and Strength rolls, and his Toughness. The warrior ignores all wound modifiers while he is Berserk, but he cannot use any skills that require him to concentrate, including Shooting and Taunt, but not Intimidation.

Berserkers attack with reckless abandon. Anytime his Fighting die is a 1 (regardless of the result of his Wild Die), he hits a random adjacent target, (this cannot be the original target). The attack may hit friend as well as foe. If there are no other adjacent targets, the blow simply misses.

The Berserker may end his rage by doing nothing (not even moving) for one full action and making a Smarts roll at –2.

Brawny

Requirements: Novice, Strength and Vigor d6+

Your hero is very large or perhaps just very fit. Either way, his bulk resists damage better than most. Add +1 to your Toughness.

In addition, your hero can carry more than most proportional to his Strength. He can carry up to 8 times his Strength in pounds without penalty instead of the usual 5 times his Strength. His Size is +1.

Fast Healer

Requirements: Novice, Vigor d8+

Your hero heals quickly. He may add +2 to his Vigor rolls when checking for natural healing (see page 86).

Luck

Requirements: Novice

The hero seems to be blessed by fate. He draws one extra benny at the beginning of each game session, allowing him to succeed at important tasks more often than most, and survive incredible dangers.

Great Luck

Requirements: Novice, Luck

The player draws 2 extra bennies instead of 1 for his luck at the start of each session.

Noble

Requirements: Novice

Those born of noble blood have many perks in life, but often have just as many responsibilities. This Edge doesn't just cover true nobility, such as dukes and barons, or tribal chieftains—it can also cover bishops, merchant princes, and just about anyone else who has gathered power and riches.

Nobles have high status in their societies, are entitled to special treatment from their foes, gain +2 Charisma, and also have the Rich Edge.

This gives the hero several Edges for the price of one, but the responsibilities that come with being a noble often more than offset the additional perks. Exactly what these responsibilities are must be determined by the Game Master before the game begins. This might include the supervision of a business, a manor farm, or political appointments.

If a character fails to live up to these responsibilities, it is entirely possible that he might lose his title and all benefits conferred by this Edge.

Quick

Requirements: Novice

Your character was born with lightning-fast reflexes and a cool head. Whenever you are dealt a 5 or lower in combat, you may discard and draw again until you get a card higher than 5. Level Headed characters draw their additional card and take the best before using their Quick Edge.

Rich

Requirements: Novice

Whether your hero was born with a silver spoon in his mouth or earned his fortune through hard work, he's got more money than most.

Rich heroes start with £15 and have a regular income of £300 per year. This might accumulate in a trust fund or bank rather than going directly into the hero's pockets, but that depends entirely on the source.

Filthy Rich

Requirements: Novice, Rich or Noble

This character is extremely wealthy. He begins play with £25 and has an income of £750 per year.

As with the Noble Edge, such vast wealth requires a very complete background, including details of the source of the riches, responsibilities, obligations, and risks.

Combat Edges

These Edges are designed to help your hero do one simple thing—defeat his foes in mortal combat.

Block

Requirements: Seasoned, Fighting d8+

Heroes who engage in frequent hand-to-hand combat are far more skilled in personal defense than most others. They've learned not only how to attack, but how to block their opponent's blows as well. A hero with this Edge adds +1 to his Parry.

Improved Block

Requirements: Veteran, Block

As above, but the hero adds +2 to his Parry.

Close Fighting

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Fighting d8+

This Edge is for skilled knife-fighters, who pride themselves on defeating their foes up close and personal.

Close fighters move inside most weapons' reach, adding a bonus to their Parry equal to the enemy weapon's Reach +1 for that particular foe. No bonus is granted if the foe is unarmed or using a knife or other small weapon.

Example: A character with the Close Fighting Edge battles a native with a short sword (Reach 0). The character's Parry is raised by +1.

Improved Close Fighting

Requirements: Novice, Close Fighting

Close fighters train to go for vital areas and weak spots for quick and lethal kills. The attacker adds a bonus to his Fighting roll equal to his enemy's Reach +1, as well as the Parry bonus from the basic version of this Edge.

Combat Reflexes

Requirements: Seasoned

Your hero recovers quickly from shock and trauma. He adds +2 to his Spirit roll when attempting to recover from being Shaken.



Dirty Fighter

Requirements: Seasoned

There is no honor among thieves, and the world of Solomon Kane has more than its fair share of scoundrels. Those with this Edge will do anything to win out in a fight.

This dastardly cur is particularly good at tricks. He adds +2 to all Trick maneuver rolls (page 79).

Really Dirty Fighter

Requirements: Seasoned, Dirty Fighter

The knave is extremely skilled in tactical deceit. By describing the trick and spending a benny, he may automatically get the Drop on any single opponent (see page 76 for the Drop).

Dodge

Requirements: Seasoned, Agility d8+

Crafty warriors know how to get out of harm's way, using cover and concealment to make them harder to hit. Unless the hero is the victim of a surprise attack and so taken completely unaware, attackers must subtract 1 from their Shooting or Throwing rolls when targeting him.

Characters who attempt to evade area effect attacks may add +1 to their Agility roll as well (when allowed).

Improved Dodge

Requirements: Veteran, Dodge

As above but attackers subtract 2 from their attack rolls, and the character adds +2 to evade area effect weapons when allowed.

Entangle

Requirements: Seasoned, Fighting d8+

An entangle is a combination of a disarm and a grapple which leaves the enemy at a disadvantage but still allows the character to attack.

The character makes a Disarm attack (see page 76), but if he succeeds he has entangled his foe's weapon arm rather than disarming him. He may have wrapped the arm in a cloak, or simply locked his opponent's elbow against his body using his arm.

The entangled foe counts as an Unarmed Defender (unless he has two weapons) and cannot Withdraw from Combat (see page 80). Unlike a grapple, however, the character may continue to use a one-handed weapon against his enemy while he has him entangled.

On his next action, the enemy may try to escape the entanglement as per breaking a grapple (see page 77).

First Strike

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+

Experienced fighters have learned to strike quickly as a foe moves into melee range, taking advantage of their last, hesitant step before they are properly set and positioned for combat.

Once per turn the character gets a free Fighting attack against a single enemy who moves adjacent to him. This automatically interrupts the opponent's action, and does not cost the hero his action if he is on Hold or has not yet acted this round.

Improved First Strike

Requirements: Heroic, First Strike

As above but the hero may make one free attack against each and every foe who moves adjacent to him.

Fleche

Requirements: Veteran, Agility d8+, Fighting d8+

A fleche is a running attack, which begins with a leap, followed by the attack, and ends with the attacker running past his opponent, all in a single movement.

If the hero moves at least 2" before making an attack against an adjacent opponent, he may attack and then Withdraw from Combat without his foe, or other adjacent opponents, receiving a free attack.

All movement after the attack must be in the same direction as the original movement (the character must move in a straight line).

Note that the attacker is still subject to First Strike attacks from foes he moves adjacent to during a fleche.

Fleet-Footed

Requirements: Novice, Agility d6+

The hero is incredibly fast. His Pace is increased by +2 and he rolls a d10 instead of a d6 when running.

Florentine

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Fighting d8+

A hero trained to fight "Florentine" is a master at wielding two weapons at once. He adds +1 to his Fighting rolls against an enemy with a single weapon and no shield. In addition, opponents subtract 1 from any Gang Up bonuses they would normally get against the hero (see page 77).

Wall of Steel

Requirements: Veteran, Florentine, Notice d8+

Sometimes a fighter finds himself greatly outnumbered in a fight. Fortunately, the character has the perception and agility to handle multiple foes. Opponents gain no Gang Up bonus against the hero.

Frenzy

Requirements: Seasoned; Fighting d10+

Frenzied fighters make fast and furious melee attacks, sacrificing finesse for raw speed. This allows them to make an extra Fighting attack per round at a –2 penalty to all Fighting rolls. This attack must be taken at the same time as another Fighting attack though it may target any two foes adjacent to the hero (Wild Cards roll two Fighting dice and one Wild Die). The –2 penalty is subtracted from all attacks.

A character armed with two weapons still only makes one extra attack.

Improved Frenzy

Requirements: Veteran, Frenzy

As above but the character may ignore the –2 Frenzy penalty.

Giant Killer

Requirements: Veteran

Your hero knows how to find the weak points in massive creatures, whether it's the akaana king or a great ape from the high mountains.

Your character does +1d6 damage when attacking creatures three sizes or more larger than himself. Men are Size 0 while great apes are Size 3, for example (the Game Master has a complete bestiary starting on page 300).

Hard to Kill

Requirements: Wild Card, Novice, Spirit d8+

Some men are more than flesh and bones. They are a steel will and a raw determination backed by the righteousness of their faith.

When forced to make any of the Vigor rolls on the Knockout Blow or Injury tables, he may ignore his wound modifiers. This only applies to Vigor rolls called for by these tables—he still suffers from wound modifiers for other Trait rolls normally.

Harder to Kill

Requirements: Veteran, Hard to Kill

Your hero is nearly impossible to kill; or his foes have a tendency to leave him for dead, allowing him to escape.



If he is ever "killed," roll a die. On an odd result, he's dead as usual. On an even roll, he's Incapacitated but somehow escapes death. He may be captured, stripped of all his belongings, or mistakenly left for dead, but he somehow survives.

Improvisational Fighter

Requirements: Seasoned, Agility d6+

Heroes often find themselves fighting with pieces of equipment or furnishing not designed for combat. A character with this Edge has a knack for using such improvised weapons, and does not suffer the usual –1 attack penalty when wielding them. See page 57 for details.

Iron Jaw

Requirements: Novice, Vigor d8+

The hero can absorb damage like he was made of English oak. He gets +2 to Soak rolls.

Iron Will

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d8+, Guts d6+

The character has seen many horrors the world has to offer, and holds his ground when lesser men flee. He gains +2 to all Guts rolls and subtracts 2 from rolls on the Fright Table.

Level headed

Requirements: Seasoned, Smarts d8+

Fighters who can keep their cool when everyone else is running for cover are deadly customers in combat. A hero with this Edge draws an additional action card in combat and acts on the best of the draw.

Improved Level headed

Requirements: Seasoned, Level Headed

As above but the hero draws 3 cards.

Lunge

Requirements: Novice, Fighting d8+

A lunge allows a swordsman to extend the reach of his weapon. The character gains +1 Reach to his weapon. He may not use this Edge with First Strike, Frenzy, or Sweep.

Marksman

Requirements: Seasoned

The character excels at taking controlled, measured shots. If he does not move in a turn, the hero may fire as if he took the aim maneuver (see page 74).

Marksman may never be used with a rate of fire greater than 1.

Nerves of Steel

Requirements: Wild Card, Novice, Vigor d8+

Your hero has learned to fight on through the most intense pain. He may ignore 1 point of wound penalties.

Improved Nerves of Steel

Requirements: Novice, Nerves of Steel

The character ignores 2 points of wound penalties.

No Mercy

Requirements: Seasoned

The character may spend a benny to reroll damage from one of his successful attacks. The reroll applies to any one damage roll, not multiple damage rolls from a single attack (such as a Sweep attack).

Quick Draw

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+

Drawing his weapon in haste can save a warrior's life if he finds himself attacked from ambush or by deceit.

This Edge allows a hero to draw a weapon and ignore the usual –2 to his attack that round. If the hero must make an Agility roll to draw a weapon (see page 73), he adds +2 to the roll.

Riposte

Requirements: Seasoned, First Strike, Fighting d8+

A riposte is a combination of a swift parry followed by a quick attack. Once per round, the character receives a free Fighting attack against one foe within reach of his weapon who failed a Fighting attack against him. This attack is made at –2.

A riposte must be a straight attack (so no Disarm, Wild Attack, or other maneuvers) and may not be combined with Frenzy or Sweep. It may be used with the Defend maneuver (but not the Full Defense maneuver).

Improved Riposte

Requirements: Veteran, Riposte

As above, except the character may make a free attack with no penalty.

Solid Determination

Requirements: Heroic, Wild Card, Iron Jaw

When lesser men fall by the wayside, this hero just keeps soldiering on.

When the character takes enough wounds to make him Incapacitated, he may make a free Soak roll. Should the roll fail, the hero may spend a benny to make a soak roll as normal. If a character suffers multiple wounds in the same round which take him to Incapacitated, he may make multiple free Soak rolls.

Example: Solomon Kane already has 2 wounds, when two alluring vampires sink their teeth into him, inflicting 2 and 3 wounds respectively. Kane may make two free Soak rolls, one against each attack.

Spot Weakness

Requirements: Seasoned, Smarts d8+, Fighting d8+, Notice d6+

No swordsman, whether one taught at the finest academy or one who developed his art on the streets of London, is flawless. Everyone has a weakness, and this character has the training necessary to spot and exploit such a weakness.

If an opponent making a Fighting attack against the character rolls a 1 on his Fighting die (regardless of Wild Die), the character receives +1 to Fighting rolls against that foe for the rest of the combat. If an opponent

rolls a 1 on his Fighting die but hits the hero using his Wild Die, the character still spots the flaw.

You only get the bonus once, no matter how many 1s are rolled.

Steady Hands

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+

Your hero ignores the Unstable Platform penalty for using "fine" physical skills from the backs of animals or while riding in moving vehicles (see page 80).

Sweep

Requirements: Novice, Strength d8+, Fighting d8+

Sweep allows a character to make a single Fighting attack and apply the result against all adjacent targets at a –2 penalty. Resolve each damage roll separately. Allies are affected by such attacks as well, so characters must be careful how they use this powerful ability.

A character may not use Sweep in the same action she uses Frenzy.

Improved Sweep

Requirements: Veteran, Sweep

As above but the hero may ignore the –2 penalty.

Trademark Weapon

Requirements: Novice, Fighting or Shooting of d10+

The hero knows one particular and unique weapon like the back of his hand. When using that specific weapon, the character adds +1 to his Fighting, Shooting, or Throwing skill rolls. A hero can take this Edge multiple times, but must apply it to a different weapon each time. If a Trademark Weapon is lost, the hero can replace it, but the benefit of the Edge doesn't begin again for two game weeks.

Improved Trademark Weapon

Requirements: Veteran, Trademark Weapon

As above but the bonus when using the weapon increases to +2.

Two-Fisted

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+

This hero isn't ambidextrous—he's simply learned to fight with two weapons at once.

When attacking with a weapon in each hand, the hero rolls for each attack separately, but ignores the multi-action penalty.

Leadership Edges

Kane himself was once a captain in the French army and led dozens of men in bloody battle. Your character may do the same, and Leadership Edges will aid in commanding his troops, as the Edges apply to those he leads rather than himself. Subordinate characters within 5" are considered "in command" and benefit from these Edges.

Leadership Edges are not cumulative from multiple commanders. Troops cannot benefit from two leaders with the Command Edge, for example. They could benefit from two different Edges, however, such as Command and Fervor, even if they were possessed by two different leaders.

Wild Card characters are never affected by Leadership Edges—they're too independent-minded to be driven by others unless they choose to be.

Command

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d6+

Command is your character's ability to give clear instructions to surrounding allies and enforce his will upon them. This makes your character's compatriots more willing to fight on despite their wounds, and so adds +1 to their Spirit rolls to recover from being Shaken.

Command Presence

Requirements: Novice, Command

A booming voice, effective commands, natural charisma, or simple training results in a much more effective combat element. At the center of that element is the officer in command.

A hero with this Edge has a "command radius" of 10" instead of the usual 5".

Fanaticism

Requirements: Seasoned, Spirit d8+, Command

The hero has a force of personality that gives others the heart to stand when the courage of other men fails.

Those under the hero's command gain +2 to their Guts rolls.

Fervor

Requirements: Veteran, Spirit d8+, Command

A simple phrase uttered by a great leader can sometimes have momentous results. A leader with this ability can inspire his men to bloody fervor by yelling a motto, battle cry, or other inspirational words.

Allies who are in command add +1 to their Fighting damage rolls.

Gifted Leader

Requirements: Veteran, Command

Command comes easy to this hero and his followers respect him. The result is a well-disciplined and effective force that works well as a unit.

Extras making group rolls while under this leader's command roll d8 as the Wild Die instead of d6.

Hold the Line!

Requirements: Seasoned, Smarts d8+, Command

This Edge strengthens the will of the men under the hero's command. The troops add +1 to their Toughness.

Inspire

Requirements: Seasoned, Command

Leaders with exceptional reputations and experience in battle inspire the soldiers around them.

They add +2 to their Spirit rolls when recovering from being Shaken (this already includes the original +1 bonus for the Command Edge). This greatly improves the chances of men recovering from light wounds or poor morale that might normally take them out of the action.

Natural Leader

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d8+, Command

This Edge signifies a special link between a leader and his men. With it, he may share his bennies with any troops under his command. The hero also gains one extra benny per session if his troops will be on hand (GM's call).

Power Edges

Power Edges relate to mystical energies and dark magic, and so can only be taken by heroes with the Arcane Background Edge. See page 97 for more details on the types of Arcane Backgrounds available.

New Power

Requirements: Novice, Arcane Background

An arcane character may learn a new power by choosing this Edge. He may choose from any powers normally available to his Arcane Background. This Edge may be taken more than once.

Rapid Recovery

Requirements: Seasoned, Vigor d6+, Arcane Background

Some powerful mages and ju-ju men are able to recover faster than others from the exertions of working magic.

This Edge allows a spellcaster to reduce the time it takes to recover a Fatigue level lost to backlash to 15 minutes.

Improved Rapid Recovery

Requirements: Veteran, Rapid Recovery

The character regains one Fatigue level lost to backlash every 5 minutes.

Strong Caster

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background, Smarts d8+, arcane skill d6+, Knowledge (Occult) d8+

The character is adept at channeling raw magical essence.

A character with this Edge reduces the initial Casting Modifier of all spells by 1, to a maximum of zero. For instance, a spell with a Casting Modifier of –2 would give just a –1 penalty to this hero.

Improved Strong Caster

Requirements: Heroic, Strong Caster

As above, except the penalty to the Casting Modifier is reduced by 2 (to a maximum of zero).

Professional Edges

Professional Edges are special abilities that reflect many years of practicing a particular trade. These Edges help you create a hero who is far more competent in his chosen field than most others of his ilk—far more than just having a d12 in skills relevant to that occupation.

Professional Edges represent many years of training, so their Requirements are quite high. Players may purchase Professional Edges after character creation, but should usually lead up to it story-wise by practicing the affected trade in between adventures. The time spent acquiring a Professional Edge is subjective and up to the Game Master, but makes the game much more believable if a little narrative time is spent training.

Stacking: Bonuses to the same Trait from different Professional Edges do not stack. If you make a hero with both the Woodsman and the Thief Edges, for example, he gains +2 to his Stealth skill—not +4.

Acrobat

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Strength d6+

Those who have formal training in the acrobatic arts or are naturally agile may take this Edge. It adds +2 to all Agility rolls made to perform acrobatic maneuvers (including Trick maneuvers), and also adds +1 to a character's Parry, provided the character has no encumbrance penalty.

Example: Solomon Kane wants to leap over a table and attempt to interrupt the enemy soldier who's about to shoot an innocent in the back. If Kane had the Acrobat Edge, he'd add +2 to his Agility roll to leap over the table, but not to the opposed Agility test to try to interrupt the soldier's action.

Explorer

Requirements: Novice, Vigor d6+, Survival d8+

There are two extremes of climate, and this character has survived them both. He gains a +2 bonus to Survival rolls. In addition, he has a +2 bonus to resist the effects of hot and cold environments (see pages 89 and 91).

Gunsmith

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d8+, Repair d8+

A gunsmith not only makes and repairs firearms and cannons—he also manufactures powder bombs, grenades, and pistol shot. The character receives a +2 bonus when creating weapons (page 55).

Investigator

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d8+, Investigation d8+, Streetwise d8+

These heroes have spent a great deal of time researching ancient legends or devilish mysteries. They add +2 to Investigation and Streetwise rolls, as well as Notice rolls to search through evidence.

Jack-of-All-Trades

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d10+

Through liberal book-learning or amazing intuitive perception, your hero has a talent for picking up skills on the fly. There is little he can't figure out given a little time and a dash of luck.

Any time he makes an unskilled roll, he may do so at d4 instead of the usual d4–2.

Musketeer

Requirements: Novice, Shooting d8+, may not have the All Thumbs Hindrance

Some characters have a natural affinity with firearms, or have trained for years to load quickly even while under fire.

Musketeers can reload a firearm in a single action. They may walk while reloading, but may not run. The Edge does not apply to cannon, only to personal arms.

Scholar

Requirements: Novice, d8+ in affected skills

Learned sages and amateur enthusiasts spend months of their lives studying particular fields. They become experts in certain subjects, and rarely fail to answer questions in their particular area of expertise.

Pick any two Knowledge skills that your character has a d8 or better in. Add +2 to your total whenever these skills are used.

Thief

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Climb d6+, Lockpicking d6+, Stealth d8+

Thieves specialize in deceit and treachery. They are nimble practitioners of the less than honest arts, but can be invaluable where traps must be detected, walls must be climbed, and locks must be picked.

Thieves add +2 to Climb, Lockpicking, and Stealth rolls. The bonus to Stealth does not apply when the character is in a wilderness environment—only in urban areas.

Woodsman

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d6+, Survival d8+, Tracking d8+

Woodsmen are rangers and scouts who are more at home in the wilderness than in urban areas. They are skilled trackers and scouts, and know how to live off the land for months at a time.

Woodsmen gain +2 to Tracking, Survival, and Stealth rolls made in the wilderness (not towns, ruins, or underground).

Social Edges

These Edges help your hero achieve the important task of convincing others to do as he wishes.

Charismatic

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d8+

Your hero has learned how to work with others, even those who might be somewhat opposed to him or his goals. This adds +2 to his Charisma.



Common Bond

Requirements: Wild Card, Novice, Spirit d8+

This Edge signifies a special link between close companions—such as a typical party of player characters. It doesn't matter whether or not the characters get along perfectly or not, they've just formed a close and common bond during their epic adventures.

A character with this Edge may freely give his bennies to any other Wild Card he can communicate with. This represents the hero giving his verbal or spiritual support to the ally. The player should say what his character is doing to give the support. The gesture could be as complex as a rousing speech, or as simple as a knowing nod.

Connections

Requirements: Novice

Your hero is connected to someone of power and resources, such as the Church, the East India Company, a tribe of warriors, or even a resourceful noble with a lust for adventure.



To use a character's Connection requires that she get in touch with one of her contacts and make a Persuasion roll. This may be a face-to-face meeting, a message delivered across town, or even a dispatch sent across the globe. Be warned now that your traveler will not likely be in civilized areas with clear lines of communication often, and help may be months in coming. The GM should feel free to modify both the Persuasion roll and any results based on the circumstances.

A failure indicates the hero's contacts couldn't come through this time, or perhaps just weren't persuaded that their help was really necessary.

On a success, the contact spares only meager resources, such as information or minimal funds. On a raise, the contact might send some more substantial help, such as dispatching a rescue expedition or supply train.

Two or more raises means the hero has sufficiently made a case for serious help. If the character needs financial assistance, the contact may provide a little more than he's comfortable with. If the hero asks for men, the contact delivers either one expert in a useful field (a tracker or scholar, for example) or five average fighter-types for the contact's particular organization (a bandit chief sends five thugs, the military sends five infantrymen, and so on). In all cases, it is the GM's decision exactly what form the assistance takes.

A character may take this Edge more than once. Each time it is taken, it must be applied to a different group.

Good or Bad Reputation

Requirements: Veteran

Whether the character is branded a hero or villain, he has earned a reputation for himself across the world.

He may add his Charisma to Intimidation rolls. A negative score is treated as positive for this (and the hero has a bad reputation).

Strong Willed

Requirements: Novice, Intimidate d6+, Taunt d6+

Characters with strong willpower use their voice, steely stares, or quick wits to unnerve their opponents.

Strong Willed adds +2 to a character's Intimidate and Taunt rolls, as well as his Spirit and Smarts rolls when resisting Tests of Will attacks.

Weird Edges

Weird Edges are slightly supernatural, and may stem from ancient bloodlines, strange births, or tribal customs.

Beast Bond

Requirements: Novice

Some heroes can exert incredible will over their animal companion. These characters may spend their own bennies for any animals under their control, including mounts, pet dogs, and so on.

Beast Master

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d8+

Animals like your hero, and won't attack him unless he attacks them first or they are enraged. His "animal magnetism" is so great he's attracted a loyal animal of some sort as well. This is typically a dog, wolf, or bird.

Larger animals such as tigers or bears are possible, but require that the hero take this Edge twice. If the beast is killed, another comes in 2d6 days if possible.

Conviction

Requirements: Heroic, Spirit d6+

As your Wanderer grows spiritually, he will eventually be able to tap into his inner strength more reliably.

Once per game session, the character can automatically trigger his Righteous Rage instead of rolling to see if it's triggered (see page 67 for more on Righteous Rage).

Danger Sense

Requirements: Novice

Your hero can sense when something bad is about to happen. Anytime he's about to be the victim of a surprise attack, ambush, or other nasty surprise, he gets a Notice roll at –2 just before the attack or event occurs. If successful, the character is immediately considered on Hold, possibly allowing him to take appropriate action to avoid disaster.



Should the roll fail, the hero is allowed a regular Notice roll when the ambush or trap is sprung. In essence, he receives two chances to avoid surprise, but with different possible outcomes.

Healer

Requirements: Novice, Spirit d8+

A hero with this Edge adds +2 to all Healing rolls. Up to five companions traveling with a Healer add the bonus to their natural healing rolls as well (that is, when they make Vigor rolls to see if their wounds heal each week).

Wild Card Edges

The following Edges work only when the character is dealt a Joker during combat. The Edge's effects are in addition to the usual effects of being dealt a Joker.

Dead Shot

Requirements: Wild Card, Seasoned, Shooting/Throwing d10+

The character doubles his total damage when making a successful Shooting or Throwing attack this round.

Mighty Blow

Requirements: Wild Card, Seasoned, Fighting d10+

The character doubles his total damage when making a successful Fighting attack this round.

Legendary Edges

The Edges listed below are out of the regular order because few campaigns get to this level. Heroes who do reach this Rank are powerful indeed, and these special abilities reflect their incredible status.

Followers

Requirements: Wild Card, Legendary

A man who battles evil all his life and lives eventually attracts others to his side. Whether they are faithful followers or paid retainers, these allies are dedicated servants who stand by the hero even in the worst situations.

Each time this Edge is chosen, five allies join the hero's band. Casualties are not automatically replaced, so a hero may need to choose this Edge again on occasion to replenish his losses.

These allies must have some way to eat and earn income, and generally want a piece of whatever treasure, or other rewards the hero acquires. Otherwise, the followers are completely dedicated to their idol and risk their lives for him under normal conditions. In general, they won't knowingly throw their lives away, but special circumstances or those who have been with the hero for a few years might.

It is up to the Game Master to determine the followers' statistics, but in general, use the Foot Soldier archetype presented on page 328. Followers generally come with only basic equipment depending on their particular culture (tribal warriors come with at least a shield and spear, for example). The character must purchase any additional equipment for his Followers himself.

Leader of Men

Requirements: Legendary, Command

The character is a true leader of men, and commands respect and obedience from those who serve under him. Wild Cards may benefit from his Leadership Edges (if they so choose).

Professional

Requirements: Legendary, d12 in affected Trait

The hero is an expert at a particular Trait. His Trait becomes d12+1. This Edge may be selected more than once, but it may never be applied to the same Trait twice.

Expert

Requirements: Legendary, Professional in affected Trait

As above, but the affected Trait increases to d12+2.

Master

Requirements: Wild Card, Legendary, Expert in affected Trait

The character's Wild Die increases to a d10 when rolling the affected Trait. This Edge may be chosen multiple times, though it may only affect a particular Trait once.

Sidekick

Requirements: Wild Card, Legendary

A character who triumphs over evil time and time again becomes an inspiration to others. Eventually, one of these devotees may attempt to join the hero in his epic quests.

The hero gains a Novice Rank sidekick. The sidekick is a Wild Card, gains experience as usual, and has abilities that complement or mimic his hero's.

In general, the player should control his sidekick just like any other allied character. Of course, the sidekick may occasionally cause trouble (by getting captured, running into danger when he's not supposed to, etc.). The player should be prepared for his "Edge" to become a "Hindrance" from time to time.

If the sidekick dies, he isn't replaced unless the hero chooses this Edge again.

Tough as Nails

Requirements: Legendary

Your hero is a grizzled veteran. Increase his Toughness by +1.

Improved Tough as Nails

Requirements: Legendary, Tough as Nails

As above, but increase your character's Toughness by another +1.

Weapon Master

Requirements: Legendary, Fighting d12

Through long years of dedicated practice, your character can defend himself with most any weapon. Increase your hero's Parry by +1.

Master of Arms

Requirements: Legendary, Weapon Master

As above, but increase your hero's Parry by another +1.



Character Summary

1) Race

• You can only play a human, but you get a free Edge (for which you must meet all the requirements).

2) Traits

• Your hero starts with a d4 in each attribute, and has 5 points with which to raise them. Raising an attribute a die type costs 1 point.

• You have 15 points for skills.

• Each die type in a skill costs 1 point up to the linked attribute. Going over the linked attribute costs 2 points per level.

• Charisma is equal to the total bonuses or penalties given by Edges and Hindrances.

• Pace is 6".

• Parry is equal to 2 plus half Fighting.

• Toughness is equal to 2 plus half Vigor. Go ahead and add the bonus granted by the armor worn on your torso to this value as well for speed's sake, but remember it may not count if attacks target other parts of the body.

3) Edges & Hindrances

• You gain additional points for taking up to one Major Hindrance and two Minor Hindrances.

For 2 points you can:

• Gain another attribute point.

• Choose an Edge.

For 1 point you can:

• Gain another skill point.

• Increase starting funds by £5

4) Gear

• Start with £5

5) Background Details

• Fill in any other background details you care to add.

Leveling

• Gain a new Edge
• Increase one skill*
• Increase two skills**
• Increase one attribute***
• Add a new skill at d4

*Equal to or greater than linked attribute

**Less than linked attribute

***Only once per Rank.

Load Limits

A character's load limit is equal to 5 x their Strength.

Every multiple of the load limit after the first subtracts 1 from a character's:

• Agility and all linked skills
• Strength and all linked skills

Skills Summary

Skill	Linked Attribute
Boating	Agility
Climbing	Strength
Driving	Agility
Fighting	Agility
Gambling	Smarts
Guts	Spirit
Healing	Smarts
Intimidation	Spirit
Investigation	Smarts
Knowledge	Smarts
Lockpicking	Agility
Notice	Smarts
Persuasion	Spirit
Repair	Smarts
Riding	Agility
Shooting	Agility
Stealth	Agility
Streetwise	Smarts
Survival	Smarts
Swimming	Agility
Taunt	Smarts
Throwing	Agility
Tracking	Smarts

Hindrances Summary

Hindrance	Type	Effects
Allergy	Minor/Major	–2 or –4 to Trait rolls when exposed to allergen
All Thumbs	Minor	–2 Repair; Roll of 1 on a mechanical or electronic device causes malfunction
Anemic	Minor	–2 Vigor to resist sickness, disease, poison or environment
Arrogant	Major	Must humiliate opponent, always look to challenge the 'leader'
Bad Eyes	Minor	–2 to attack or notice something more than 5" distant
Bad Luck	Major	One less benny per session
Big Mouth	Minor	Unable to keep a secret, blabs at the worst time
Blind	Major	–6 to all actions that rely on vision, –2 on social rolls, gain additional Edge
Bloodthirsty	Major	Never takes prisoners; –4 Charisma if demeanor is known
Branded	Minor	–2 Charisma
Cautious	Minor	Character is overly cautious
Clueless	Major	–2 to most Common Knowledge rolls
Cocky	Minor	The character must spend his first action bragging or lose a benny
Code of Honor	Major	The character keeps his word and acts like a gentleman
Curious	Major	Character wants to know about everything
Death Wish	Minor	Hero wants to die after completing some task
Delusional	Minor/Major	Character suffers from grave delusions
Dependent	Major	See text
Doubting Thomas	Minor	–2 to Guts rolls when faced by supernatural horrors
Elderly	Major	Pace –1, –1 to Strength & Vigor die types; +5 skill points for Smarts skills
Enemy	Minor/Major	The character has a recurring nemesis of some sort
Glass Jaw	Minor	–2 to Soak rolls
Greedy	Minor/Major	The character is obsessed with wealth
Habit	Minor/Major	A Minor Habit is simply annoying (Charisma –1)
Hard of Hearing	Minor/Major	–2 to Notice sounds; automatic failure if completely deaf
Heroic	Major	The character is a true hero and always helps those in need
Illiterate	Minor	The character cannot read or write
Jingoistic	Minor/Major	–2 or –4 to Charisma when dealing with other races and cultures
Lame	Major	–2 Pace and running die is a d4
Loyal	Minor	The hero tries to never betray or disappoint his friends
Mean	Minor	The character suffers –2 to his Charisma for his ill-temper and surliness
Obese	Minor	+1 Toughness, –1 Pace, d4 running die
One Arm	Major	–4 to tasks requiring two arms
One Leg	Major	Pace –2, d4 running die, –2 to rolls requiring mobility, –2 to Swimming skill
Outsider	Minor	–2 Charisma, treated badly by those of the more dominant society
Overconfident	Major	The hero believes he can do anything
Pacifist	Minor/Major	The character fights only in self-defense as a Minor Hindrance, and won't fight living creatures under any circumstance as a major Hindrance
Phobia	Minor/Major	–2 or –4 to Trait tests when near the phobia
Poverty	Minor	Half starting funds, general inability to hang onto future income
Quirk	Minor	The hero has a minor but persistent foible, such as bragging, or elitism
Small	Major	–1 Toughness
Stubborn	Minor	Hero always wants his way
Ugly	Minor	–2 Charisma due to the character's less-than-average appearance
Vengeful	Minor/Major	Character holds a grudge, will kill to settle the score as a Major Hindrance
Vow	Minor/Major	The hero has a pledge to himself, a group, a deity, or a religion
Wanted	Minor/Major	The character is a criminal of some sort
Yellow	Major	The character is cowardly and suffers –2 to his Guts rolls
Young	Major	3 points for Attributes, 10 skill points, +1 benny per session

Edges Summary

Edge	Requirements	Effects
Acrobat	N, A d8, St d6	+2 to nimbleness-based Agility rolls; +1 Parry if unencumbered
Alertness*	N	+2 Notice
Ambidextrous*	N, A d8	Ignore –2 penalty for using off-hand
Arcane Background*	N, Special	Allows access to supernatural powers
Arcane Resistance*	N, Sp d8	Armor 2 vs. magic, +2 to resist magic effects
Improved Arcane Resistance	N	Armor 4 vs. magic, +4 to resist magic effects
Attractive*	N, V d6	Charisma +2
Very Attractive*	N, Attractive	Charisma +4
Beast Bond	N	Character may spend bennies for his animals
Beast Master	N, Sp d8	You gain an animal companion
Berserk*	N	Smarts roll or go Berserk after being wounded; +2 Fighting and Strength rolls, –2 Parry, +2 Toughness; Roll of 1 on Fighting die hits random adjacent target
Block	S, Fighting d8	Parry +1
Improved Block	V, Block	Parry +2
Brawny*	N, St d6, V d6	Toughness +1; load limit is 8xStr instead of 5xStr
Charismatic	N, Sp d8	Charisma +2
Close Fighting	N, Ag d8, Fighting d8	Bonus to Parry equal to opponent's Reach +1
Improved Close Fighting	N, Close Fighting	Bonus to Fighting equal to opponent's Reach +1
Combat Reflexes	S	+2 to recover from being Shaken
Command	N, Sm d6	+1 to troops recovering from being Shaken within 5"
Command Presence	N, Command	Double command radius to 10"
Common Bond	WC, N, Sp d8	May give bennies to allies in communication
Connections	N	Call upon powerful friends with Persuasion roll
Conviction	H, Sp d6	Can trigger Righteous Rage once per game without rolling
Danger Sense	N	Notice at –2 to detect surprise attacks/danger
Dead Shot	WC, S, Shoot/Throw d10	Double ranged damage when dealt Joker
Dirty Fighter	S	+2 to Tricks
Really Dirty Fighter	S, Dirty Fighter	Can spend benny to get the Drop
Dodge	S, A d8	–1 to be hit with ranged attacks
Improved Dodge	V, Dodge	–2 to be hit with ranged attacks
Entangle	S, Fight d8	The character can trap his foe's weapon arm, leaving him as an Unarmed Defender and unable to retreat from combat.
Explorer	N, Vi d6, Survival d8	+2 to resist effects of heat or cold
Fanaticism	S, Sp d8, Command	Followers gain +2 to Guts rolls
Fast Healer*	N, V d8	+2 to natural healing rolls

*Background Edges—must be chosen during character creation.

Edge	Requirements	Effects
Fervor	V, Sp d8, Command	+1 melee damage to troops in command
First Strike	N, A d8	May attack one foe who moves adjacent
Improved First Strike	H, First Strike	May attack every foe who moves adjacent
Fleche	V, Ag d8, Fight d8	See text
Fleet-Footed	N, A d6	+2 Pace, d10 running die instead of d6
Florentine	N, A d8, Fighting d8	+1 vs. foes with single weapon and no shield, ignore 1 point of gang up bonus
Followers	L, WC	Gain 5 followers (see text)
Frenzy	S, Fighting d10	1 extra Fighting attack at –2
Improved Frenzy	V, Frenzy	As above but no penalty
Giant Killer	V	+4 damage when attacking large creatures
Good/Bad Reputation	V	Add Charisma to Intimidation rolls
Gifted Leader	V, Command	Extras under the hero's command roll d8 Wild Die for Group rolls
Gunsmith	N, Sm d8, Repair d8	+2 when making grenades, powder bombs, guns or shot
Hard to Kill	N, WC, Sp d8	Ignore wound penalties for Vigor rolls made on the Knockout or Injury tables
Harder to Kill	V, Hard to Kill	50% chance of surviving "death" by some means
Healer	N, Sp d8	+2 Healing
Hold the Line!	S, Sm d8, Command	Troops have +1 Toughness
Improvisational Fighter	S, Sm d6	Suffers no penalties for using improvised weapons
Inspire	S, Command	+2 to Spirit rolls of all troops in command
Iron Jaw	N, Vi d8	+2 to Soak rolls
Iron Will	N, Sp d8, Guts d6	+2 to Guts rolls, –2 to Fright Table rolls
Jack-of-all-Trades	N, Sm d10	No –2 for unskilled Smarts based attempts
Leader of Men	L, Command	Hero may use Leadership Edges on allied Wild Cards
Level Headed	S, Sm d8	Act on best of two cards in combat
Improved Level Headed	S, Level Headed	Act on best of three cards in combat
Luck*	N	+1 benny per session
Great Luck*	N, Luck	+2 bennies per session
Lunge	N, Fight d8	Can extend melee weapon Reach by 1"
Marksman	S	Character gets the Aim maneuver (+2 Shooting) if he does not move
Mighty Blow	WC, S, Fighting d10	Double melee damage when dealt Joker
Musketeer	N, Shoot d8, no All Thumbs	Reload blackpowder weapon in 1 action
Natural Leader	N, Sp d8, Command	Leader may give bennies to troops in command
Nerves of Steel	N, WC, V d8	Ignore 1 point of wound penalties
Improved Nerves of Steel	N, Nerves of Steel	Ignore 2 points of wound penalties
New Power	N, AB	The hero learns a new spell
No Mercy	S	Can spend bennies on damage rolls

*Background Edges—must be chosen during character creation.

Edge	Requirements	Effects
Noble*	N	Rich; +2 Charisma; hero is noble born with status and wealth
Professional	L, d12 in Trait	Trait becomes d12+1
Expert	L, Prof. in Trait	Trait becomes d12+2
Master	L, WC, Expert in Trait	Wild Die is d10 for one Trait
Quick*	N	Discard draw of 5 or less for new card
Quick Draw	N, A d8	May draw weapon as a free action
Rapid Recovery	S, Vi d6, AB	Recovers a Fatigue level due to backlash every 15 minutes
Improved Rapid Recovery	H, Rapid Recovery	Recovers a Fatigue level due to backlash every 5 minutes
Rich*	N	Start with £15 and have a regular income of £300 per year
Filthy Rich*	N, Noble or Rich	Hero begins play with £25 and earns £750 per year
Riposte	S, First Strike, Fight d8	Once per round you may make a Fighting attack at –2 against a foe who misses you in melee
Improved Riposte	V, Riposte	As above, but with no penalty.
Scholar	N, d8 in affected skills	+2 to two different Knowledge skills
Solid Determination	H, WC, Iron Jaw	May make a free soak roll to avoid being Incapacitated
Spot Weakness	See notes	When a foe rolls a 1 on his Fighting die against you, you get +1 to Fighting rolls against him
Steady Hands	N, A d8	Ignore unstable platform penalty for mounts or vehicles
Strong Caster	S, AB, arcane skill d6, Know (occult) d8	Casting Modifiers for spells are reduced by 1 (min, of zero)
Imp. Strong Caster	V, Strong Caster	Casting Modifiers are reduced by 2 (min. zero)
Strong Willed	N, Intimidation d6, Taunt d6	+2 Intimidation and Taunt, +2 to resist
Sweep	N, St d8, Fighting d8	Attack all adjacent foes at –2
Improved Sweep	V, Sweep	As above but with no penalty
Thief	N, A d8, Climb d6, Lockpicking d6, Stealth d8	+2 Climb, Lockpicking, Stealth, or to disarm traps
Tough as Nails	L	Increase Toughness by +1
Improved Tough as Nails	L, Tough as Nails	Increase Toughness by another +1
Trademark Weapon	N, Fighting or Shooting d10	+1 Fighting or Shooting with one particular weapon
Imp Trademark Weapon	V, Trademark Weapon	+2 Fighting or Shooting with one particular weapon
Two-Fisted	N, A d8	May attack with a weapon in each hand without multi-action penalty.
Wall of Steel	V, Florentine, Notice d8	Foes get no Gang Up bonus against you
Weapon Master	L, Fighting d12	Increase Parry by +1
Master of Arms	L, Weapon Master	Increase Parry by another +1
Woodsman	N, Sp d6, Survival d8, Tracking d8	+2 Tracking Survival, and Stealth

*Background Edges—must be chosen during character creation.

Arms and Equipment

For man's only weapon is courage that flinches not from the gates of Hell itself, and against such not even the legions of Hell can stand.

—Skulls in the Stars

Solomon Kane is as recognizable for his trusty pistol and somber clothing as he is for his dour demeanor. Firearms in this period are still relatively new, and swordplay is a vital skill if a wanderer is to survive in the dark places of the world. Whether your character is a pistol-packing ne'er-do-well or a simple tribesman; a skilled fencer or a crack-shot musketeer, he'll need to ensure he's adequately equipped before venturing forth on the *Path of Kane*.

In the following section is a list of the equipment common to the world of Solomon Kane. Below are some notes you'll need to understand the equipment lists.

AP (Armor Piercing): The weapon or round ignores this many points of Armor. A weapon with an AP value of 4, for instance, ignores 4 points of Armor. Excess AP is simply lost.

Armor: This is the amount of protection provided by the equipment, which is added to the wearer's Toughness when the covered location is hit in combat. A character who wears multiple layers of armor only gains the highest bonus—they do not stack. Note that unless an attacker states otherwise, hits are always directed at the victim's torso.

Cost: Equipment prices are listed with either a British pound value or a rating of Mil. The latter means the goods are only available to the military.

Damage: Damage is listed in terms of dice. Ranged weapons have fixed damage dice (such as 2d6). Melee weapons have damage based on the wielder's Strength die plus another die, as listed under individual weapon entries. A dagger, for instance, inflicts Str+1d4 damage. We'll discuss damage later on.

Heavy Weapon: The weapon can affect vehicles or creatures with Heavy Armor.

Minimum Strength: Some weapons list a Minimum Strength needed to use them. With melee weapons, a character with a lower Strength can use the weapon, but there are penalties.

First, your weapon's damage die can't be any higher than your Strength die. So if your scrawny kid (d4 Str) picks up a sword (Str+d8 damage), he rolls 2d4 damage, not d4+d8.

Second, if your Strength die isn't at least equal to the weapon's damage die, you don't get any of the weapon's inherent bonuses, such as +1 Parry or Reach (if there are any). You're still affected by associated penalties, however, like –1 Parry.

For ranged weapons, there's a –1 penalty to your Shooting roll per die your Strength is lower than the requirement. This is ignored if the weapon can be braced on a firing stand or other support.

Parry +X: The weapon adds the listed bonus to the character's Parry score when used. A character using two weapons with a Parry bonus only gains a benefit from the highest value.

Range: This lists the weapon's Short, Medium, and Long range. Ranges are listed in inches so you can use a ruler to move and



shoot on the table-top with miniatures. Each inch is equal to 2 yards in the real world, so that 5" is 10 yards, or 30 feet.

Weapon ranges are "effective" ranges for the table-top. If you need to know the real world range of a weapon (for battles that don't take place on the table-top, for instance), multiply each range bracket by 2.5. A cannon with a Long range of 300, for example, has a "real world" Long range of 750", or 1500 yards.

Reach: Weapons with Reach allow their user to make Fighting attacks at the listed range. A Reach of 1, for example, allows a character to strike a target 1" distant. Any weapon without a Reach value can only strike targets at arm's length (adjacent).

Reach can be very important when fighting from horseback and against mounted foes. See Setting Weapons on page 81.

Reloading: Weapons such as firearms and crossbows are very slow to reload. The table lists how many full actions it requires to reload such weapons.

Currency

The standard unit of exchange used in *The Savage World of Solomon Kane* is the British Pound. The pound is divided up into 20 shillings, and each shilling is divided up into 12 pence. To keep money easy to handle we rounded up the prices of all the items on the equipment list to the nearest shilling (0.05 pounds), allowing you to keep track of your money in decimal format.

Historic Currency

For those with an interest in the currency of Kane's era, here's a list of the common English coins used in the period:

30 shillings (fine sovereign), 20 shillings (pound), 15 shillings (ryal), 10 shillings (angel), 5 shillings (half-angel), 2.5 shillings (quarter angel), 12 pence (1 shilling), 6 pence (sixpence), 4 pence (groat), 3 pence (three-pence, pronounced "thruppence"), 2 pence (half groat), 1 pence (penny), three-quarter pence (three farthing), and half pence (half-penny, pronounced "haypenny").

Selling Goods

Wanderers in Kane's world occasionally come into possession of booty or cargo. Gems and jewelry are easy enough to sell or trade, but unloading more mundane items such as swords, muskets, or cargoes of cloth can be a bit more tricky. One or two items can sometimes be sold at near full-price if the right buyer can be found, but no merchant pays full price for such items.

A Streetwise roll in any town allows a seller to unload all of his mundane goods for a quarter its normal value. A raise finds a buyer who will take it all for half the list price. This roll may only be attempted once per week.

The Armory

Gunsmiths are skilled craftsmen, adept at manufacturing a wide range of weapons and ammunition. These rules do not allow characters to manufacture cannons but they can rearm themselves without access to a town.

Unless stated otherwise the hero requires raw materials equal to half the cost of the finished item, a set of gunsmith's tools, and a source of heat to work metal. The GM has the final word on whether the necessary components can be found.

Grenade

Grenades were invented in Cathay and are only slowly making their way onto European battlefields. A character wishing to create a grenade needs 1 pound of metal (usually iron or brass), 10 shots of powder, and a small length of fuse. The total cost of the components is £0.35.

Crafting the case requires one hour and a successful Repair roll at –2. On a success the casing is constructed correctly. With a failure the casing fails to set properly—damage is reduced to 2d6 in a Small Burst Template. A critical failure ruins the casing completely and the gunsmith needs a new batch of metal.

The fuse can be set to any delay with a Smarts roll. Failure means the grenade goes off 10-40% earlier or later than expected.

Pistol Shot

Shot is made by pouring molten metal—usually lead because of its low melting temperature—into a mold. After the metal has cooled the mold is opened and the shot filed smooth. Twelve shots can be made every 30 minutes. Producing a batch of shot requires a successful Smarts roll. Failure means the shot is poorly formed and using it imposes a –1 penalty to Shooting rolls. A critical failure ruins the entire batch.

Powder Bomb

Gunpowder can also be used to make a low-powered explosive. A standard bomb requires 10 rounds of shot & powder and does 2d6 damage. Creating a bomb requires a Repair roll and 30 minutes work. No tools or heat source are required. The user bundles the shot and powder into a sack, pot, or other container, then sets a small fuse into it. The fuse is set as with grenades, above.

Bigger Bombs: A cask of gunpowder causes 5d6 damage in a Large Burst Template. If additional bombs are rigged to explode at the same time, roll their damage separately.

Selected Gear Notes

Below are some notes on some of the equipment listed in this chapter.

Armor Notes

The invention of blackpowder weapons has greatly reduced the value of wearing armor in battle, though it is still worn on ceremonial occasions by the upper echelons of society. The wearing of armor in public is frowned upon unless the wearer has a legal right, such as the nobility or soldiers (conquistadors proudly wear metal armor in Kane's world). Heroes of humble birth who wear heavy armor in public can expect to be stopped and questioned by the town guard on a frequent basis.

Note that the weights listed for large suits of armor are figured for their "distributed" weight. This assumes the armor is properly fitted, which requires a Knowledge (Armorsmithing) roll, some basic tools, and 1d6 hours. If armor is not properly fitted (such as when wearing armor taken from a foe), the weight is typically doubled. Full suits of metal armor are rarely worn now.

Armor & Water

Armor is particularly dangerous in water. An armor's bonus is subtracted from all Swimming rolls. This is in addition to any penalties from the armor's weight.

Even leather armor is quite deadly as its weight doubles when soaking wet.

Donning Armor

Experienced travelers often leave their bulky armor to be carried by pack animals, donning it only when battle looms. Leather armor typically takes 1d6 minutes to put on. Chain takes 2d6 minutes. Plate mail requires 2d6 x 5 minutes to properly attach.

Discarding Armor

Discarding armor requires a number of rounds equal to twice the armor's bonus. Discarding plate mail, for example, takes six full rounds.

At the end of this time, if the adventurer is trying to remove his armor while in water, he must also make a successful Swimming roll (minus the armor's bonus) to get rid of the armor.

Shields

If a character with a shield is hit by a ranged attack from the protected side, roll damage normally, but add the Armor bonus of the shield to the character's Toughness in the affected area (it acts as an obstacle).

Hand Weapons

Brass Knuckles

A character wearing brass knuckles is considered to be an Unarmed Attacker when facing a foe with a melee weapon (including another set of brass knuckles).

Exotic Hand Weapons

Although the majority of weapons in this chapter are European, cultures around the world have their own unique weapons. The following are some the wanderers may encounter on their travels.

Chúi: A Chinese weapon comprising a heavy round metal ball attached to a wooden handle. Treat as a maul, but can be used in one hand.

Dao: A curved Chinese sword. Treat this as a long sword.

Falchion: A medieval European weapon whose blade bulges wider before sweeping back to a point. It is thought to have been the basis for the Persian scimitar, though the latter has a thinner blade. Treat this as a long sword.

Kerambit: A Southeast Asian dagger with a curved blade, which represents a tiger's claw. The weapon is held in such a way that the tip of the blade points downward, for it to be used for slashing attacks, rather than piercing attacks most commonly associated with knives. Users place their index finger through a hole in the handle. When held this way, the user cannot be disarmed. Treat it as a dagger which can deliver slashing attacks.

Kodachi: A Japanese short sword. It is similar in length to the wakizashi, but made using different techniques. It has a curved blade and long wooden handle. Treat as a short sword which also grants +1 Parry.

Kris: A wavy-edged blade from Southeast Asia. Treat this as a dagger, except it causes Str+d4+1 damage due to the unusual shape of the blade.

Lathi: A long, flexible bamboo stick with a blunt metallic cap used in Hindoostan. It is used in a similar style to a sword, though cannot be used to make piercing attacks. Due to the flexibility and the light weight, treat this as a short sword.

Macuahuitl: This long wooden weapon was favored by Aztec warriors. Although it resembles a club, the rows of razor-sharp obsidian blades that lined the edges make it as fearsome as the finest Spanish blade. Treat this as a long sword, but with Parry –1.

Nzappa Zap: An African axe, similar to the tomahawk of the American Indians. It can be used as a melee weapon (treat as a hand axe) or thrown (treat as a throwing axe).

Phurba: A Tibetan dagger with three edges. The pommel often bears a likeness of the Tibetan deity Vajrakilaya. His faces are shown as happy, relaxed, and vengeful. Treat this as a dagger that causes Str+d4+1 damage.

Pudao: A Chinese two-handed sword. The blade and handle are both around 3 feet long, requiring the weapon to be used two-handed for balance. Treat this as a great sword.

Tabar Zin: A Persian axe with a crescent-shaped blade. Two forms exist, a short version (treat as a battle axe) and a long version (treat as a great axe).

Valaška: An Eastern European weapon mainly carried by shepherds. The metal tip has an axe blade on one side and a flat end used for hammering on the other. Its handle is long enough to use as a walking stick, but the tool lacks the sturdiness of a true weapon. Treat it as a hand axe that can also deliver blunt damage by using the flat-end of the head. A roll of 1 on the Fighting die (regardless of Wild die) means the Valaška is ruined.

Yawara: This Oriental weapon is a short palm-sized stick with two flattened ends, like those of a nail. Wrapped in a clenched fist, the ends can be used to deliver lethal blows. Treat as a brass knuckle, except the wearer can be disarmed.

Improvised Weapons

Heroes often find themselves fighting with objects that aren't intended for use as weapons. Torches, vases, chairs, tankards, bottles, tools, and other mundane items are frequently pressed into service in combat. Such improvised weapons cause the wielder to suffer a –1 Fighting or Throwing penalty, as well as –1 to Parry. The Game Master is the final judge of an improvised weapon's effectiveness.

Main Gauche

Many fighters use a secondary weapon to distract and parry. A main gauche is a short blade used for this purpose. When used in a character's off-hand, increase the Parry bonus of the primary melee weapon by +1.

Blackpowder Weapons

The firearms in Kane's time are typically wheellocks, though other types of firearm exist. For game purposes all firearms work the same way (with a few minor differences for matchlocks, on page 58).

Moisture: Water is gunpowder's worst enemy. Any time a character's powder gets wet, roll 1d6 per shot. On a roll of 4–6 for damp conditions (in drizzling rain, or when wading through a deep stream), the shot is ruined. If the powder was soaked (in heavy rain, or when swimming), each shot is ruined on a d6 roll of 2–6.

Overcharging: Both muskets and pistols may be "overcharged," meaning the user puts an extra charge of powder in the weapon. Overcharging adds an extra die of the same type to the weapon's damage roll, but risks bursting the barrel. A roll of 1 on the hero's attack die (regardless of the Wild Die for Wild Cards) means it has burst the barrel of the weapon and ruined it permanently. In addition, the blast causes 3d6 damage to the user.



Blunderbuss

Blunderbusses fire a spread of metal balls (also called "shot"), and so do more damage at close range before the shot spreads and more of it hits the target. Farther away, the shot spreads more and causes less damage. Because of the increased chance of hitting someone due to the spread, blunderbusses add +2 to their user's Shooting rolls.

Blunderbusses do 1d6 damage at Long range, 2d6 at Medium range, and 3d6 at Short range. Note that blunderbusses cannot be overcharged—they rely more on the spread of their shot for their damage than the actual blast.

Musket

Muskets come in two main forms, those with matchlock firing mechanisms, and wheellocks. We're only concerned with matchlocks here due to their disadvantages.

Matchlocks, as the name implies, use a lit match (a short piece of slow burning fuse) to ignite gunpowder in the priming pan.

Although wheellocks were invented in the mid-16th century and flintlocks in the early 17th century, matchlocks are cheap and simple to produce and remain in service until almost the 18th century.

Matchlocks have three main drawbacks compared to their advanced cousins. First, the match must be kept lit to avoid delays when wishing to fire. This is clearly visible at night (halve Darkness penalties to attack the holder), and sparks can ignite the powder prematurely. In game terms, a roll of 1 on the Shooting roll (regardless of the Wild Die) means the gun misfires and the powder charge is wasted.

Second, the match must be kept dry. In wet weather, the match goes out on a roll of 1 on a d8 unless precautions are taken to keep the match dry. During torrential rain, such as a tropical storm, this rises to 1 on a d6. Check every hour. Submersion in water automatically soaks the match. A wet match is ruined and must be replaced, which takes an entire round.

Third, being of old design and based upon the earlier arquebus, they are fairly heavy and unwieldy, with long barrels. A matchlock musket weighs 20 pounds. And, because matchlocks are relatively old technology, you don't get rifled matchlock muskets. (And no, you don't get matchlock pistols. Sticking a pistol with a burning fuse in your pants is asking for trouble!)

Two-Barrel Pistol

The two-barrel pistol has two barrels and locks but only a single trigger. Pulling the trigger back halfway discharges the first barrel—further pressure fires the second.

Although this weapon effectively doubles the wielder's firepower it takes twice as long to reload compared with a single barreled pistol.

Both barrels may be discharged as a single action simply by squeezing the trigger hard. When double-fired both barrels must be aimed at the same target—roll two Shooting dice but only a single Wild Die.

Special Weapons

Note that special weapons don't have a cost. Those listed with a Cost of "Military" are generally not available on the open market, but are instead provided by governments to their armed forces.

Cannon

Cannons can fire two different types of shells: solid shot and canister.

Solid Shot: These big round balls are made to batter walls or plow through packed ranks of troops. To fire, the leader of the crew makes a Shooting roll as usual. A target in a direct line from the cannon and adjacent to the first target is also hit on a d6 roll of 1–3, and takes full damage. This continues until there are no more adjacent foes.

Canister: These shells are designed to detonate inside the barrel of the cannon. The jagged metal in the "canister" then sprays out of the cannon to shred anything within its deadly cone like a giant shotgun. Place a ruler in front of the cannon in the direction you want it to fire and make a Shooting roll with no range modifiers. If the shot misses, move the far end of the ruler 1" left or right (roll randomly).

Now place a Medium Burst Template at the near end of the ruler and move it directly forward along that path for 24". Every target under the template is hit for 3d6 damage. Cover acts as Armor just as with any area effect weapon, meaning prone characters add +2 to their Toughness.

Reloading: Cannons require one action to reload with a crew of four, or two actions with fewer crewmen.

Line of Sight: Cannon crews must be able to see their targets to hit them. Mortars and bombards may fire at targets they cannot see (assuming they know roughly where the target is) at a –4 penalty, and with double deviation should they miss (see page 74).

Flamethrower

An early flamethrower was invented over five hundred years ago by the Chinese. It used a double valve cylinder to squirt oil over a naked flame. As the crew operates the pumps, a spray of oil is ignited, turning into

a gout of flaming liquid, which washes over enemies. By regularly changing crew, the device can spray a continual wall of flame.

To resolve such an attack, the attacker places the small end of the Cone Template at the tip of the weapon and the large end on as many targets as he's able. The attacker then makes a Shooting roll at +2. Defenders who make a successful opposed Agility roll against the attacker's Shooting total move out of the way and are unaffected. The rest suffer the weapon's damage (typically 2d10) and roll to see if they catch fire (page 92). Raises on the Shooting roll have no additional effect—the target is flamed or not.

Grenades

Grenades are still an exotic weapon and should be relatively rare outside the Orient. These rules are included as grenades may sometimes find their way into your hero's hands.

Like any thrown weapon, grenades have a range, but where they land cause damage in a Medium Burst Template.

Grenades are set with unreliable fuses. When the grenade is thrown, a raise means it detonates immediately. A success (or failure) not only deviates, but means the grenade does not explode at once. Roll a die at the start of each action after the grenade was thrown. On an odd result, the grenade explodes. It can be defused with a Smarts roll at –2.

Even with a grenade that explodes when intended there are usually a few seconds for targets to react. A character within the burst radius has two additional options. To pick up and throw the grenade before it goes off, he must make an Agility roll at –4 (or –2 if he was on Hold). Failure means it goes off and he takes an additional die of damage.

A character may also throw himself on a grenade. He takes double the normal number of dice of damage for his heroic act, but his total Toughness is subtracted from the damage inflicted on other characters in the blast radius. Allies won't normally perform such an obviously suicidal act, though the GM might rule otherwise in specific situations, such as when an ally has a "loyal" personality.

Other Currencies

Although we only use English pounds for convenience, GMs can add extra flavor to their games by having the wanderers encounter other currencies.

Ducat: A gold coin used in Europe since 1566. Originally introduced in Venice in the 13th century.

Guilder: A Dutch coin minted in gold and silver and available in multiple denominations.

Koku: A measure of rice in Nippon weighing 330 pounds (enough to feed one person for a year), which is used to pay samurai their annual stipend.

Livre Tournois: French currency. Coins worth 1 livre were often called francs, after the inscription on them. Divided into 20 sols, each sol worth 12 deniers (a similar breakdown to the English pound).

Rupee: The standard silver coinage of Hindoostan and the surrounding realms.

Scudo: Coin minted by the Papal States and widely used in Italy along with the ducat.

Gold Escudo: Spanish gold coin worth 8 reales. A real is also known as the Real de a Ocho (pieces of eight). Widely used in South America and in Spanish holdings the world over.

Sultani: These gold coins are minted in the Ottoman Empire. Also known as the altin.

Thaler: A German silver coin, widely used in Scandinavia and northern Europe. It is the official currency of the Holy Roman Empire.

Wén: Name used to denote Chinese coins and notes. Coins come in a variety of shapes and sizes, but all have a hole through them so they can be looped onto a piece of string.

Zlot: An Eastern European coin widely used in Poland, Moldavia, Wallachia, Russia, Transylvania, and the European side of the Ottoman Empire. Favored by merchants due to its wide acceptability.

Miscellaneous Goods

Certain goods are listed with a + after their price. For these items, quality improves the more a character spends. For instance, a standard £0.2 cutlery set is wooden. If he wants pewter or silver, the character can pay more. How much more is up to the Game Master.

Animals: Stats for animals can be found in the Bestiary at the back of this book.

Candle: A candle provides light in a 2" radius for two hours. It blows out in a strong wind or if the character holding it runs.

Climbing Gear: Climbing gear consists of a small pick, a small hammer, and spikes to drive into rock. It does not include rope.

Dice, Weighted: This seemingly ordinary pair of dice is weighted. The user gets an additional +1 Gambling whenever he cheats at dice games (see page 23).

Flask: A flask holds one pint of liquid. It has a waterproof cork stopper.

Grappling Hook and Line: A grappling hook is attached to a light line of variable length (but usually no more than 15 yards in length). The user throws the hook just as if he were attacking a target. It has a range of 3/6/12. If it "hits," the hook has set and can hold up to 200 pounds of weight.

Gunsmith's Tools: Making weapons or shot without these tools gives the gunsmith a –2 penalty. (See page 55 for details.)

Hammer, Pick or Shovel: Although they are intended as tools, hammers can be used in combat as small improvised weapons. Picks and shovels are treated as medium improvised weapons in combat.

Lantern: Lanterns provide light in a 4" radius for three hours per pint of oil. There is a 50% chance the lantern breaks if dropped, and a 1 in 6 chance it sets combustibles alight. (See the rules for fire on page 92).

Lantern, Bullseye: A bullseye lantern acts as a regular lantern, but also has a shuttered reflective hood that can focus light through a small opening. When used in this way, it provides a cone of light equal to the Cone Template. There is a 50% chance the lantern breaks if dropped.

Leather Satchel: Satchels are large enough to hold two large books (or anything else of similar size).

Lockpicks: A character who tries to pick a lock without these tools suffers a –2 penalty to his roll.

Manacles: Prisoners can be shackled at the wrists or legs (or both). Leg shackles reduce the prisoner's Pace to 2, while wrist manacles prevent him using his hands. Both have Toughness 12.

Medicine Chest: A medicine chest contains 10 doses of powders and tonics for treating sickness (but not injuries). A healer using a chest has a +2 bonus to Healing rolls to treat diseases. Each use of the chest consumes 1d4 units of medicine. Restocking the chest costs £0.3 per unit of medicine.

Oil (1 pint): Besides providing light when used in lanterns, oil can also be used as a weapon. This is usually done by putting oil in a ceramic flask with a lit fuse. The flask is then thrown at the target, it breaks and the fuse ignites the oil. Lighting a fuse requires 1d6 rounds with flint and steel (1 round with open flame), so it's best to light the fuse before a fight starts (a fuse stays alight for 10 minutes).

The flask's range is 3/6/12. Anything it hits is set alight on a d6 roll of 5–6, causing 1d10 damage per round. The fire has a chance of spreading as usual.

Rope (10 yards): The rope can safely handle 300 pounds without worry. For every 50 pounds over that, roll 1d6 every minute or whenever the rope suffers a sudden stress. On a 6, the rope breaks under the strain.

Scroll Case: Used to carry maps and other important documents, scroll cases are made of leather and can be made watertight by sealing the ends with pitch or wax.

Torch (1 hour): A torch provides clear light in a 4" radius. Properly prepared torches last for one hour. Temporary torches can be made with some wood, rags, and 1 pint of oil for every 10 torches. These last half as long, however.

Waterskin: A waterskin holds 2 quarts of liquid and weighs 5 pounds when full.

Armor and Shields

Type	Armor	Weight	Cost	Notes
Personal				
Leather	1	15	$1	Covers torso, arms, legs
Chain hauberk (long coat)	2	25	$3	Covers torso, arms, legs
Plate corselet	3	25	$5	Covers torso
Plate arms (vambrace)	3	10	$2	Covers arms
Plate leggings (greaves)	3	15	$3	Covers legs
Pot Helm (Spanish style)	3	4	$0.50	50% chance of protecting vs head shot
Steel Helmet (with visor)	3	8	$1	Covers head
Barding				
Plate barding	3	30	$12	For horses, covers entire body
Shields*				
Small Shield (Buckler)	—	8	$0.50	+1 Parry
Medium Shield	—	12	$1	+1 Parry, +2 Armor vs ranged shots
Large Shield (Kite, Pavise)	—	20	$2	+2 Parry, +2 Armor vs ranged shots

*Shields protect only against attacks from the front and left (assuming a right-handed hero).

Special Weapons

Type	Range	Damage	RoF	Cost	Weight	Shots	Notes
Cannon (shot)	50/100/200	3d6+1	1	Mil	—	1	AP 4, See notes, Heavy Weapon
Canister	24" path	2d6	1	Mil	4	1	See notes
Flamethrower	Cone	2d10	1	Mil	25	20	Ignores Armor
Grenade	5/10/20*	3d6	—	$0.50	2	1	Uses the Medium Burst Template

Ammunition

Ammo	Weight	Cost	Notes
Arrow*	1/5	$0.05/2	
Quarrel*	1/5	$0.1/5	AP 2 (standard crossbow bolt)
Shot (w/powder)	1/10	$0.05	For black powder weapons
Sling stone	1/10	$0.05/20	Stones can also be found for free with a Notice roll and 1d10 minutes searching, depending on terrain

*Outdoors, arrows and quarrels are recovered on a d6 roll of 4–6 (50% chance). Underground or indoors, the chance is reduced to a roll of 5–6 on 1d6 to reflect the increased chance of breakage.

Melee Weapons

Type	Damage	Weight	Cost	Min. Str	Notes
Axes and Mauls					
Axe	Str+d6	2	£0.25	d6	
Battle Axe	Str+d8	10	£0.50	d8	
Great Axe	Str+d10	15	£2	d10	AP 1; Parry –1; requires 2 hands
Maul	Str+d8	20	£0.75	d10	AP 2 vs rigid armor (plate); Parry –1; requires 2 hands
Flail	Str+d6	8	£0.25	—	Ignores Shield Parry bonus
Blades					
Bayonet	Str+d4	1	£0.10	—	A bayonet fixed to a rifle increases the damage to Str+d6, Parry +1, Reach 1, Requires 2 hands
Dagger	Str+d4	1	£0.10	—	
Great Sword	Str+d10	12	£4	d10	Parry –1; requires 2 hands
Long Sword	Str+d8	8	£0.50	d6	Includes scimitars
Katana	Str+d8	6	£20	—	
Main Gauche	Str+d4	1	£1	—	Parry +1
Rapier	Str+d4	3	£3	—	Parry +1
Short Sword	Str+d6	4	£0.35	—	Includes sabers and cutlasses
Blunt Weapons					
Club	Str+d4	1	£0.05	—	
Brass Knuckles	Str+d4	1	£0.10	—	See notes
Pole Arms					
Halberd	Str+d8	15	£0.40	d8	Reach 1; requires 2 hands
Harpoon	Str+d8	10	£0.50	d8	Reach 1; requires 2 hands
Pike	Str+d8	25	£0.70	d8	Reach 2, requires 2 hands
Staff	Str+d4	8	£0.05	—	Parry +1; Reach 1; requires 2 hands
Spear	Str+d6	5	£0.20	d6	Parry +1; Reach 1; requires 2 hands

Improvised Weapons

Type	Range	Damage	RoF	Cost	Weight	Min Str	Notes
Small	3/6/12	Str+d4	1	—	1	—	–1 attack & Parry
Medium	2/4/8	Str+d6	1	—	3	d6	–1 attack & Parry
Large	—	Str+d8	1	—	6	d8	–1 attack & Parry; requires 2 hands

Exotic Weapons

Type	Damage	Weight	Cost	Min. Str	Notes
Chúi	Str+d8	20	£0.75	d10	AP 2 vs rigid armor (plate); Parry –1
Dao	Str+d8	8	£0.50	d6	
Falchion	Str+d8	8	£0.50	d6	
Kerambit	Str+d4	1	£0.10	—	See notes
Kodachi	Str+d6	4	£0.35	—	Parry +1
Kris	Str+d4+1	1	£0.10	—	See notes
Lathi	Str+d6	4	£0.35	—	Parry +1
Macuahuitl	Str+d8	8	£0.50	d6	Parry –1
Nzappa Zap	Str+d6	2	£0.25	d6	See notes
Phurba	Str+d4+1	1	£0.10	—	See notes
Pudao	Str+d10	12	£4	d10	Parry –1; requires 2 hands
Tabar Zin	Str+d8	10	£0.50	d8	
Valaška	Str+d6	2	£0.25	d6	See notes
Yawara	Str+d4	1	£0.10	—	

Ranged Weapons

Type	Range	Damage	RoF	Cost	Weight	Min Str	Notes
Blunderbuss	10/20/40	1–3d6*	1	£2	12	d6	2 actions to reload
Wheellock Pistol	5/10/20	2d6+1	1	£4	3	—	AP 1; 2 actions to reload
Wheellock Musket	10/20/40	2d8	1	£3	15	d6	AP 2; 2 actions to reload
Matchlock Musket	10/20/40	2d8	1	£1	20	d8	AP 2; 2 actions to reload; see notes
Two-Barrel Pistol	5/10/20	2d6+1	1/2	£7	5	d6	AP 1; 2 actions to reload per barrel; See notes

*A blunderbuss does 1d6 at Long range, 2d6 at Medium range, and 3d6 at Close range.

Type	Range	Damage	RoF	Cost	Weight	Min Str.	Notes
Axe, throwing	6/3/2012	Str+d6	1	£0.25	2	—	
Bow	12/24/48	2d6	1	£1	3	d6	
Crossbow	15/30/60	2d6	1	£2	10	d6	AP 2; 1 action to reload
Harpoon	3/6/12	Str+d8	1	£0.50	10	d8	
Knife/Dagger	3/6/12	Str+d4	1	£0.10	1	—	
Sling	4/8/16	Str+d4	1	£0.05	1	—	
Spear	3/6/12	Str+d6	1	£0.20	5	d6	

Miscellaneous Goods

Item	Cost*	Weight
Backpack (leather)	£0.20	2
Bedroll	£0.10	2
Blanket	£0.20	4
Book (blank, 50 pages)	£0.25	2
Candle. dozen (2" radius)	£0.25	1
Climbing gear	£0.20	6
Compass	£0.50	1
Crowbar	£0.15	2
Cutlery	£0.2+	1
Dice/cards	£0.05	–
Dice/cards (weighted/marked)	£0.75	–
Flask (ceramic)	£0.05	1
Flint and steel	£0.05	1
Grappling hook	£0.50	2
Gunsmith's tools	£2	5
Hammer	£0.20	1
Lantern (4" radius)	£0.15	3
Lantern, Bullseye	£0.25	3
Leather satchel (waterproof)	£0.15	2
Lockpicks	£1	1
Manacles	£0.25	2
Map	£1	–
Match for matchlocks (10)	£0.05	1
Medicine chest	£5	10
Oil (for lantern; 1 pint)	£0.05	1
Pick or shovel	£0.20	5
Quiver (20 arrows or bolts)	£0.10	2
Rope (20 yards)	£0.05	15
Scroll case	£0.05	1
Soap	£0.05	–
Torch (1 hour, 4" radius)	£0.05	1
Waterskin (empty)	£0.10	1
Whistle	£0.15	—
Whetstone	£0.05	1
Writing equipment	£0.50	1
Animals, Trained		
Dog, guard	£0.25	—
Dog, hunting	£0.50	—
Hawk	£4	—
Horse	£3	—
Mule	£2	—
Warhorse	£6	—
Riding gear	£0.75	—
Clothing		
Normal clothing	£1	—
Formal clothing	£10	—
Winter gear (cloak and boots)	£4	—
Food		
Cheap meal	£0.05	—
Good meal	£0.25	—
Trail rations (keeps 1 week)	£0.20	5
Drink (per bottle)		
Cheap stuff (ale)	£0.05	1
Good stuff (wine)	£0.5+	1
Lodging (per night)		
Poor quality	£0.05	—
Good quality	£0.25	—
Women (or Men)		
Cheap Date	£0.10	—
Upscale wench	£1+	—

**Costs for all items depends on its availability. A lantern in England is easy to come by. In darkest Africa, a tribe would likely shed blood over such a find.*

Game Rules

The flickering rapier parried the whistling scimitars and the Arab died on its point, which seemed to hesitate in his heart only an instant before it pierced the brain of a black swordsman. Another ebon warrior, dropping his sword and leaping in to grapple at close quarters, was disemboweled by the dirk in Kane's left hand, and the others fell back in sudden fear.

—The Footfalls Within

Now you know how to make a hero for *The Savage World of Solomon Kane* and know something about the background, it's time to learn how to actually play the game. Don't worry—it's not hard! You'll be ready to go in no time!

Wild Cards & Extras

Your hero (a player character), the heroes being played by other players, and any unique villains and monsters are collectively called "Wild Cards." These beings have a little better chance at doing things, are a little tougher to put down, and are generally more detailed than common guards, minions, or lackeys—collectively called "Extras."

Wild Cards are noted with the picture of Solomon Kane by their name, like this:



Solomon Kane

Besides your own characters, it's up to the Game Master to decide which NPCs are Wild Cards. An English explorer probably isn't a Wild Card, but Sir Marcus Dalgleish, a veteran of several voyages and an important character in your campaign, certainly is. You'll see the difference between Wild Cards and Extras as you continue to read, but for later reference, the differences are:

- Wild Cards suffer multiple wounds.
- Wild Cards always roll a Wild Die along with their Trait die when making tests and take the better of the two.

Trait Tests

The heart of the Savage Worlds system is the Trait Test, which lets you use your attributes and skills to perform tasks. To use an attribute or skill, simply roll the die assigned to it. If the result is a 4 or better (the "Target Number" or TN), you're successful!

Modifiers

Circumstances modify your die roll, such as shooting at something at long range or finding a well-hidden clue. Some things, such as ranged attacks, have standard modifiers. It's up to the GM to determine any modifiers for more subjective tasks, such as spotting an ambush or eavesdropping on a conversation through a door.

In general, an easy task, such as finding tracks in the mud, is made at +2. A difficult task, such as finding tracks by torchlight, is made at –2. An extremely difficult task, such as locating tracks in a rainstorm, is made at –4. An average task requires no modifiers.

The Wild Die

Extras roll a single die of the appropriate type, as described above. But Wild Cards roll an extra d6 and take the best of their normal die or the "Wild Die" when making skill or

attribute rolls. Wild Dice are rolled just like the Trait die, are subject to exactly the same modifiers, and can Ace as well (see below).

The downside is that snake-eyes (double 1s) on one of these rolls is a critical failure of some sort. The Game Master gets to make up something rotten to befall your character. That's the price Fate charges for making someone a hero.

Unskilled Attempts

If a hero doesn't have a skill for an action he's attempting, he rolls 1d4 and subtracts 2 from the total. Wild Card characters still get their Wild Die for these rolls, but remember this also suffers the same –2 penalty. The GM may occasionally decide that a character has no chance at a particular skill if he has no training in it—such as performing surgery or speaking a language he has never heard before.

Aces

All Trait tests and damage rolls in *The Savage World of Solomon Kane* are "open-ended." That means that when you roll the highest number possible on a die (a 6 on a d6, an 8 on a d8, and so on), you get to roll that die again and add it to the total. This is called an "Ace." Any modifiers to the die roll should be tacked on after adding up an Aced roll.

Example: Kane is fighting a group of cannibals. He has a d10 Shooting and rolls an Ace (a 10), so he rolls again. He gets another 10, rolls again, and gets a 3. His total is (10+10+3=) 23!

Opposed Rolls

Sometimes rolls are "opposed" by an opponent. If two characters are wrestling for control of a valuable artifact, for example, they both make Strength rolls and compare results.



When this happens, the acting character gets his Trait total first. If he wants to spend bennies (see the next section), he does so now. When he's satisfied with his total, his opponent gets to roll. The highest total wins. In a tie, the two foes continue to struggle with no clear victor.

Raises

Sometimes it's important to know just how successful a Trait test was. Every 4 points over the TN you need for success is called a "raise." If your hero needs a 4 to Shoot an opponent and rolls an 11, he hits with one raise (and would have two raises with a roll of 12). Figure raises *after* adjusting for any modifiers.

Cooperative Rolls

Sometimes several individuals may want to cooperate to help a friend complete some kind of urgent task. If two or more characters want to perform a task together (and the GM decides it's possible for them to do so), the lead hero makes his roll with any modifiers. Assisting characters make a roll as well, but against a flat TN of 4. Each success and raise the companions achieve on their own rolls adds +1 to the lead character's total. This has a normal maximum of +4 for all tasks except those of Strength, which have no maximum.

Example: Kane and a friend, Sir James Wycliffe, are exploring an old temple and want to try to push a stone door open as a team. The GM decides that's reasonable. Kane is the lead character and makes his Strength roll. Sir James makes a roll as well and gets a raise. He adds +2 to Kane's total.

Group Rolls

When you want to make a noncombat Trait roll for a group of Extras you don't have to roll it one character at a time, instead roll one Trait die as usual along with a Wild Die (see page 65). Take the best of the two as always and treat this as the group's total. This way you get a nice average without having to make Notice rolls for every NPC who approaches the ambush, or watch one goofball ruin a stealthy approach for his 49 companions.

Bennies

The Solomon Kane stories are tales of action, adventure, and savage horror—but at the core of most of them is the concept of indomitable will.

In *Savage Worlds*, willpower is represented by "bennies," small game tokens that allow your hero to reroll important tasks and avoid crippling or even deadly blows.

Every player starts each game session with three "bennies."

The Game Master may also give you more bennies for great roleplaying, overcoming major obstacles, or even entertaining the group with an outlandish action, roleplaying in character to the detriment of your hero, or other memorable act. (Tips for awarding bennies can be found on page 125.)

You can use bennies to reroll any Trait test. Make the entire roll from scratch. If you're making two attacks with Frenzy and don't like the results, reroll both attacks from scratch just as if the first set of rolls never happened. You can keep spending bennies and rerolling as long as you like, and take the best of your attempts. If you roll a 5, for example, and a benny gets you a 4, keep the original 5 instead.

You cannot spend bennies on tables, damage rolls, or any other roll that isn't a Trait roll.

Bennies can also net your hero additional Experience Points. See page 68 for details.

Soak Rolls

Bennies can also be used to save your hide from deadly attacks. Choose carefully where you spend them! See page 84 for complete information on how to make Soak rolls.

Righteous Rage

In *The Savage World of Solomon Kane*, bennies have an additional function as well. Each time your hero spends a benny in combat, roll a separate d6. On a 5–6, the character is gripped with an overwhelming rage, holy conviction, or pure red-blooded fury. The exact rationale is up to you—not

every hero has to have Kane's hot blood for instance—but the game effect is the same. For your character's next three turns, roll an extra d6 and add it to his Trait and damage rolls.

Righteous Rage kicks in immediately, and even adds to the very roll you spent the benny on in the first place. Mark your rage with three tokens of some sort (three red gaming beads work great). At the end of each round after the Rage is triggered (before new cards are dealt), discard a bead. When all the tokens are gone, your hero's rage has subsided.

Rage does not stack—if a hero is already raging he does not roll for it again even if he spends a benny.

Note that having the Conviction Edge allows a character to automatically trigger his righteous rage before rolling, once per game session.

Example: Solomon Kane wrestles with Gulka, a massive warrior from the heart of darkest Africa. Gulka inflicts two wounds on the Puritan and Kane's player decides that will not stand. He spends a benny to Soak the wounds and gets a 6—enough to negate one of the two wounds.

Immediately after, the player rolls a d6 for Righteous Rage and rolls a 5. Kane's blood boils hot, for he knows that if he dies, the villain he has pursued across two continents, Le Loup, will escape. For the next three rounds—starting immediately with his Soak roll—he adds +1d6 to his Trait and damage rolls. He rolls the extra die for his Soak roll and gets a 3—raising his Vigor roll enough to cancel the last wound.

Game Master Bennies

Game Masters get bennies too. At the start of each session, the GM gets one benny for each player character. He may use these for any of his villains during the course of the session.

Advancements

At the end of each game session (usually around 4–6 hours of gaming), the GM awards 1 to 3 Experience Points to everyone in the group.

Here's a quick look at how many Experience Points should be awarded per adventure.

Experience Point Awards

Award	Situation
1	The group accomplished very little or had a very short session.
2	The group had more successes than failures.
3	The group succeeded greatly, and their adventure had a significant impact on the overall story.

Bennies

At the end of each game session, roll 1d6 for every benny you have left over. Each roll of 5 or 6 gives your character an additional Experience Point. Spare bennies cannot be carried over between game sessions.

Ranks

As a character gains more Experience Points, he goes up in "Rank." This is a rough measure of how powerful the individual is.

As heroes progress in experience, new Ranks allow them access to more powerful Edges.

Ranks

Experience Points	Rank
1–19	Novice
20–39	Seasoned
40–59	Veteran
60–79	Heroic
80+	Legendary

Leveling Up

Every 5 points accumulated grants a hero an Advance. An Advance lets a character do one of the following:

- Gain a new Edge for which you meet the requirements.
- Increase a skill that is equal to or greater than its linked attribute by one die type.
- Increase two skills that are lower than their linked attributes by one die type each.
- Buy a new skill at d4.
- Increase one attribute by a die type.*

*You may only choose this option once per rank. No Trait may be raised above a d12 (but see the Professional and Expert Legendary Edges). Legendary characters may raise an attribute every other Advance.

Starting With Experience

If the Game Master lets you make a hero who has already earned some experience, simply make a character as usual and then grant her that many Advances. A Veteran hero, for example, has 40 Experience Points, so you would make a normal character and grant her eight Advances.

Additional goods, equipment, or assets must be determined by the Game Master. As a quick rule of thumb, a hero's starting funds double with each Rank after Novice.

Replacement Heroes: If a character dies (or is retired), the player's new hero begins play with half the Experience Points his former hero had (round down). If a character died with 17 Experience Points, for example, his replacement enters play with 8 points.

Legendary Characters

Legendary characters are major forces in the world, and often have political power and influence as well as a host of Edges to defeat those who oppose them.

Once a hero reaches Legendary status, the rules for Advances change a bit. The character now Advances every time he accumulates 10 Experience Points instead of 5, but a whole range of new Edges opens up to him as well. "Legendary Edges" allow characters to accumulate followers and otherwise become major players in the struggle against evil.

Legendary characters may also choose to improve an attribute every other Advance.

Combat

In England and on the Continent, Hollinster has seen more flashy, more brilliant fencers than Kane, but he realized as he watched that he had never seen one who was as technically perfect, as crafty, as deadly, as the tall Puritan.

—From Blades of the Brotherhood

Heroes must often overcome violent, sometimes supernatural, foes. Here's how to resolve fights in *The Savage World of Solomon Kane*.

Time

When a fight breaks out, game time breaks down into rounds of six seconds each. Ten rounds, then, is one minute.

The Battlefield

In any combat with more than a handful of opponents, the Game Master should make a quick map of the terrain on some sort of



erasable surface. Chessex® makes great Battle Mats™ already marked off with 1" squares or hexes (visit them at www.chessex.com). You can then place miniatures on the map to show exactly where everyone is during the fight.

The terrain can be sketched out quickly and easily with an erasable marker to make sure everyone understands the tactical situation. You can also use miniatures terrain or a plain tabletop with a ruler. The more detailed you get, the more likely everyone is to make use of their surroundings and do more than just say "I attack."

Distance

Movement, weapon ranges, and the like are listed in inches to help when playing with miniatures. In the "real world," each inch is equal to 2 yards.

If the Game Master needs a different scale to accommodate a larger battle, simply adjust weapon and movement ranges as needed.

Allies

Allied NPCs are divided up among all the players to control. This is a very important part of the game because the setting features bands of skilled hirelings, fellow travelers forced to defend themselves, or a hero's loyal retainers, and the game is designed to handle them quickly and easily. It's also designed for the players to control them—not the GM.

It doesn't matter whether the characters control the allies, only that the players do. This keeps everyone involved in the action even if one hero is out of the fight, and makes running large combats easier and more fun. Of course the GM can always take charge of NPCs if the need arises, but with good, mature roleplayers, this shouldn't be necessary.

Example: Kane and his charge, Lady Amanda, have hired 12 native bearers to help explore ruins in the jungles of Africa. The guides only follow Kane's orders in the game world, but if battle comes, the two players share control of the NPCs.

Initiative

Action in *The Savage World of Solomon Kane* is fast and furious, just like in the stories. To help the Game Master keep track of who goes in what order and add a little randomness, we use a single deck of playing cards with both Jokers left in to determine everyone's initiative.

Deal in characters as follows:

• Every Wild Card is dealt a single card (only characters with the Level Headed or Improved Level Headed Edges get more). Any allies under that player's control act on his initiative card as well.

• Each group of Game Master characters, such as all akaanas, all Aztec warriors, and so on, share a card.

Exactly which nonplayer character groups get their own cards is up to the GM. If he wants to break his 30 cannibals into 5 groups of 6, that's fine. Your goal is to do whatever makes running the battle as quick and easy as possible. Generally, Wild Cards and other unique characters get their own card.

Example: Kane, Lady Amanda, and 12 hired guides are crossing a river when they're attacked by a frenzied crocodile. A mysterious ju-ju man stands in the shadows, seemingly directing the attack.

Kane, Lady Amanda, and the ju-ju man each get their own card, as does the crocodile. The guides act on Kane and Lady Amanda's cards.

Shuffle

Shuffle the deck after any round in which a Joker was dealt (see below).

The Countdown

Once the cards are dealt, the Game Master starts the round by counting down from the Ace to the Deuce, with each group resolving its actions when its card comes up.

Ties: Any ties are resolved by suit order: Spades are first, then Hearts, Diamonds, and Clubs (reverse alphabetical order).

The Joker Is Wild!

What happens if you're dealt a Joker? Jokers act as "wild cards." You can go whenever you want in the round, even interrupting another character's action if you want! In addition, you add +2 to all Trait tests this round, and +2 to damage totals as well!

Hold

A hero may choose to wait and see what happens by taking a Hold action. He may then go later in the round if he chooses. A Held action lasts until it's used. If a character has a Held card when a new round starts, he is not dealt in and starts the round on Hold.

Interrupting Actions: If a character on Hold wants to interrupt an action, he and the opponent make opposed Agility rolls. Whoever rolls highest goes first. In the rare case of a tie, the actions are simultaneous.

Example: Kane is on Hold when a vicious lion bursts from the jungle. The two roll Agility and Kane wins. He can shoot the lion before it attacks.

Surprise

Combat often starts before everyone involved is prepared. An ambush, a sudden double-cross, or a trap might all give one side in a fight an edge over the other.

When this happens, the side that started the fight is not dealt cards, but begins the fight on Hold. Victims of the surprise attack must make Notice rolls. Those who make it are dealt in as usual. Those who fail get no card in the first round of combat.

Example: Kane and Sir James Wycliffe creep through a gloomy cave when they are spotted by two vampires hiding in the darkness. The horrors wait until the two are within striking range to spring their attack.

The two vampires are on Hold and get to attack immediately. If Kane and Sir James make their Notice rolls they are dealt in normally. If not, they have to wait until the next round to act.

Standoff!

Occasionally, you might find a situation where everyone is on Hold. Maybe you're in the middle of a tense negotiation when one person goes for his blade. In these situations, everyone should roll their Agility since they are all on Hold and act in order of highest to lowest (ties are simultaneous). Deal everyone in as normal on the next round.

Actions

Characters perform "actions" when their card comes up each round. A character can perform one regular action each turn—such as attacking, running, and so on—without penalty.

Multiple Actions

Characters may also perform multiple actions such as Intimidating someone while blasting away with a pistol, running and Fighting, attacking with a weapon in each hand, and so on. A hero can't fire more than



his weapon's rate of fire in a round, however, nor may he make more than one Fighting attack with the same weapon, or Run twice in a single round.

In essence, a character may not perform the same action twice in a round. The actions are assumed to take place almost simultaneously, so a hero couldn't make two simultaneous Intimidation rolls or use the same sword to attack twice. He could make a Fighting attack and a Shooting attack if he had a gun in one hand and a knife in the other, though, and could even issue a Taunt at the same time. He could only make two Fighting attacks, however, if he used two different melee weapons.

Each additional action attempted in a round subtracts 2 from all the hero's rolls. If an adventurer wants to fire a gun with one hand and slice at an adjacent foe with the other, for instance, he subtracts 2 from both rolls. If he also wanted to make a Test of Wills against someone at the same time, he subtracts 4 from all his rolls.

Wild Cards get their Wild Die on each action as usual.

Example: Backed into a corner, Kane tries to shoot a vicious native and Intimidate another. Both his Shooting and Intimidate totals suffer a –2 penalty because he took two actions instead of one.

Free Actions

Some minor actions are "free" and don't inflict multi-action penalties. Speaking a short sentence or two, moving up to the character's Pace, falling prone, resisting opposed rolls, or dropping an item, are all examples of free actions.

One Wild Die Per Action

When Wild Cards roll multiple dice for a single action, they roll only one Wild Die. A warrior with the Frenzy Edge, for example, rolls two Fighting dice and one Wild Die. He can use the Wild Die's total to replace either of his Fighting dice if he chooses. The Wild Die must either replace one of the regular dice or be ignored—it never adds another action or attack to the roll.

Example: Kane draws his rapier and attacks two bandits using the Improved Frenzy Edge. His Fighting is d12+2. He rolls two d12s for the Edge plus his Wild Die, and adds +2 to all the totals.

Even if all the dice indicate success, he still only gets 2 hits—the Wild Die doesn't add an extra attack.

Movement

Most humans can move their Pace in a round. This is considered a "free action." Other types of movement are covered below:

Crawling: A character may crawl 2" per turn. This counts as being prone when being fired upon.

Crouching: A character may move while crouching at half Pace. He may run while crouched (halve his total Pace after rolling for running). Ranged attacks against him suffer a –1 penalty.

Going Prone: A figure may fall prone at any time during its action. This usually counts as Medium Cover as well (see page 75).

Getting up costs 2" of movement. When the lead or spears start flying, smart heroes move, shoot, and then get prone behind cover before their action is over, forcing attackers to go on Hold to attack them.

Difficult Ground: Difficult ground such as mud, steep hills, shifting sand, or snow, slows characters down. Count each inch of difficult ground as two inches for purposes of movement.

Jumping: A hero can jump 1" horizontally from a dead stop, or up to 2" with a "run and go." A successful Strength roll grants one extra inch of distance.

Running

A character may run an additional 1d6" during his turn if he wishes. This extra d6 is called the character's running die. Characters suffer a –2 penalty (the standard multi-action penalty) to all other actions they make while running.

Group Running Rolls: When rolling for a group of nonplayer characters, villains, or monsters, the GM or controlling player makes a single running roll. Although not every member of the group need run, it's a convenient way to save a little time in the heat of battle.

Combat Actions

Characters can perform a multitude of actions when their card comes up in combat. The most common actions are making tests of will or attacking using either the Fighting, Shooting, or Throwing skill. These are all covered on the following pages.

Simpler actions such as readying an item, drawing a pistol, or other quick tasks usually take one action. More complex actions, such as lighting a torch, digging through a pack to find a small item, and so on, might require a random number of rounds—say 1d6 rounds. The Game Master has the final say on exactly how long a complex action takes.

Readying Weapons

Drawing a weapon usually takes an entire round, but a character can do it faster if she wants. This is an action, however, and so inflicts the standard multi-action penalty of –2 to the character's attack roll.

Drawing two weapons at once, drawing a weapon from a difficult location (such as from inside a coat), or drawing a large or unwieldy weapon (such as a musket), follows the same procedure as outlined above but requires an Agility roll.

*Example: **Solomon** Kane draws his pistol and fires it at the great ape approaching him. Kane doesn't want to take a full round to draw his weapon, so he takes the –2 penalty to his Shooting roll instead.*

If Kane wanted to draw his pistol and rapier, he could do so, but he'd have to make an Agility roll first. If he managed to do so, he'd suffer an extra –2 multi-action penalty to both his Fighting and Shooting.

Attacks

At the brutal core of *The Savage World of Solomon Kane* is its fast, furious combat. Here's all you need to know to decimate your foes and keep your hero alive.

Fighting

A character may make one hand attack per round per weapon he holds. The Target Number to hit is equal to the opponent's Parry score (2 plus half his Fighting ability; that's a 2 if he has no Fighting skill!).

Bonus Damage: If your attack hits with a raise, add +1d6 to your damage total as well! The d6 may Ace just like other damage rolls.

Example: Kane slices a constrictor with a saber and hits with a raise. He rolls his weapon's damage of Strength + 1d6. Then he adds +1d6 to the total for the raise.

Shooting & Throwing

The Shooting skill covers everything from bows and arrows to pistols and cannons. The base TN to hit something at Short range is 4 as usual. Shots at Medium range subtract 2 from the Shooting roll, and shots at Long range subtract 4 from the roll.

Bonus Damage: If you hit your target with a raise, add +1d6 to the damage total. This roll may Ace just like any other damage roll.

Range Modifiers

Range	Modifier
Short	—
Medium	–2
Long	–4

Rate of Fire

The Rate of Fire is how many Shooting dice the hero rolls when firing the weapon. Two-barrel pistols, for example, have a Rate of Fire of 2, and so let the player roll up to 2 Shooting dice at once, though only at a single target. Wild Cards roll one Wild Die as usual with the Shooting roll, and can use it in place of one of the Shooting dice if they choose.

Special Rules

Below are a number of rules for special maneuvers characters might perform during furious combat.

Aim

A character who spends a full round aiming (no movement allowed) may add +2 to his Shooting or Throwing roll in the following round versus whatever target he aimed at. Aiming for multiple rounds has no additional effect.

Area Effect Attacks

Grenades and other attacks that cover a large area are "area effect attacks." The three most common size attacks are represented by Small, Medium, and Large Burst Templates, found (along with the Cone Template) on pages 340 and 341.

To attack with an area effect weapon, the character places the template on the table (or picks where he wants the center of the blast to be) and makes a Shooting or Throwing roll as usual. If the attack is successful, the blast is centered where desired. Everything under (or partially under) the template is affected. Area effect attacks, unlike other attacks, do not receive bonus damage if the attack roll was a raise.

Failure means the blast deviates. Just how far depends on whether it was thrown or launched, and what range bracket the target was in (Short, Medium, or Long). Roll 1d6" for thrown weapons (such as grenades) and 1d10" for fired projectiles. Multiply by 1 for Short range, 2 for Medium, and 3 for Long.

Next roll a d12 and read it like a clock facing to determine the direction the missile deviates. A weapon can never deviate more than half the distance to the original target. That keeps the deviation rules from making things go behind you.

Cover: Targets who are prone or behind cover still get some protection from area-effect attacks. In these cases, the modifier they would normally receive against ranged attacks acts as that many points of Armor instead. A character in major cover, like lying in a ditch, negates four points of damage from a blast if he's caught within it.

Diving for Cover: Thrown weapons with a blast effect (such as grenades) sometimes allow potential targets a chance to move out of the area of effect. Give targets who saw the danger coming an Agility roll at –2 to jump out of the way and avoid the damage. If the roll is successful, move the character just outside the template (his choice exactly where).

Grenades can be thrown back as well if the fuse is still lit (see page 59).

Breaking Things

Occasionally a character may want to break something, such as a weapon, a lock, or a door. Use the Toughness values below for these kinds of objects. Use these rules for solid objects.

Most anything can be broken given enough time and effort, so use this system only when attempting to break things in a hurry (such as during combat rounds).

The Parry of an inanimate object is 2. The catch is that damage rolls against them don't count bonuses from raises on the attack roll, nor Aces. Unlike a person, an attack cannot hit a "vital" area on a lock or a door and thus do more damage. If an attack can't do enough damage to destroy an object, it can't destroy it (at least not quickly). This keeps characters from shattering doors with a feather and a lucky Strength roll.

If the damage roll equals or exceeds the object's Toughness, it's broken, shattered, bent, or otherwise ruined. The GM decides the exact effects—such as whether a good strike opens a hole in a door or knocks it off its hinges.

See the Obstacles section on page 78 to attack through objects.

Damage Types: After the type of Object and its Toughness is the type of damage that can affect the object. Blades do cutting or piercing damage, spears are piercing weapons, and so on. Pistols and muskets are considered piercing weapons.

The type of damage is important for objects because shooting a single bullet through a door, for instance, may penetrate it, but won't destroy it. Only a blunt or cutting attack is likely to destroy a door in one hit.

Object Toughness

Object	Toughness	Damage Type
Light Door	11	B, C
Heavy Door	14	B, C
Iron Door	18	B, C
Lock	10	B, P
Manacles	15	B, P, C
Knife, Sword	14	B, C
Rope	7	C, P

B=Blunt, C=Cutting, P=Piercing

Called Shots

Use the following modifiers and effects when heroes try to target specific locations:

Limb (–2): An attack to a limb causes no additional damage but may ignore armor or have some other special effect (see the Disarm maneuver).

Head or Vitals (–4): The attacker gains +4 damage from a successful attack to these critical areas. The target must actually have vital areas, and the attacker must know where they are to gain this advantage.

Small Target (–4): Attacks against small targets such as the lock on a door or the one missing scale on some foul thing's breast are made at –4. The effect of success depends on the situation–the door might close instantly, the missing scale may mean the serpent gets no armor, etc. If the GM has no particular effect in mind, it adds +4 damage just like a shot to the head or vitals.

Tiny Target (–6): Particularly small or narrow targets, such as a spyhole in a door or a helmet visor, carry a –6 modifier. The effects of a hit depend on the target. In the case of the spyhole, the blow ignores the door's armor and inflicts +4 damage because it's a head shot to whoever is looking through it (as above).

Cover

Light Cover: Characters subtract 1 from their attack rolls if half or less of their target is obscured.







Illumination





Medium Cover: The penalty is increased to –2 if more than half of the target is hidden from view. This is also the usual penalty for attacking a prone character (see Prone).

Heavy Cover: The penalty is –4 if only a small part of the target is visible (prone beside a tree, behind a high wall, peeking around the corner of a building, and so on).

Attacking through a very tight opening that provides near total cover, such as an arrow slit in a castle wall, subtracts 6 from the roll.

Darkness

Dim: Dim conditions, such as twilight, light fog, night with a full moon, and so on subtract 1 from combatants' attack rolls.

Dark: Darkness with a little ambient light (starlight, partial moon) inflicts a –2 penalty, and targets aren't visible outside of 10".

Pitch Darkness: Targets aren't visible at all in pitch blackness, but if a character knows roughly where a victim is (he can hear him, the target is in a confined space, a glint of light shines off his sword or breastplate, and so on), he may be attacked at –4.



Defend

If a character's only regular action is to defend, his Parry is increased by +2 until his next action. The defender may still move normally while performing this maneuver, but no running or other actions are allowed.

Disarm

A character can try to make an opponent drop a weapon (or other object) with either a close combat or a ranged attack. To cause a disarm check, the attacker must first hit the opponent's arm (–2, see Called Shots). The defender must then make a Strength roll. If the roll is less than the damage, he drops his weapon.

The attacker may choose to make this a non-lethal attack with a melee weapon. Ranged attacks can be nonlethal if the attacker targets the weapon instead of the limb (generally –4 instead of –2). In this instance, the holder's Strength is opposed by the ranged weapon's damage.

The Drop

Sometimes an attacker is able to catch a foe off-guard and gets "the drop" on him. This usually happens at a distance of only a few feet, but other situations may occur (a sniper on a nearby rooftop). Only the GM can decide when one person has obtained this kind of advantage over another. Usually it's when the victim is in the classic hostage pose, is completely unaware of the danger, or has been caught unarmed by an armed foe.

The attacker is considered on Hold and adds +4 to his attack and damage rolls should he decide to strike.

Finishing Move

A completely helpless victim (one who is bound or unconscious, for example) may be dispatched with a lethal weapon as an action. This is automatic unless the GM decides there's a special situation: a particularly tough victim, a chance for escape, and so on.

The killer must usually dispatch his foe up close and personal, but the Game Master may occasionally allow finishing moves to be performed at range.

Firing Into Melee

Occasionally heroes have to fire into the middle of hand-to-hand fights. The trouble is that even though we might see figures standing perfectly still on the battle mat, in "reality," they're circling each other, wrestling back and forth, and moving erratically as they fight.

For that reason, firing into a tangle of people, such as a melee, is quite dangerous. Use the Innocent Bystander rules when this occurs (see below).

Full Defense

In addition to the usual Defend option, a character can go for a full defensive action. He makes a Fighting roll and uses the result as his Parry until his next action. This is a trait test, so he gets to roll his Wild Die as well. And, of course, the dice can Ace, and you can choose to use bennies on the roll if you want to, as usual.

Note that the character's Parry never gets worse as a result of the roll. If the roll is lower than the hero's Parry score, he keeps that instead (but gains no bonus from the full defense).

There is a drawback, however. A character choosing to use the full defense maneuver cannot move at all. He's doing everything he can to fend off whatever is attacking him. If you want to run away as well, use the defend maneuver instead.

Ganging Up

Ganging up on a foe allows attackers to flank, exploit openings, and generally harass their outnumbered opponent.

Each additional adjacent attacker after the first adds +1 to all the attackers' Fighting rolls, up to a maximum of +4. If three warriors attack a single hero, for example, each of the three warriors gets a +2 bonus to their Fighting rolls.

Grappling

Sometimes it's best to restrain your foe rather than beat him to a bloody pulp. That's where grappling comes in.

Grappling is a regular Fighting roll, and is a non-damaging attack. If the attacker wins, he's entangled his foe. With a raise, his foe is also Shaken.

Once entangled, the defender may attempt to break free on his next action. Both the defender and attacker pick either their Strength or Agility and then an opposed roll is made. If successful, the defender is free but the attempt consumes his action. If he does so with a raise, he's free and may act normally. Failure means he is still entangled. Instead of breaking free the defender may attempt a different action but at a –4 penalty.

After grappling a foe, the attacker may attempt to damage his victim on subsequent rounds by making an opposed roll as above. On a success he does his Strength in damage (gaining the extra d6 for a raise as normal).

Innocent Bystanders

When a character misses a Shooting or Throwing roll, it may be important to see if any other targets in the line of fire were hit. The GM should only use this rule when it's dramatically appropriate—not for every missed shot in a hail of musket fire.

Each miss that comes up a 1 on the attack roll indicates a random adjacent character was hit. If the attacker was using a blunderbuss, a roll of 1 or 2 hits the bystander. Roll damage normally.

Horses and other animals are also possible targets when firing on mounted characters.

It's sometimes easier to hit an adjacent victim than the original target using this quick system. That may not be entirely realistic, but it's fast and simple, it makes large groups of people vulnerable to missile fire, and best of all, increases the drama of firing at opponents locked in melee with the attacker's allies.

Nonlethal Damage

A character who wants to beat someone up without killing them can choose to do nonlethal damage. This usually requires the attacker use only his fists or a blunt weapon of some sort. Edged weapons may be used if they have a flat side, but this subtracts –1 from the attacker's Fighting rolls.

Extras who would be Incapacitated by a nonlethal attack are simply knocked out for 1d6 hours. If a Wild Card is Incapacitated by a nonlethal attack, he is knocked out for 1d6 hours as well.

Nonlethal wounds are otherwise treated exactly as lethal wounds.

This means it's much easier to render an Extra unconscious than a Wild Card. This is intentional, as heroes can take multiple punches before going down for the count, but most "mooks" go out with one or two good punches.

Example: Kane is whacked on the back of the head by an Inquisitor, who plans on torturing him later. The villain gets lucky and does 4 wounds to our hero. Because he was doing nonlethal damage, Kane is simply knocked out for 1d6 hours instead of taking serious damage (wounds).

Obstacles

Sometimes characters have sufficient power to attack their foes *through* obstacles. (See the Breaking Things section on page 74 to actually destroy intervening obstacles.)

To attack a target through an object, first decide if the attack hits. If it misses, there's no additional effect other than a small hole in the intervening obstacle.

If the attack would have hit without the cover modifier, the round is on target but the obstacle acts as armor for the target hiding behind it.

Below are the Armor bonuses for some obstacles commonly used as cover. This is added directly to the target's Toughness, including any actual armor he's wearing in the affected location. Subtract the weapon's Armor Piercing value from the total Armor protection offered—not separately from both the obstacle and armor actually worn by the target.

Obstacle Toughness

Armor	Obstacle
+1	Glass, leather
+2	Leaded glass window
+3	Interior wooden wall
+4	Thick wooden wall
+6	Baked mud wall
+8	Brick wall
+10	Stone wall

Example: Kane uses a cannon to blast a spanish soldier hiding behind a stone wall (Armor +10). The cannon ignores 4 points of Armor, so the wall only provides 6 points of protection.

Prone

Smart heroes lie down when lead starts flying. This gives them Medium Cover against most attacks. Attackers to the defender's side or within 3" ignore the modifier since the target is just as exposed to these characters as if he were standing.

A prone defender who is attacked in close combat has his Parry reduced by 2, and he must subtract 2 from his Fighting rolls.

Ranged Weapons in Melee

No ranged weapon larger than a pistol may be fired at adjacent foes engaged in melee. Larger weapons may still be used as clubs, however, and Kane frequently uses his musket in this capacity. Pistols can be fired in close combat, but since the defender is actively fighting back, the Target Number for the Shooting roll is his Parry rather than the standard TN of 4.

That means it's harder to hit someone who's wrestling with your character in melee than someone a few feet further who isn't actively wrestling with your hero.

Touch Attack

A character who simply wants to touch a foe (usually to deliver a special effect of some kind) may add +2 to his Fighting roll.

Tricks

Characters often attempt fancy maneuvers or clever tricks to distract their foes and set them up for deadly follow-up attacks. These might include throwing sand in an foe's eyes, ducking between a tall opponent's legs to stab him in the back, pulling a rug to topple an enemy over, and so on. Tricks do not include weapon feints—those are already "assumed" in a character's Fighting and Parry scores.

To perform the trick, the player must first describe exactly what his character is doing. Next he makes an opposed Strength, Agility, or Smarts roll against his foe. The GM must determine which is more appropriate based on the player's description of the trick. For instance, yanking a rug might use Strength versus the defender's Agility.

If the character is successful, his opponent is distracted and suffers –2 to his Parry until his next action. With a raise, the enemy is distracted and Shaken as well.

These penalties do not stack. Tricking a foe twice has no additional effect.

Example: Kane is backed into a corner by a very large and dangerous thug. Kane ducks down, grabs a handful of dirt, and flings it at the thug's face.

He and the thug both make Agility rolls, and Kane wins with a raise. The thug is blinded by the dirt, and is momentarily Shaken. The hapless villain also suffers –2 to his Parry until his next action, giving Kane time for a quick rabbit punch that just might put the big fellow down.

Two Weapons

A hero may attack with a weapon in each hand if he desires. This works just like any other multi-action, and inflicts a –2 penalty to each attack. (Note that the Two-Fisted Edge negates the multi-action penalty when attacking with two weapons.)

Tricks

Sometimes a hero has to resort to dirty tricks to gain an advantage over a foe. Fortunately, *The Savage World of Solomon Kane* lets you do all manner of stunts with a single mechanic: Tricks.

Here are some examples of typical tricks. Unless otherwise stated, these are Agility tricks.

- **Appel:** A sudden stamp of the foot to distract your opponent.
- **Backflip:** Using an obstacle, such as barrels, a cart, or even a wall, to help you flip over an opponent.
- **Balesta:** A sudden hop forward, either as the prelude to an attack or to catch an opponent off guard.
- **Beat:** Slapping an opponent's blade out of the way to leave his body open to an attack.
- **Bind**: Encircling an opponent's blade with your own. This move is designed to prevent him from moving his blade while you slide yours forward along his.
- **Blind:** This is achieved by throwing sand in a foe's face or flipping a cloak over his head. Slashing his forehead so he bleeds into his eyes works too (as a trick it does no damage and so doesn't require a Called Shot to the head).
- **Corps a Corps:** French for "body to body." This usually involves giving your opponent a shove to unbalance him.
- **Flash (Smarts):** A lady can distract a foe by flashing her cleavage or thigh. Only tends to work on men.
- **Flick:** A sudden movement of the blade designed to distract a foe.
- **Pull the Rug (Strength):** Yanking a rug out from under a foe's feet (this trick can work against more than one opponent).
- **Who's That? (Smarts):** The oldest trick in the book, but it still works.

Unless your character is Ambidextrous, subtract another 2 points from the off-handed attack.

Example: Sir James Wycliffe is backed into a corner by a pack of ravenous wild dogs of unnatural size. He has two knives, but isn't Ambidextrous. The first roll suffers a –2 penalty (for using two weapons), and the second suffers a –4 penalty (two weapons plus the off-hand penalty). He makes his Fighting roll twice, and gets his Wild Die with each roll. But with the odds stacked against him, he's going to need to roll high!

Unarmed Defender

If one character has a melee weapon and his foe doesn't, the opponent is considered unarmed and is very likely in a world of hurt. Since he can only dodge and evade rather than actively parry, any armed attacker trying to hit the unarmed defender may add +2 to his Fighting roll.



Most animals and monsters are considered armed due to natural weapons such as claws and teeth.

Unstable Platform

A character attempting to fire a ranged attack from the back of a horse or other mount, a moving carriage, or other "unstable platform" suffers –2 to his Shooting roll.

Wild Attack

Sometimes a desperate character may want to throw caution to the wind and attack with everything he's got. This is called a "wild attack," and can be devastating if successful. If used recklessly, it can quickly get even a veteran character slaughtered.

Performing a wild attack adds +2 to the character's Fighting attack and resulting damage roll, but his Parry is reduced by 2 until his next action.

Wild attacks can be used with multiple attacks, such as from the Frenzy or Sweep Edges, or with two weapons.

Withdrawing From Combat

Inevitably, your character may sometimes decide discretion is the better part of valor and choose to escape a combat, rather than fight it out to the death.

Whenever a character retreats from melee, all adjacent non-Shaken opponents get an immediate free attack against the retreating character (but only one—no Frenzy or other Edges apply unless they specifically state otherwise).

A character may take the Defend option (+2 Parry) while retreating from combat, but won't be able to perform other actions that round besides movement and will still suffer the free attack.

Example: Kane is attacked by three bandits in melee. He decides to run for it, giving each bandit a free Fighting roll against him. Kane wisely uses the Defend maneuver during his retreat as well to increase his Parry by +2 until he can get away.

Mounted Combat

Mounted combat doesn't comes up often in the Kane stories, but that's no reason your heroes can't do it. Here are a few notes about how to handle these situations.

These rules refer to horses, but apply equally to mules, camels, and other riding animals as well.

Movement

Mounts move on their rider's action card. Even though the animal may move, the rider may still Hold his action. If he's still Holding the action in the next round, move the horse on the rider's Held card.

Falling

Anytime a character is Shaken or suffers a wound while on horseback he must make a Riding roll to stay horsed. If he fails, he falls. If the horse is moving, the rider suffers 2d6 damage (he sustains only 1d6 damage if the horse was still).

Firing on Mounted Targets

Shots directed at mounted characters use the Innocent Bystander rules (page 77) to see if the horse was hit. Of course, an attacker can always aim for the horse instead.

Fighting

Heroes who wish to fight from horseback must use the lowest of their Fighting or Riding skills. This makes it important for cavalrymen to actually be able to ride well!

Characters who shoot from an animal suffer a –2 penalty to their Shooting rolls. The Steady Hands Edge negates this penalty.

Charging

A rider on a charging horse adds +4 to his damage roll with a successful Fighting attack. To be considered charging, the rider must have moved at least 6" or more in a relatively straight line towards his foe.

Trained Horses

Animals specifically trained to fight (such as warhorses) may attack any threat to their front during their riders' action. Untrained horses do not fight unless cornered.

Setting Weapons

A weapon with a Reach of 1 or greater can be "set" against a cavalry attack. To do so, the attacker must be on Hold when he is attacked by a charging mount (see page 71).

If so, he rolls to interrupt as usual, but each combatant adds +2 to his Agility roll for each point of his weapon's Reach. The winner attacks first, and adds the +4 charge bonus to his damage; the loser gains no bonus.

Wounded Mounts

When an animal is Shaken or wounded, it rears or bucks. A rider must make a Riding roll to stay mounted, or suffer the consequences of falling (see above). Mounts which aren't trained in fighting flee in a random direction when Shaken, taking their riders with them.

Tests of Will

Intimidate and Taunt allow a hero to make a "test of wills" attack against an opponent. In combat situations or during competitive miniature battles, tests of will have objective effects, as seen below.

Tests In Combat

To make a test of wills, the character makes an opposed roll against his chosen target. The defender uses Smarts to resist Taunt, and Spirit to resist Intimidate.

The GM should modify both hero's rolls depending on the situation. Waving a gun in someone's face isn't polite, but it's worth a +2 bonus to Intimidate, for example.

Success means the attacker gets a +2 bonus to his next action against the defender during this combat. A raise on the roll gives the attacker the bonus and makes the defender Shaken as well.

This can be a great setup for an attack, a trick, or even a second test of wills if the first one didn't get a Shaken result.

Tests of Will

"Attack" Skill		Resisted By
Taunt	vs.	Smarts
Intimidate	vs.	Spirit

Example: Kane attempts to Intimidate a cannibal by firing his pistol in the air. He makes his Intimidation roll and beats the cannibal's Smarts with a raise. The cannibal is Shaken and Kane adds +2 to his next action against the savage.

Tests Out Of Combat

Successfully Taunting or Intimidating a character has more subjective effects out of combat. An Intimidated foe might back down, retreat, or reveal information he has about something the heroes want to know. An opponent who was humiliated with a really good Taunt might run away in shame—or he might be so infuriated he charges the hero who made fun of him! This can be a great way to distract a foe from a weaker ally.

Whatever the outcome of the test itself, an attempted Taunt or Intimidate shifts the target's attitude one step towards Hostile (see Reactions, page 127).

Tests of Will & Groups

A character can only make a test of wills attack against a single opponent. If the foe is the "leader" of a group, however, the rest of the group is likely to follow his lead. If the boss of a group of bandits is Intimidated and decides to back down, for example, his fellow thieves follow his orders.

This entirely depends on the situation, so the Game Master must make the call.

Example: Kane is traveling through the forest when he encounters some bandits.

He fixes the leader with his steely gaze and rolls his Intimidate. He wins big, so the GM decides the leader runs away and his companions follow. Kane's way is clear without a drop of blood shed.

Damage

After a successful close combat or ranged hit, the attacker rolls damage.

Ranged weapons do fixed damage, as listed in the Gear section.

Hand weapons do damage equal to the attacker's Strength die plus a second die, which depends on the weapon (a long sword, for instance, is a d8) and whether the wielder meets the Minimum Strength requirement (page 53). An unarmed combatant rolls only his Strength die.

Note that damage rolls of any sort are not considered Trait rolls (even ones using Strength), so Wild Cards don't get their Wild Dice and may not spend bennies on them. All damage rolls can Ace, however.

Bonus Damage

Well-placed attacks are more likely to hit vital areas, and so do more damage. If your hero gets a raise on his attack roll, he adds +1d6 to the final total (it doesn't matter how many raises you get, you still just get a single d6 in bonus damage). This roll may Ace as usual.

Damage Effects

After hitting, your damage is compared to the opponent's Toughness. If the damage roll is less than the target's Toughness, the victim is beaten up a bit but there's no game effect. If the damage is equal to or higher than the victim's Toughness, he's Shaken (see page 85). Mark it with a counter of some sort to show its status.

A raise on the damage roll means the victim is wounded. Extras are Incapacitated—they're injured badly enough to quit the fight, and may even be dead (see Aftermath, to find out for sure). Wild Cards can take a little more punishment, though.

Wounds and Wild Cards

Each raise on a damage roll over a Wild Card's Toughness causes a wound. Wild Cards can take three wounds before they are Incapacitated (see page 85).

Each wound a Wild Card suffers causes a –1 cumulative penalty to his Pace (minimum of 1) and to all further Trait tests—up to the maximum of a hero's 3 wounds. A hero with 2 wounds, for example, suffers a –2 penalty to his Pace and any Trait tests.

If a hero suffers a wound and wasn't Shaken already, he's Shaken as well.

Knockout Blow

When a Wild Card takes more than three wounds, he has suffered a "Knockout Blow." Consult the Knockout Blow Table on page 84 to find out exactly what happens.

Use the number of wounds actually caused by the Knockout Blow when reading the table. If a hero takes 5 wounds, for example, check the Knockout Table entry for 5 wounds (it doesn't matter how many wounds he had previously). If the hero already had 1, 2, or 3 wounds, you still check the table for 5 wounds. If a hero with 3 wounds takes 1 wound, he checks the 1 wound entry.

This is a bit tricky to grasp at first, but keeps heroes from dying too easily from a number of lesser hits. A direct hit from a cannon, however, will likely kill the toughest hero in one blow.

Example: Solomon blasts an evil priest with his pistol, causing 3 wounds. The priest already had 1 wound, so the GM consults the Knockout Blow Table for 3 wounds. The priest is Bleeding Out and Incapacitated.

Timing

Heroes sometimes take multiple hits on the same action card, such as when they're ganged up on by a group of bad guys. The game has been designed to let players roll all the attack dice at once to keep things fast and furious. Damage rolls, however, are resolved and applied one at a time. The attacker decides what order to roll damage in if it becomes an issue. This is especially useful when you're doing large skirmishes and rolling handfuls of dice together.



Knockout Blow

Heroes who suffer more than 3 wounds must check this table to determine their fate. Remember, you're checking the number of wounds caused by the knockout blow (the one that sent the hero to this table)—not the total number of wounds he has.

Don't forget to subtract the character's wound modifiers from any Trait rolls required by the table.

1 Wound: Battered & Bruised

If the wounded character was previously Incapacitated, this result has no further effect. Otherwise, your hero's had the wind knocked out of him. Make a Spirit roll at the beginning of each round. If the roll is successful, he becomes Shaken and can return to the fight.

2 Wounds: Incapacitated

Your character is beaten badly enough to take him out of this fight. The hero's Incapacitated and must roll on the Injury Table (see page 85).

3 Wounds: Bleeding Out

Your character is Bleeding Out and Incapacitated. Roll on the Injury Table and make a Vigor roll at the start of each combat round. A failure means the hero has lost too much blood and becomes Mortally Wounded (see below; begin rolling for the Mortal Wound in the next round). With a success, he hangs in there, but he's still bleeding and must roll again next round. With a raise, or a successful Healing roll, he stops bleeding but remains Incapacitated.

4+ Wounds: Mortal Wound

The injured hero has suffered a life-threatening wound and will not recover without aid. He is Incapacitated and must roll on the Injury Table. He must also make a Vigor roll at the start of each round. If the roll is failed, the character dies. A Healing roll stabilizes the victim but leaves him Incapacitated.

Multiple Knockout Results

It's sometimes possible for a character to get sent to the Knockout Blow Table more than once. A hero who is already Bleeding Out, for example, might get nailed by a random shot, get hit by an area effect weapon, or picked on by a malicious sniper. When this happens, treat each incident separately. They are, in effect, separate injuries. If your hero is Bleeding Out twice, for example, you'll have to roll to see if he survives twice per round.

The Soak Roll

A hero can spend a benny to automatically eliminate a Shaken condition.

If the benny is spent immediately after taking one or more wounds from a single attack, you may make a Vigor roll as well. A success and each raise on the roll reduces the number of wounds suffered from that attack by 1. If the hero is left with any wounds from the attack however, he's still Shaken as usual. Don't count the wound modifiers you're about to suffer when making this roll.

A character may only make one attempt at a soak roll per attack. If a successful soak roll eliminates 2 of 3 wounds, for instance, a hero can't make another soak roll to eliminate the third wound. (However, the character could spend a second benny to reroll the Vigor roll as usual.)

If a character suffers multiple hits on the same action card, he needs to spend bennies and attempt to make soak rolls after each hit—before the next "set" of wounds can be soaked.

Example: Kane gets attacked and hit twice in the same round by two savages. The first attack makes him Shaken, and the second causes 2 wounds.

Kane takes the Shaken result. He knows if he completely soaks the wounds, he won't be Shaken anyway. So he makes a Soak roll against the two wounds and gets a 5 on his Vigor roll. That negates one wound, but he's still Shaken.

He could now spend another benny to be unshaken, but can't negate the remaining wound.

Shaken

Shaken characters are rattled, distracted, or momentarily shocked by tests of will results, fear, and most commonly, by taking damage.

Although not as severe as taking a wound, being Shaken has several negative effects. First, Shaken characters may only move up to half their Pace and can perform no other actions (including running).

If a Shaken character is Shaken again by a damaging attack (not by a Test of Wills, fear, or similar non-damaging effect), he suffers a wound instead.

When it is next his turn to act, a Shaken character first attempts to recover by making a Spirit roll. Failure means he remains Shaken. With a success, the recovery check consumes the action but the character recovers and can remove his Shaken counter. With a raise, the character recovers instantly and may act normally.

Example: Lady Eleanor Black throws a mug of beer at a charging thug (she Tricks him and gets a Shaken result). Kane takes advantage of the distraction to slip in and knock the man silly with his fist. He does just enough damage to get a Shaken result. Since the thug was already Shaken, he suffers a wound and goes down in a heap.

Incapacitated

Incapacitated characters are unconscious or at least too beaten, battered, or bruised to do anything useful. They may not perform actions and are not dealt action cards in combat.

A character who became Incapacitated due to wounds inflicted on him becomes Shaken if healed (whether through natural healing or some other means). A second Healing roll may then be attempted to tend to any actual wounds the fallen hero has suffered (see page 86).

Characters Incapacitated by Fatigue must be treated for the specific cause of their stress in order to recover (see page 88).

Injury Table

Roll 2d6 on the table below, then make a Vigor roll. If the Vigor roll is failed, the injury is permanent regardless of healing. If the roll is successful, the effect ends when all wounds are healed.

If the attack that caused the Injury was directed at a specific body part, use that location instead of rolling randomly.

2d6	Wound
2	**Unmentionables:** The hero suffers an embarrassing and painful wound to the groin. If the injury is permanent, reproduction is out of the question!
3–4	**Arm:** The character catches one in the left or right arm (determined randomly). The arm is rendered useless.
5–9	**Guts:** Your hero catches one between the crotch and the chin. Roll 1d6 on the sub-table below: **1–2 Broken:** His Agility is reduced by a die type (min d4). **3–4 Battered:** His Vigor is reduced by a die type (min d4). **5–6 Busted:** The hero's Strength is reduced by a die type (min d4).
10	**Leg:** The hero's left or right leg (determined randomly) is crushed, broken, or mangled. His Pace is reduced by 1.
11–12	**Head:** Your hero has suffered a grievous injury to his head. Roll 1d6 on the sub-table below: **1–2 Hideous Scar:** Your hero now has the Ugly Hindrance. **3–4 Blinded:** One of your hero's eyes was damaged. He gains the One Eye Hindrance (or the Blind Hindrance if he only had one good eye). **5–6 Brain Damage:** Your hero suffers massive trauma to the head. His Smarts is reduced one die type (min d4).

Healing

The Healing skill can be used to treat wounded characters after a battle. Each attempt takes 10 minutes, and requires some basic supplies such as bandages and clean water. If these supplies aren't available, the healer suffers a –2 penalty to his roll. The healer must also subtract the patient's wound levels from his Healing roll. Incapacitated characters are treated as having 3 wounds.

A success removes one wound, and a raise removes two. Wounds must be treated within one hour of being received. Once an attempt to treat an injury has failed, it may not be attempted again—it must heal naturally (see below).

Aftermath

After a battle, the players make Vigor rolls for all of their wounded allies (the GM may roll for wounded foes). With a success, that character is alive but Incapacitated (failure indicates death). With a raise, the wounds were only superficial and the character may function normally. This creates interesting choices for the players after battle as they must decide what to do with their wounded companions and living captives.



Walking Wounded: If it is important to know which Incapacitated characters can walk and which cannot, make a second Vigor roll for each. Those who make it are "walking wounded"—they may shamble slowly but still cannot fight or perform other useful actions.

Those who don't make the roll can be moved but risk aggravating their injuries. They must make another Vigor roll for each and every hour of movement. Should they fail, they begin to die. They may be stabilized with a Healing roll at –2, but any further movement will no doubt be fatal.

Natural Healing

Every five days, wounded or Incapacitated heroes may make Vigor rolls. Wild Cards remove a wound level (or their Incapacitated status) with a success, or improve two steps with a raise. A critical failure on a natural healing roll increases a Wild Card's wound level by one. If the hero already has three wounds treat him being Incapacitated. Extras lose their Incapacitated status with a success and expire if they roll a 1 on their Vigor die.

Subtract wound penalties from these rolls as usual, as well as the modifiers below. These are cumulative, so rough traveling in intense cold with one wound is a total of –5, for example. Medical aid means that someone with the Healing skill is actively checking the patient's wounds, changing dressings, giving what medicines are available, and so on.

Healing Modifiers

Modifier	Condition
–2	Rough traveling
–2	No medical attention
–2	Poor environmental conditions, such as intense heat, or rain
+0	Basic Medical Aid (bandages)
+1	Good Medical Aid (physician)
+2	Expert Medical Aid (surgeon: these are very rare)

Situational Rules

The rest of this chapter covers situational rules—rules that don't come up every game, such as controlling allies, fear, falling, and fatigue.

If this is your first time through the book, skim over the various sections so you know what's in here, then come back and check them out in detail as and when you need to use them.

Allies

Allies play a big part in *The Savage World of Solomon Kane*. They serve as troops under your hero's command, loyal retainers, or hired savages.

Keeping up with allies in the game is quite simple. Just copy the Allies Sheet on page 333 and fill in the blanks. There's a collection of useful allies fully statted out in the final chapter of the book (see page 322).

We've given the GM some tips on creating and using allies on page 125.

Allied Personalities

You can add a little flavor to your allies by rolling on the Personality Table. Jot down the keyword on the Allies Sheet so that you and your Game Master can have a little insight into each particular ally's character.

For the most part, you should consider these general impressions with no particular game effect. What they can do is help both the players and the GM decide just how an ally might react in a given situation.

A player whose character is leading an expedition to a mysterious ruin could look over his list of native guides and bearers and choose to send the "Sneaky" ally ahead to scout the way, or the "Observant" character to act as lookout while camping in hostile territory.

If he has to go with the "Lazy" ally for some reason, there's a good chance the GM will rule he loses attention sometime during his watch. These simple notes can add quite a bit of depth to your extras.

Ally's Personality

d20 Roll	Personality
1	Young
2	Cruel
3	Old
4	Happy
5	Experienced
6	Fanatical
7	Lazy
8	Sneaky
9	Bright
10	Stupid
11	Crude
12	Agile
13	Observant
14	Clueless
15	Mysterious
16	Creative
17	Righteous
18	Fearless
19	Cowardly
20	Heroic

Experience

Allies who take part in battle with their more heroic employers gain experience as well—though they don't learn as quickly as player characters. Don't keep track of their experience points, just roll randomly to see if they've "leveled."

At the end of a game session in which the allies had a significant role (usually by taking part in combat), roll a d6 for each group of identical allies. On a roll of 5–6, the survivors level up just like player characters. If the roll fails, they don't.

Ammo

Keeping track of ammunition for all your nonplayer character allies can be a real pain, but in the age of blackpowder weapons, allies carrying an infinite supply of shot, powder and matches shouldn't be allowed. Here's an easy and dramatic way to handle this problem.

The ammo level of each group of allied NPCs starts at Very High, High (the usual level), Low, or Out. A space for each of these ammunition states can be found on the Allies Sheet.

Using Fatigue

The rules in this section are designed to let you handle complex subjects such as heat exhaustion, starvation, and sleep deprivation quickly and easily. That said, Game Masters still shouldn't worry about enforcing them until it becomes an important story element. The point of Fatigue is to reinforce narrative story elements on the characters so that their players must take certain actions. In most games, hacking through sweltering jungle is interesting narratively, but has little effect on the characters. The players may picture the expedition, but don't really put much thought into the importance of finding shelter, foraging for food, or getting adequate rest. Slapping a couple of penalties to every action they perform makes them think about these things—especially if they have to fight!

Again though, you should only worry about these rules when it's dramatically appropriate. But if you want to make them search out warm caves during a blizzard—potentially leading them into new adventures—the Fatigue rules are a big incentive.

Fatigue and Traits

Players may wonder why the Fatigue rules affect their mental skills as well as their physical abilities. In other words, why does banging one's shin in a cave cause him to suffer a penalty to his Lockpicking skill? Or to his ability to Intimidate someone?

Just like wound penalties, fatigue wears on one's patience and will as well as his body. A character who's been trudging through a blizzard for hours isn't going to think as clearly as one who's well-rested. And a guard who's been up all night isn't going to be nearly as alert and watchful as one who's had a good night's sleep.

Used wisely, these simple rules can make your group take precautions they may have long ignored in other games.

After each fight, the ammo drops a level (unless the GM feels the allies didn't really use much in that scene). In combat, if the allies are dealt a deuce, their ammo level drops a level after that round. This makes for dramatic situations where running out of powder is a possibility, and sets up realistic logistical problems while eliminating a major bookkeeping chore.

Fatigue

Heat, cold, hunger, thirst, lack of sleep, and drowning are all sources of "Fatigue," a downward spiral that can lead to a character's death if he doesn't find a way to recover.

A character who falls victim to Fatigue passes through several "fatigue levels" before finally succumbing to them and passing on. These states, and how to recover from them, are described below.

Fatigued

The hero is tiring quickly. All of his Trait checks suffer a –1 modifier until the source of his fatigue is relieved (see the individual hazard descriptions).

Exhausted

The hero is fading fast and will collapse soon if help is not received. He suffers –2 to all his Trait rolls until the source of his fatigue is relieved.

Incapacitated

The character collapses and is near death. He may be able to whisper incoherently, but is otherwise inactive and unable to perform any actions. He can take no actions until he receives treatment for whatever caused the condition.

Death

The hero passes on. Whether or not a hero ever reaches this level of Fatigue is up to the GM. Freezing to death isn't a particularly heroic way to die, but it does stop players abusing the "heroes can't die" rule.

Multiple Hazards

A character only has one "Fatigue" track. Say a hero hasn't eaten in days and finally becomes Fatigued. He later ventures out into

a blizzard and has to roll against the cold. His Fatigue penalty counts against his Vigor roll as usual, but if failed, he becomes Exhausted. He doesn't gain two different Fatigue levels. A character without food or water in extreme heat or cold is in grave danger of keeling over dead from exposure.

Example: Kane stays up all night on watch for trouble. He fails his Vigor roll for getting no sleep and is Fatigued. Later the next day, during a river crossing he slips and falls into the torrent. He now must make a Swimming roll at –1 due to his Fatigue. He fails yet again and is now Exhausted even though the Fatigue came from two different sources.

If Kane doesn't take time to rest, his wandering days could be over.

Hazards

Below are some of the most common environmental hazards heroes must face, with details on when a character must roll, any important modifiers, and how he or she recovers from any effects suffered from it. The Game Master should use these hazards mostly for dramatic purposes.

A quick trip outside through a heatwave isn't worth keeping up with, but a long trek through the jungles of Africa certainly is, especially if it heightens the drama and makes the wanderers think about things they might otherwise ignore, such as shelter, warm clothing, or eating their mounts to stay alive.

Bumps and Bruises

Characters who suffer minor but troubling injuries, such as being dragged by a horse, stumbling down a slope, or running through a cavern in the dark can suffer from Fatigue rather than suffering actual wounds.

The GM should usually allow a Vigor roll to avoid damage when suffering conditions like those described above. Those who fail gain a Fatigue level from multiple bumps and bruises.

The Game Master may occasionally allow sure-footed characters to make Agility rolls to avoid this damage instead.

Fatigue gained in this way can lead to Exhaustion, but not to a character becoming Incapacitated.

Recovery: Fatigue levels from bumps and bruises automatically improve by one step every 24 hours after the original injuries occurred.

Example: *Kane and Sir James Wycliffe must race down a steep slope to escape the clutches of some angry Indian warriors.*

The Game Master decides that Kane and Sir James trip and suffer bumps and bruises if they don't each make successful Agility rolls. Sir James succeeds, but Kane fails, and suffers –1 to all his activities for the next 24 hours.

Cold

Trudging through deep snow for hours on end, or facing biting, bitter winds, can dehydrate and fatigue a character as quickly as blazing deserts. Every four hours spent in



weather below freezing (32°F), a hero must make a Vigor roll. Failure means the victim gains a Fatigue level. Subtract 1 from the character's Vigor roll for every 20 degrees below freezing.

The standard roll assumes the character is wearing a warm shirt and cloak. If the victim has less substantial clothing, subtract 2 from the roll. Winter gear adds +2.

Recovery: Warmth and shelter from the elements allows a hero to recover a Fatigue level every 30 minutes.

Drowning

Water is deadly to those heroes who aren't prepared for it. Here are some standard water hazards and how often a character must make a Swimming roll.

- A hero with at least a d4 in Swimming does not have to make a roll when in calm water.
- In rough water, all characters must make a Swimming roll every minute.
- In white water, the hero's swept into eddies and hydraulics and must roll every round.
- A character forced to tread water for long periods without being able to cling to some buoyant object must roll once every hour.

Each failed roll adds a Fatigue level. An Incapacitated character drowns in a number of rounds equal to half his Vigor. If someone can get to the victim within five minutes of death, he can be resuscitated with a Healing roll at –4.

Subtract 2 from a character's Swimming rolls if he is trying to hold something up, including another character. This penalty rises to –4 if he has his hands and feet tied. Add 2 to the roll if he's holding something buoyant.

Don't forget that any characters wearing armor are further hindered by the weight of their armor. See page 56 for details on removing armor while in the water.

Recovery: Once a character is out of the water, he recovers one Fatigue level every five minutes. This doesn't mean he is completely out of danger, of course, as soaked characters are far more susceptible to the cold!



Heat

Intense heat, typically that over 90°F, can cause heat exhaustion and heat stroke, both of which are extremely dangerous. The real danger in high temperatures is actually from dehydration, so conscientious, well-supplied characters can greatly improve their chances of survival in extreme heat simply by carrying a sufficient amount of water and drinking frequently.

When the temperature reaches 90 degrees or more, the Game Master should pay closer attention to how much water characters are able to drink. If the characters are able to drink at least 4 quarts of water a day, they may be tired and sunburned, but are not in any immediate danger.

If that amount of water isn't available, characters must make Vigor rolls every four hours. Subtract two from the roll if the hero has half the water he needs, and subtract 4 if he has less than half.

Also subtract 1 from the roll for each additional 5 degrees it is above 90 degrees Fahrenheit.

Add +1 to the Vigor roll if the character refrains from all physical activity. Add another +1 to the roll if the character can get into substantial shade.

Failure means the character gains one level of Fatigue.

An Incapacitated character suffers heat stroke, and may suffer brain damage. Make a second Vigor roll when the character becomes Incapacitated. If that roll is failed, the victim's Smarts and Strength decrease by one step permanently (to a minimum of d4). Prolonged exposure beyond this point is almost inevitably fatal.

Recovery: A victim who receives adequate amounts of water recovers one Fatigue level every hour.

Hunger

Most people need approximately one pound of food every 24 hours. If sufficient sustenance isn't available, a character begins to suffer from severe hunger.

Starting the first day after the meal was missed, the character must make a Vigor roll. Subtract 2 if the hero has less than half the required amount of food. Failure means the character gains a Fatigue level.

After the first day, the character must roll for hunger every 12 hours, and thirst every 6 hours. A successful Survival roll each day provides enough food (and water) for one person per raise.

Recovery: At least a pound of decent food allows a character to recover a Fatigue level every hour.

Sleep

Most people need a minimum of six hours sleep every 24 hours. Those who go without aren't likely to be at their best. A character who goes without sleep must make a Vigor roll at a cumulative –2 penalty every 12 hours thereafter or gain a level of Fatigue. A large amount of coffee, sugar, or other stimulant adds +2 to the roll.

A character who becomes Incapacitated due to lack of sleep simply falls unconscious for 4d10 hours. Lack of sleep never leads to Death (at least, not directly).

Thirst

An average-sized man requires two quarts of water a day. This requirement is doubled in both very dry conditions (such as the desert) or areas of high humidity (the jungle) as the character perspires constantly and begins to dehydrate.

If enough water isn't available, the hero begins to suffer from dehydration. Starting the first day after the water runs out, the character must make a Vigor roll. Subtract 2 if the hero has less than half the required amount. Failure means the character gains a Fatigue level.

After the first day, the character must make the required Vigor roll every 6 hours.

A successful Survival roll each day provides enough water (and food) for one person per raise.

Recovery: Access to the regular required amount of water allows a character to recover a Fatigue level every hour.

Other Hazards

Below are a few more hazards heroes must occasionally deal with that have effects other than Fatigue.

Falling

Falling off a roof is likely to break your hero's arm. Jumping from a cliff, even into water, can spell certain death.

Falling damage is 2d6, plus an additional 5 points per 5" (10 yards) fallen (round up), to a maximum of 2d6+50.

Water: A fall into water reduces damage by half, and an Agility roll means the character dives and takes no damage at all, though he must make a Vigor roll or be Shaken. A fall over 15" (30 yards) requires an Agility roll at –2 to avoid damage.

Fire

Fire is the most deadly element. Roll the damage listed below when a character is first burned and at the beginning of each round until he is free of the flame.

Armor offers no protection against a raging inferno, and so ignore any armor bonus to a character's Toughness when resisting fire damage.

Fire Damage

Damage	Description
+2	Burning weapon
1d10	"Spot fire," such as a burning arm or leg
2d10	Campfire
3d10	Lava

Spreading: Anytime something flammable is hit by fire, roll 1d6. On a 6, the target catches fire. Very flammable targets, such as a scarecrow, catch fire on a 4–6. Volatile targets, such as a person soaked in oil, catch fire on anything but a 1.

Roll again each round after a victim catches fire (at the beginning of his action), as if checking to see if the victim catches fire. If he does, the fire grows in intensity and does its current level +2 in damage that round. This is cumulative to +6.

Smoke Inhalation: Fires in confined areas produce deadly smoke. Every round a character is in such an environment, he must make a Vigor roll. A wet cloth over the face adds +2 to the roll. If the roll is failed, the character gains a Fatigue level (as described on page 88).

Disease & Poison

When a character ingests, contacts, catches, or otherwise suffers from poison or disease, he must make a Vigor roll and subtract any penalties for the poison or disease's strength. If failed, the character suffers whatever effects are described.

Anthrax (–4): Death within 2d6 days. No known cure.

Arsenic (–2): Loss of one die of Vigor in 2d6 days. If this would drop Vigor below d4 then death results. Often used in small doses over time to make detection difficult.

Black Death (–4): Death within 1d4 days. No known cure.

Curare (–2): Immediate Exhaustion; death in 2d10+10 minutes. Unique to South America, and known only to the indigenous tribes.

Cyanide (–4): Death in 3d6+10 seconds. Must be ingested.

Hemlock (–2): Make a Vigor roll (–2) every 30 minutes. With a failure, gain a Fatigue level. When the character is Incapacitated by the hemlock, he dies.

Scurvy (–2): Loss of one die of Vigor each month. If this would drop Vigor below d4, then death results. Characters with scurvy cannot recover any Fatigue levels or wounds. Plentiful fresh food (for at least a week) allows a victim to recover from the disease.

Treating Poison and Disease: If a poison can be treated (and some can't), it requires a Healing roll at –2. Snakebites and similar common poisons can usually be treated.

Diseases are not well understood in Kane's time, and can usually only be treated with the proper medicine. You'll find out how characters can recover from it in the disease's description, though finding a physician who will offer the correct treatment is another matter entirely.

Fear

Certain creatures and horrific scenes may challenge a character's resolve and cause them to make a Guts check when they see them. A success on the Guts check means the character manages to overcome his fear. The effects of a failed Guts roll depend on whether the cause of the roll was grotesque or terrifying in nature.

Fear/Nausea: If the scene was grotesque or horrific, such as a grisly discovery or learning a secret "Man Was Not Meant to Know," the character is Shaken and must make a Vigor roll or suffer severe nausea/mental shock. This inflicts a –1 penalty to all actions for the remainder of the encounter. A natural 1 on the Guts roll (regardless of the Wild Die) causes the victim to roll on the Fright Table as well.

Terror: A terrifying trigger, such as a monstrous creature or unknowable evil, is much more intense, and can rattle even the most stout-hearted hero. Extras are typically Panicked (unless the GM feels like rolling for them on the Fright Table). Wild Cards must roll on the Fright Table should they fail their Guts check (not just if the Guts die comes up a 1). Roll 1d20 and add the monster's Fear penalty to the roll (a –2 adds +2 to the roll).

Becoming Jaded

After encountering a particular type of creature, the character shouldn't have to make Guts checks every time he sees another one in that particular scenario. If the party clears out a cave full of African vampires, for example, they should only have to roll the first time they encounter them—not in every chamber. The Game Master might require a roll if the heroes encounter vampires in a particularly different or frightening situation, however, such as if they fall into a pit full of the ravenous creatures. The GM should also enforce a second roll if a new more fearsome type of vampire is encountered further in.

The Game Master should also require Guts checks should the party encounter vampires again in a later adventure.

Example: Kane has already made his Guts check while passing a massive display of shrunken heads in the jungle. When he later finds the chief native clad in a robe of similar heads there's no need for a second check.

However when all the eyes open and the mouths begin screaming, Kane needs to make another check to keep the cold grip of terror at bay!

Fright Table

1d20*	Effect
1–4	**Adrenaline Surge:** The hero's "fight" response takes over. He adds +2 to all Trait and damage rolls on his next action.
5–8	**Shaken:** The character is Shaken.
9–12	**Panicked:** The hero is Panicked. He must immediately flee at his full Pace and receives a free run action. Each round thereafter, the hero may make a Spirit roll as a free action. With success, he comes to his senses. On a failure, he must keep running away.
13–16	**Minor Phobia:** The character gains a Minor Phobia Hindrance somehow associated with the trauma.
17–18	**Major Phobia:** The frightened character gains a Major Phobia Hindrance.
19–20	**The Mark of Fear:** The hero is Shaken and also suffers a minor cosmetic physical alteration—a white streak forms in the hero's hair, his eyes twitch constantly, or some such oddity. This reduces his Charisma by 1.
21+	**Heart Attack:** The character is so overwhelmed with fear that her heart stutters. The hero becomes Incapacitated and must make a Vigor roll at –2. If successful, the hero is Shaken and can't attempt to recover for 1d4 rounds. If she fails, she dies in 2d6 rounds. A successful Healing roll at –4 saves the victim's life, but she remains Incapacitated.

**Add the creature's Fear penalty as a positive number to this roll.*



Combat Summary

Initiative

- Deal each Wild Card and group of characters one card.
- Reshuffle the deck the round after a Joker is dealt.
- A Joker allows the character to act whenever he wants in a round, and adds +2 to all his Trait and damage rolls that round.

Movement

- A character may move up to his Pace and perform an action, such as making a hand-to-hand attack, firing a ranged weapon, casting a spell, or making a test of wills.
- A character may attempt additional actions, such as running, but incurs a –2 penalty to all Trait rolls for each additional action.

Fighting

- The attacker makes a single Fighting roll. If the roll is equal to or greater than his target's Parry, the attack hits (see Damage). A raise on the attack adds +1d6 to the damage.

Shooting

- The attacker makes a single Shooting roll and subtracts 2 for Medium range and 4 for Long range. If the roll is successful (TN 4 or more), the attack hits (see Damage). A raise on the attack adds +1d6 to the damage.

Damage

- If the damage is equal to or greater than the victim's Toughness, he's Shaken.
- A Shaken character who receives a second Shaken result is wounded.
- If the damage exceeds the victim's Toughness by a raise, he's Wounded. Wounded Extras are Incapacitated and removed from play. Wild Cards can suffer up to three wounds.
- When a Wild Card suffers more than three wounds he is Incapacitated. Check the Knockout Blow table to determine the extent of his injuries.

Tests of Will

- The character makes an opposed roll against his chosen target. The defender uses Smarts to resist Taunt, and Spirit to resist Intimidate.
- Success means the attacker gets a +2 bonus to his next action against the defender. A raise on the roll gives the attacker the bonus and makes the defender Shaken.

Aftermath

- A Healing roll on an injured Wild Card heals 1 wound with a success and 2 with a raise. If the roll is failed, the wound must heal naturally.
- Incapacitated Extras roll Vigor to see if they are alive or dead.

Test of Wills Summary

Intimidate	Opposed roll versus Spirit; +2 to next action against this target with a success; +2 bonus and opponent is Shaken with a raise
Taunt	Opposed roll versus Smarts; +2 to next action against this target with a success; +2 bonus and opponent is Shaken with a raise

Attack Options Summary

Attack	Modifier
Aim	+2 Shooting/Throwing if character does not move
Area Effect Attacks	Targets under template suffer damage, treat cover as armor; missed attack rolls cause 1d6" deviation for thrown weapons, 1d10" for launched weapons; x1 for Short range, x2 for Medium range, x3 for Long range; no extra 1d6 damage for a raise.
Breaking Things	See Obstacle Toughness Table; Parry 2; No bonus damage or Aces apply
Called Shots	
Limb	–2 attack
Head	–4 attack; +4 damage
Small target	–4 attack
Tiny target	–6 attack
Cover	
Light	–1
Medium	–2
Heavy	–4
Darkness	
Dim	–1 attack
Dark	–2 attack; targets are not visible beyond 10"
Pitch Darkness	Targets must be detected to be attacked at –4
Defend	+2 Parry; character may take no other actions
Disarm	–2 attack; defender must make a Str roll vs. the damage or drop his weapon
The Drop	+4 attack and damage
Finishing Move	Instant kill to helpless foe with lethal weapon
Firing Into Melee	See Innocent Bystanders
Full Defense	Character rolls his Fighting, using the result as his Parry
Ganging Up	+1 Fighting per additional attacker; maximum of +4
Grappling	Fighting roll to grapple, on a success, foe is entangled; on a raise opponent Shaken. Defender can make opposed Strength or Agility to break free (any other action made at –4); Attacker can make opposed Strength or Agility to damage victim
Innocent Bystanders	Missed Shooting or Throwing roll of 1 (2 with blunderbusses) hits random adjacent target
Nonlethal Damage	Characters are knocked out for 1d6 hours instead of wounded
Obstacles	If attack would have hit but for the concealment penalty, the obstacle acts as Armor
Prone	As Medium cover; prone defenders suffer –2 Fighting, –2 Parry in melee
Ranged Weapons in Melee	Pistols only; Target Number is defender's Parry
Touch Attack	+2 Fighting
Trick	Describe action; make opposed Agility or Smarts roll; opponent is –2 Parry until next action; with a raise, the foe is –2 Parry and Shaken
Two Weapons	–2 attack; additional –2 for off-hand if not Ambidextrous
Unarmed Defender	Armed attackers gain +2 Fighting
Unstable Platform	–2 Shooting from a moving vehicle or animal
Wild Attack	+2 Fighting; +2 damage; –2 Parry until next action
Withdrawing from Combat	Adjacent foes get one free attack at retreating character

Magick & Devilry

"Great ju-ju—great fetish, me!" he announced to Kane. "You see? My ghost go out—kill Songa—come back to me! Great magic! Great fetish me!"

—Red Shadows

During his travels, Kane encounters several sorcerers and priests, the most notable of them being N'Longa, the African ju-ju man who becomes his friend and ally, and the vile necromancer Roger Simeon (who, while never actually faced by Kane, does work terrible magic, forming the basis of *The Right Hand of Doom*).

Although you can play shamans and sorcerers in *The Savage World of Solomon Kane*, they are not the same as typical fantasy wizards and priests. They do not bring down fiery doom upon their foes, nor do they cast spell after spell in rapid succession. In Kane's world magic is a powerful, dark, and often subtle force, not to be trifled with.

Making Arcane Heroes

The first thing a magician must do is buy the Arcane Background Edge and choose which type of supernatural power he is blessed with. Two different types of powers are presented in this rulebook: the Shaman, which covers everything from African ju-ju men to American Indian shamans to blood-thirsty Aztec priests, and Sorcerer, which covers all aspects of Western magic. This includes the much-feared art of necromancy (which is usually practiced only by villains in the world of Kane, but exceptions may exist). All types of powers use the same basic rules but with a few very important differences in the details.

Arcane Skill

Each type of power has a particular arcane skill: Shamanism for shamans and Magick for sorcerers. You need to take the skill for your character's particular Arcane Background and put points into it as usual, so if you're planning to take an Arcane Background, make sure you put some skill points into the corresponding arcane skill.

Shamanism is linked to Spirit, and Magick to Smarts.

Starting Powers

Arcane heroes start with a number of powers that may be chosen from a specific list, dictated by the Arcane Background they practice—see the Arcane Background entries on the following pages for specifics.

Learning New Powers

An arcane character can learn a new power by selecting the New Power Edge (see page 41). As soon as he chooses this Edge, he can begin using whichever power he chooses for his new power. In-game, the power comes through practice or research, but this occurs in the hero's "down time" between sessions and is ignored.

Using Powers

As an action, a hero may use a power by declaring the power he's using and making an arcane skill roll minus the spell's Casting Modifier.

If successful, consult the particular power to determine the results. On a failure, the caster suffers "Backlash." See the section on Arcane Backgrounds for details of the specific and dangerous effects.

Some of the Casting Modifiers are very high, making it seem all but impossible to succeed. Magic in the world of Solomon Kane is not a matter of uttering a few words and waving one's hands. Magic is complex and requires time if it is to work properly.

Each round a hero spends (after the first) preparing his spell reduces the Casting Modifier penalty by 1, to a maximum of zero. The caster may take no other actions during the round, including movement, though he retains his usual Parry score if attacked.

Once the caster finishes preparing, he must cast his spell on the following round or the magic is wasted and he must begin again.

Note that fixed penalties to arcane skill rolls, such as being able to animate extra corpses with the *zombie* spell at an additional –1 per corpse after the first, aren't Casting Modifiers, and therefore cannot be reduced by spending extra time in preparation.

Example: N'Longa wishes to summon a lion to aid Kane. The summon beast *power has a Casting Modifier of –6 for Medium creatures. N'Longa elects to spend just two rounds in preparation. He casts his spell the round after with a final modifier to his arcane skill roll of –4.*

If he wanted to animate three zombies instead, he would have a –4 Casting Modifier for the zombie *spell and another –2 for the extra corpses. The longest he can prepare is four rounds, and he still suffers the –2 for the extra zombies.*



Disruption

Disruption can happen one of two ways.

During Casting: A mage must maintain concentration while casting. If he takes any damage during this time, the magic may be disrupted. To maintain concentration, the caster makes an opposed arcane skill roll against the damage suffered. If he wins, he may continue casting. If he fails, his casting is ruined and he must begin again.

A caster who is Shaken by non-damaging means (such as a Test of Wills) must make a simple Smarts roll to maintain concentration (not opposed).

Active Spells: A caster who has an active spell in play (one with a duration listed as a time increment) may be disrupted if he takes damage. This works as above, except if the mage fails his roll all of his active spells are dropped after the attack that caused the disruption. With success, he maintains all his active spells.

A caster with active spells who is injured while casting another spell makes just a single disruption roll. On a failure, he loses all his active spells and must start his current casting from scratch.

Example: An Aztec priest has cast an armor spell. Kane shoots at him with his pistol, causing 10 points of damage. The priest fails his Shamanism roll, but still benefits from the spell for this attack.

Canceling Spells

A mage who has cast a spell with a duration other than Instant/Permanent may end it at any time before the duration expires as a free action. See Duration (page 100) for details of why he would do this.

Arcane Backgrounds

Arcane Background (Shaman)

Arcane Skill: Shamanism (Spirit)

Starting Powers: 2

Power List: *armor, banish spirit, barrier, beast friend, boost/lower trait, burrow, curse, deflection, dispel, elemental manipulation, enchant weapon, entangle, environmental protection, fear, fly, ghost form, grave speak, invisibility, light, obscure, puppet, shape change, slumber, smite, spirit servant, spirit ward, summon beast, summon spirit, tempest, transfer soul, undead ward, viper weapon, vision quest, withering curse, zombie*

Shamans draw their power from spirits, be they elements, animals, ancestors, or even gods, such as worshipped by Aztec priests.

Fetishes: Shamans use fetishes—pieces of bone, wooden carvings, or bags of leaves and herbs—to invoke the sacred spirits by rattling, rubbing, or burning them. Each shaman begins with a fetish, but if he ever loses it, all arcane skill rolls are made at –4 until he recovers it or makes a new one.

Making a new fetish takes a week spent gathering materials and a Shamanism roll at –6. Every extra week spent preparing the fetish in advance reduces the penalty by 1, to a maximum of zero. On a failure, the time is wasted and the shaman must begin again. A roll of 1 on the Shamanism die (regardless of Wild Die) ruins the fetish (as above), and the shaman must also roll on the Backlash Table with a –2 penalty. A shaman may only ever own one fetish at a time (he cannot create spares in advance).

Native Spirits: A shaman's strong links to his native spirits mean he gains a +1 bonus to his arcane skill rolls in his native country.

Backlash: If a casting attempt fails, the shaman gains a Fatigue level for 30 minutes.

On a roll of a 1 on his arcane skill die, (regardless of Wild Die), the hero must roll 2d6 on the Backlash Table. It's possible to suffer backlash and still succeed at casting because of the Wild Die. On a critical failure, the hero must roll 3d6 on the Backlash Table and use the lowest two die results.

A Changed System

Fans of the *Savage Worlds* rules who glance at this chapter will recognize many terms. However, this magic system is not the same as in the *Savage Worlds* rulebook, having been heavily modified to fit the style of magic present in the Kane stories.

A brief summary of the major changes is listed below.

- No Power Points are used. Instead, spells suffer a Casting Modifier, which can be "worked off" by taking longer to cast the spell. While mages can therefore cast more frequently, magic is much slower to invoke.
- Only two Arcane Backgrounds exist, Shamanism and Sorcery. No Arcane Backgrounds from the *Savage Worlds* rules should be used.
- There is a Spell Backlash Table. This replaces the regular rules for magical backlash.
- Some spells are missing. Offensive magic especially, such as *bolt* and *blast*, has no place in the Solomon Kane stories. Magic is powerful, but in different ways.
- Some new spells have been added, specifically ones which were used in the stories. We recommend you read these carefully.
- Spells have a much longer duration than in *Savage Worlds*, but cannot be maintained.

These changes reflect the ritual style of magic in Robert E. Howard's tales, where the arcane arts were subtle, powerful and mysterious.

Players should note, where magic is concerned, that modern distinctions, such as "white" and "black" magic have no place in the *Savage World of Solomon Kane*. There is no intrinsically good magic, indeed Kane views all magic as inherently ungodly, but the power of magic can be used for good or ill and it is people who make that choice.

Arcane Background (Sorcery)

Arcane Skill: Magick (Smarts)

Starting Powers: 2

Power List: *animate hand, armor, banish spirit, barrier, beast friend, boost/lower trait, burrow, curse, deflection, dispel, elemental manipulation, enchant weapon, entangle, ghost form, grave speak, invisibility, fear, fly, light, obscure, puppet, shape change, slumber, smite, speak language, spirit servant, spirit ward, summon beast, summon spirit, tempest, transfer soul, viper weapon, withering curse, zombie*

There are many types of sorcerers, from powerful practitioners of angelic magic to warlocks and witches or vile necromancers.

As with shamans they traffic with spirits, but sorcerers deal exclusively with angels or demons, and the cooperation of these spirits is drawn forth with elaborate rituals, spoken words of power, runes, and perhaps even dark sacrifices.

Components: Working Magick requires components, such as powders, oils, chalks, and incense to work properly. A sorcerer begins the game with 10 sets of components. Each casting uses one set of ingredients per Rank of the spell. Additional components cost £0.50 each.

A sorcerer who does not have sufficient components to cast a particular spell suffers a –1 penalty to his arcane skill roll per missing component. Thus, if a mage wanted to cast a Veteran spell (requiring 3 components) but only had a single set left, he would suffer a –2 penalty. Such a penalty, caused by lack of components, is fixed and cannot be offset by spending additional time in preparation.

Whether or not a spell is successful, the components are still used in the casting.

Backlash: With a failure, the mage suffers a level of Fatigue, which is recovered after 30 minutes. On a roll of 1 on his arcane skill die, regardless of Wild Die, the hero must roll 2d6 and consult the Spell Backlash Table. It is possible to suffer backlash and still succeed at casting because of the Wild Die. Magic is a harsh mistress. With a critical failure, the hero must roll 3d6 on the Backlash Table and use the lowest two die results.

Powers

Listed below are the powers available in *The Savage World of Solomon Kane*. Each power has the following statistics:

Rank: This is the Rank a character must be in order learn this power; Novice, Seasoned, Veteran, Heroic, or Legendary.

Casting Modifier: The Casting Modifier (or CM) is a penalty applied to the caster's arcane skill roll. He can reduce the number by spending extra time in his preparation.

Range: The maximum distance the target of the spell can be from the user when the power is first activated (it remains in effect even if the target moves out of range until the end of a spell's duration). A Range of Smarts, for example, means 10" for a caster with a Smarts of d10. If a power lists three ranges, such as 12/24/48, these are read just like missile weapon ranges, and subtract the standard penalties for each range bracket (0/–2/–4). The caster's skill roll acts as both "casting" and attack total for these powers.

Duration: How long the power lasts in minutes (each minute is 10 rounds), hours, or days. Some spells have a Duration based on the Rank of the caster.

A spell with a Duration of 1 minute/Rank, for instance, lasts just 1 minute for a Novice character. If cast by a Heroic character, it has a Duration of 4 minutes as the caster has four Ranks under his belt.

An NPC spellcaster has an effective Rank at least equal to his highest Rank spell for this purpose only. A shaman who can cast a Veteran spell, for instance, is treated as if he were Veteran Rank when determining spell durations. The GM may always make the caster higher (or lower!) Rank if he chooses.

Each power currently in use subtracts 1 from future uses of the hero's arcane skill, so an arcane hero can choose to cancel spells before their duration expires. This is a free action, and makes subsequent spells easier to cast.

Trappings: Not every caster casts a given spell the same way. Trappings are a way of describing what the power looks like, or how the wizard goes about casting it.

Each power listed in this chapter has a few sample trappings to give you some ideas what form these powers may take depending on your character's archetype. For instance, while an African ju-ju man may be able to control animals by speaking the language of the animal spirits, a Western sorcerer might hold a small crafted statue smeared with the beast's blood.

Animate Hand

Rank: Veteran

Casting Modifier: –4

Range: Self

Duration: Special

Trappings: Trance

This dark incantation allows the sorcerer to animate one of his own hands. Unfortunately, the caster must first sever his hand from his body! This causes one automatic wound and the caster has the One Arm Hindrance.

If the arcane skill roll is successful, the caster's severed hand animates (see Creeping Hand, on page 310). With a raise, the hand is a Wild Card.

The caster must remain in a trance while the hand is animated. Any disruption causes the hand to die immediately. The caster can "see" through the hand, and guides it by giving whispered directions up to five miles distant.

There is no way to reattach the hand, and most wizards use this as a final curse to enact revenge on one who has wronged them.

Armor

Rank: Novice

Casting Modifier: –2

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 minute/Rank

Trappings: Ethereal armor, a mass of insects or worms, animal skin, bone

Armor creates a field of magical protection around a character, or an actual shell of some sort, effectively giving the target Armor.

Success grants the recipient 2 points of Armor. A raise grants 4 points of Armor.

Banish Spirit

Rank: Veteran

Casting Modifier: –5

Range: Smarts

Duration: Instant

Trappings: Holy symbol, holy water, bells, prayers, burning fragrant wood or herbs

Whether a restless ghost unable to leave the material world or demon possessing the body of an innocent, *banish spirit* exorcises a supernatural being, sending them to their final resting place.

This spell is an opposed roll of the caster's arcane skill versus the target's Spirit. The user must score a success *and* beat the target's roll to succeed in the banishing.

Barrier

Rank: Seasoned

Casting Modifier: –1/section

Range: Smarts

Duration: 5 minutes/Rank

Trappings: Fire, ice, thorns, force, bones.

Barrier creates a solid, immobile wall to protect the user against attack or to entrap an opponent

Regardless of what the *barrier* is made of (ice, thorns, stone, energy, etc.), it has a Toughness of 10. Every Casting Modifier the caster takes creates a 1" wide section of wall. The *barrier* ranges in width from a few "real world" inches thick for stone or other hard materials up to a foot for things like bones or ice. (If you're using a gridded mat to play, draw the *barrier* between the squares directly along the grid-lines.) The exact placement of each section is defined by the caster, but each section must be connected to at least one other section after the first.

When the spell expires or a section is broken, it crumbles to dust or dissipates (the trappings are never left behind). Each section of the *barrier* is destroyed by an attack that exceeds its Toughness of 10. Hitting the wall is automatic with a Fighting attack (ranged attacks must roll to hit as usual), but raises on the attack roll do not grant bonus damage.

Opponents may climb the *barrier* at –2 to their Climb roll if it is made of something solid. Fiery versions of the *barrier* cause 2d4 damage to anyone who wishes to leap through instead.

Beast Friend

Rank: Novice

Casting Modifier: Special

Range: Smarts x 100 yards

Duration: 10 minutes/Rank

Trappings: Animal call, figurine of beasts

This spell allows mages to speak with and guide the actions of nature's beasts. *Beast friend* works only on creatures with animal intelligence, not humanoids, summoned, magical, or "unnatural" animals.

The target must be within the sorcerer's range—it is not conjured by this power.

The Casting Modifier depends on the creature's Size. The base modifier is –1, plus an additional –1 for each point of Size greater than Size +0. Negative Size levels are treated as Size +0. A lion (Size +2) has a casting Modifier of –3, for instance.

Swarms may also be controlled using *beast friend*. Small swarms are –1, Mediums –3, and Large –5. Thus a individual rat has a modifier of –1 to control, as does a small swarm of the creatures.

Boost/Lower Trait

Rank: Novice

Casting Modifier: –2

Range: Smarts

Duration: 1 minute/Rank

Trappings: Physical change, glowing aura, potions, spirit possession

This power allows a hero to increase any of a target's Traits by one die type for a standard success, and two with a raise. The affected Trait can exceed d12. Each step over d12 adds +1 to his Trait total. For example, a raise on a target who already has a d12 in the Trait grants him d12+2 for the duration of the power.

The power can also be used to lower an opponent's Trait. This is an opposed roll against the victim's Spirit. Success lowers any Trait of the caster's choice one step, a raise lowers it two steps. A Trait cannot be lowered below a d4.

Multiple castings stack, though the caster must keep track of when each expires.

Burrow

Rank: Novice

Casting Modifier: –3

Range: Smarts

Duration: 1 minute/per Rank

Trappings: Dissolving into the earth

The *burrow* power allows a magician standing on raw earth to meld into it. He can remain underground if he wants in a sort of "limbo" or burrow to anywhere within his range. A mage with a Smarts of d8 could therefore move up to 8" (16 yards) each round, up to the spell's duration or simply remain submerged.

A burrowing mage can attempt to surprise a foe (even one who saw him burrow) by making an opposed Stealth versus Notice roll. If the mage wins, he gains +2 to attack and damage that round, or +4 with a raise. Targets on Hold may attempt to interrupt the attack as usual.

Curse

Rank: Seasoned

Casting Modifier: –4

Range: Touch

Duration: Special

Trappings: Evil eye, hexing, spoken curse

Some practitioners of magic use their arts for good; others inflict pain upon their foes.

To use this particularly nasty spell, the caster pits his arcane skill against the victim's Spirit. If the caster is successful, the victim becomes sick and suffers Fatigue immediately. Each day, at dawn, he must make a Vigor roll or suffer another level of Fatigue. Once he becomes Incapacitated, he makes a Vigor roll each day to avoid death.

The *curse* can be lifted by the caster or through use of *dispel*.

Deflection

Rank: Novice

Casting Modifier: –2

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 minute/Rank

Trappings: Mystical shield, gust of wind, phantom servant that intercepts the missiles

Deflection powers work in a variety of ways. Some actually deflect incoming attacks, others blur the target's form or produce other illusionary effects. The end result is always the same however—to misdirect incoming melee and missile attacks from the user.

With a standard success, attackers must subtract 2 from any Fighting, Shooting, or other attack rolls directed at the user. A raise increases the penalty to –4. This also acts as Armor against area effect weapons.

Dispel

Rank: Seasoned

Casting Modifier: –1

Range: Smarts

Duration: Instant

Trappings: Waving hands, whispered words

Dispel allows a hero to negate enemy spells. It has no effect on innate powers, such as a vampire's charm or the succubi's lure. Neither does *dispel* work on magic items or permanent enchantments unless the specific item or enchantment says otherwise.

Dispel can be used on a power already in effect, and can also be used to counter an enemy power as it's being used. The latter requires the countering mage to be on Hold and interrupt his foe's action as usual.

In either case, dispelling the opponent's power is an opposed roll of arcane skills. The dispelling character suffers a –2 modifier to this roll if the target power is of another type (i.e. shamanism vs. magick).



Elemental Manipulation

Rank: Novice

Casting Modifier: –1

Range: Smarts x 2

Duration: Instant

Trappings: Calling on appropriate spirits, a sample of the particular element

An arcane character choosing this power must select one element to control (he may choose additional elements by selecting this power more than once). A successful casting allows him to perform basic "tricks" with his chosen element. The specific tasks that may be attempted are listed below.

Air: The caster can create light air currents to blow out a candle, fan a flame, lift a skirt, or cool his body in oppressive heat (+1 to a single Fatigue roll caused by heat).

Earth: A wave of the hand can open a one-foot square hole in soft earth (or half that in stone), or cause a spray of sand that might blind an opponent (+1 to a Trick roll).

Fire: The caster can snap his fingers to create a small flame (about the size of a hot match). With existing fire, he can urge it to spread (+1 to see if a fire spreads), cause it to flare (perhaps as part of a Trick), or slowly set light to an object over a few rounds.

Water: The caster can conjure up to a pint of water somewhere within his sight (not "inside" objects or people). He can also purify one gallon of water, whether it be poisoned or simply salt-water.

Enchant Weapon

Rank: Novice

Casting Modifier: –2

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 minute/Rank

Trappings: Weapon glows, changes to another substance, or runes emerge

Some monsters are immune to nonmagical weapons. This power enchants an existing weapon, making it magical. This does not affect its damage, nor give the wielder a bonus to hit his foes, but it allows him to damage creatures immune to nonmagical weapons.

Entangle

Rank: Novice

Casting Modifier: –2, –4, or –6

Range: Smarts

Duration: Special

Trappings: Animated vines, skeletal hands burst from soil, spider webs

This power allows the hero to restrain a target with entangling bonds. The arcane skill roll is opposed by the target's Agility. Success indicates partial restraint so that the target suffers a –2 to Pace and skills linked to Agility and Strength. A raise restrains the target fully. He cannot move or use any skills linked to Agility or Strength.

Each following round, an entangled target may make a Strength or Agility roll to break free. Other characters may also attempt to free the ensnared person by making a Strength roll at –2.

The caster picks his Casting Modifier before he invokes the spell, depending on the creature or area he wishes to affect. For a –2 Casting Modifier *entangle* targets a single opponent of Size +3 or smaller. With a –4 penalty, the spell affects everyone in Medium Burst Template or one Large creature (see page 298 for details on Size). For a Casting Modifier of –6, the spell affects everyone in Large Burst Template or one Huge creature. Swarms cannot be entangled.

Environmental Protection

Rank: Novice

Casting Modifier: –2

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 hour/Rank

Trappings: A mark on the forehead, potions, growing gills

This power allows the target to breathe, speak, and move at his normal Pace while in any hostile environment: underwater, in the lava of a volcano, the arctic wastes, and so on. Pressure, atmosphere, air, and so on, are all provided for the character.

Complete protection is offered only for background hazards. A fire attack still causes normal damage even with *environmental protection*, for example.

With a raise on the casting, the duration becomes 1 hour + 2/Rank (for that target).

Fear

Rank: Novice

Casting Modifier: –2

Range: Smarts x 2

Duration: Instant

Trappings: Eldritch energy, cold chills

This power causes the target to feel an overwhelming dread and horror.

The area of effect covers the Large Burst Template. Every creature under the template must make a Guts check; apply –2 to the Guts roll if the caster got a raise. Wild Cards who fail roll on the Fright Table (page 93). Extras are Panicked instead.

Fly

Rank: Veteran

Casting Modifier: –3 or –6

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 hour/Rank

Trappings: Flying carpets, broomsticks

Fly allows a character to fly at his basic Pace. He may double his Pace by taking the –6 Casting Modifier during casting.

Ghost Form

Rank: Veteran

Casting Modifier: –6

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 minute/Rank

Trappings: Adopt a shadowy form

With a successful arcane skill roll, the user becomes ethereal. He is unable to affect the world through material means, and it cannot affect him. He can walk through walls, and non-magical weapons pass straight through him. Any items carried at the time of casting are also ethereal. The mage may still cast magic, however, and is still susceptible to magic attacks, including from magic items.

Should the caster (or part of him) become corporeal "inside" someone or something, both he and his victim suffer damage. A hand causes 1 wound to each, an arm causes 2 wounds, both arms cause 3 wounds, and the whole body causes 4 wounds.

Grave Speak

Rank: Seasoned

Casting Modifier: –4

Range: Touch

Duration: 2 minutes/Rank

Trappings: Runes carved on bodily remains, burning black candles, "leather" books, Ouija board

It is said the dead know many secrets, and through the black arts a mage can reach beyond death to contact departed souls. Many good spellcasters avoid using this power as there are risks involved.

In order for this spell to work, it must be directed toward a particular soul. The caster must either know the name of the deceased or possess a personal item, which includes their corpse, or any part of it at least, as well as any of the deceased person's treasured possessions.

If the spell is successfully cast, a ghostly disembodied voice makes itself known and may be questioned. The caster may ask the spirit one question for each minute the spell is active.

The spirit contacted is not necessarily friendly and can lie, but it may not refuse to answer or make guesses. The GM must adjudicate what information the entity knows—the spirit is not omnipotent and knows only what it knew in life up to the moment of its death.

A roll of a 1 on the caster's arcane skill, regardless of Wild Die, may summon up a demon or other hostile entity. While it cannot directly affect the caster, it will try to convince him it is the person he sought, then feed him inaccurate or dangerous information, perhaps seeking to lead the character to his death.

Invisibility

Rank: Seasoned

Casting Modifier: –5

Range: Self

Duration: 1 minute/Rank

Trappings: Powder, potion

Being invisible is a powerful aid in combat, and useful for spying as well.

With a success, the character is transparent, but a vague outline is visible. A character may detect the invisible presence if he has a reason to look and makes a Notice roll at –4. Once detected, he may attack the foe at –4 as well.

With a raise, the character is completely invisible. The penalty to Notice or hit him is –6.

In either case, the power affects the character and his personal items. Anything picked up after the power was cast remains visible.

Light

Rank: Novice

Casting Modifier: 0

Range: Touch

Duration: 2 hours/Rank

Trappings: Floating globes, glowing palms, enchanted staffs

The ability to create light is a pretty simple one as magical spells and powers go, but a party trapped in the dark with loathsome undead is happy to be accompanied by an ally with this spell. *Light* must be cast on an inanimate object, such as a coin, a sword, or shield, or even someone's clothing. Clever casters often cast light on a foe's clothes or weapon to make him easier to see—ignore any penalties for illumination when attacking such an affected target.

The light created is as bright as a torch, and provides clear illumination in an area equal to a Large Burst Template.

Obscure

Rank: Novice

Casting Modifier: –2

Range: Smarts

Duration: 1 minute/Rank

Trappings: Creeping darkness, whipping sand, or rolling fog

This power creates an area of obscureness equal to a Large Burst Template. Any attacks into, out of, or through the area of effect suffer the standard penalty for pitch darkness of –6.

Puppet

Rank: Veteran

Casting Modifier: –2

Range: Smarts

Duration: 1 minute/Rank

Trappings: Glowing eyes, trance-like state, a swaying amulet, voodoo dolls

Sometimes it pays to persuade others to do your fighting for you. Some do this by blatant mind control, others do it by manufacturing visual and auditory illusions.

Puppet is an opposed roll of the caster's arcane skill versus the target's Spirit. The user must score a success and beat the target's roll to gain complete control. The victim will attack friends and even commit suicide, though such acts allow the victim another opposed Spirit roll to break the spell.

Villainous types may have other versions of *puppet* that allow them to control subjects for much longer periods of time. Such powerful versions usually require an item belonging to the victim.

Shape Change

Rank: Special

Casting Modifier: Special

Range: Self

Duration: 1 hour/Rank

Trappings: "Morphing," talismans

Many cultures have legends of powerful shamans or magicians who can take on the shape of animals. This power does just that. This version of the power only allows a user to transform into mundane animals.

A character may learn this spell while of Novice rank, but cannot transform into the more powerful creatures until he attains the appropriate rank. The Casting Modifier depends on the type of creature the character wishes to change into. Use the Shape Change Table below as a guideline for morphing into unlisted creatures. A wizard can always elect to shape change into a beast available at a lower Rank than his own, and he uses the Casting Modifier appropriate to the creature he chooses.

Weapons and other personal effects are assumed into the animal's form and reappear when the power ends, but other objects are dropped.

While transformed, the character retains his own Smarts, Spirit, and linked skills (though he may not be able to use them since he cannot speak). He gains the animal's Agility and Strength and linked skills, and cannot use most devices. He has no capacity for speech and cannot use powers, though he may continue to maintain any powers previously activated.

The GM has final say on what an animal can and cannot do. A shaman in dog-form might be able to pull the trigger on a musket, for instance, but would use a default skill roll of d4–2 as the animal has no Shooting score of its own. The shaman's Persuasion functions normally, but without speech, might suffer a –4 or worse penalty depending on what he tries to accomplish.

Shape Change Table

CM	Rank	Animal Types
–2	Novice	Hawk, cat, snake
–3	Seasoned	Dog, wolf, deer
–4	Veteran	Lion, tiger
–5	Heroic	Bear, shark
–6	Legendary	Elephant

Slumber

Rank: Seasoned

Casting Modifier: –2

Range: Smarts x 2

Duration: 2 hours/Rank

Trappings: Sing lullaby, gestures, blow powder or sand at targets

This spell places the target into a deep but otherwise natural sleep. The character picks where he wants to center the spell and places a Medium Burst Template. He then makes an arcane skill roll. Any living creature (not ethereal entities, undead, or constructs) within the area must make a Spirit roll, or a Spirit roll at –2 if the caster scored a raise. Those who fail fall into a deep sleep.

Loud noises awaken the sleepers as if they were a normal sleeper. When the duration expires, the sleepers naturally wake up.

Smite

Rank: Novice

Casting Modifier: –1

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 minute/Rank

Trappings: A colored glow, runes, sigils, crackling energy, barbs grow from the blade

This power must be cast on a weapon of some sort. If it's a ranged weapon, it affects 20 bolts, balls, or arrows, or one full "load" of ammunition. While the spell is in effect, the weapon's damage is increased by +2, or +4 with a raise. A weapon that is the subject of the *smite* power does not count as a magical weapon for the purposes of which creatures it may damage.

Example: A shaman blesses a warrior's arrows with smite. The warrior has 20 arrows in a quiver, so 20 arrows now do +2 damage (or +4 if the character gets a raise on his arcane skill roll).

Speak Language

Rank: Novice

Casting Modifier: 0

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 hour/Rank

Trappings: Words, pictures, hand motions, spiritual translator

This power allows a character to speak fluently in a language other than his own. The language must be a human language—not animalistic. A raise on the arcane skill roll allows the user to project a particular dialect as well. This spell has no effect on written languages.

Spirit Servant

Rank: Seasoned

Casting Modifier: –5

Range: Smarts

Duration: 10 minutes/Rank

Trappings: An invisible servant

Spirit servant conjures an ethereal spirit. The weight the *spirit servant* can lift is equal to 10 lbs times the caster's Spirit die type, or 50 lbs times his Spirit with a raise on the casting roll.

Lifting Creatures: If the servant wishes to lift a living creature, it may try to resist the power with an opposed Spirit roll. If the Spirit roll is greater than the caster's skill total, the creature is unaffected. If the creature loses, however, it is lifted as usual and does not get another attempt to break free.

Occasionally a victim might manage to grab onto something solid to prevent itself from being lifted. When this happens, the victim may make an opposed Strength roll versus the spell caster's arcane skill. If the victim is successful, he manages to grab onto whatever is available and is not moved, bashed, or otherwise affected that round.

Weapons: The servant can wield a weapon. When this occurs, the weapon's Fighting is equal to the caster's arcane skill, and its damage is based on the caster's Spirit instead of his Strength. A sword that does Strength+d8 damage, for example, does Spirit+d8 when wielded by the *spirit servant*. The weapon otherwise functions normally, including granting bonus damage when it strikes with a raise. The rules for Minimum Strength apply, with the caster's Spirit being used instead of his Strength.

Dropping Things: Particularly ruthless casters use the servant to drop their foes or bash them into walls. A creature affected by this power can be moved up to the caster's Smarts in inches per turn. Dropped creatures suffer falling damage as usual.

Victims who are bashed into walls or other solid objects suffer the caster's Spirit+d6 damage. If a caster with a d12 Spirit smashes a cannibal into a cliff, for example, the victim suffers d12+d6 damage. If the caster is a Wild Card, the player rolls his Wild Die as well as this damage.

Spirit Ward

Rank: Seasoned

Casting Modifier: –4

Range: Smarts

Duration: 2 hours/Rank

Trappings: Ring of holy water, salt, glyphs, leaves, fragrant wood

This spell creates an invisible barrier that can keep out ghosts, specters, spirits, and other ethereal entities—it has no affect against



demons or undead in physical form. The target creature must have the Ethereal Monstrous Ability to be affected.

The caster first makes his arcane skill roll and then places a Medium Burst Template centered on himself. Spirits wishing to enter the Template must make an opposed Spirit check against the caster's arcane skill total. If they fail, they cannot pass the ward while the spell remains active.

Spirit ward stops the entity from passing through, but only weakens their ability to use monstrous abilities such as Fear or throwing physical objects. Such abilities or attacks suffer a –2 penalty against beings in the ward, –4 with a raise on the arcane skill roll.

The spell is negated if any living creature of rat-size or larger crosses the circle.

Summon Beast

Requirements: The caster must know *beast friend* before he can learn this spell.

Rank: Novice

Casting Modifier: Special

Range: Special

Duration: 1 minute/Rank

Trappings: Animal bones or feathers of appropriate sort, glyphs, chanting

Animals have long been associated with sorcerers, whether it be the familiars of witches or the fetish beasts of shamans. This version of the power only allows a user to summon mundane animals.

A character may learn this spell while of Novice rank, but cannot summon any larger creatures until he attains the appropriate rank. The Casting Modifier depends on the type of creature the character wishes to summon. Use the Summoning Table as a guideline for unlisted creatures.

Small creatures have a Size less than zero. Medium creatures are Size +0 to Size +3. Large covers Size +4 to +7, and Huge is +8 or larger. Swarms share a similar set of statistics and fill a Medium Burst Template. The Bestiary details many mundane animals.

A wizard can always elect to summon at a lower Rank than his own if he wants.

The beast is under the total control of the summoner for the duration of the spell.

Animals can only be summoned in their natural terrain. So while a sorcerer may be able to summon a swarm of rats in London, only in Africa can he call a lion to his side.

Summoned creatures appear from the nearest appropriate terrain. For instance, rats will swarm out of sewers, a lion emerges from jungle or grass on the savannah, and a swarm of birds descend from clouds or shoot out of trees. If in doubt, assume the beasts "appear" 1d10 x 2 yards away from the caster.

When the duration expires, the animal leaves of its own accord.

Summoning Table

CM	Rank	Animal Types
–4	Novice	1 Small animal
–6	Seasoned	1 Medium or Swarm of rats, birds, insects, or other vermin, or 2 Small animals
–8	Veteran	1 Large, 2 Medium or Swarms, or 4 Small animals
–10	Heroic	1 Huge, 2 Large, 4 Medium or Swarms, or 6 Small animals
–12	Legendary	2 Huge, 4 Large, 6 Medium or Swarms, or 10 Small animals

Summon Spirit

Rank: Seasoned

Casting Modifier: Special

Range: Spirit

Duration: 1 minute/Rank

Trappings: Summoning circle, calling the spirits, bloody sacrifice

Many entities dwell beyond the walls of reality, and the caster has learned the rituals for summoning them to the mortal realm.

The spellcaster can summon a demonic steed, devilkin, ghost, or hellhound with this spell, determined at the time of casting. The

Casting Modifier is equal to half the entity's Spirit die type. So if a shaman wanted to summon a ghost, for instance, he would have a –5 penalty.

The summoned entity is under the control of the caster.

Tempest

Rank: Veteran

Casting Modifier: –20

Range: 10 miles diameter

Duration: 2d6 hours

Trappings: Gestures, words of power

Controlling the weather requires a most powerful magician.

Tempest can be used to create or dispel storms. If the arcane skill roll is successful, an existing storm dissipates or a new one appears overhead with supernatural speed. The size of the storm affected is 10 miles in diameter. The power only works outdoors. In areas where storms do not typically exist, such as a desert, the arcane skill roll is made at –4 and may be attempted only once per day.

When *tempest* is cast, the accompanying rain reduces visibility (treat as Dark Lighting conditions), extinguishes most normal fires within 1d10 rounds, and only volatile materials have a random chance of igniting from fire-based attacks. *Tempest* conditions inflict a –1 penalty to most actions due to slipping, difficulty hearing, and so on. The GM must decide if any actions are unaffected.

If the caster manages to score a raise when casting *tempest*, he has created a monstrous storm. Visibility is reduced to just 12" (and still subject to Dark Lighting) and the ground turns into a quagmire. Any character running must make an Agility roll or fall prone and become Shaken. Non-game effects include flash floods and lightning strikes, possibly damaging nearby buildings, drowning livestock, and flattening crops.

Weather magic is among the hardest to perform, and a wizard suffers backlash if his arcane skill die total is 2 or less.

Transfer Soul

Rank: Heroic

Casting Modifier: –8

Range: Spirit

Duration: Special

Trappings: Caster falls into a coma

One of the greatest spells of the shaman is the ability to transfer his soul into another body, sending the original inhabiting spirit to the Shadowlands, a ghostly realm.

This power requires the caster to make an opposed roll of his arcane skill against the victim's Spirit. With a success, the wizard successfully transplants his mind into his victim's body.

The caster retains his Smarts and Spirit, as well as all his skills and Edges except those specifically related to the physical body (such as Attractive or Fleet Footed), and all mental Hindrances (such as Arrogant, Delusional, or Phobia). He gains his new body's Agility, Strength, Vigor, and any physical Hindrances (such as Lame or One Arm) and Edges (Brawny, Quick, and so on). The GM has the final say on what Edges and Hindrances are kept or gained.

The Wanted Hindrance is considered a physical Hindrance for this purpose, as it is usually based on the victim's appearance, not his mind. The Game Master may also rule that the mage loses any Connections he had. Alternatively, the hero may retain knowledge of his Connections, but he no longer looks the same and could struggle to convince his former allies he is not an imposter or an enemy agent.

The spell ends only when the caster wishes it or when his new body is killed. When the spell ends, the victim's soul is returned to his body (which is very unfortunate if it is dead, as he becomes a zombie). The victim has no memory of being in the Shadowlands, believing instead he fell into a deep (possibly lengthy) sleep.

This powerful spell can be used to inhabit a corpse. No opposed Spirit roll is required. Treat the corpse as a zombie, but add the mage's Smarts, Spirit, skills, and such like as normal.

While this spell is in effect, the caster's body is soulless and appears dead. It is vital a mage protects his defenseless "corpse" during this period.

Undead Ward

Rank: Seasoned

Casting Modifier: –4

Range: Smarts

Duration: 2 hours/Rank

Trappings: Ring of holy water, salt, glyphs, leaves, fragrant wood

Zombies are feared in many parts of the world, and countless superstitions revolve around ways to ward off the evil creatures. The only sure way to keep the undead at bay however, is magic.

This spell is identical to *spirit ward*, but only keeps out creatures with the Undead Monstrous Ability.

Viper Weapon

Rank: Seasoned

Casting Modifier: –2

Range: Smarts x 2

Duration: 1 minute/Rank

Trappings: A wave of the hand

Turning a staff into a snake was a power known to the wizards of ancient Egypt. *Viper weapon* instantly transforms one weapon into a venomous snake. It can be used on the caster's own weapon or to give an enemy a nasty surprise.

The caster must pick one weapon within range and make an arcane skill roll. With a success, the weapon immediately transforms into a venomous serpent (use the standard venomous snake stats on page 307).

The serpent is not under the spell caster's control and attacks the nearest target, acting on the caster's Initiative card. On a raise the serpent is particularly dangerous and is treated as a Wild Card.

When the duration passes or if the snake is killed, whichever comes first, the snake reverts back to being a weapon.

Vision Quest

Rank: Veteran

Casting Modifier: 0

Range: Self

Duration: Special

Trappings: The shaman dances, smokes a pipe, creates sand paintings, or performs other rituals, depending on the time spent questing and his culture

A *vision quest* is a plea to the spirits for a glimpse into the future. The shaman may ask the spirits a single question. The nature of the question determines the time it takes to perform the *vision quest*. During this period the shaman is subject to disruption. Should he be disrupted, the vision ends and the shaman learns nothing of use.

If properly appeased (the shaman makes a successful Shamanism roll), the spirits return with the most likely answer to the question. The future contains many possible pathways however, so the shaman's vision may not always be correct.



The spirits, though prepared to serve on occasion, dislike being used as a crutch, and a shaman who becomes too reliant on the *vision quest* will find it harder to summon aid.

Each use of this spell after the first in the same week incurs a cumulative –1 penalty to all the caster's arcane skill rolls. The "clock" resets every Sunday at midnight.

Vision Quest Table

Duration	Information Requested
1 Hour	Some relatively minor matter such as the success of a crop, a marriage or birth, and so on.
1 Day	A matter of some import, such as the outcome of a great battle.
1d6 Days	A major matter such as the identity of a murderer or the weakness of a particular abomination.



Withering Curse

Rank: Heroic

Casting Modifier: –10

Range: Touch

Duration: Permanent

Trappings: Chanting, spoken curse

This vile and extremely dangerous spell causes one target to wither and age many years in an instant.

The caster makes an arcane skill roll opposed by the victim's Vigor. On a success, the victim ages rapidly, and permanently loses a die step of Strength and Vigor, two die steps on a raise (both to a minimum of a d4). Neither attribute can ever be increased with advancements. The victim now counts as having the Elderly Hindrance.

If cast on an character who already has the Elderly Hindrance, the victim dies of old age if he fails his Vigor roll.

Should the caster suffer backlash, he does not roll on the Backlash Table. Instead, he must make a Vigor roll or suffer the effects of the spell to his own body.

Zombie

Rank: Veteran

Casting Modifier: –4

Range: Smarts

Duration: Special

Trappings: Carving symbols on corpses, throwing bones, graveyard rituals, "leather" books

This power is considered evil, and so is typically used only by villainous nonplayer characters such as necromancers, dark priests, and the like.

When cast, *zombie* raises a single corpse. The caster may cause additional corpses to animate in a single casting, but each corpse after the first gives an additional –1 penalty to the arcane skill roll.

Undead are immediately obedient, though perhaps a bit mischievous and literal-minded in their duties.

Corpses aren't summoned by this ability, so there must actually be a supply of bodies available for the power to have any effect. The bodies don't have to be fresh—*zombie* can raise servants that have been waiting patiently for centuries. Graveyards, morgues, and battlefields can all serve this purpose.

With a success, the dead remain animated for 1 hour. With a raise, they remain animated for 1d6 hours. With two raises, they remain animated for an entire day.

Some say a few powerful necromancers may have improved versions of this power that are easier to cast and create permanent undead.

See page 321 for the statistics for zombies and page 316 for skeletons.

Backlash Table

2d6	Effect
2	**Rift:** Something from the spirit world has been disturbed by the caster's dabbling and lashes out at him. He must make a Spirit roll at –2 or lose one die in his arcane skill permanently. If his skill die drops below a d4, he permanently loses his Arcane Background. Regardless, he also cannot use his powers for 2d6 days.
3	**Spirit Whip:** The character suffers a Wound. He also loses the ability to use his powers for d6 days.
4–5	**Spirit Blast:** The caster takes a level of Fatigue for 24 hours and can't use his powers for a day.
6–8	**Magic Feedback:** The caster is left Shaken and is unable to use his powers for d6 hours.
9–10	**Energy Fatigue:** The mental strain of dealing with such vast power has taken its toll. He is Shaken and can't use his powers for d8 Rounds.
11	**Magic Shock:** The caster is Shaken and may not use his powers for d6 Rounds.
12	**Power Surge:** The caster taps into a particularly potent source of magic and gains +2 to his arcane skill rolls for the next 24 hours.

The Dark Arts

Rane's world sits uneasily between the superstitious time of the Middle Ages and the scientific reasoning and understanding of the Renaissance. The Church has proscribed the study or practice of the seven magic arts, known collectively as the artes prohibitae.

Nigromancy: Also known as "black magic," is the art of summoning devils and demons and communicating with the dead. The latter is known as necromancy.

Geomancy: Divination by use of a series of dashes drawn in sand or written or paper.

Hydromancy: The art of divination through dropping objects into a pool of water and watching for patterns in the ripples. Other forms include watching for colors or figures in the water, speaking words of power over water, and studying eddies in rivers.

Aeromancy: A form of divination by observing the wind, interpreting thunder and lighting, aerial visions, or meteors and shooting stars.

Pyromancy: Divination by fire, which includes casting salt into fire, burning plants, heating bones and studying the patterns made by cracks, and burning straw.

Chiromancy: Also known as palmistry, chiromancy reveals the future through studying the lines on a hand.

Spatulamancy: Divination using the shoulder blade of an animal. It is often linked with pyromancy, the bone being burnt to form cracks.

Alchemy, the creation of potions as well as the search for the philosopher's stone, reputed to convert base metals into gold, is not yet a banned art, but its time is drawing to a close. Most Western magic currently studied is a blend of spirit summoning mixed with Hermeticism, a belief that the physical, mental, and spiritual are three distinct realms.

Spell Summary Table

Power	Rank	CM	Range	Duration	Effects
Animate Hand	V	–4	Self	Special	Animates one of the caster's hands
Armor	N	–2	T	1 min/Rank	+2 Armor; +4 with a raise
Banish Spirit	V	–5	Smarts	Instant	Exorcises a spirit
Barrier	S	–1/section	Smarts	5 min/Rank	Creates barrier with a Toughness of 10
Beast Friend	N	Special	Smarts x 100y	10 min/Rank.	Speak with and guide creature
Boost/Lower Trait	N	–2	Smarts	1 min/Rank	Raise or lower any Trait by 1 die type; 2 die types with a raise
Burrow	N	–3	Smarts x 2	1 min/Rank	Burrow into earth and move up to range; May attempt surprise attack
Curse	S	–4	T	Special	Target suffers Fatigue; must make a Vigor roll each day or worsen
Deflection	N	–2	Touch	1 min/Rank	-2 penalty to be hit; -4 with a raise
Dispel	S	–1	Smarts	Instant	Dispels magical effects
Elemental Manip.	N	–1	Smarts x 2	Instant	Minor manipulations of chosen element
Enchant Weapon	N	–2	T	1 min/Rank	Makes a weapon magical
Entangle	N	–2/–4/–6	Smarts	Special	Target -2 Pace, Strength and Agility skills; completely restrained with raise
Environ. Protection	N	–2	Touch	1 hour/Rank	Breathe and move normally; minor elemental protection
Fear	N	–2	Smarts x 2	Instant	All within Large Burst Template must make Guts check; at -2 with a raise
Fly	V	–3/–6	Touch	1 hour/Rank	Allows character to fly
Ghost Form	V	–6	T	1 min/Rank	Makes target ethereal
Grave Speak	S	–4	T	2 min/Rank	Can communicate with the dead
Invisibility	S	–5	Self	1 min/Rank	-4 to be detected or attacked; -6 with a raise
Light	N	0	Touch	2 hours/Rank	Creates Large Burst Template of clear light
Obscure	N	–2	Smarts	1 min/Rank	Large Burst Template of total darkness
Puppet	V	–2	Smarts	1 min/Rank	Controls another being
Shape Change	Special	Special	Self	1 hour/Rank	Allows caster to change into various animals
Slumber	S	–2	Smarts x 2	2 hours/Rank	Puts targets in a Medium Burst Template to sleep
Smite	N	–1	Touch	1 min/Rank	+2 bonus to melee weapon damage; +4 with a raise
Speak Language	N	0	Touch	1 hour/Rank	Speak read and write another language
Spirit Servant	S	–5	Smarts	10 min/Rank	Moves creatures or objects; see text
Spirit Ward	S	–4	Smarts	2 hours/Rank	Stops ethereal beings entering an area
Summon Beast	N	Special	Special	1 min/Rank	Summons a beast or swarm (requires *beast friend*)
Summon Spirit	S	Special	Spirit	1 min/Rank	Summons a supernatural beast
Tempest	V	–20	10 miles	2d6 hours	Summons a storm
Transfer Soul	H	–8	Spirit	Special	Transfer caster's soul into another body
Undead Ward	S	–4	Smarts	2 hours/Rank	Stops undead from entering an area
Viper Weapon	S	–2	Smarts x 2	1 min/Rank	Turns a weapon into a viper
Vision Quest	V	0	Self	Special	Allows a glimpse into the future
Withering Curse	H	–10	T	Permanent	Ages victim, causing loss of Strength and Vigor
Zombie	V	–4	Smarts	Special	Creates zombies


Come no further...
What lies beyond is not for the eyes of any wanderer, but for the Game Master alone.


NORTH AMERICA
SOUTH AMERICA
EUROPE
ASIA
AFRICA
MIDDLE EAST
NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN
SOUTH ATLANTIC OCEAN
NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN
SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN
INDIAN OCEAN
Equator
Holy Roman Empire
Scotland
Ireland
England
Portugal
Spain
Ottoman Empire
Turkey
Greece
Barbary Coast
Tripoli
Jerusalem
Alexandria
Cairo
Sahara Desert
Egypt
Nile River
City of Snakes
Al-Taer
Timbuktu
Bastn
Niger River
Benin
El Mina
Slave Coast
Nile Valley
Nimr
Kilimanjaro
Zanzibar
Kalahari Desert
Cape of Good Hope
Cape Horn
Mexico
Tenochtitlan
Panama
Jamestown
Roanoke
Caribbean Sea
Main
Hindoostan
Chandragiri
Macao
Nippon
Gobi Desert
Great Wall of China
Mt. Fuji
Lake Suwa
Kyoto
Tokyo
THE WORLD OF SOLOMON KANE

The Art of Storytelling

Far back in Kane's gloomy eyes a scintillant light had begun to glimmer, like a witch's torch glinting under fathoms of cold gray ice. His blood quickened. Adventure! The lure of life-risk and battle! The thrill of breathtaking, touch-and-go drama!

—Skulls in the Stars

Now you've read the rules and know how to play. And if you're thinking about Game Mastering, you probably have a good idea how to do that as well.

Before you start creating intriguing tales of mystery and adventure, let's talk a little about the fine art of Game Mastering.

Your Game

You might think that the first step in starting a new game is finding a group of people to play with. That is important, but that's your next step. Your first step is to get yourself excited about the game. Do that and you'll likely get all your friends excited as well.

Start by reading the rules again. The greater understanding of the core mechanics you have, the easier it'll be to sell the idea to your friends. Then look at the adventure section and the villains and monsters. Think about what future adventures you might create, and what cool ideas you can use to make them really special. Take another look at the Solomon Kane stories and get a good feel for the types of tales Robert E. Howard told. Once you get a few basic ideas, you can sell the vibe to your players and more readily explain any questions they may have.

Game Night

Now it's time to recruit your players. You've got a great setting in your hands and a good enough idea about how it will play to explain it to your friends. The next step is to find out who wants to play, and when they are available.

When you're finding out who wants to play, first ask when each person can make it. It's very important that you set both a time and a regular day to play. If you rely on having a fluctuating week-to-week schedule, you're almost certainly doomed to failure.

People have busy lives, and as much as everyone involved might love to play, they've still got to study for classes, take care of their children, and otherwise live their lives. If you have a set night every week, it's much easier for your friends to schedule most of their activities around game night. It also helps you know when you've got to be ready to run an adventure.

It's common for people to play from about 6PM to 11PM on a weeknight, or on a Sunday night. Friday and Saturday are great if you're in college, but difficult for older players who have wives and children as they need their weekend nights to be with their families.

If you start at 6PM, your players have time to get off work, grab some food (or share pizza with the group), and get deep into the game by 7 or so. Make sure you manage to wrap things up by 11PM or so as well. Remember your players likely have work or classes the next day and you don't want game night to be stressful for them. If you define these things up front, you can help players with busy schedules figure out ahead of time whether or not they can make your game night.

A wise Game Master tries to end each night with a cliffhanger as well, to give players something to look forward to and as a way of drawing them back. If you manage to get your players talking during the week about what's going to happen next, you know they enjoyed themselves and you've done your job well.

Character Types

Once you've got a few friends interested, it's great if you can give them a little primer information and find out what kind of heroes they want to play.

You don't need everyone to make their characters at this point—character creation in *The Savage World of Solomon Kane* is fast enough that they can do it at the start of your first session if you want—but if some of your friends have neat ideas as to their heroes' backgrounds or basic types (witchfinder, Indian warrior, and so on), you can start doing more detail work on your story so it fits the characters better.

Getting Together

The first thing a Game Master has to do in most roleplaying games is figure out why the heroes are together. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

The Wanderers

Solomon Kane is a wanderer. Though he sometimes goes looking for trouble, most often it finds him on his journeys.

As such, we recommend you kick off your first adventure in the same manner. The heroes all happen to be at the right place at the right time. Let the players decide why their characters are there. You might even get some adventure ideas for the future from their stories.

Former Acquaintances

You can also start a campaign with the characters already knowing one or more of their comrades. This works great for getting the game moving.

Staying Together

After the first adventure has passed, the players may wonder why their characters might stay together. This is easy if they're employed by a common benefactor, or if there are some friendships in the party.

Ideally, the heroes stay together because of their experiences. While many folk believe in the supernatural, the heroes are among a few chosen souls who have battled it. Once one has faced a horde of zombies, one isn't likely to return to normal life with ease.

Maybe they don't stay together. Maybe they all return home and try to forget what happened just like normal folks. Let a few days or weeks pass where nothing happens (narratively, of course). Later on though, one of the individuals gets involved in another situation. This time however, he knows at least a few other people who have the right skills, so he asks the other player characters for help.

Friction

So what happens if your group doesn't get along? That depends on whether it's the players or the characters who are arguing.

We won't give you advice on how to handle conflicts with your friends. You know them best, and you'll have to figure out if there are certain friends who just don't fit in your campaign. Remember though, friends are more important than games—even ours. If you and the group can't talk out your differences, find something else to do for a while that doesn't cause friction. Maybe you can come back to the game once you've worked things out.

Friction between characters, on the other hand, is not only fine, it's to be encouraged to a certain degree. Any interesting group of personalities squabble or argue on occasion. As long as this is done in character, it adds to the roleplaying experience and the depth of your campaign. Quiet fights between the heroes can often take on a life of their own, encouraging players to take you, the GM, aside or write you private notes about actions their heroes perform away from the prying eyes of others.

Running the Game

The *Savage World of Solomon Kane* has been designed to make the job of the Game Master as easy as possible. The game and its system concentrate on letting you and your friends play the game and make incredible and exciting memories. We aren't interested in spending hours before the game creating statistics for M'Goba the cannibal.

That means when preparing for your game you can concentrate on creating intricate plots, tricky puzzles, and interesting villains. You don't have to do complex math to make your nonplayer characters and monsters, and you certainly don't need to spend an hour on some computer program just to make up a few Aztec warriors.

Your job is kept easy during the game as well since there's very little bookkeeping. You might have to keep track of a few Wild Card villains' wounds, but other than that, the bad guys are up, Shaken, or removed from play. That means you can focus on describing the action instead of trying to record "2 hit points of damage on the African warrior figure with the chipped paint on his spear."

Take advantage of these things to give yourself a break and run a game like you never have before. If you want to spend a lot of time on your campaign, make some cool props or develop your nonplayer characters' personalities and plot lines—not their game statistics.

Learning the Rules

Before you start a game, at least know and understand the rules on pages 65 to 96. You need to know how to make Trait rolls, use Wild Dice, attack, and handle wounds. Everything else in this book, from magic to combat maneuvers, can be ignored until you need it.

No Winner or Loser

If you're used to conventional boardgames, card games, or miniature games, you're probably used to the concept of winning the game. Well, you can forget about that now.

In *The Savage World of Solomon Kane* you aren't trying to pit "your" forces against the characters in a bid to wipe them out. Your main job as GM is to tell a cool story that gets the players talking about it afterward. Killing off their heroes session after session just so you can claim "victory" may get them talking about the game, but it won't be in a good way.

Of course, this doesn't mean that your adventures have to be a walk in the park for the heroes. Players who have seen their characters battle their way through a horde of angry natives to rescue a captured ally, avoided death traps, and then fought an epic battle against the dastardly Aztec high priest in charge of the temple will talk about the game far more excitedly than a group who fights just a couple of warriors to achieve their goal.

In a roleplaying game, the players "win" by having a good time and having their heroes achieve something. You "win" by making sure this happens.

Be Prepared

As logical as it sounds, as GM it's your job to be prepared before the session begins. Make sure you have your dice, paper, pencils,



and most importantly your adventure notes at hand. If you need miniatures, ready them before the game.

Once a game starts, nothing ruins the fast, furious, and fun pace worse than you having to leave the table to go print a map or find some paper to draw maps on.

Depending on your skill as a GM, you might be running an adventure without notes. However, if you're new, make sure you read your notes beforehand so you know what's going to happen during the game.

Prepare to be Adaptable

Sometimes the players will come up with a course of action you hadn't considered when you were writing your adventure. You might have planned for an epic battle against a giant ape menacing an African village, only to find your characters go off to recruit an army of natives to assist them. Your carefully crafted battle now becomes a massacre.

Although roleplaying has similarities to acting, it isn't about sticking to a tight script. You, as the stage director, get to lay out the scenery and the plot, but the rest is ad-libbed by the players.

If the players do something that is totally unexpected, call a snack break and spend the time thinking about how you can salvage your plot. For the giant ape, all you need to do is use more Extras. Maybe it has children, or has become a sort of "ape god" and is now worshipped by a tribe of savages.

What you shouldn't do is berate the players for not following your adventure to the letter. They don't know what you have planned, and if you continually stifle their creativity, they end up as bystanders in a story they can't change. They might as well hand you their characters, leave the table, and go do something more interesting.

Unexpected Props

Sometimes players state actions that don't tie in with the description you have of their surroundings. For instance, the heroes are involved in a fight in a manor house with a depraved noble's loyal guards. Suddenly, one of the players says his character wants to yank a rug out from under the guards' feet. There's no mention of a rug anywhere in your notes.

Although the player made an assumption about what props are available, it is a valid one. There's bound to be rug at the house, the same as there are candles to extinguish and drapes to pull down, and full glasses of wine perfect for throwing in a foe's eyes within easy reach. You can't be expected to think of every single detail about a scene, so give your players some leeway in shaping the world their characters inhabit.

Most times, you should go with the flow, especially if the player has described a cool Trick and his actions won't derail your plot. He might even earn a benny.

However, if the inventive player in the above situation said the rug is near the fire and the guards should fall in, you're quite within your right to overrule him. Give the players a little rope to play with, but don't let them try to hang you with it.

Style Conventions

The Savage World of Solomon Kane has several conventions you need to keep in mind when you're running a game.

Action and Drama

Despite being a horror game in part, *The Savage World of Solomon Kane* is also a game of action. Kane himself engages in numerous fights, some of which are over quickly, others last many minutes.

The Solomon Kane stories are also fast paced. Kane doesn't sit around for long before something happens to drive him forward. If the players are pondering over a course of action force them to act quickly by having a group of natives or some wild beast turn up on the scene. Don't give the players too long to think—force them to act.

The same rationale applies to scenes in which the heroes can't do anything heroic, like traveling from London to West Africa. Rather than have the players sit through a long description of how their ship moves inexorably closer to their destination, just do a cut-scene. A quick "Okay, you set sail and

a month later you spot the jungle-shrouded coast," will suffice unless you already have an encounter planned for the journey.

Even though the player characters are the heroes, not everything should go their way. Present them with an unexpected obstacle at least once every adventure. This could be something as trivial as finding his pistol has jammed beyond immediate repair, forcing the hero to ditch his ranged weapons and get up close and personal, or something more dangerous, like the sudden arrival of enemy reinforcements or an unexpected storm forcing the party to seek shelter somewhere dangerous.

Tough Opponents

New players may find that they need to Ace their Fighting rolls to hit an opponent. That's not unusual in *The Savage World of Solomon Kane,* especially against skilled combatants. Make sure the players have a copy of the Combat Options sheet (see page 96) and encourage them to make use of it.

Tricks are a great way of gaining a short term advantage over a foe, as is teamwork and ganging up on a superior enemy.

Players familiar with other rules systems might take a little while to get used to the idea that they cannot just whittle away a tough opponent's hit points. Encourage them to be more creative in their approach to combat.

Show, Don't Tell

So, the game has begun and the players are into the mood. Everything is going swell, until the characters enter a graveyard and you tell them, "You see a zombie shuffling toward you." In the time it takes to say that sentence you've destroyed the atmosphere.

Solomon Kane's stories are as much horror stories as anything else, and horror relies on atmosphere and a sense of the unknown. By breaking the latter, you've destroyed the former. This where the Show, Don't Tell part comes in.



For instance, which of these descriptions creates a better atmosphere? "You see a zombie moving toward you," or "As you look on, a figure emerges from the mist, its arms outstretched, clawing at the air in front of it as it moves closer in shuffling steps. Its flesh hangs in tatters from its bones, and the smell of the grave assaults your nostrils."

The former gives the players the bare facts in a rather clinical, perfunctory way. They also know exactly what they're facing and, having read the rules, they immediately start making Called Shots to the head.

The latter description gives the players exactly the same information, but rather than being told it's a zombie, they're shown it's a zombie. The creature has all the hallmarks of the walking dead, but they're revealed based on what the *characters* can see, smell, and hear, rather than what the *players* actually know.

Description

Read the Kane stories and you'll quickly see that Howard loved adjectives and evocative descriptions. You should try to emulate this when you describe scenes to your players.



For instance, a ghost ship isn't a "black ship." Instead, describe it as "a worm-eaten vessel sailing maddeningly from the fiery depths of Hell."

Locations should likewise be described in an exciting way. West Africa isn't just "covered by jungle." It's a land " swathed in black, silent jungle which broods beyond the light of your campfire." An old temple deep in the jungles of Mexico isn't a "ruin overgrown with vines." It's a "dark, ominous structure. Though vines cover much of its outer facing, the entrance gapes like a dark maw, as if it will devour anything that tries to enter."

The players, and therefore their characters, see the world through your descriptions, so make them vivid but without going into excruciating detail.

The same applies to attacks, especially in melee combat. Unlike some other roleplaying games (RPGs), *The Savage World of Solomon Kane* doesn't use hit points, so players may fall into a routine of simply seeing their attacks miss and therefore cause no damage. After a while, the "I attack but miss" routine starts to grow very stale.

Encourage them to describe their attacks in colorful ways, and do the same for parries. A hero doesn't simply miss an attack roll, his opponent parries his blade with a circular flick of his wrist, giving the hero a hard stare as their blades lock, or he nimbly steps to one side, sneering at the character's lack of finesse. A hero who attacks with Frenzy might "strike as fast as a viper, his blade a blur of cold steel."

The Sense of the Unknown

The sense of the unknown is your friend, so use it. Never reveal facts to your players unless you absolutely have to. Solomon Kane's journeys take him to the ends of the earth, at a time when these places were little explored and in which ignorance is king. The group should learn facts by exploration and investigation, not simply be told what is going on.

Imagine the group is exploring an old house. In one of the rooms they see a long curtain gently moving. One of the characters asks, "Can we see what's behind it?" Rather

than just saying, "No," which might be factual, add another layer to your answer by adding, "Would you like to pull it aside?" Now the player begins to wonder whether he should pull it aside or not. Maybe there's something nasty lurking there.

When a player says he'll open the door encrusted with mysterious slime, ask him which hand his character is using. It's not important to the game, but the player won't know that.

If you're describing a room or situation, focus on the unknown, rather than the known. Bring their attention to the cupboard with its door slightly ajar, the deep shadows of the forest, and the thick mist swirling through the graveyard at night. Let them create their own fears based on what they think may exist.

Introducing New Players

Getting your friends to try a new game can be pretty difficult, especially if they're used to one system and don't like to try many others. We recommend you create a few sample characters and run a very simple fight against a few evil minions.

This should give them a good idea of how the basic rules work, and show them just how fast, furious, and fun the game can be.

Once they're interested, find out what they know about Solomon Kane's universe. They might be ardent Kane fans ready to start right away, or they may give you a blank look. We all like different things.

In the latter case, let them flick through the character generation pages and read the player background material. While they're doing that, fill them in on the background, and the tone of the game (which is fast-action horror in case you haven't picked up on the clues). Remember, if you're excited about the game, you can pass the feeling on.

Be prepared to sit down with them and help them through character generation. We've designed it to be as easy as possible, but someone who has never played an RPG before might find some of the terminology strange.

Adjudicating Problems

Even with such a fast and fun system, there may come a time when a rules dispute arises. Maybe a player wants his hero to do something cool and feels you've set too high a penalty or insisted he use a Trait he feels is wrong, or perhaps there's a difference of opinion on the wording of something.

Stopping the game to argue about rules isn't fun for anyone. Tell the player politely that your decision stands for now, but you'll talk to him after the session. Once the game is over, sit with the player and talk through the problem. Chances are you can find a solution that keeps everyone happy. Once you've reached a decision, remember to note it down so that, if the situation comes up again, you can go right to the solution.

Missing Players

You've set up a cool adventure involving all the characters ready for tonight's session and then Joe calls to cancel. Maybe he has to work tonight, or his kid's sick. So what do you do? You have a few options, and your decision will depend on what suits your game best.

- Let someone else run the missing hero for the night in addition to their own hero. Running two characters can be tricky, so pick someone you know can handle the job. You roleplay the hero if the others need to talk to him, and you can always override decisions made by the other player if they go against the character's personality. In this way, the group doesn't lose the character's skills, and the hero gets his share of Experience Points.
- You could have the hero called away, thus removing him from play for the night. This works well at the start of a new adventure, but having him vanish part way through an epic trek across Africa will generate a lot of awkward questions from the other players (not to mention their characters).
- The hero could be captured by the enemy, again removing him from play, but there's the risk the player will have to sit out the next session if he hasn't been rescued by then.

Ending the Game

As we said earlier, you should set a time limit for your sessions. That doesn't mean that when the clock strikes 11PM you should put down the dice and abandon the game, of course. Instead you need to think about how to end the session.

Most times you should try to end the game in a "safe zone," somewhere the heroes aren't in any mortal peril. Safe zones primarily come in two forms, those just after an event, and those just before.

Safe zones after an event might follow the conclusion of a battle. The characters might be tired or wounded, but they're not in any immediate danger.

A safe zone before an event is a good place to end if you think carrying on will cause the session to seriously overrun. For instance, the characters are about to enter the dark and blood stained temple of Mictlantecuhtli. You know that exploring the temple will take at least an hour to play out. Rather than rush through it now, you could choose to end the session with the heroes gathered outside the temple.

Sometimes though, despite all your best efforts, the game has to end during a battle or other confrontation. Don't worry about it: it happens.

Take careful notes about the situation, especially if you're using miniatures. Map out where everyone is and what state of health your NPCs are. Next week, you can lay out the map before the players turn up ready to get back into the action.

Last Week

Once you've run your first session, you might find it helpful to provide a recap of events from the previous session before play begins. A lot can happen between sessions, and sometimes players forget exactly what took place. At the end of each session, jot down a few notes about major events and,



more importantly, where the session ended so you can provide a brief refresher at the start of the next session.

Experience

You should usually award two or three experience points to each character per game session. That means your players get to upgrade their characters every other game. (Rules for leveling characters are found on page 68.)

When you end longer adventures, story arcs that take four to six sessions or so, you might want to award three points, but any more should be reserved for really big events. Keeping your average award to two means your characters progress at a steadier rate, and won't be Legendary warriors after only a few months of play.

Starting With Experience

In general, player characters at the start of a *Savage World of Solomon Kane* campaign are rookies who are only a little better than the average population. They've got a little training and talent, but haven't had many adventures on their own yet.

You may occasionally decide to start your campaign with more experienced characters. That's encouraged if you want the players to emulate the heroic feats of Solomon Kane earlier on in their campaigns. An assault on the ancient vampire city of Negari or daring to challenge a swordsman of Le Loup's skill to a duel to the death are not adventures for the inexperienced.

We recommend starting experienced heroes as Seasoned, or very rarely, Veterans. It's important to the balancing process to make your players create their characters as Novices and then "bump" them up through their four progressions per rank. This keeps a more realistic progression of attributes and skills, and ensures they can't take more advanced Edges than they would otherwise be entitled to.

It is also easier to do it this way from a player's perspective. It's a little tricky to add up all the "points" one would have at Seasoned rank. Bump up a character from a Novice however and the advancement system is a very simple.

Bennies

Experience is very limited—we encourage you to give out two points just about every game session. Bennies, on the other hand, are much more flexible, and allow you to reward creative players on the spot for their actions.

You should hand out a benny anytime a player does something particularly clever, finds a very important clue, or generally advances the plot. You should also hand out bennies for great roleplaying. If a Loyal hero jeopardizes his life to save his comrade, for instance, he definitely deserves a benny for his efforts. It never hurts to reward a player for a great line, side-splitting in-game joke, or even a rare serious and dramatic moment.

In general, reward players with bennies for the kind of play you like to see in your games. Average players should get one or two extra bennies per night. Really good roleplayers may wind up with two to three.

Nonplayer Characters

This section takes a look at how you can use nonplayer characters (NPCs) in your game, both as the heroes' allies and enemies.

Allies

The *Savage World of Solomon Kane* is unique in lots of ways. Perhaps the most unusual is that allied NPCs, whether they are hirelings, soldiers, or inspired followers, fall under the control of the players.

Though it's rarely written, most games assume that the GM controls the NPCs, both when they're being talked to and when they fight alongside the heroes. Most of the time, this means the overworked GM often simply forgets about the additional characters during a fight, or shoves them to the side and just describes what happens to them. This goes for hirelings, sidekicks, and love interests too. The simple fact is that in most games, allies are a cumbersome complication.

As great as this works in the game, it can take a little getting used to. If you've been Game Mastering other games for a long time and have a hard time letting go of the NPCs, we suggest you try it for a bit.

The GM acts out these allies when they're spoken to, of course, but he should very rarely, if ever, take them over in combat.

Here are some of the advantages to letting your heroes control allied NPCs.

First, the players themselves will come to care about their troops. Those extra hands in a fight can really come in handy. Players quickly come to realize allies can be just as precious as new abilities and solid gold loot. Having a couple of extra spear carriers when clearing out a small nest of akaanas is nice. Using them to help storm a Portuguese slaver fort is a downright necessity. You'll see your group commit extraordinary acts of courage and heroism just to save a hireling they would ordinarily have forgotten about.

Second, allies allow tactical-minded players to do more than just swing a sword or pull a trigger. Some of the most effective heroes in *The Savage World of Solomon Kane* are those who have a number of Leadership Edges and valorous followers to use them on.

Third, allies can be important to a lot of stories, but you, the GM, have your hands full handling the game, rules questions, and your own bad guys. If you have to control a bunch of hirelings, you're in for a lot of dice rolling that your players could be doing for you.

Finally, if you allow your heroes to have allies, you can include all the minions your villains should have as well. Picture an Aztec priest cornered in his temple. Would he be sitting there alone? No, he'd be surrounded by scores of fanatical followers.

These lesser minions can also make great complications for your battles, and players will have fun bashing through them with the NPCs while their heroes battle the leader and his more capable lieutenants.

Artificial Inflation

When running games, a lot of GMs become extremely enamored with the ally aspect of the game. That's great and it's what we intend, but it also sometimes leads to very large parties of heroes and NPCs, which then demand very large parties of opponents.

It's okay if you do this—the system can handle it—but be warned that a combat with 50+ combatants will take a bit—even with such a fast, furious, and fun system as this.

To avoid this kind of "inflation," remember to pay attention to the size of your party and its nonplayer characters, and then remember that you'll likely need as many foes (if of equivalent power) to present a real challenge to the party.

Important Victims

At some point during your adventures, somebody important to the heroes will inevitably get kidnapped. It might be a loyal retainer, the young daughter of an eminent nobleman, or even a complete stranger. Kane goes to the ends of the world, for example, to track down Marilyn Taferal.

Naturally, if there's been a kidnapping, the heroes are involved in the rescue attempt. Where there are heroes, there's usually a large amount of violence as well.

Abusing Allies

We know what you're thinking. "My players are going to run their allies right at the enemy while they hide."

You're afraid they will just abuse the defenseless NPCs and say, "The book says I control them!"

True. But the book also says the GM is the boss. You're the final adjudicator of the game. Just because the players control the allies doesn't mean your NPCs throw themselves on swords or over cliffs. Remember, the characters, not the hired help, are the heroes of the tales you tell.

Take control when you need to or when you've got your own plans, but for the most part, let your party handle the hired help. Try it. You'll see. Once the characters have expended their helpers once and then have to face an entire tribe of akaanas alone, they'll be less willing to treat their allies as sword-fodder in the future.

In order to ensure the person they are trying to rescue isn't accidentally mown down in a hail of lead, you should give any kidnap victim central to the plot Wild Card status. They don't have to be any use in combat, and indeed it's better if they're the helpless sort who need rescuing, but the wound levels given by Wild Card status give you a safety net. Alternatively, you can simply ignore the Innocent Bystander rule, which means they won't get hurt unless someone deliberately targets them.

Villainous Thugs

Of course, allies aren't the only characters your heroes will meet during an adventure.

Henchmen

Henchmen are a step above your standard Extra, but a step below Wild Cards. They're handy for giving the characters a tougher opponent, but without all the perks of a Wild Card. To promote a character to Henchman, simply give a standard Extra a Wild Die.

Fanatics

Here's a very simple trick to prevent the untimely death of villains. You can use this simply to extend a fight (so they get to use their powers) or to allow them a chance to get away (and return later seeking revenge).

Any Extra within 1" of a villain becomes fanatical, sacrificing his life so his master can live. Any attack made against the villain is instead made against one of the Extras, as he leaps in the way of the sword, fist, or pistol with his master's name on it.

Reactions

These rules are covered here in the GM's chapter because they only apply to NPCs. Players' characters should never roll on this chart. How they want to approach someone or react to them is completely up to them and their personality. That's why it's called "roleplaying." Each player must make up his mind about how his hero reacts to the members of his party. (An NPC's Charisma is a good measure of their likeability though.)

For NPCs, you should decide their initial attitudes if you have a strong idea of what it should be. If the heroes are white men in Africa armed with "thunder sticks," the natives may think them gods, making them Friendly or even Helpful automatically.

For those times when you don't have a strong feeling or plan as to how some random character might react to your heroes, these rules come in handy.

Persuasion & Streetwise

Whenever a hero asks an NPC to do something, or tries to use the Persuasion or Streetwise skills, roll 2d6 on the table below and add the character's Charisma modifier to the roll. This is the NPC's initial attitude to that hero and gives you a good idea of what an NPC is willing to do for the character, how much it might cost, or what the hero might have to do in return.

If the hero says the right thing or offers a significant reward, he may increase his initial reaction a step (though usually only one step per encounter). The opposite is also true.

Reaction Table

2d6	Initial Reaction
2	**Hostile:** The NPC is openly hostile and does his best to stand in the hero's way. He won't help without a very substantial reward.
3–4	**Uncooperative:** The character isn't willing to help unless there's some significant advantage to himself.
5–9	**Neutral:** The character has no definite attitude, and will help if the task at hand is very easy. If the task is difficult, he'll require substantial payment of some kind.
10–11	**Friendly:** The NPC will go out of his way for the hero. He'll likely do easy tasks for free (or very little), and is willing to do more dangerous tasks for fair pay or other favors.
12	**Helpful:** The NPC is anxious to help the hero, and will probably do so for little or no pay depending on the nature of the task.



Creating Adventures

Across the dusky waters the whisper came: boom, boom, boom!—a sullen reiteration. Far away and more faintly sounded a whisper of different timbre: thrum, throom, thrum! Back and forth went the vibrations as the throbbing drums spoke to each other. What tales did they carry? What monstrous secrets whispered across the sullen, shadowy reaches of the unmapped jungle?

—Red Shadows

This chapter looks at how you go about designing an adventure, and introduces the *Path of Kane* Plot Point campaign.

If you're new to roleplaying games, or just need a helping hand to kick start your imagination, we've included a very handy Adventure Generator later in this chapter. It'll help you produce the bones of an adventure in just a few minutes, leaving you time to put on the flesh.

Bear in mind the style notes we included in the previous chapter when designing adventures. The golden rule of an exciting and successful Solomon Kane adventure is to keep the adventures fast-paced with plenty of action.

What is an Adventure?

Think of adventures as a movie—they're a collection of scenes or encounters, linked together to form a single story. Unlike with many other roleplaying games, Howard's stories focus purely on the main events, rather than the boring journeys or random encounters to get from scene A to scene B.

Adventures should always have a definite conclusion, a closing scene that draws the curtain on that particular tale. However, adventures in *The Savage World of Solomon Kane* don't have to be stand-alone events, with no relationship to what has gone before or what will come next. Adventures can exist within a greater framework, which is known as a campaign.

So what's a campaign? It's a longer story told out over a number of adventures. In the story *Red Shadows*, Kane tracks down Le Loup, following lead to lead over several years. Although Howard skips over the details, such an adventure is perfect for turning into a campaign of linked adventures spanning the globe as the heroes pursue their evil quarry from place to place.

Adventure Types

Once you're ready to start designing adventures, you need to decide whether your adventures will be scripted, situational, or some mix of the two.

Scripted Adventures

Scripted adventures resemble interactive stories. The players can make choices along the way, but the overall plot advances more or less intact regardless of what they do. Epic stories must sometimes follow this path—it's hard to tell a story if you don't know what chapters are to come. This allows you, the GM, to tell incredible stories, but also requires more work as you have to plot out each step in the saga.

When running a scripted adventure, try not to make your scenarios *feel* scripted. The group should never feel like they're just observers, going along for the ride no matter

what they do. Instead, use the situation, overwhelming opponents, or "down times" to make the group feel like they control the story more than they really do.

Situational Adventures

Situational adventures are much easier to run if you're able to think on your feet as you won't have quite as much preparation. In these epic tales, you present a situation of some sort and then just let the heroes deal with it however they choose. Say the heroes learn of a spate of strange disappearances in Torkertown. What do the heroes do about it? Do they start scouring the landscape for clues? Do they start questioning witnesses? Or maybe they spot a pattern and lurk around the area, waiting for the killer to return.

Because these adventures give players' characters greater freedom to roam, you'll need to outline most of the people, places, and things near the adventure area. You may also want a few staged encounters to toss in as needed in case the players stall.

The Plot

Every adventure is a story, and thus it needs a plot. Ideally, a plot should be just a line or two of text, summarizing the main focus of the story. For longer adventures, try to break the plot down into two or more parts, each with its own summary.

Here's a sample plot, "Several people have disappeared from a remote village in the Black Forest. The culprit is in fact a rabid wolf with curious cunning. The players must slay the beast to stop the murders." Epic stories can often come from such simple beginnings.

The Villain

Every story needs a villain, someone who pits their will against the heroes. It might be a pirate chief, Barbary slavers, savage cannibals, a depraved nobleman, a ghost, or perhaps even a major character, like Le Loup.

Ideally, the villain shouldn't appear directly until the climax of the adventure. Having them captured or killed part way through tends to dampen the fuse you lit when you started the adventure. There is more information on creating villains later in the chapter.

Remember as well that villains don't have to die at the end of the adventure. Having a major villain return in some future adventure, especially when the heroes believe them to be dead, can work very effectively. Of course, if you do this with every villain, the players will get frustrated and openly voice opinions on what miraculous way the villain will escape this week. Save recurring villains for ones the players have come to hate. When they finally get to administer final justice, they will appreciate the moment all the more.

Location, Location, Location

Locations are as important as the plot. They add great flavor to your game and give the heroes a chance to use some of the skills they perhaps don't get to use every week (for example, Tracking isn't much use in London, but in Africa it can be vital).

Solomon Kane journeyed around the world in pursuit of his righteous aims. You should see to it that your heroes likewise have the opportunity to visit far off lands and exotic locales. Kane's was a time of exploration and discovery and many of the places the heroes will visit will be unknown to them, perhaps to any but those who live there. Be sure to vary your locations and show your heroes new and amazing sights.

Locations can also be used to add extra excitement to the adventure. A battle in a cave where gun fire might trigger a landslide, or cause a volley of stalactites to fall from the ceiling, can be exciting, and presents heroes with a tactical challenge.

As mentioned earlier, you should also be prepared to let the players add some details to the location, so long as it suits your story. If fighting against a group of akaanas in an African village, for instance, a hero may want to throw handfuls of straw onto a camp fire to generate smoke and mask an attack. You may not have thought about these features when you were designing the adventure, but they fit the location and let the heroes do something dramatic rather than just blasting away with their pistols, so let it happen.

Adventure Structure

Ideally, most of your adventures should be constructed around 3–4 scenes. This should give you enough material to last for a typical session, and bring the adventure to a suitable close at the end of play.

Of course, there's nothing stopping you from designing longer adventures. You just have to add more scenes and add a suitable break. Think of them as TV shows where it ends with a "To be continued..." across the screen.

Ideally, every scene should have some sort of conflict, whether that be a chase, NPC interaction, or a good old fashioned fight.

The Hook

A "hook" is the method used to get the heroes involved in your adventure. It's the proverbial carrot attached to the stick.

Hooks can be as simple as a patron giving the characters orders ("We want you to find the man who killed our son"), related through rumor ("The natives speak of the City of the Dead in hushed whispers"), or actually involve the heroes (they witness a kidnapping or the direct aftermath of some fearsome beast's attack).

Much of the hook is provided for you in this book, for each player character has crossed paths with Kane and feels inexorably pulled toward adventure. In truth, N'Longa is contacting them in their dreams and visions through the magic of Kane's ancient staff. This ancient device has many uses, one of which allows N'Longa to sense when a person of note—a hero or other character with some part to play in the great scheme of life—crosses its path.

In Media Res

That's Latin for "starting in the middle of things." Basically, it means that you begin the adventure straight into the action, with just a little prelude description. The heroes





might be engaged in a battle against hungry cannibals, or blasting their way clear from an Inquisition captor with prisoners in tow.

This method is very useful for getting the players straight into character, and it grabs their attention from the start. Maybe in our example plot, the first scene starts with the heroes battling bandits in the Black Forest who have just waylaid a lone farmer. The adventure starts *in media res* with the battle itself.

Once the scene is over, the farmer tells the heroes he is going to the nearest town to inform the authorities that people have been vanishing from his village. He's the hook for getting the heroes involved in the rest of the adventure.

The Middle

Exactly what happens in the middle of the story depends on your plot. Ideally, there should be one or two scenes (or more, for a longer, more complex story) that push the story forward in a logical fashion.

Let's assume in our example story the first scene, the hook, has the characters discovering that people are vanishing from their beds.

Our next scene could have the characters investigating the village, perhaps talking to the burgomaster (mayor) or other prominent citizens. Here they learn a little more about the backstory of the plot and get a feel for what is happening.

For our next scene, we decide to introduce the mystery first hand to the players. As they rest in the village tavern, the heroes see vaporous tendrils of eerie, glowing fog drift past the windows, followed moments later by a bloodcurdling scream.

Rushing out, the heroes find tracks which begin as those of a man but end as those of a pig. Rushing into the forest the heroes spy a lone pig. When they catch it they discover it has human eyes! The heroes also see the glowing fog retreating toward a ruined tower on the dark, brooding hills, whose silhouette cuts the moonlit horizon like a blade of pure darkness.

The Climax

The climax is the final scene of the story, where all the pieces come together. Your adventures should end on a bang, not a whimper. The heroes should see their victory as a struggle against terrible odds, not a walk in the park.

Since the climax is the finale of the story, it should also feature the main villain of the piece (although he may escape to haunt the heroes another day).

In our sample adventure, the finale takes place in the basement of the ruined tower the heroes discovered. Following the fog, the characters learn the tower is inhabited by a trio of hags. The fog flows from their great cauldron, and scattered around it are a variety of animal bones. It seems the trio of unholy sisters are turning the villagers into animals… then eating them!

Encounter Difficulties

As you take a look through the bestiary chapter at the back of the book, you might be wondering about what level of heroes the entries are designed for. Are they intended for four characters of Novice Rank? Seasoned? A single Legendary character?

The answer is none of the above. The encounters are created to reflect the natural organization of the characters or creatures listed. This means your group had best be warned that *The Savage World of Solomon Kane* isn't like some games that automatically set the challenge level to something the party is able to deal with.

Sometimes a villain needs to be avoided, or clever tactics or additional allies are needed to defeat him.

We do this both because it's more natural, it's more of a challenge, and any system we created would have a difficult time fitting the varied natures of your heroes' parties. If the characters recruit 40 native warriors, for instance, it doesn't make a lot of sense that every group of cannibals or akaanas suddenly grows an equivalent amount, just to provide a challenge. That means that just as in real life, exploring the world with a larger party is much safer—and of course much more costly as these warriors must be fed, outfitted, and paid from the heroes' pockets.

Of course it also means the characters have to lead the extras and ensure they receive medical attention when wounded. They must also contend with the many mutineers and other troublemakers who are likely to infiltrate their band. There are bad apples in every bunch, as the old saying goes.

All that said, the Game Master *should* tweak encounters to fit the nature of his party. If they truly are walking around in a group so large nothing is a threat, feel free to up the difficulty of encounters that make sense—such as flocks of akaanas or a city of vampires—or introduce new ones, like a rival army angry at being "invaded." In most inhabited parts of the world, a large group of armed individuals is going to attract the wrong kind of attention, so heroes traveling with a virtual army should find they invite as many troubles as their followers solve.

You'll have a good idea what your party can handle after a few sessions without the need for some sort of formula. And don't worry if the heroes lose a few extras along the way. Even famous heroes rarely make it to the finale of their adventure with all their loyal men.

Ignorance & Superstition

The world Kane journeys through is that of our own, but it is not the modern world of logic, science, and reasoned arguments. Kane's world is a dark, mysterious place, full of superstition and ignorance.

Many scientific marvels we take for granted today, such as the telescope, are largely unknown to Kane. In rural communities, the ability to magnify images may be viewed as witchcraft. Gunpowder may be known in Cathay and the West, but to savages it is a substance carried and used by gods.

Although your adventures don't have to be historically accurate to be enjoyable, a brief read through the chapter on the Savage World of Solomon Kane will be helpful in getting the right tone. A good encyclopedia can also yield helpful ideas that you can use in your adventures.



Nonplayer Characters

The backbone of any good game is the world that surrounds the players' heroes, and nonplayer characters are a big part of that. This section shows you how to breathe life into the supporting cast of your *The Savage World of Solomon Kane* stories.

Creating NPCs

Consider this Game Master's Rule #1 when it comes to NPCs: Don't "design" them!

Don't create your NPCs with the character creation rules. Just give them what you think they ought to have in their various skills and attributes, give them suitable Edges (you don't have to meet the requirements either, if you don't want) and move on. Remember this game is supposed to be easy for you to set up, run, and play. Don't sit around adding up skill points for NPCs when you could be designing fiendish traps and thinking up nasty special abilities for your monsters!

A careful look through the rules notes that you never need to know an NPC's rank—it's purely a mechanic for balancing the players' heroes so that no single individual dominates the game.

There are plenty of sample villains at the back of this book ready for you to use straight away. You can also use them as guides to help you create your own extras.

Personality

Far more important than most nonplayer character's statistics are their personalities. Jot down a note or two about any NPCs the party is likely to come across so you'll have some idea how to run them.

Some GMs find it useful to identify the prominent NPCs in their stories with actors or characters from film, television, books, or comics. Knowing that the Captain of the Duke's bodyguard is "played by Sam Elliott," for instance, gives you a good handle on how to handle interactions with him. He's likely to be gruff, to the point, and have a deep, throaty voice.

Adding these extra touches to nonplayer characters can really make them stand out and be remembered by your players as well. That way the Captain becomes a memorable character they may call on in the future rather than just a one-shot resource they forget about by the next scene. Not every NPC needs this kind of depth of course, but those that do add a level of realism and continuity to your game.

Making Villains

Villains more than monsters lie at the heart of a good Solomon Kane adventure. The game may have some have fierce monsters, but at the core, the game is about people and their good and evil natures.

For that reason, remember that *The Savage World of Solomon Kane* doesn't have "gray" NPCs. They're either a hero or a villain. What we're going to look at here is how to make a memorable villain of your own devising.

Motivation

Motivation is important to a *Savage World of Solomon Kane* villain. After all, this is what makes them a villain and not just a bad person. Villains usually have a strong motive tied carefully to the adventure plot.

Roger Simeon the necromancer, for example, despite not really appearing in *The Right Hand of Doom,* created the adventure through his dark desire for revenge on his betrayer. He wasn't just a vile necromancer killing for the fun of it. Nakari, vampire-queen of Negari, is a villain because she seeks total power at any cost. Le Loup is a cold-blooded murderer whose greed knows no bounds (he even resorts to killing his men to avoid sharing the spoils).

Appearance

Villains, including monsters, should have fitting descriptions. Again, making heavy use of adjectives is highly recommended.

Nakari isn't just attractive, she's "a young woman of tigerish comeliness." This vivid description is not only physical, but also helps describe her mindset, in this case that of a dangerous predator.

Le Loup has "hard, almost opaque eyes with a scintillating shallowness that reflected a thousand changing lights and gleams." These are without doubt the eyes of a killer; eyes whose "shallowness" reflect his dark soul. The Africans Le Loup eventually "befriends" called him Eyes-Like-Leopard, referring to the hunter's soulless gleam.

The same also applies to allied NPCs. N'Longa, one of Kane's closest allies, is "lean, withered, and wrinkled," which describes his supernatural age. He also has "eyes like a snake," making them cold, almost alien in appearance. Thus, while he may look frail, his eyes betray something mysterious within him (in this case his powerful ju-ju).

Adventure Generator

The heart of any good roleplaying story is the tale of the player characters who adventure through it.

This Adventure Generator helps you, the Game Master, create interesting things for your party to do "on the fly." At the beginning of a session, for example, your players may not yet have decided what they want to do.

If they surprise you by heading to Mexico when you thought they would go to Japan, you can use the Adventure Generator to help you quickly create challenging situations, deadly opponents, and strange obstacles.

Remember, though, that this system doesn't produce a ready to run story. It produces the bare bones, onto which you must attach the flesh. We'll give you an example later to help you out. You should also look through the following chapters (starting on page 145) for inspiration, as well as example adventures.

To create a story, simply work through the tables in order. You can roll randomly and take the results, pick the entries you like, or a mixture of both. Maybe just reading the tables will give you an idea for a cool adventure.

An adventure need only have a single major villain, but additional locations, henchmen, allies, and twists can be created for each of the individual episodes.

Sometimes the results might not seem to make sense immediately. If you've got the time, think about how you can make them fit together. If you can't find a way, just reroll the result.

1. Villain

The villain is the main nemesis of the heroes. He is the spider at the centre of the web and usually only encountered at the climax of the adventure. The villain should be a fully developed Wild Card, at least equal in power to individual heroes, if not the whole party.

Note that a villain does not have to be human. Gideon's ghost in *Skulls in the Stars* counts as a villain as much as evil Ezra, as do the akaanas in *Wings in the Night*.

d6	Result
1	Avenger
2	Corrupter
3	Destroyer
4	Warlord
5	Wizard
6	Zealot

Avenger: Seeks revenge for a perceived wrongdoing either against them personally or something they believe in. Roger Simeon was an avenger.

Corrupter: This villain works through subversion rather than brute force. Nakari of Negari was a corrupter.

Destroyer: Destroyers are seeking to bring something (or someone) to a permanent end. The king of the akaanas (referenced but never encountered) was a destroyer.

Warlord: A warlord is a militaristic villain, seeking to conquer by force. He usually has an army supporting him. King Asshur has a large army, and thus falls under the label of warlord.

Wizard: The villain is a vile necromancer, evil witch, wicked priest, or some other type of sorcerer. Agara of Basti was a wizard.

Zealot: Whatever this villain's cause (it could be political, military, or religious for instance), the zealot has a total belief in it. Jeremy Hawk, who sought to become king of Basti, was a zealot.

2. Goal

The villain's goal represents his primary motivation. His Hindrances should be chosen based on his nature (as determined on the previous table) and his goal.

A villain may have more than one goal, but there should always be a primary goal, which the other goals assist. Think of the others as sub-plots.

d6	Result
1	Destroy/Conquer
2	Discovery
3	Greed
4	Kidnap/Steal
5	Power
6	Revenge

Destroy/Conquer: A villain may be out to destroy someone or something. Alternately, he may seek conquest rather than outright destruction. An Aztec priest who wants to overthrow his king, who has converted to Catholicism, and reestablish worship of the old gods can be a conqueror.

Discovery: The villain seeks to discover something of value. This may be a ritual for immortality, the secret path to El Dorado, or even the man who killed his wife and who drove him to commit dark deeds.

Greed: There's more to greed than money, though the former is a powerful motive for evil deeds. Seeking political favors, rare minerals, or knowledge can just as easily lead to villainous activities. Even a warlord has to fund his conquests.

Kidnap/Steal: The villain seeks to kidnap someone or something. This may be a friend of a hero, or a victim to use for some dastardly purpose. A villain may also be after an item, such as a gold idol or a powerful artifact.

Power: Gaining a political position or acquiring sensitive information can bring a villain power as easily as discovering a secret or conquering a land.

Revenge: Revenge takes many forms, from simple humiliation to murder. It usually involves methods similar to one of the other goals, but is aimed at a specific target for a personal reason.

3. Hook

The Hook determines how the heroes get involved in the adventure.

d6	Result
1	Caught up in Events
2	Innocent Beginning
3	Motivation
4	Old Friend/Enemy
5	Patron
6	Rumor

Caught up in Events: Through no fault of their own, the heroes find themselves thrust into the action. Starting this way may leave the heroes confused as to what is happening, thus encouraging them to investigate. *Skulls in the Stars* begins this way when Kane is set upon by a ghost outside Torkertown.

Innocent Beginning: The story starts innocently enough, but quickly leads onto something more sinister. *Rattle of Bones* begins in this manner, with Kane merely seeking shelter for the night at an inn. These are hard to manage, as players are always on the lookout for adventures, so having some more obvious clue apparent as a red herring can help disguise an Innocent Beginning.

Motivation: Heroes have Hindrances and sometimes those Hindrances drag them into adventures. *Red Shadows* begins this way, when Kane comes across a dying girl and vows to track down her killers (the Heroic and Vengeful Hindrances at work).

Old Friend/Enemy: An old acquaintance seeks out the heroes, for good or ill. In *Hawk of Basti*, Kane encounters Jeremy Hawk, a former ally who turns out to be a villain.

Patron: Someone approaches the heroes with a job offer (maybe the villain!). In *The Moon of Skulls*, Kane visits the vampire city looking for Marilyn Taferal, whose trail he had followed after learning she was alive from her evil uncle, Sir John Taferal.

Rumor: With no rapid communication system to broadcast news of events, rumors circulate like wildfires. A rumor can come in the form of an overheard conversation or a piece of evidence. The story *Wings in the Night* begins this way.

4. Locales

Exciting locales make interesting battlegrounds and scenic backdrops. Roll once or twice per episode. In a series, try to set each episode on a different fragment, allowing you to introduce a variety of locales.

2d6	Result
2	Villain's Lair
3–5	Ruin/Lost City/Temple
6–7	Settlement
8–9	Exotic Land
10–11	Wilderness
12	Castle/Mansion

Castle/Mansion: Part of the adventure takes place in a castle or mansion. Decide whether it is an abandoned ruin or still inhabited.

Exotic Land: An exotic land is one foreign to the majority of heroes, such as darkest Africa, mysterious Cathay, or sand-swept Arabia.

Ruin/Lost City/Temple: Ruins may be war ravaged towns, forgotten temples of a bygone age, derelict forts, or areas forcibly vacated of inhabitants by the European powers.

Settlement: The adventure takes place somewhere there are lots of innocents.

Wilderness: An adventure set outside a settlement or ruin of some kind is considered to be in the wilderness.

Villain's Lair: Much of the adventure takes place in the villain's home. Roll again to see where the base is located.

5. Villainous Henchmen

Villains sometimes operate with henchmen, though not always. Roll once per adventure. Henchmen should generally be encountered in the early scenes—save the major villain for the climax.

Individual henchmen may be Extras or else low level Wild Cards at the Game Master's discretion.





2d6	Result
2–4	Combat Veteran
5	Right Hand Man
6–8	Thugs
9–10	Beast
10–12	Wizard

Beast: The villain has one or more beasts at his disposal. These may be mundane, like lions, or unnatural, such as akaanas or bestial werewolves.

Combat Veteran: Combat veterans are masters of warfare and should be able to take down any individual hero in a fair fight. They may not be capable in other areas, but they are deadly duelists.

Right Hand Man: The villain's most trusted lackey is usually a jack-of-all-trades. He can fight, talk, and ride his way out of trouble. He is also fanatically loyal to his master.

Thugs: Savage tribesmen, Barbary pirates, or English musketry are examples of thugs. Whoever they are, thugs are low grade lackeys.

Wizard: The villain has a sorcerer of some description aiding him.

6. Twists and Turns

Adventures rarely run as smoothly as the heroes would like. Ideally, there should be one or two twists and turns per episode. To increase the length of an adventure, make extra rolls.

2d6	Result
2	Double-Crossed
3	Unexpected Foe
4	Trap/Ambush
5	Rescue Ally
6–8	Creature
9	Natural Hazard
10	Unexpected Ally
11	Shock Revelation
12	Discovery

Creature: Some sort of creature makes a sudden appearance in the adventure at any unexpected time. Check out the bestiary starting on page 300.

Discovery: Many secrets lie buried across the world and not all bring material reward. Maybe the heroes find a document revealing the villain's plan or discover an inscription that leads to another adventure. For those heroes with mundane goals, maybe a cache of valuable resources is uncovered.

Double-Crossed: At some point, a key figure in the adventure switches side. This works both for and against the heroes, depending on who it is performing the double-cross.

Natural Hazard: At some point in the adventure, the characters are hampered by the forces of nature. There is a list of several different hazards starting on page 303. Pick one that fits the character's current location and climate.

Rescue Ally: At some point during the adventure, an ally of the heroes ends up in the villain's clutches. Kidnapping the ally may be a distraction to cover the villain's actions elsewhere, or it may advance the villain's main goal directly.

Shock Revelation: Something important is revealed during the adventure. Such Shock Revelations do not have to be bad—though they often are! Perhaps an Extra declares his undying love for a hero or maybe the group

discovers a clue that suggests an old and trusted friend is secretly in league with the forces of darkness.

Trap/Ambush: Traps range from simple pits to complex traps involving moving walls. You can either create your own, or check out page 281 for an idea.

Unexpected Ally: Maybe the natives rise up against the villain and join the heroes, or perhaps the old man they met earlier in the adventure turns out to be a retired duelist who just can't sit back and watch the villain get away with his foul plot. Either way, someone or something comes to the heroes' aid at a crucial moment.

Unexpected Foe: Maybe the villain turns out in fact to be someone the heroes weren't expecting ("It's my sister!"), extra henchmen join a desperate battle at a crucial time, or some innocent looking animal turns out to be a vicious killing machine.

Example Adventure

Let's take a look at using the tables to create the bones of an adventure. After rolling the dice we end up with Zealot (Villain), Power (Goal), Innocent Beginning (Hook), Temple and Settlement (Locales), Beast (Villainous Henchmen), and Rescue Ally and Natural Hazard (Twists and Turns).

Our heroes are on their way to the New World, specifically Mexico, so we'll set the adventure there.

First we need a villain, as he is the linchpin on which the adventure rotates. Our villain is a Zealot, which means he's fanatical about something. Since the Aztecs in this age are renowned for their bloody sacrifices and dark gods, we'll make him an Aztec priest.

We know the priest covets Power, so now we need to determine what sort of power he wants. He's likely already powerful in spiritual matters, but what if he wants even more power? The Aztecs sacrificed children to ensure the rains fell, so what if there's been a drought and the priest thinks he can end it by sacrificing lots of children? Such an act would greatly swell his personal power among the people, and they may even allow him to overthrow the king to install himself on the throne.

We'll quickly nip ahead to Rescue Ally, which we think should be set up early for this tale. On the voyage over, the heroes get talking to a young Spaniard, who has come to Mexico to search for his missing father. The youth has much bravado, but it's clear he's not cut out for adventuring.

Our adventure starts with an Innocent Beginning. We might decide the heroes encounter a village of Aztec natives living in an area of parched grasslands. The natives are wary of the heroes, but nonetheless offer them hospitality. The heroes notice there are very few children, and the villagers explain that their offspring have been sacrificed to the gods by the priest to ensure the rains come.

Naturally appalled by this apparent cruelty, the heroes arm themselves and prepare to confront the bloodthirsty maniac, but are warned that other men tried to resist the priest's power and were slain by a creature known only as the "night beast."

On the journey to the temple, the heroes are attacked by the "night beast," which is actually a werejaguar in the service of the priest. Following the defeat of the creature, it reverts to human form, further emphasizing the priest's evil powers.

At the temple the characters must battle several more werejaguars before they locate the priest. Surrounded by a score of warriors (we elected to add some extra henchmen) in the center of the temple, the priest stands in a chamber littered with the skeletons of children. He is moments away from making a great sacrifice—the young Spaniard who accompanied the heroes to Mexico. The priest hopes the sacrifice of a white child will please the gods and complete his accession to the throne.

The heroes defeat the priest and rescue the Spaniard. As the priest dies, the gods show their anger by causing an earthquake (Natural Event), which shakes the temple to its foundations. The characters must flee the collapsing temple before the entrance is sealed for all eternity.





The Path of Kane

The Plot Point campaign for *The Savage World of Solomon Kane* revolves around Robert E. Howard's own love of his friend H.P. Lovecraft's *Cthulhu* mythos. In the tale *The Footfalls Within*, he hints that certain creatures of great darkness have been imprisoned around the world, and that Kane's staff—once held by King Solomon himself—is one of the few relics capable of defeating them.

In *The Path of Kane* we expand this story to reveal that these terrors—imprisoned long ago by ancient sorcerers—have begun to stir after many thousands of years. Worse still, their presence is corrupting humans, leading to acts of unspeakable evil against their fellow man. Solomon's friend N'Longa is aware of this and helps Kane to deal with some of these threats. But the Puritan cannot tackle this task alone. N'Longa uses the power of the staff to contact others who have crossed Kane's path (and who have come in contact with the powerful cat-headed staff), and tasks them with saving the world from the ravages of these ancient beings.

All the adventures you need to run *The Path of Kane* are in Chapters 9 through 12, and come in two sorts. The first are marked with this symbol ⚜. These adventures are Plot Points, and form the grand backstory that ties the campaign together and gives your heroes a reason to stay as a group.

The second type of adventures are called "Savage Tales." These are stories of varying depth that can be run when your heroes enter certain locations. They can be used within the Plot Point arc (see the sidebar on page 141), or run as standalone tales, and are marked with the symbol 🕮.

Refusing the Path

It may be that the heroes are unwilling to start on *The Path of Kane*, or maybe you want to introduce them to it gradually. That's fine, and you have all the tools you need to run your own exciting tales. However, at some point you may wish to use *The Path of Kane* Plot Points. At that stage, the heroes receive the vision which, as discussed in the Making Characters section, leads them to the little town of Torkertown in Devon and the start of the Plot Point campaign.

A character who refuses N'Longa's call begins to suffer sporadic nightmares and haunted dreams, seeing in his mind's eye crumbling ruined cities of incalculable age, catching glimpses of unspeakable horrors in the darkness, and hearing unfathomable voices, which speak to him in tongues so ancient even Time has forgotten them. And all the while, N'Longa calls him to the wind-swept coast of Devon.

Those who continue to refuse the call find their troubled dreams affecting them in the real world. A character who becomes Fatigued or Exhausted finds it takes twice as long as normal to recover. Should this still not be enough motivation, the heroes, after around four adventures, find themselves dogged by bad luck.

Whenever a reluctant character rolls a 1 on a trait die (regardless of his Wild Die) he cannot spend a benny to reroll the failure.

A Winding Path

Experienced roleplayers who have played in a published campaign may have found a lot of them rather linear. You visit Locale A and find a clue to B, which leads to C, and so on. That is just the way of most campaigns, which are by their very nature limited by space requirements and a desire for the players not to get stuck for clues or become sidetracked.

The Path of Kane uses a different approach. One of the keywords used to describe the Kane stories could be "wandering." Kane has no set plan, but merely wanders the world, encountering evil along his route and dealing with it in his own style. We want to capture that feel that evil lurks everywhere and has no set pattern.

As such, once the Plot Point campaign begins, the heroes are free to travel the world as they see fit in search of the artifacts N'Longa needs them to find. These powerful artifacts have been scattered by the ages, and even N'Longa, the greatest magician alive, cannot clearly see their exact locations.

No matter which known continent they visit, the heroes will find at least one artifact in their path, and thus they are free to pick their own direction from the start. Some groups may want to head to the open territories of North America, others might wish to see the mysteries of Cathay, or plumb the dark depths of Eastern Europe's forests. Whatever route they go, a Plot Point is already in place to help the GM.

Campaign Strings

In order to locate the first five artifacts, the heroes must follow every whisper about evil sites. After all, they do not know which sites contain the items. The GM has the choice of when the heroes hear about a locale containing one of the artifacts, but before they reach it, they should hear talk about other evil places, forcing them to follow in Kane's footsteps (sometimes quite literally) and investigate every dark rumor they come across in their travels.

Five Lengths of String

Now we've talked about strings, let's take a look at how they might look if you wanted to use every adventure. We've put together five example strings, one for each of the artifacts the heroes need in order to locate the sixth. Plot Points are marked with the ⊕ symbol.

Europe

- ⊕ Red Vengeance ..... (p. 157)
- 🕮 The Dark Side of Love ..... (p. 172)
- 🕮 The Last Song ..... (p. 161)
- 🕮 The Hunger ..... (p. 175)
- 🕮 The Silence of Death ..... (p. 164)
- 🕮 Rats in the Woodwork ..... (p. 177)
- 🕮 Blood of Dracul ..... (p. 169)
- ⊕ The Maiden's Kiss..... (p. 181)

Africa

- 🕮 The Cult of Nakari ..... (p. 193)
- 🕮 Beneath the City of Vampires (p. 197)
- 🕮 King of the Demons ..... (p. 200)
- 🕮 The Red God ..... (p. 204)
- 🕮 The City of Ghosts..... (p. 207)
- 🕮 Claws of Basti ..... (p. 213)
- 🕮 The Lion of Ninn ..... (p. 217)
- ⊕ The Blood Eagle ..... (p. 223)

North America

- 🕮 The Thirst ..... (p. 246)
- 🕮 An English Dragon..... (p. 248)
- ⊕ The Croaton ..... (p. 254)

Central America

- 🕮 The Claws of Pantera..... (p. 261)
- 🕮 The Feathered God ..... (p. 258)
- ⊕ The Pyramid of Skulls..... (p. 265)

Cathay

- 🕮 The Knotted Scarf..... (p. 278)
- 🕮 The Imp of Heaven..... (p. 282)
- 🕮 The Immortal Army ..... (p. 286)
- ⊕ Hold of the Mummy Lord .. (p. 290)

Finale

Whatever order the other adventures are run in, these two form the finale and must be run only if the first five artifacts have been recovered.

- ⊕ A Road Ends..... (p. 230)
- ⊕ The Source of Evil ..... (p. 234)

Changing Monsters

Although the campaign string approach gives the GM and players a lot of control over the campaign, it does bring with it one obstacle. With no way of knowing when the heroes will visit certain locales, the numbers and strengths of monsters in the adventures may prove too easy a battle for your heroes, especially as they advance in Rank.

Check before you start an adventure how great a challenge you think the main enemy or enemies would pose and balance that against the heroes' abilities and how tough you think the adventure should be. If necessary, feel free to modify the stats as you see fit.

As a final piece of advice, remember that it's far better for your game to let the heroes succeed too easily for a few adventures than it is to have the players make new characters each week.

These intermediate sites are linked by "campaign strings." We give you the start of the string in the first Plot Point, and the ends of each string, in the form of the artifacts' locales. What we don't force on you is which other sites the strings wind through along their journeys. (There are example strings in the sidebar opposite, but you are free to ignore them and let your players pick their own route.) The GM must pick Savage Tales or design his own adventures along each campaign string, allowing the heroes to battle other evils before they reach their ultimate goal. In this way, the GM gets to use sites he likes, or thinks his players may enjoy. If the players weren't keen on Howard's story about Basti, then you can leave it out, but if the tale about Nakari of Negari amazed them, then they should definitely visit the ruins and investigate the new evil lurking there.

The one limitation is that each string should only contain tales for that continent. The string to the City of the Eagle, for example, should not include Pantera or the Croatan.

For instance, before the heroes learn of the City of Eagles, the site of one of the artifacts, they may climb the Eyrie of the Demon King and the Hills of the Dead, walk the streets of Basti, Ninn, or Negari, and maybe enjoy a couple of extra Savage Tales of your own devising. They may travel the entire continent in all directions, but only when you are ready should they encounter the City of Eagles.

By altering how many adventures are along each string, you can directly control the length of the campaign. If time is short (maybe you have three months to run the campaign), you could place just one adventure in their path before each artifact locale. If you plan to run the campaign for much longer, each string may have anywhere between 3 and 10 (or more) adventures.

You may also want to develop and explore side-plots created by your characters' backstories. Given the free-form nature of *The Path of Kane*, this should be relatively easy. Never feel rushed to push the players along the path. Let them wander as Kane did, at their own pace and with the ability to explore sidetracks and tangents that interest them.

If one of your heroes seeks his long-lost sister, for example, you might insert clues to her location along the route to Negari or any other adventure destination. The quest to recover the lost girl, or perhaps only sad clues as to her disappearance, may then be a single scene in the heroes' journey, or a longer sidetrack that takes several sessions to resolve.

The Campaign Map

However long your campaign strings are, the campaign must begin, include, and end at key sites for the Plot Point to make sense.

Beginning

- The first adventure in the campaign takes place in Torkertown. When your heroes are ready to begin the campaign, start with the adventure **Red Vengeance** (on page 157). Here they investigate a recent spate of murders only to find the murderer is a fiend from beyond the grave. N'Longa also contacts them to start them on their quest.

Middle

The first five artifacts the heroes seek are found in fixed locations. The name of the location and the accompanying Plot Point adventure are found below. These tales can be run in any order. Once the heroes hold the first five artifacts, proceed to the End.

- Dungeon (this story has no fixed locale, but should take place in Central or Eastern Europe), **The Maiden's Kiss** (p.181)

  Traveling through Eastern Europe, the heroes rescue an innocent maiden from a group of soldiers. They learn a noblewoman known as the Devil's Mistress is kidnapping young girls. Arriving at her castle, they discover the Devil's Mistress is draining the girls' blood, but she is no vampire—she does so for her abominable master.

- City of Eagles, **The Blood Eagle** (p.223)

  Talk of slavers leads the heroes into the barren wastes of the Sahara and the City of Eagles, a lost Roman city. After fighting for their lives in the arena against a monstrous creature, the heroes are brought before the power-mad and sadistic Emperor.

- Roanoke, **The Croaton** (p. 254)

  Word of vanished colonists and strange noises on the wind lures the heroes to the deserted streets of Roanoke. Hostile Indains attack, but when fought off they resort once more to summoning a terrible demon, the Croaton.

- City of the Dead, **The Pyramid of Skulls** (p. 265)

  The kidnapping of natives leads the characters to the feared City of Dead, where they are mistaken as gods. Forced into committing suicide or admitting they are mortals, the heroes must defeat the evil priest and destroy the city once and for all.

- Takla Makan, **Hold of the Mummy Lord** (p. 290)

  Merchant caravans passing the ruined city of Takla Makan have been destroyed, and the merchant community is terrified. Reaching the high plateau on which the city stands, the characters are confronted by a grisly inhabitant from the past—an immortal mummy lord and his terrifying undead servants.

End

The last two Plot Point adventures are listed below, and must be run in this order to bring the campaign to its climax.

- City of Snakes, **A Road Ends** (p.230)

  Armed with the first five artifacts, the heroes are led by visions to North Africa, to the fabled City of Snakes. Here, the last remaining mutated followers of Apep the Living God offer sacrifices to their fell deity. Their most recent offering is someone the heroes know, at least in passing.

- Jerusalem, **The Source of Evil** (p.234)

  With all six artifacts in their hands, the heroes travel to Jerusalem to find the Seal of Solomon. After using the artifacts to rid the world of the escaped horrors, the wanderers discover the greatest foe they must face lies right under their feet. As a secret order of guardians mistakenly tries to stop them from "summoning" the evil, the chamber collapses, and the heroes are left to destroy the creature that spawned the myth of Satan.

Attuning The Artifacts

Anyone who touches one of the six artifacts instantly realizes it is a thing of power. Even a casual touch alerts a person to the device's nature. Those who want to use the artifact must simply open themselves up to the device's power and let its energy flow through them, a process known as attuning.

In game terms, if a hero wants to gain any of an artifact's benefits, he may spend a benny to learn and access its abilities. If another hero wishes to use the item, he too must spend a benny to access it.

Note that the heroes do not have to attune themselves immediately. Many will likely think of the artifacts as works of Devilry, as Kane did. Our Puritan hero carried the cat-headed staff for many adventures, but it was only in *The Footfalls Within* that he truly attuned himself to the power within the object. Encourage the players to think in character when it comes to the mysterious artifacts, which are obviously far older than Christianity and therefore may challenge their 17th century beliefs.



The Savage World of Solomon Kane

His eyes were mystical deep pools that drowned unearthly things,

And Solomon lifted up his head and spoke of his wanderings.

"Mine eyes have looked on sorcery in the dark and naked lands,

"Horror born of the jungle gloom and death on endless sands."

—Solomon Kane's Homecoming

The world of Solomon Kane is a dark and mysterious place. European colonization is in its infancy, and much of the world remains shrouded in an air of superstition and hearsay. Tales of dog-headed men and lands where it is so hot a man can burst into flame are rife, even in the fledgling mercantile houses of the Old World.

In this chapter we look at the world in which Solomon Kane lives, detailing the technology and science of the age. Kane's world closely resembles our own, but differs in places. History has been deliberately muddled here and there in the interests of the stories that can be told. In the following chapters, you'll find a wealth of adventures set in each area, allowing your heroes to explore the wonders of a rapidly changing world.

An Age of Discovery

The world of Solomon Kane hangs poised between the emerging scientific age of the Renaissance (1500–1700) and the superstitious beliefs of the late Middle Ages (1300–1500). Although scientific thought is spreading across Europe, leading to many wondrous discoveries, the age-old specter of superstition refuses to die.

Transport

The horse-drawn carriage is at the cutting edge of vehicular transportation, appearing in Hungary at the start of the 16th century. Though the wheel has long been used in Europe, the carriage is revolutionary because of its spring suspension, giving passengers a smoother ride.

Carriages are expensive, however, and are the possessions of the nobility and wealthy merchants. For peasants, the cart remains the standard method of wheeled transportation.

Throughout Cathay, Hindoostan, and the Orient, the litter or palanquin (called a sedan chair in Europe), is used. Little more than a chair mounted inside a covered frame with two poles running alongside, the passenger is carried along by bearers. In Europe, the sedan chair comes into use around the end of the 16th century, but only in major cities.

Horses remain common beasts of burden and mounts across Europe and Asia. Camels are used in northern Africa and parts of Arabia, while llamas are popular in the mountains of western South America.

Navigation

For centuries man navigated using the stars and landmarks. Early traders and explorers were coast-huggers, sticking close to land to avoid becoming lost at sea and being able to find a safe haven in the event of storms.

The compass, known to the Chinese since the 4th century, is the main tool for finding direction. But while knowing which way you're facing isn't difficult, determining exactly where you are on the vast ocean or in the interior of an unexplored continent requires different tools.

Places, Names, and Dates

Throughout this section and in the gazetteer chapters that follow there are many historical places, names, and dates mentioned. This book isn't an atlas or an historical reference book. We have provided the basics so you can look them up and learn as much detail as befits your particular campaign.

If you want to set an adventure in the Atlas Mountains of North Africa, for example, you can check through a decent encyclopedia and discover its history and geography in more detail.

Of course, it is important to remember that this is still a game. As interesting as it can be to do the research to make a story historically accurate, it is far more important for you to remember to make a gripping tale, full of adventure, intrigue, and excitement.

Provide all that and your players will forgive the odd historical inaccuracy.

Knowledge of latitude (how far north or south a vessel is of the Equator) has been known for many centuries, and navigators still use a sextant for this purpose, using the sun at noon as a reference point. Longitude, the distance one has traveled east to west, remains a matter of guesswork.

To measure longitude at sea, mariners use a knotted rope attached to a log to measure the ship's speed. A navigator maneuvers the ship until it is on the same latitude as his intended destination, and sets a course directly east or west. Log readings are taken at set times during the day, and the captain records the readings in a journal (which is where the term "ship's log" comes from). He then transfers the estimated movement to his charts to give him a rough longitude.

The method is inaccurate, but it's all there is, and navigation is more of an art than a science. Even though sailors are beginning to understand the Atlantic trade winds, the effects of ocean currents remains a mystery. Miscalculations can be disastrous, and many ships have run aground on reefs because their calculations are erroneous.

Inland, travelers rely on dead reckoning, estimating the distance he has walked. It is highly inaccurate, and it is with good reason that early explorers stick close to the coasts or follow major rivers.

When a ship nears land, the crew lowers a lead weight on a knotted rope, measuring the depth of the water. Weights are usually coated with wax and collect samples of the ocean floor. (This is a pre-Roman invention.) A skilled navigator would know the different types of sand or small rocks off the coast of major ports, and could use these to help get a bearing.

Discovery and Conquest

Following Columbus' first sighting of the New World in 1492, Europeans are struck by exploration fever. Led by the Spanish, the colonization of the New World becomes a series of conquests against the indigenous peoples, followed by the importing of slaves from Africa (which began around 1501).

Hernán Cortés defeats the Aztecs in a series of battles between 1519–21, while further south Francisco Pizarro conquers Peru and the Incan Empire (1531–6).

Some discoveries, although later leading to bloody conquests, begin by expanding knowledge of the New World. Juan Ponce de León sighted Florida in 1513, and Magellan commands the first circumnavigation of the globe between 1519–21, though he does not survive to complete the voyage. In 1580, Francis Drake becomes the first captain to circumnavigate the world and survive the entire journey.

Inland, Francisco Vásquez de Coronado's expedition, heading north from Mexico, finds the Grand Canyon in 1540, while a year later Francisco de Orellana navigates the mighty Amazon river.

While Spain leads the exploration to the west, it is the Portuguese who head east, discovering Hindoostan, the Spice islands, Cathay, and Japan between 1509 and 1542. Only Brazil becomes a Portuguese territory

in the New World, granted to them by the Pope (who divided the world between Spain and Portugal).

Medicine

Although the Age of Reason is dawning, medicine remains primitive, and can often be dangerous for patients. Practitioners still follow the works of Galen (who performed most of his studies on animals), being unwilling to go against centuries of accepted wisdom when their eyes (and other senses) give contradictory findings.

This is an age where most students of medicine accept the existence of the four humors—blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm—which have to be kept in balance for a patient to be healthy.

The superstitious nature of medicine has yet to be washed away in other regards, and doctors consult astrological charts and texts, as well as the Bible, to supplement the knowledge in medical treaties.

Physical touch is generally disdained, the physician preferring instead to check the patient's color, urine, and excrement for signs of illness. Following diagnosis, patients are prescribed a cure, which is most often a combination of medicine (which includes mercury, a metal discovered in the mid-16th century), diet, and surgery. Leeching and blood-letting, staples of the Middle Ages, remain popular as ways of cleansing the blood, which physicians hold is produced by the liver, and is therefore key to curing diseases.

Of course, one can always turn to the wise woman or the herbalist, who know of the medicinal nature of plants and herbs. Unfortunately, these women will soon face the purifying fires of the Inquisition or of witchfinders for their "devilry." In the Orient, herbal medicine has been practiced for many hundreds of years, and is extremely popular. Unlike in Europe, there is little stigma attached in far Cathay to the profession of herbalist or alchemist.

When an injury requires surgery, a barber-surgeon is judged not so much by his skill as by his speed. Anesthesia usually involves a blow to the head or forcing the unfortunate patient to imbibe or inhale substances like belladonna, which can just as easily kill him as render him incapacitated.

Amputations usually involve a razor sharp knife to cut away flesh, followed by rapid sawing through the bone and cauterization with oil to stem the flow of blood. Patients are, when it is practical, tied to a table to ensure they remain still.

However, times are changing. Wounds tend now to be washed in a salt solution, which helps sterilize them. Paracelsus has made advances in chemistry, though it is still a blend of science and superstition. Warfare too is playing its part in medicine, as the grisly casualties allow doctors to study injuries in detail.

Artificial limbs (wooden and held on with straps) and glass eyes, are developed, in part, by a battlefield surgeon named Ambroise Paré. He also has the notion that flies spread disease, previously believed to be humor imbalances or spontaneously created effects.

Slavery

IT is the dark side of human nature that drives us to dominate people who are different from ourselves. Although this is a game, Solomon Kane lived at a time when modern slavery was rearing its ugly head, beginning with the Portuguese and Spanish importing African slaves to the West Indies in the 1500s.

Robert E. Howard mentions slavers and slaves in his Kane stories, but only in passing. They are the victims of his evil villains and even Kane spent some time at the hands of brutal slavers. Howard uses this feature of history as a backdrop for his tales. His focus was on telling stories, not making a sociopolitical commentary.

Slavery exists in *The Savage World of Solomon Kane*, and it is something heroes should consider evil. Use it to highlight the villainy of the heroes' enemies. It doesn't matter whether a slave is black, red, yellow, brown, or white. Like Kane, heroes should be opposed to the practice of slavery.

More importantly, he seems poised to revolutionize amputation by reinstating the Roman practice of using ligatures to stem blood flow, and by using turpentine mixed with rose oil and egg yolk (after running out of hot oil) to treat amputated limbs and bullet wounds. The reduction in infection rates is clearly noticeable, but the establishment, afraid of change, keeps to the old ways for many centuries to come.

The Church had long taught that the human body was sacred, and dissection was prohibited (though it has been practiced for centuries), forcing students to work on animals. However, in 1543 Andreas Vesalius published his De Humani Corporis Fabrica, detailing advanced knowledge of human anatomy, much to the chagrin of the Church.

Despite reservations, medical practitioners have seen the wisdom of studying the human anatomy in regard to advancing their art, and several medical schools begin teaching the subject. Corpses of executed criminals are preferred for study, the popular belief being they died out of God's favor, but a lack of available bodies forces desperate students to adopt the grisly practice of grave-robbing.



General Science

Despite popular myths about our ancestors believing in a flat Earth (a belief propagated during the early 19th century), people have known since the time of the ancient Greeks that the Earth is round. Eratosthenes (276-194 BC) used the angle of shadows cast by the sun at midday in Alexandria and Syrene to calculate the circumference of the Earth. Arabaic texts brought to Europe during the Crusades further reinforced this belief, and by the early 12th century few European scholars were in any doubt the Earth was a sphere.

The study of astronomy, once inseparable from astrology, comes into its own with the work of Copernicus, and later the treaties of Galileo and Giordano Bruno. Copernicus' great work, published in the year of his death (1543), proposes that the sun, not the earth, lies at the center of the solar system, and that the planets follow circular patterns around the sun. This runs contrary the Church's teachings, and leads to Bruno being burned at the stake for his heresy in the latter years of the 16th century.

Tycho Brahe's incredibly accurate observations were later used by Johannes Kepler to show that the orbits of the planets are in fact elliptical, rather than circular.

The art of warfare, ever popular in Europe, is revolutionized by the invention of the blast furnace, which can produce large quantities of cast iron. It is also around this age that coal begins to replace wood as the fuel source of choice. Though calorific values are not yet understood, it is clear that coal (which was known to the Romans) burned hotter and longer, making it more practical.

Mathematics in general undergoes a major development as well when Vieta, a French mathematician, begins using letter symbols for algebra and trigonometry. Before this, mathematicians used words for variables, which slowed down calculations and led to

ambiguities. In 1585, the ordered world of mathematics is dramatically changed again by the introduction of the decimal point.

Mercator produces his first map of the world in 1568 using a system of projection still used in modern times. It allows for greater accuracy in cartography.

In the early 17th century, toward the end of Kane's time, it is proposed by William Gilbert that the Earth has a magnetic field. Though compasses had always relied on magnetism, few understood the principal behind them.

The telescope is invented in 1608 by Hans Lippershey, allowing Galileo to discover the moons of Jupiter and the phases of Venus.

Religion

The majority of Europeans are Christians (in name if not in deed). The pious carry the religion with them wherever they go.

Islam is a powerful force in the world too, represented in eastern Europe by the mighty Ottoman Empire, and in Hindoostan by the growing Mogul empire. The ancient Indian religion of Hinduism finds itself under great pressure in Hindoostan as it is threatened by Mogul incursion from the north and the presence of the Portuguese arm of the Holy Inquisition in the south. The fact a convert to either faith is also freed from Hinduism's rigid caste system may account as much as the hideous torture and coercion for Hinduism's decline in this period.

Also affected, and to a greater degree, is the Buddhist religion, which has been all but removed from northern Hindoostan. Though the faith is now experiencing one of its most successful periods in Cathay, which has turned its back on its traditional Taoist heritage under the current regime, Buddhism is prevalent in many parts of the Orient (including in Nippon, where Chan Buddhism is in the process of developing into Zen Buddhism).

There are countless minor faiths, not to mention the numerous offshoots or sects of the world's main religions, but throughout the period religious wars, religious fervor, and religious persecution are prevalent.

Superstitions

Many cultures in today's world have superstitions, but in Kane's era they are far more prevalent. Arabs believe the genii haunt the desert wastes. Western Europeans accept the existence of the Devil and witchcraft. Scandinavians still regularly practice the Viking tradition of cutting their toenails to avoid the giants using them to create a massive ship called Nagalfarer, which will carry the giants to the battle of Ragnarok, the end of the world. The Chinese wear red because it is considered lucky, whereas black clothing is a sign of ill omen.

The list of superstitions is long and sometimes baffling, but a little research will unearth some interesting and unusual beliefs. They can be used to lend color to your stories, to emphasize some of the differences between cultures, as well as between the period in which the game is set and our own.

Western superstitions we may laugh at today, such as avoiding black cats, throwing spilled salt over one's shoulder to blind the Devil, not walking under ladders, carrying lucky herbs, nailing a horseshoe to a door for good luck, and so on are all commonly practiced and fervently believed.

Game Mechanics: If you want to bring superstitions into your game, here's a very simple rule. A character who breaks a superstition suffers a –1 penalty to all Trait rolls for the rest of the day unless he spends a benny to negate it. You shouldn't use this rule all the time, instead tying it into an adventure.

For instance, if the heroes are staying at an inn supposedly haunted by the Devil (or one of his minions), have them spill salt at the dinner table. A Common Knowledge roll lets them know this is considered bad luck, and that throwing a pinch over one's shoulder negates that. Players in a modern mind set may scoff, but they'll be less willing to make the same mistake twice when you take away a benny.

Sexism

Women in *The Savage World of Solomon Kane* have more opportunities than historical women of the era, but sexism is still rampant. For the most part, lower class women are expected to have a craft, while noblewomen are expected to avoid manual labor and look their best at all times. In many cultures, women could not hold land or titles, being little more than chattel of their husbands or fathers.

Exactly how far you want to carry this historical sexism across into your games is a matter of choice. If you want women to play a more active roll in your campaign, the following information should help.

Woman cannot serve in the military as soldiers, nor can they be an ordained priest in any Western faith. Indeed most other religions or beliefs are male-dominated. She may, however, work as a missionary, spreading the word in foreign lands.

A woman might also lead a double life, acting as a respectable member of society by day; at night engaging as a highwayman or thief. Such a life would be highly unusual, but not beyond the realms of belief. Historically, at least two women became pirates to escape the life of marriage, poverty, and drudgery that awaited them. Female pirates are no less feared than men, but receive no special treatment should they be caught.

A female character could also be adventuring because she is searching for someone, such as a lost husband or child. Although such a hero may start off traditionally feminine, by the end of her adventure, she will as hardy as any man.

Some women do engage in scholarly pursuits. Such activities mark them as "odd," but boundaries are starting to shift. Female doctors are rare, but there are always some who break the mold.

Ideally, a player wanting to play a non-conformist female should take the Outsider Edge to show she has stepped beyond society's accepted limits.

Remember that, even though Robert E. Howard styled Kane as a Puritan (we'll go into the roots of Protestantism a little later), he used it as a shorthand for the character's austerity, and in fact there was little reference to religion in the tales. Religion can be a divisive issue, of course, and it is best used in this way; primarily as a backdrop to your adventures and a way of bringing a feel for the era into your stories.

Kane's World

The following chapters are devoted to looking at the world in the time of the Puritan. Each geographic area is given a brief overview, followed by a number of sample locales you can use in your adventures. Some of these come from Kane's own travels, others are places Kane never visited. When we reference locations Kane visited, we also make use of Ramsey Campbell's endings of the unfinished stories.

Although we've described the major locales Kane visited, any tales you run in these cities should be set after Kane has departed. The stories you tell through your game should be about your heroes, not simply recreating Solomon Kane's adventures verbatim.

As such, the descriptions of locales visited by Kane have a section entitled, "The City After Kane." The sample adventures set in these locales continue the tale of the locale after Kane has left, presenting new challenges for your players, but in backgrounds readers of his stories will be familiar with.

Each section, where appropriate, has brief notes on some of the major historical events and figures of the era to help you get a feel for that area of the world in this time. If you need further details, they can be found in any good history book.

Finally, there are the Plot Points and Savage Tales related to that area of the world. We've kept them together with the geographic description to make it easier for you to find what you need during play and minimize the amount of flipping back and forth.

The Old World

The Old World is the term used to describe Europe. It is broadly divided into Western and Eastern Europe, with Eastern Europe generally considered to begin at the borders of the great Holy Roman Empire.

Western Europe

Following the ravages of plague in the 14th century, Western Europe is beginning to recover. The population swells dramatically during the century, leading to rampant inflation as wages fall in real terms. Many rural settlements vanished during the plague, and the subsequent population explosion causes widespread famine and poverty among the lower classes, while the nobility enjoy delicacies and extravagances (as they have always done).

Feudalism in Western Europe is dead, but the old social ladder remains firmly in place. Peasants, while no longer serfs, must still pay heavy taxes to the nobles, their landlords. Life on the bottom rung is short, very hard, and laborious, while at the top there is little to do but hunt, socialize, and grow fat on the labors of the peasants. Some nobles have slipped from mere decadence into depravity, with all the perils that brings.

The great kingdoms of England, France, Spain, and the Holy Roman Empire control much of Western Europe, though Portugal and the Netherlands are beginning their ascent to becoming major political players.

These realms have rarely seen eye to eye, and indeed have spent much of their history warring with each other. Spain's attempt to defend Catholicism against the Protestant states sees it fighting England and Holland, while also fighting France for dominance of Europe and taking on the Ottoman Empire to prevent the spread of Islam. This ambitious policy, funded by gold from its conquests in the New World, leaves Spain constantly on the brink of bankruptcy.

Eastern Europe

Eastern Europe is darker in nature than the western half of the continent. True roads are few and far between, and journeys between settlements involve travel through dark forests, whose canopies turn day into night for weary travelers, steep ascents and descents through majestic mountains, and wading through stinking marshes where mosquitoes and leeches feed on a traveler's warm blood.

Eastern European peasants are extremely superstitious, hiding behind locked doors at night in fear of the nameless horrors that haunt the darkness. Although nominally Catholic or Orthodox Christians, in fact many peasants follow the old ways, and keep lucky charms on their persons and houses to ward off evil. Practice of old religions—once thought crushed first by the Romans and then by the Teutonic Knights—bubbles beneath the surface, hidden behind a veneer of accepted religion.

It is also a divided land. Whereas Russia and Poland are free states, Hungary and the territories beyond are now dominions of the mighty Ottoman Empire. Though ruled by native kings, these monarchs are little more than vassals of the great Musselman Sultan, who rules from distant Istanbul.

Indeed, it was the mighty Ottoman's blockade of land routes to Arabia, Persia, and distant Cathay that forced Europeans to

search for alternate sea routes to these distant shores. In doing so, the Ottomans themselves unwittingly generated the impetus for exploration and trade that spurred European nations to to ascend to new heights of power and riches.

Religion

Until the early 16th century, religion in Western Europe meant the Catholic Church. Martin Luther's famous *Ninety-Five Theses* changed the religious face of Europe, however, leading directly to the Reformation and a new form of Christianity, widely known as Protestantism (born as it was from protest). Henry VIII of England separated his country from the Church, founding the Anglican Church, with the monarch as the head, around 1535. As the new thinking swept through Europe, the Scots, Dutch, and Swiss adopted Calvinism, while large parts of the Holy Roman Empire, Austria, Scandinavia, and Hungary adopt Lutheran teachings.



As often happens throughout history, these religious differences led to bitter and violent opposition. The tumultuous religious upheaval in Europe led to several wars and persecutions, including the bloody slaughter of the French Huguenots and the eighty year Dutch War of Independence from Spain. In 1588, the ill-fated Catholic Spanish Armada sets sail against Protestant England in an effort to break the alliance of Protestant states, and in 1618 the brutal conflict known as the Thirty Year War begins.

Eastern Europe, especially in the south, is unified under the Greek Orthodox Church, which separated from Rome centuries ago. Unlike the Western church, Orthodox religion has not undergone a split, and the Patriarch is still the head of the unified faith.

The emergent religious power in Europe is actually Islam. Under the rule of Suleiman the Magnificent, the Ottoman Empire spreads across north Africa, the Middle East, Turkey, Greece and the Balkans, Hungary, parts of the Crimea, and by the start of the 16th century the Ottoman armies were banging on the doors of Vienna. Fortunately, the siege failed, but deep divisions within the western churches have prevented a unified response to this ever-present threat of conquest.

Under Ahmed I, the current Sultan, the Empire has suffered its first setbacks in the European wars. In 1606, the 15-year war with Austria ended in a stalemate, and the Sultan was forced to abolish the tribute paid by Austria as part of the resultant treaty. No Ottoman army will ravage Europe until the conquests begin again in 1647.

The Inquisition & Jesuits

The first Inquisition was founded in the 13th century to combat the growing Cathar heresy which sparked the Albigensian Crusade. The Inquisitors who torture Kane are members of the Spanish Inquisition—an organization founded in the late 15th century.

The Spanish rulers, Ferdinand and Isabella, had given Spanish Jews a choice—they could either forfeit their wealth and leave Spain, or convert to Christianity. Many converted, but only in name. Away from prying eyes, they kept their old faith alive.

The Spanish Inquisition was initially founded to root out these false converts, and to bring them to justice, venturing as far as the New World to carry out their mission.

With the coming of the Reformation, the Catholic Church faced a new problem—Protestantism. Alongside this mission, the Inquisition is also charged with rooting out heresy within the Catholic Church, hunting out and cleansing the world of witchcraft, stamping out homosexuality, and censoring books which opposed Catholic doctrine. The Inquisition publishes an Index, a list of proscribed books, and woe betide anyone caught studying these works.

The Inquisition is not an organization to be taken lightly. Backed by Papal decrees, they have the authority to take whatever steps are necessary to protect the Catholic Church. Prisoners are often tortured or lashed to extract confessions, or forced to convert to Catholicism. In some cases, converts were still burned at the stake to save their immortal soul, but were granted the courtesy of being strangled into unconsciousness first.

This is an age of scientific discovery, not all of which the Church is happy with. Many scientists, among them such notables as Giordano Bruno and Galileo, fall foul of the Inquisition. To non-Catholics, the Inquisition is feared and reviled as murderers and torturers of the innocent. To the faithful, they are the defenders of Catholicism.

Working closely with the Inquisition are the Society of Jesus (or Jesuits), an order founded in 1537. The Jesuits are primarily teachers and scholars, operating Church-run schools and missionaries. They are also charged with converting heathens to Christianity, and to countering the Protestant Reformation.

Jesuits are opposed to slavery, believing that the heathen natives of foreign lands should be converted rather than treated like animals. The Jesuits build many schools for the specific purpose of converting heathens and educating them in the ways of "civilized" behavior. Such beliefs and practices often bring them into dispute with monarchs, who see them as interfering in state affairs.

Puritanism

European religion, in its simplest form, was divided between Catholics and Protestants during Kane's time. The Puritan movement, which began in the mid-1500s, was not a separate branch of Protestantism, but instead a belief that the Protestant Church should throw off all vestiges of the Catholic faith, including the use of the decorative trappings of the churches and the elaborate hierarchy of bishops and priests.

Puritans, especially in England, were far from unified, and were found among the Scottish Presbyterians, Presbyterians who wanted to adopt Calvinist theology, and the Free Churchmen (who advocated removing all power from the Church and allowing the faithful to worship in free congregations).

There was no common consensus on doctrine or on toleration. What they did share was a belief in the divine rights of Man to worship God without the need for church or sovereign control. In essence, every person had the right to worship God as he saw fit according to scripture.

Though Queen Elizabeth had been sympathetic to the early Puritans, many Puritans were also anti-monarchists. This is primarily due to the fact the Anglican church is headed by the monarch, thus becoming pat of the Church hierarchy.

So, what does this book mean when we refer to Kane as a Puritan? Solomon Kane, being a wanderer, most likely supported the Puritans' core view that God could be reached without the need for a priest acting as a mediator. Kane was a religious man, but quite obviously saw no need to go to church regularly, pray, or sing hymns—he worshipped God through his work in combating evil.

Players who wish to play Puritan characters could choose to be hard-line anti-Papists and monarchists, but they can also follow Kane's path, worshipping God through their deeds rather than prayers.

Travel & Terrain

There is an awful lot to explore in Kane's world. This section covers overland travel for any region.

Movement Rates

Land movement rates can be worked out using the chart below. It serves for animals and vehicles as well as characters. Most times you needn't worry about how long it takes to get somewhere, but occasionally it may prove vital.

Base Speed in mph: Half Pace

Speed Modifiers

Ground	Speed	Terrain Type
Easy	+0.5	plains, road
Average	+0	rocky ground, light forest or jungle, low hills
Hard	–1	steep hills, medium forest or jungle, sand
Difficult	–2	mountains, marsh, heavy forest or jungle

Base speed cannot drop below 0.5 miles per hour unless the character is Incapacitated. Groups usually move at the speed of the slowest member.

Forests and Jungle

Forests and jungles are rated as light, medium, or heavy vegetation. Notice rolls (and Driving and Riding, if you've got a land vehicle or mount) suffer a penalty in accordance with the Cover rules (page 75). Survival rolls to find food are made at +2 in a forest or jungle, as there's always something to eat (just beware of poisonous plants).

Hazards

Hazards are natural occurrences that cause problems for characters. There's more information on these events starting on page 303.

Travel

The Old World has several major islands and many major sea ports. Nautical trade across Europe has existed since before the Romans came to power, and remains the safest way to journey. Only in the Mediterranean is there any real risk, for the Barbary pirates prowl these waters in their slave powered galleys.

Travel inland can be made several ways. Barges and river boats sail navigable rivers, transporting cargoes from ports to inland towns and cities, and coaches and carriages journey regularly between major cities.

For those fallen on hard times, farmers' carts make short trips between neighboring settlements, and while uncomfortable and slow, they are an alternative to walking. Inns are commonplace, and most every major road has inns a day's journey apart, providing welcome relief from the perils of the road.

Of course, the "roads" of Europe are little more than dirt tracks, even between major cities. The old Roman roads still exist in places, but they have not been repaired in over a millennium, and many are little more than occasional stones protruding from the soil. Maintained roads exist, but travelers must pay to use them at toll houses, which are usually positioned near bridges or fords.

Dangers

Much of mainland Europe is still prowled by wolves, bears, and wild boars, not to mention gangs of bandits and out of work mercenaries. Once outside of a settlement, travelers must rely on their own wits and sword arms, for nobody protects the roads. Folk are advised to travel armed and be ready to fight, for most bandits prey on the weak, and avoid heavily armed parties.

And worse still lurks in the great, dark forests and desolate mountains of Europe, among the blackened stones of fire-burnt castles, long deserted by mortals; and in caves which threaten to lead the explorer into Hell itself. Phantoms, specters, vampires, and werewolves still prowl the unlit regions of the Old World, searching for their prey.

People & Events of Note

This is a brief overview of some notable persons and events affecting the Old World in this era.

People

Ahmed I (1590-1617): The Sultan of the Ottoman Empire (r. 1603-1617) is known for his fluency in many languages, as well as his skill as a swordsman. Under his reign, the Empire suffers its first setbacks in both the east and west. In his latter years he turns to indulging in various pleasures and as a result corruption spreads through the ranks of the bureaucracy and military. He dies of typhus in 1617.

Elizabeth I (1533–1603): Protestant Queen of England from 1558–1603 and daughter of Henry's wife Anne Boleyn, Queen Elizabeth makes peace with the Catholics and leads England into an age of exploration. When Englishmen speak of "good Queen Bess," they are referring to Elizabeth.

Henry IV (1553–1610): King of France (r. 1589–1610) and Navarre, Henry ends the civil war in France by granting Catholics and Protestants equal rights. Henry is murdered in 1610, which threatens the peace in France.

James I (VI of Scotland) (1566–1625): Ruler of a unified Great Britain from 1603 until his death, James was the first monarch of the House of Stuart.

Ivan IV (1530–84) becomes the first Russian Tsar. His tyrannical rule (1547–1584) earns him the epitaph, "the Terrible." He dies in 1584 while playing chess.

Louis XIII (1601-43): King of France (r. 1610-43). Louis, at the time of this game, is an eight year old monarch, having just assumed the throne after his father's assassination. His mother, Marie de' Medici, acts as Regent until his 13th birthday.

Mary I (1542–87): Henry VIII's daughter by his first wife, the Spanish Catherine of Aragon, Mary instigated a vicious campaign against the Protestants during her reign as Queen of England (1553–58), leading to hundreds being burnt at the stake. Her actions earned her the nickname, "Bloody Mary."

Philip II (1527–98): King of Spain (r. 1556–98), Philip launched the great Spanish Armada in 1588 in an attempt to subdue and conquer England, restore her to Catholicism, and improve trade routes to the Spanish Netherlands.

Philip III (1578–1621): King of Spain (r. 1598-1621). Renowned for his extreme piety, was a poor ruler, easily dominated by his advisors.

Pope Paul V (1552-1621): Pontiff from 1605-21, Paul V is a hard-line Catholic, with no love of the English monarch, James I. Under his rule, St. Peter's Basilica is finished, and the Vatican library greatly expanded.

Sir Francis Drake (1540–96): English privateer, navigator, politician, and explorer. Francis Drake was second in command of the English fleet which defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588.

Sir Richard Grenville (1542–91): An English landowner, admiral, and explorer. Kane encountered Grenville several times, and was present at his death at the hands of the Spanish. See page 330 for more details.

Sir Walter Raleigh (1552–1618): An explorer, mariner, and courtier, Raleigh made several voyages to the New World, his last in search of El Dorado. After sacking a Spanish town, the Spanish Ambassador to England demands Raleigh's head by way of retribution. Raleigh is executed in 1618.

Events

Much of the period is marked by frequent wars between the European powers. War causes misery, and where there is misery there is undoubtedly evil.

French Wars of Religion (1562–98): The fans of hate roused the smouldering embers of religious intolerance into a raging inferno in France in 1562, when the religious wars broke out between Catholics and Protestant Huguenots. The bloody St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572 led to the tens of thousands of Huguenots being murdered, and many more fleeing across the Channel to England. France was thrown into civil war again, ending only in 1598.

Kane himself fought in these wars, and was perhaps a Captain there.

Calais Falls (1558): The last remaining English holdings in France are captured by the French.

Livonian War (1558–83): Poland, Sweden, Denmark, and Russia war over Livonia (modern day Estonia and Latvia).

Eighty Years' War (1566–1648): Citizens of the Spanish Netherlands rebel, leading to 80 years of war and civil unrest.

Iberia United (1580): Spain and Portugal unite under one crown, a union which lasts for 60 years.

Anglo-Spanish War (1585–1604): Spain and England are at war in the Old and New Worlds.

Spanish Armada (1588): Spain's attempt to invade England with a great fleet was thwarted by bad weather, bad luck, and the skill and determination of the English sailors. Although Spain remained dominant for some time, aided by riches from territories in the New World, its European influence began to decline after the Armada.

Gunpowder Plot (1605): Guy Fawkes and his fellow Catholic dissenters try to kill James I of Great Britain and his Parliament, but are caught and executed.

Time of Troubles (1598–1613): Russia is wracked by civil unrest following the death of Tsar Feodor Ivanovich (last of a Viking dynasty known as the Rurikids). Unrest ends with the founding of the Romanov Dynasty (when Mikhail Romanov assumed the throne).

British East Hindoostan Company (1600) is founded. The Company's rapid expansion into Hindoostan and the East Indies brings England into direct conflict with Portugal.

Thirty Years War (1618-1648): Central Europe, especially the Germanic states, are ravaged by bitter fighting over religious issues. Famine and disease add further to the casualty figures, and around 25% of the German population is killed during the War.

Slavery is introduced into North America in 1619 by British settlers.

Torkertown

There are two roads to Torkertown. The shorter leads across upland moor, while the longer trail leads through quagmires and swamp. When Solomon Kane came first to Torkertown, the swamp road was considered the safer of the two, for something terrible haunted the moors and killed in a manner more horrible.

As the Puritan discovered, the fiend was the vengeful ghost of Gideon, the cousin of wicked Ezra, the hermit of the marsh, who killed Gideon and hid his body. Both ghost and killer have now departed this mortal realm, and the moor road to Torkertown is once more safe to travel.

The village is similar to countless others across England, and indeed Europe. At the center of the village is the green, an open area of grass on which the local markets and fairs are held. This is common ground, and when not in use by the villagers it is used to graze sheep. A gallows, last used to hang the necromancer Roger Simeon, stands sentinel over the green, a reminder to all that justice, even in these days of rising banditry and rumored witchcraft, will be served.

Across one side of the green stands the church, an imposing stone-built structure dating back to the Normans, encompassed by a low stone wall, within the grounds of which lie the graves of Torkertown's citizens. Though once Catholic, the church has been rededicated as a Protestant place of worship.

Beside the church is the manor house, owned by the squire, a rich landowner who is landlord to most of the populace. As befits his post, he is also the local magistrate.

To the other side of the green is the local coaching inn, The Lamb. Situated on the London road, Torkertown has a steady influx of merchants and travelers.

Most of the common houses are low, stone-built cottages with thatched roofs, or timber structures with wattle and daub walls. The occupants are a mixture of crafters and tenant farmers, tilling the land of the squire or the Church-owned lands.

One of the houses belongs to the constable, charged by the squire with maintaining law and order in the village. His post is part-time, and he is called upon only when needed. A small outbuilding serves as the jail, where prisoners are kept until judged by the local magistrate or sent in chains to London to await judgment by a higher authority.

On the boundaries of the village are the sprawling farmhouses, some owned by the squire and run by tenant farmers, others are owned by the church, and a few independent of either authority. Beyond these are the crop and grazing fields. Like many settlements, there is an orchard in which grow apple and pear trees.

Red Vengeance

Lead In: The heroes begin at the fork in the road, where both roads lead to Torkertown by different routes.

Have each character tell the others a little about themselves, including how they crossed Kane's path and what happened to them since. Some may have been saved by Kane, others may have been hunted by him and given a chance to atone for whatever sins they committed. Since then, all have had dreams pointing them to Torkertown. Those who didn't want to follow them were not forced to, but suffered terrible night terrors until they finally relented.

Entering Town

The wanderers enter Torkertown late one winter's afternoon in search of an inn. The road they have been following leads them past the graveyard, where a funeral is taking place. Several dozen mourners are standing beside an open grave while the priest reads a funeral mass.

Have the wanderers make a Notice roll. With success, they spot several fresh graves, each no more than a week old judging by the lack of grass on the soil.

Read the following introduction aloud to the players (whenever you see text printed like this in the adventures, it is to be read aloud).

Making your way to the inn, it becomes obvious things are not right here.

Beyond the church stand several small cottages, each with a freshly whitewashed cross on its door. A woman standing in the door of one crosses herself, and goes inside.

Across the village green, close to the inn, stands a large house. It is no doubt owned by someone of wealth and standing. Outside, a cart is being loaded with furniture while a woman dressed in black looks on with tear-filled eyes.

Before you know it, you have reached the door of the inn.

The Lamb

The local inn, *The Lamb,* lies close to the church. The score of (all male) patrons inside sip their ale in silence, each with a worried



Roger Simeon

Roger Simeon, a necromancer, was betrayed by John Redly and duly executed for his crimes, but not before he enacted a murderous revenge on his former friend.

Though supposedly dead, Simeon's power extends beyond the grave, and who knows if he managed to transfer his damned soul before the noose strangled the life from his body?

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Magick d12, Notice d6, Taunt d8
Charisma: –2;
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Mean, One Hand, Vengeful (Major)
Edges: Arcane Background (Magick), Hard to Kill, Harder to Kill, Level Headed, New Power, Strong Caster, Strong Willed
Gear: Knife (Str+d4)
Powers: *animate hand, boost/lower trait, deflection, fear, grave speak, speak language, transfer soul, zombie.*
Treat as if Heroic Rank.

look on his face. Curious heroes may decide to ask the locals about the funeral and fresh graves.

Somewhat reticent about discussing affairs with outsiders, it requires a Persuasion roll to loosen lips. Rather than list a long speech, we've presented the information as a series of questions and answers based on likely questions the heroes may ask.

Q: Who is being buried?

A: "That be old John Prestwick, a merchant, they're burying today. Died the night before last all sudden like, while walking back from this very inn. He was found in the street last morning, pale as a sheet."

Q: Why the sudden burial?

A: "Him dropping dead like that wasn't natural. Folk are worried it might be the Plague, so they sent him on his way as quick as can be."

Q: There are other fresh graves. Who else was buried recently?

A: "Them graves belongs to James Carter, Thomas Muchly, and Nathaniel Drake, God rest their souls. All died the same way as poor John. Very mysterious."

Q: Why are people painting crosses on their doors?

A: "Folks in these parts be superstitious. They reckon the Devil walks this village."

Q: Who owns the house next door?

A: "Ah, that be Roger Ivens' place. You might have seen his widow. Sad case that was. Until a month last Sunday he was a rich man, then something went askew and he lost his fortune. They found him dead at the bottom of his stairs. Magistrate said he fell, but some folk say he threw himself to his death. His poor widow has had to sell up and leave."

An Investigation

Hopefully the heroes' curiosity has been aroused by the spate of sudden deaths among local merchants. There are several courses of investigation open to them, each detailed below.

The Villagers

Asking around the village in the hope of finding further clues requires a Streetwise roll. With success, the heroes learn that the four men who died suddenly were all seen talking to a mysterious cloaked figure just hours before they died.

The figure was actually Widow Ivens. She begged each of the merchants to lend her money, but they all refused. She wore a cloak to conceal her identity, afraid to let her neighbors know how low she had sunk. How the heroes discover this is left to them.

The Magistrate

Squire Hardwicke is the local magistrate. He openly tells the heroes that all four men died of liver failure from excessive consumption of alcoholic libations, though he professes not to be a medical man if questioned on his ability to diagnose cause of death.

With a successful Notice roll, the heroes realize he is hiding something. A successful Intimidation or Persuasion roll forces him to reveal that each of the four recent bodies had dozens of small puncture marks all over them and seemed to be drained of blood. He has not revealed this for fear of being ridiculed.

The Priest

Reverend Jeffrey Timothy, the parish vicar, can be found at the church during the day and at the vicarage by night.

He admits that Ivens' death may have been suicide, but without proof it was his duty to give him a Christian burial. Unfortunately, Ivens had lost his fortune and was given a pauper's burial, attended only by his widow.

As for the others, he at first denies there was anything amiss about their deaths, but if he is pressed breaks down, sobbing that each had multiple tiny puncture wounds. He suspects a vampire is abroad, but does not know how to combat such a thing of evil.

The Graveyard

The graves of the four recent burials are easy to find. Ivens' grave is in the far corner of the churchyard, marked by a wooden cross with his name engraved on it. The ground hasn't been disturbed.

By now the heroes may be thinking there's a vampire on the loose. Reverend Timothy, if asked, consents to have the grave exhumed. Digging up the body takes several hours, at the end of which have everyone make a Guts roll as the heroes discover a slightly rotting corpse. There's absolutely no sign it has risen from its grave and sucked the blood of the four merchants.

Widow Ivens

The distraught Widow Ivens plans on leaving town in the morning to live with her sister in Bristol. She tells the heroes her husband was a merchant of some means, until he was cheated by Prestwick, Carter, Muchly, Drake, and a man named Alfred Dawlish.

The four of them persuaded her husband to join in a friendly card game. Over the next few months the stakes got higher and higher, and before Ivens realized it, he was bankrupt. Ivens later found out that his so-called friends had cheated, but when confronted they mocked him and told him to fetch the magistrate. Ivens knew that one word against five would not be considered proof. He pleaded with them to cancel his debt, but they refused.

His grieving widow does not know if her husband committed suicide or not, nor does she particularly care anymore. With a look of pure rage, she curses all four men whom she states caused her husband's death.

Alfred Dawlish

Any local can point the heroes to Dawlish's house. He is not at home when the characters call, though his housekeeper says he should be home soon. He has been to a neighboring village, and will be returning home by the graveyard road.

Hopefully the heroes rush to meet him, suspecting rightly that his life is in danger. If they don't they soon hear a scream from the direction of the graveyard.

Whenever they arrive, they are just in time to see a strange, red mist drifting toward Alfred Dawlish, who is paralyzed by fear. Heroes who succeed at a Notice roll spot a very thin tendril of red mist trailing back to the far corner of the graveyard, straight to Ivens' pauper grave.



Some characters may wish to let the blood mist enact its vengeance. Although Kane does this to Ezra in Skulls in the Stars, remind the heroes that Dawlish may have cheated Ivens, but he never actually killed him. Ivens made that decision himself.



Blood Mist

Ivens did indeed commit suicide, and his vengeful spirit has risen from the grave. His shade takes the form of a blood mist, a sort of gaseous vampire. In death, Ivens plans to bleed his foes dry as they did to him in life.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Notice d6, Stealth d12+2
Pace: 4; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 8
Special Abilities:

- **Blood Drain:** A blood mist covers an area equal to a Medium Burst Template, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone in the template.
- **Ethereal:** A character can only harm the mist in a round in which he is wounded

or Shaken by it. This requires an opposed Spirit roll (have the player roll before his attack, but don't reveal the game effects right away). If the roll is successful, the wanderer may attack and harm the mist normally. Otherwise, allow him to make the attack roll but secretly it has no effect.

- **Fear:** Any character seeing the red mist must make a Guts roll. (Poor Dawlish has already failed his roll.)

The Aftermath

If Dawlish survives, he thanks the heroes profusely. Having heard Widow Ivens' story, this is the moment when the wanderers get to act like Kane and deliver a lecture on the sins of avarice and the Hell that waits those who cheat their friends.

Heroes who demand Dawlish compensate Widow Ivens can make an Intimidation or Persuasion roll at +2 opposed by Dawlish's Spirit. Dawlish won't know if the blood mist is really dead or not, so threatening further spiritual retribution is worth a +2 bonus. Sticking a sword to his throat is worth +2 as well.

With success, Dawlish hurriedly agrees to a fair settlement. If the roll fails, he mumbles an agreement but has no real intention of keeping his word.

N'Longa's Quest

When next you sleep, each of you shares a common dream. The dreamscape warps, changes, until you and your companions sit around a fire in a dark cave. Before you sits a wizened man of indeterminable age, his skin weathered like the most ancient parchment, his eyes more alive than any person you have met before. You have no doubts that this is N'Longa, the ju-ju man who guided you onto this path.

"Evil comes," he says sadly, tracing a wiggly line in the dirt of the cave floor. "Children of Abraham know it as Satan, but this only one name. When Egypt was young, it was Apep. To Northmen it was World Serpent. In the land where sun sleeps, it Feathered Serpent. All men know of it, but none know it.

"It has no name. N'Longa know it from old days as Great Serpent, Mother of Evil, and it grow big. Ancient magics held it, but they now gone.

"Only one way to find where it sleeps and kill it. Find the six gems of power. Long hidden they are, masked by evil from N'Longa's gaze. Search world, listen to talk of evil and strike against darkness. One lies in the Old World, one in my homeland, Africa, two in the New World, and one in the lands of Cathay. Search the world.

"N'Longa dream-speak you again when he knows more."

The quest for the ancient artifacts that forms *The Path of Kane* has begun!

The Black Forest

The Black Forest, or Schwarzwald in German, lies in and around the province of Wurtemburg in the Holy Roman Empire, in what today is southwest Germany. The term applies not just to the trees, but also to the rugged, sandstone mountains on which the forest stands. The highest peak, Feldberg, stands 4,900 feet above sea level.

Covering a vast area, the Black Forest is a dark and brooding mass of tightly packed coniferous trees, broken only by clearings, villages, castles, the surrounding farmland, and the trails which run between these many outposts of civilization.

Of these settlements, the two largest are Freiburg and Baden-Baden.

Freiburg is a staunch Catholic town, and one gripped by fear. The black folds of the forest are home to witches, and the citizens, led by witchfinders, regularly scour the woods and surrounding villages for witches and necromancers. In 1564 the Black Plague came to the city, wiping out thousands of unfortunate souls. Convinced that witchcraft was the cause of the Plague, the townsfolk have grown increasingly fervent in hunting down and burning witches.

Freiburg is a free city, protected by the Hapsburgs, a dynasty which includes the archdukes of Austria, the kings of Croatia,

Hungary, Spain, and Bohemia, but with its own government. It is also home to the Albert-Ludwigs University.

Whereas Freiburg was founded only four centuries ago, Baden-Baden was founded by the Romans. The first town was built over a series of thermal springs, which gave the town its Roman name, Aurelia Aquensis.

Currently, the ancient town is ruled by the margraves of Baden, from whence the settlement takes its name. The margraves' castle sits on a hillside close to the town. According to the townsfolk, the dungeons of the castle are extensive, though why the lord needs such catacombs is a topic the locals prefer to avoid.

Outside of these oases of civilization the area is far wilder. The landscape is dotted by numerous castles and towers, each owned by a petty noble or robber-knight, who holds whatever territory he can defend. Some of these lords are noble, in the traditional sense of the word, others, like Baron Von Staler, are depraved through circumstance or moral choice.

The trails are plagued by bandits, who drift in and out of the shadowy forest like ghosts. Along the trails are numerous inns, spread roughly a day's travel apart. As Kane discovered in *Rattle of Bones*, however, the quiet inns are by no means guaranteed safe havens.

Travelers who do find a decent inn are cautioned only to stick to well-worn trails and avoid travel at night if at all possible. Those who must travel are advised to make haste, and to wear a crucifix about their neck. Though most speak only of the bloodthirsty bandits who will happily gut a man for a few coins, locals know that darker fiends prowl the woods after sundown.

Witches and necromancers work their fell magicks by the light of the moon, using the many sheltered glades to perform their Black Masses. Though vile in their own right, at least these fiends are men.

Many wanderers have reported hearing deep, bestial breathing near the edge of the woods, seeing yellow, inhuman eyes peering at them from the darkness beyond their lantern's reach, or having the feeling that something not wholly human is stalking them. Such wanderers are lucky, for many who walk the darkened trails after dark are never seen again, victims of the numerous and extremely vicious werewolves that prowl the Black Forest.

The Last Song

Lead In: The Black Forest is littered with towns and villages. Since the evil here is hidden, the heroes simply enter the village on their journey, perhaps looking for a place to stay, or on the path of another site of evil elsewhere.

Festivities

The heroes enter a small Black Forest village. Colored flags flutter from ropes stretched between wooden buildings, and printed sheets are nailed to every house. If the characters speak German, read the text below. If not, they can find someone who speaks their language with a successful Streetwise roll to translate.

> *Baron Gunther Von Muelhoffer proudly announces his "Choir of Rapture" to be performed for all to hear at his Castle on the night of the Full Moon.*

A Common Knowledge roll reveals the next full moon is tonight. The citizens are in a jubilant mood, and are only too happy to sing the Baron's praises.

Von Muelhoffer is something of a local celebrity. A composer of hymns and general music as well as a nobleman, his work is renowned throughout the land. The baron has even composed some arrangements for the Holy Roman Emperor. His music is without parallel.

Many locals believed he had recently succumbed to madness, for he had sealed himself away in his castle for long months, refusing to handle any affairs. Servants, who frequented the village for supplies, tell that he could be heard singing in his chambers at all hours. The singing is followed by intense wails of despair as he failed to find the perfect pitch he sought for his great work.

All that seems to be behind him now, however, and evidently the baron was simply dedicated to perfecting his latest work. Word has slipped out that the noble has been secretly gathering all of the finest singers in the land, who will tonight perform the baron's greatest masterpiece.

Heroes visiting the castle by day, perhaps to introduce a fellow nobleman or to try to learn something more about the baron, are politely but firmly refused entry. The steward informs them that the baron can see no one before a concert, and especially not today, when he is preparing for such an important performance. From within, the heroes hear a single voice, its pitch and tone almost unnatural in its perfection.

The heroes must return tonight.

The Infernal Choir

As the sun sets, the villagers begin the short walk to the manor. Servants form a line from the front door through to the great hall, guiding the villagers to benches laid out for them to sit on.



At the far end hangs a gigantic tapestry, showing a choir of angels singing praises to the infant Christ in his manger. A successful Notice roll reveals there is a large area behind the tapestry, no doubt a stage of some kind.

As the first rays of moonlight stab down through the windows to gash the shadowy room, the baron comes out from behind the curtain and moves to address the crowd.

"Tonight," he says quietly, his voice barely audible over the low, mournful hum that has begun from behind the tapestry, "you will hear the fulfillment of my dreams. Tonight, a choir will sing in glorious rapture, free from the constraints of conscious thought, morality, or prejudice."

With a sweep of his hand, he yanks on the tapestry, releasing it to fall to the floor. On the stage, swathed in inky shadows, are a score or so shapes, vaguely humanoid in form, yet lumpish and indistinct.

At first you think the choristers are statues, until a ray of moonlight strikes the stage, revealing their ghastly, misshapen form, a Hellish mockery of man's image, designed to torment body and mind by their presence alone—what fiend would imprison singers in an iron maiden, to force from their lips blasphemous sounds which no sane man could call music?

All Hell breaks loose—the guests panic and flee, while Von Muelhoffer urges the hidden choir, who by now are screaming in agony, to sing louder! Have the characters make Guts rolls before dealing Initiative cards. Those who fail suffer –1 to all rolls for this fight, due to the terrible din and wailing of the victims.

The mad Von Muelhoffer fights to the death, his slight physique belying his strength and resilience. As the fight progresses, the choir slowly grows quieter. There are 20 choristers, and at the start of each round after the second 1d4 die from their wounds. Opening an iron maiden and releasing the captive takes an entire round, though a hero may move his regular Pace to reach them.

Baron Gunther Von Muelhoffer: Treat as a Wild Card Noble (see page 326). However, he is Berserk (no need to roll) and has an

extra +10 Toughness from his insane state. For every two choristers released or killed, drop his Toughness by 1.

Loyal Servants (6): Treat as Town Militia (see page 323).

Von Staler's Castle

Within the Black Forest are many castles and towers, but few have a reputation vile enough to rival that of Baron Von Staler's home.

Squatting atop a granite rise, the castle is a cold, soulless structure, its imposing walls merging with its base to form a single edifice, as if the castle was grown by a malevolent force, rather than built stone by stone by masons.

The castle was already old when Solomon Kane visited, for he noticed it had fallen into a state of near ruin, the courtyard was overgrown, and a pervasive smell of damp and decay assaulted the nostrils. What little light the few torches and fires gave out could not compete against the darkness, like the eyes of a man in his final moments of death. Though well appointed, even the furnishings are worn, moldy, and dust covered. It was a castle which gave the appearance of being abandoned, yet it was inhabited.

Von Staler, a powerful lord, was once also a noble soul, who cared little for a man's religion, and offered sanctuary to all who asked.

He was also an expert huntsman. However, during a hunt, he was thrown from his horse and suffered a head blow, which robbed him of his sight. Von Staler's blindness affected not just his vision, but also his soul, which became as dark as his world. The lord slipped into cruelty. His poor horse, the cause of his affliction, was chained in such a way that it could not lie down, then viciously blinded. The skeletal remains of its rotted corpse stand in an iron gibbet to this day—silent sentinel watching over the approach to the castle gates.

Though Von Staler was robbed of sight, his hearing became acute, so much so that even raised voices pained his ears. His servants were dismissed for the inability to walk or speak quietly, Von Staler lived in his fortress with none but a few men-at-arms, each as stealthy as a hunting cat.

Making noise became a crime in Von Staler's lands, and the noose awaited those who flouted the draconian laws. Even the wearing of shoes was forbidden within the castle proper.

Aside from his men-at-arms, Von Staler's only companions were Kurt—the stalwart captain of the baron's guard and Von Staler's closest aide—and Kurt's sister, known only as the Baroness.

The Baroness was a widow, brought to the castle to nurse Von Staler after his tragic accident. Unable to see his maid, Von Staler's became obsessed with her tender voice and touch.

When Von Staler recovered, he insisted she stay, locking her in her chambers to ensure compliance. How many years she had lain chained to her bed were not revealed to Kane, but it must have been many, for her body became grotesquely corpulent and her mind, deprived of human companionship or stimulation, withered like a grape left in the sun.

Kane uncovered the Baroness' plight, but in the fracas which followed, she was slain. Ironically, it is Von Staler, her captor, who is her executioner. A fall and subsequent blow to the head while fencing with Kane restores his sight. Rushing to protect his songbird, Von Staler sees what she has become and in a murderous fury stabs her through the heart. He then turns on Kurt, his loyal servant, accusing him of kidnapping the Baroness and substituting her for a shapeless, ugly thing. His sight restored, yet still blinded in his soul, Von Staler stabs Kurt a fatal blow, and the pair crash down the stairs, whereupon the lord's spine breaks, ending his cruel reign.

Several years have passed since Kane's visit, and still the locals refer to the castle as the Castle of the Devil. Though Von Staler is dead, something else now haunts the ruins. Greedy locals, on hearing of Von Staler's death, sought to rob his riches, but those few who returned did so totally insane.

The Silence of Death

Lead In: While journeying through the Black Forest, the heroes hear the tale of Von Staler and his evil, and his defeat at the hands of Solomon Kane. If your players haven't yet read the story, you might want to suggest they do so before you run this tale or else have them meet a traveler on the road who can recount (and perhaps embellish a little) the circumstances of the baron's story set out on the previous page, and make the heroes familiar with the tale of the evil baron.

Locals also tell them that a greater evil now lurks within the castle's drab walls, an evil that robs men of their minds and stops their heart as easily as a sword point would.

This should be reason enough for the heroes to set out to explore the ruined castle.

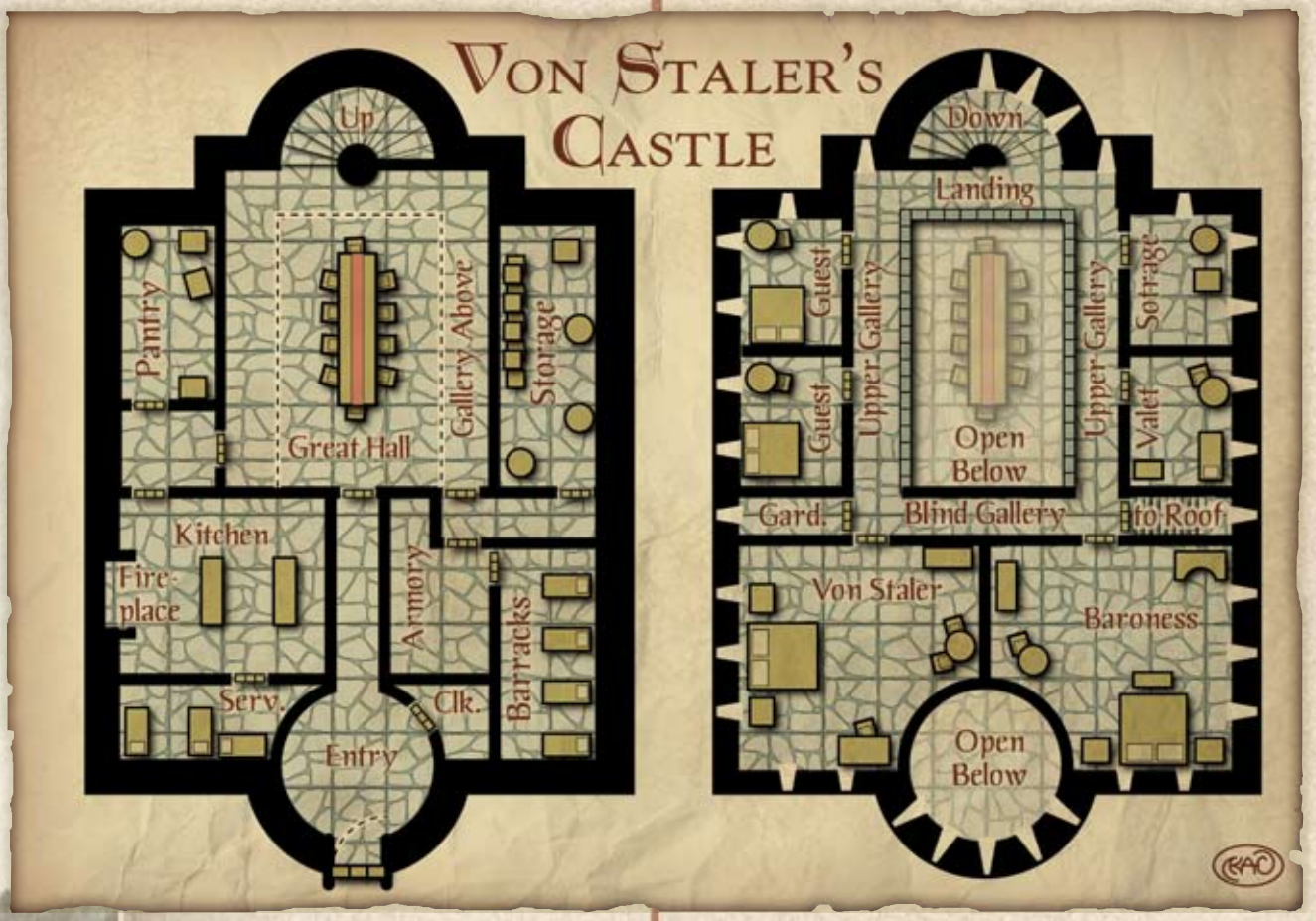
The Castle of the Devil

Von Staler's castle is haunted. Unable to find peace in death after her imprisonment, the Baroness, whose skeleton still lies where she was murdered, now haunts the castle.

In twisted mockery of Von Staler's affliction and her own life in the near silent castle, the shade can emit a scream of absolute silence, the eternal, total silence of the grave. So perfect is the absence of noise that it drives men insane or causes their heart to fail through dread fear.

The castle is much as Kane left it, save for a now total absence of light and a greater smell of damp and decay.

A brief description of the most important rooms is given below. The other rooms are labeled according to their former function on the map. The Game Master should feel free to make up suitable descriptions of the decaying furnishings within.



Great Hall

The great hall is reached through a long, dark corridor.

Dominating the great hall is a long table, the stuffed chairs which surround it now rotting and moldy. On the table are three place settings and the rotten remains of a wild boar, no doubt the last meal served in the castle.

This was the meal served to Kane and his traveling companion, John Silent.

Along the walls are mounted weapons, their blades rusty and their edges dulled by the endless passage of time, as well as animal heads, whose glassy eyes flicker in the light of your lanterns.

Several doors lead off the hall, and a grand staircase at the back of the hall leads into unknown territory. At the foot of the stairs lie two skeletons.

The skeletons are those of Kurt and Baron Von Staler, the latter still with his sword thrust through Kurt's ribs. Von Staler's skeleton has a broken spine.

If any hero moves toward the stairs, the weapons on the walls animate, held in the ethereal grasp of the ghosts of the many men-at-arms who died by the hand of Kane and Silent. In death, they continue to serve their former master, and seek to prevent the heroes from seeing the Baroness.

Animate Weapons (2 per hero)

The animate weapons are handled like regular creatures. When they suffer a wound, they break.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d12
Skills: Fighting d8
Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8
Gear: Assorted hand weapons (Damage Str+d6 for all).
Special Abilities:

- **Called Shots:** The weapons are small compared to a man, and attacking them requires a Called Shot at –4.
- **Mindless:** The weapons are not subject to Fear, Smarts Tricks, or Tests of Will.

Pantry

The food in the pantry has rotted since Von Staler's death. A rabid rat swarm lies beneath the floor boards, ravenously waiting another cache of food—or flesh.

Rat Swarm: See page 308.

Kitchen

Following Von Staler's death, a group of travelers discovered the empty castle and moved in. The ghost used her powers on them, driving them insane. The squatters now believe that the ghostly Baroness is their mistress, and they act as her servants.

There are six insane squatters in the kitchen, preparing a "meal" of old bones and rotting meat for their mistress. They walk with extremely quiet steps, and the heroes may believe they are actually ghosts.



Baron Von Staler

Baron Von Staler, one of the most powerful lords in the Black Forest, lost his sight after falling from his horse while out hunting.

His loss of sight also led him to cruel excesses, for which Solomon Kane duly punished him.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d12, Riding d10, Shooting d8, Stealth d10
Charisma: +0;
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness**: 6
Hindrances: Arrogant, Blind, Mean, Vengeful (Major)
Edges: Block, Combat Reflexes, Level Headed, Noble, Quick
Gear: Saber (Str+d6)
Special Abilities:

- **Blind Fighting:** Von Staler's hearing more than makes up for his lack of sight. He suffers no penalties to his Fighting rolls.
- **Weakness (Sound):** Loud noises (shouts, gunshots, or such like), force Staler to make a Spirit roll at –2 or be Shaken.

Insane Squatters (6)

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Stealth d10
Charisma: –2;
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6
Gear: Dagger (Str+d4)

Von Staler's Chambers

Once well furnished, this chamber is now a decaying mass of tapestries, worm-eaten furniture, rotten bedding, paintings with surfaces slick with black mold, and years of accumulated dust.

Although Von Staler was holding the key to the Baroness' room when he fell and died, the squatters have dutifully placed it back in his chambers. Finding it requires a Notice roll at –2. Each attempt takes 20 minutes.

Upper Landing and Galleries

Judging by the jumble of dry bones, a great battle took place along the landing. Ten skeletons clad in moldy fragments of drab gray cloth, one with a cleft skull, another with a severed head, are a chilling testament to the blood spilled in this desolate place.

The skeletons are those of Von Staler's former men-at-arms, slain by Kane and Silent. When the heroes set foot on the landing, the skeletons animate, seeking to carry out their last orders and protect the Baroness from intruders.

Skeletons (10): See page 316.

Guest Chambers

These chambers were appointed to Kane and John Silent when they stayed at the castle. As with the rest of the structure, everything is in a state of decay.

The Baroness' Chamber

The only door to this chamber is not only locked, it is warded by powerful magic brought into existence by the Baroness' death. No amount of brute force, whether mundane or magical, can break down the door, nor can the lock be picked. The only way to open it is to use Von Staler's key.

The skeletal remains of the Baroness still lie on her bed, shackled in death as she was in life.

The Specter

The bloated, corpulent ghost of the poor Baroness remains quiet and unseen until a character makes a noise. Whispering is insufficient to raise her specter, but standard conversation (or louder) causes her to seek out the source of the noise. She appears for only two rounds, screaming during each round, before fading again.

Unlike regular ghosts, the Baroness walks with loud, clumsy, dragging footsteps, and is accompanied by the clinking of chains and a soft, lilting song. A long, faint ethereal chain flows from the Baroness, leading back to her skeleton. Spotting this link requires a Notice roll at –2.

This tale is a "haunted house" adventure, with the heroes exploring the decayed ruin, simultaneously trying to find and avoid the ghost while searching for a way to defeat it. The length of chain attached to the ghost is the only clue they receive regarding her weakness.

Shackles of Death

The only way to free the Baroness is to sever the shackles which bind her mortal remains. See below for details. As soon as the first wound is dealt to them, however, Von Staler's skeleton animates and attacks the heroes, for his soul in death is eternally damned by his wickedness in life. Bound to this place for all time, he has no wish to see his songbird fly her cage, leaving him to perpetual solitude in the crumbling castle.

Should the heroes scatter or destroy Von Staler's bones (perhaps suspicious they may be the cause of the haunting), they reform at the spot he lay. Not even blessing them, sprinkling them with holy water, or leaving a crucifix on them can prevent this.

Baron Von Staler: Use the stats for the Baron on page 165 but remove the Blind Hindrance and both Special Abilities, and add the Undead ability (see page 299).

The Baroness

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Notice d12
Pace: 4; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Obese
Special Abilities:

- **Ethereal:** The Baroness' ghost is not only immaterial, it is also immune to all attacks, whether magical or mundane, except those of its Weakness (see below).
- **Fear (–2):** Anyone seeing the Baroness' excessively corpulent shade for the first time must make a Guts roll at –2.
- **Scream:** As an action, the Baroness can emit her silent scream. Place a Large Burst Template centered on her. All mortals within this area must make a Guts roll opposed by the shade's Spirit or roll on the Fright Table at –4.
- **Weakness (Chains):** The chains which held her in life still do so in death. To free the ghost, the heroes must release the chains around the skeleton. However, they are held tight by some unseen force, and must be broken.

  The chains have a Toughness equal to that of the Baroness, can only be damaged by blunt or slashing weapons (whether mundane or magical), and can take four wounds before they break. Each wound also affects the Baroness as if she herself were wounded. On the fourth wound, the chains shatter and the ghost fades, never to return.

Castle Dracula

BEFORE we discuss the castle, let's take a look at the life of Count Dracula.

The Past

East of the sprawling mass of the Black Forest lies Transylvania, a small state nestled in a crook of the snow-capped peaks of the cragged Carpathian Mountains.

Now part of the Ottoman Empire, only a century ago Transylvania was fighting for its freedom, and from that struggle there rose a warlord whose name lives on in infamy—Vlad III, otherwise known as Vlad the Impaler.

Born in 1431 to Vlad Dracul, exiled Prince of Wallachia, Vlad III (known as Dracula) and his younger brother, Radu the Handsome, spent much of their early lives as hostages of the Turks, who ruled Wallachia. Here Vlad learned first hand the power of the scourge, of terror, and of barbarity.

A Dracul sat once more on the Wallachian throne in 1456. Although enthroned as a puppet ruler, Vlad allied with the Hungarians and drove the fell Turks from his homeland. During his reign, Dracula had constructed in secret Castle Dracula. He had the builders impaled afterward.

Such was his fondness for impalement that in 1459 he impaled 30,000 merchants and citizens of Brasov for treason, followed the next year by 10,000 citizens of Sibiu.

In 1462 Vlad fled Wallachia, the Ottomans having grown tired of his stubborn resistance and cruelty. Legend recounts that during his reign two Turkish dignitaries refused to remove their turbans in his presence, for religious reason. Dracula had their turbans nailed to their heads. That and his impaling of 20,000 Ottoman soldiers to form a forest of corpses, prompted the Ottomans to act against him.

Vlad again fled to Hungary, but this time he was betrayed by Matthius Corvinus, who feared Vlad would destabilize the entire region and bring Turkish wrath upon them.

When freed in 1474, Dracula sought to gain support, claiming the title of voivode (warlord) once again in 1476. Unfortunately, Dracula's persecution of the ruling boyars (nobles) and alienation of the Turks were too much for his enemies to bear, and in 1476 he was killed.

Exactly how Dracula died is disputed. Whatever the truth, it is believed his head was severed from his neck and sent to Istanbul, where the sultan impaled it on a stake.

The Castle

Castle Dracula lies on the border between Transylvania and Wallachia, near the town of Tirgoviste.

When Dracula inherited the crumbling castle in 1456 it was near derelict, and Vlad set about rebuilding it, using stone from a



Count Dracula

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d12+3, Vigor d12
Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d10, Intimidation d12, Notice d8, Shooting d8
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 10
Hindrances: Arrogant
Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command, Improved Block, Improved Dodge, Improved Frenzy, Level Headed
Special Abilities:

- **Change Form:** As an action, Dracula can change into a wolf or bat with a Smarts roll at –2. Changing back into humanoid form requires a Smarts roll.
- **Children of the Night:** Dracula can summon and control wolves or rats. as an action with a Smarts roll at –2. If successful, 1d6 wolves or swarms of rats come in 1d6+2 rounds.
- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Invulnerability:** Dracula can only be Shaken by nonmagical attacks, never wounded. Magical attacks do normal damage. When Incapacitated, he turns into mist and flees.
- **Mist:** Dracula can turn into mist as an action with a Smarts roll at –2. While in this form treat him as being Ethereal.
- **Puppet:** Dracula can use the *puppet* power using Smarts as his arcane skill with no Casting Modifier. He can maintain the power indefinitely, but may only affect one target at a time.
- **Sire:** Anyone slain by Dracula has a 50% chance of rising as a vampire in 1d4 days.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called Shots do no extra damage (except to the heart).
- **Weakness (Sunlight):** Dracula cannot use Change Form, Children of the Night, Puppet, or Mist in sunlight.
- **Weakness (Stake Through Heart):** If Dracula is hit with a Called Shot to the heart (–6), he must make a Vigor roll versus the damage. If successful, he takes damage normally. If he fails, he immediately urns to mist and flees.

castle just across the valley. Dracula had seen much betrayal in his short life, and he knew that many of the boyars who swore allegiance to him were planning his demise.

Vlad invited the boyars and their families to a great feast in his castle, showering them with lavish food and drink. When the feast ended, Dracula revealed to the boyars that he knew of their plan, and told them they could prove their loyalty by helping build a new castle. The boyars immediately offered large sums of money, but the count had something else in mind.

The boyars were arrested, and force-marched to the site of the derelict castle. Many died on the journey, and those who survived became slave laborers. On completion of the work, Dracula had the nobles executed by his favorite method of execution—impalement.

For nearly 100 years Castle Dracula has lain empty, its walls crumbling once more. The area of the castle that is still standing was long ago picked clean by looters and scavengers, but no one has yet found the vast treasures Vlad was said to have captured in his many raids to the east. Some believe they are buried in the deep dungeons beneath the castle, but terrifying tales of ghosts, vampires, and even simple cave-ins keep all but the most foolhardy from exploration. Of those few who do venture into the castle's depths, some have indeed disappeared. A few have found minor valuables in the ruins, but most come back empty-handed.

A few months ago, a new noble moved into the castle. Count Vlad Dracul claims to be a descendant of Vlad Tepes. In truth, however, later generations will know him as Count Dracula.

The Legacy of Blood

Dracula was nearly destroyed in 1476 by Turkish assassins, but managed to escape. Unwilling to die while Wallachia was still in Turkish hands, Dracula beseeched the powers of darkness to grant him salvation in return for service. Whatever powers heard his plight were only too happy to accept his deal. That morning, Dracula died and was reborn as a servant of darkness; a vampire.

So what of his head in Istanbul? Fearful for their own lives at the hand of the cruel Sultan, the assassins spread the tale of Vlad's death and sent back the severed head of another Wallachian boyar in his place.

It took Dracula months to recover from his wounds. He worked his way across eastern Europe, crawling from one dark spot to another and feeding on those he knew would not be missed. After nearly a century, he has finally recovered his vigor, quickly claimed new wealth from select Austrian victims, and made his way home.

Count Dracula's pretense of being his own descendant is not necessarily to fool the locals. In truth, he couldn't care less about what these paeans think of him. But he knows the superstitious serfs will stay out of his affairs if they have even the flimsiest excuse.

Dracula has brought with him a small coven of vampires consisting of five beautiful mistresses—his "brides."

Blood of Dracul

Lead In: Tired after a long day's travel, the heroes come across a small inn, the Black Moon, as the sun begins to set over the distant mountain peaks.

Introduction

This adventure takes place at a roadside in darkest Transylvania. Dracula makes a brief appearance, and though the heroes can battle him, even defeat him, it is not his time to truly die. Other heroes, centuries from now, will have that honor.

Dracula is a harsh master and feeds his brides only a little blood, keeping them enslaved in his castle. At least until recently, when two of them escaped and fled into the countryside. Chancing across a small inn, and ravenous with blood hunger, they slaughtered the tavern owner and his family, draining them dry.

The next night, while they rested, a traveler came to the inn seeking shelter. He never left. The brides quickly realized that if they stayed in the inn the prey would voluntarily come to them. For the last two months, the vile women, aided by an enslaved mortal, who runs the inn during the day, have fed regularly from innocent travelers. But recent times have been lean, for word of strange disappearances is spreading, and the brides are hungry for fresh blood.

Stirring the Passion

The innkeeper is a strange fellow, young but with an air of the elderly, his eyes like still pools, reflecting light yet showing no signs of awareness about his surroundings. His speech is mechanical and monotonous, performed without any inflection or interest. He serves the heroes, organizes their rooms, but makes no attempt at small talk, not even asking the heroes if their journey was good.

Several hours later, long after the sun is down, two stunningly beautiful women, the brides, drift into the bar from a back room. They introduce themselves as Karla and Olga, the owners of the inn. Both flirt outrageously with male heroes, offering them all manner of sinful pleasures of the flesh, and without charge.

Feel free to roleplay this scene. The women take great delight in causing discomfort to male wanderers. If there is a holy man or Puritan type in the group (not showing a holy symbol), they'll offer him "services" which make tales of Sodom and Gomorrah sound like children's stories.

Experienced or paranoid players might jump straight to the conclusion that the ladies are in fact vampires. As soon as they catch sight of a holy symbol with even an ounce of faith behind it, the brides become feral creatures, their fangs extending, and hissing in rage at the heroes. The innkeeper promptly grabs his sword and moves in to save the brides.

Nocturnal Guests

Assuming the heroes don't discover the brides' secret, they retire to their room (there's only one in the small inn) at some point. The doors have a locking bar, which may make the heroes feel more secure.



During the night, the brides enter the room in mist form, transforming to human shape close to two of the beds. Make rolls for surprise as usual. If the victims get no card in the first round of combat, treat the brides as having The Drop on the them. After this attack, the screams of the attacked victims automatically awaken any others who were sleeping and regular combat begins.

Characters who are awake see a strange mist ooze in through the gap under the door. When the brides assume their human form, the heroes must make a Guts roll. Regardless of the result of that roll, however, the brides have been seen and automatically lose the element of surprise.

However the combat begins, characters who were sleeping suffer a flat –1 penalty to all rolls for the first round of combat as they struggle to rise from their dreams straight into a waking nightmare.

Two rounds after the combat begins, the innkeeper tries to enter the room. If the door is barred, one bride attempts to remove the obstacle.

The Master Returns

As the last bride disintegrates into a pile of grave dust, her death wail still echoing in the quiet night, the door to the inn is thrown off its hinges. Striding through the door is a powerfully built nobleman, his countenance as fierce as that of Satan, his eyes red with anger. This is Count Dracula.

Rumors of travelers disappearing attracted the attention of the Count and he has come to investigate, sure that his missing brides are somehow behind things. Although angry with them for escaping, he is even more angry with the heroes for killing them.

Dracula cannot be defeated by the heroes, no matter what they do. As soon as Dracula takes two or more wounds (even if it would otherwise Incapacitate him), he automatically transforms into mist and flees, vowing as he does that he will seek revenge on the descendants of the heroes in centuries to come.

Innkeeper

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Knowledge (most European languages) d4
Charisma: +0;
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Edges: —
Hindrances: Loyal (to Brides)
Gear: Short sword (Str+d6)



Brides (2)

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10
Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Knowledge (most European languages) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Stealth d6
Charisma: +4;
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9
Special Abilities:

- **Blood Drain:** A bride who succeeds in grappling an opponent can make a bite (Fighting) attack the following round with a +2 bonus. With a success, the victim must make a Vigor roll, –2 with a raise, or suffer Fatigue from blood loss. This can lead to Death.
- **Claws:** Str+d6

- **Charm:** Brides can use the *puppet* power using their Smarts as their arcane skill and with no Casting Modifier. They can cast and maintain the power indefinitely, but may only affect one target at a time.
- **Mist:** Brides have the ability to turn into mist. This requires an action and a Smarts roll at –2. While in this form treat them as being Ethereal.
- **Seduction:** Men suffer a –2 penalty to Fighting when attacking a Bride.
- **Sire:** Any woman incapacitated but not killed by a Bride must make a Spirit roll or die and return from the dead as a Bride after 1d4 days.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness, +2 to recover from being Shaken, immune to poison, disease, and gas, no additional damage from called shots.
- **Weaknesses (Various):** As per Western Vampire (see page 319).

Places of Interest

Characters in *The Savage World of Solomon Kane* are wanderers. These common locations can be found across Europe, and make ideal places for you to set adventures. Each location is followed by a sample adventure, but they should form the recurring backdrop of your heroes' adventures in the Old World.

The Graveyard

Everyone dies eventually, and when they do, their bones need to be laid to rest.

As in life, so the local church becomes the focal point in death, the layout of gravestones mirroring the social order in the world of the living.

The current trend among Christians is to try to secure burial as close as possible to God, and the closest one can get is within the Church itself. As churches are limited in size, only wealthy citizens who make a sizeable donation, either in life or through their kin after their death, can expect this privilege. It is usual for the names of the wealthy land owning families of the area to be the only ones represented inside the church

The second favored option is to accept burial outside in the graveyard, within a grave as close as possible to the church, of course, and pay a lesser sum for a memorial plaque within the building itself. Graves of rich and powerful citizens are marked with elaborate mausoleums or ornately carved headstones.

Commoners, who are buried furthest from the church, may have a simple wooden cross to mark their resting place. Most don't even get this luxury.

For another donation, the priest will say a full funerary mass for the deceased, which guarantees to shorten his stay in Purgatory (for Catholics) or send him quickly on his way to God's bosom (for Protestants). Most peasants cannot afford this luxury, of course, and a quick prayer is all they receive.

In this age of early death, plague, and starvation, it is not uncommon for peasants to receive mass burials, their cloth-wrapped corpses thrown into pits and covered with lime to mask the smell of decomposition. The priests says a quick prayer for all the dead in the grave, and then it is covered. Mass graves for victims of the plague are often marked by a railing to warn citizens that the area is infected.

In all cases, it is not unusual for graves to be reused over the ages as available space becomes used.

Although graveyards are not inherently evil places, being inside hallowed ground, they do draw evil to them. Body snatchers prowl at night, looking for fresh graves to exhume, selling the recently deceased to medical students for anatomical study; necromancers look for suitable bodies to use in their foul arts; and unscrupulous churchmen exhume bodies in the church, placing them in pauper graves so other rich citizens can buy eternal, peaceful slumber within the protection of the stone walls of the church.

Known sinners are usually refused burial within the church precincts, and suicides are often buried at crossroads to prevent the unclean spirit from finding its way.

The Dark Side of Love

Lead In: The heroes hear talk of a spate of grave robbings in a small English village. Locals in the neighboring hamlets, where the heroes hear these stories, consider themselves fortunate the grave robbers have not spread their wings and come to steal their dead.

By changing the names, this adventure can be run anywhere in Europe.

Introduction

The graveyard of the small church in the hamlet of Wickhampton has been desecrated several times over the last six months and corpses stolen. The villagers are divided in their opinion of who is to blame, with grave robbers and necromancers receiving equal curses.

The heroes arrive just before dark and make their way to the inn. While eating their supper, the heroes overhear two locals discussing the situation. Both men are gravediggers (part time) and are supposed to be watching over the graveyard tonight, but have shirked their duties for fear of the "dread necromancer." The two are not happy about their lot, and welcome any offer from the heroes to accompany them.

If the heroes investigate the graveyard they spy the faint glow of a lantern within the precinct and can just make out the shadowy forms of several men.

Alerting the Men: Calling out causes the men to turn tail and make a run for it. Should the heroes give chase, have the heroes make Vigor rolls over a series of rounds. Heroes with the Fleet Footed Edge add +1 to their roll to account for their faster speed. The grave robbers use the rules for Group Rolls (see page 67). Each success and raise a runner gets nets him 1 token (use coins or gaming stones). If a hero gets 10 tokens before the grave robbers, he has cornered them. Should the grave robbers reach 10 before the heroes, they escape into the night.

Don't just roll the dice round after round during the chase and tally off numbers. Add exciting descriptions based on the die rolls, with the heroes crashing through hedges or hurdling gravestones, slipping on wet grass if they roll low, and the like.

If the heroes catch the grave robbers they turn and put up a fight. Grave robbing is a serious offense, and surrender isn't an option they wish to discuss. For each token other heroes are behind the lead characters, they must wait one round before they can join the fight. (So if a second hero is on 8 tokens when the chase ends, he can join in at the start of the third round).

Sneaking Up: Heroes who want to catch the grave robbers by surprise must make Stealth rolls opposed by the grave robbers' Group Notice roll. If the grave robbers are alerted, they flee as above. In this instance, however, the heroes are closer and start the chase with one token each.

With successful Stealth rolls, the heroes get within striking range of the men before they are spotted. The grave robbers grab their tools and rush to attack.

Grave robbers (1 per hero): Use the stats for a Citizen (see page 323), but arm them with Medium Improvised Weapons (picks and shovels).

Any grave robbers the heroes capture can be interrogated with an Intimidation roll opposed by the robber's Spirit. With success, they reveal they are working at the request of one Doctor John Hapgood. He was paying them £1 each to locate and steal fresh female corpses.

In the event the grave robbers escape or are all killed, all is not lost. In their panic to flee they leave behind a vital clue, a new coffin (in which they planned to transport the corpse) bearing a brass plaque engraved with the name "Martha Hapgood."

Back in the inn the heroes can talk to the locals about the Hapgood family. With a successful Streetwise roll they learn that Dr. Hapgood, a pillar of the community, has a residence a mile or so from town, out on the moors. The villagers react angrily to claims the good doctor was involved in the grave robbing.



The Hapgood Residence

Save for a sliver of light peeking through curtains at the back of the house, the place is in darkness. Knocking elicits no response. The door can be broken down by brute force, or the lock picked with a Lockpicking roll.

On entering, the heroes are immediately assaulted by the powerful stench of death and rose water perfume mixed together in some unholy union of life masking death. Suddenly, the wooden door to the back room crashes open and a crazed middle-aged man staggers through, a look of maniacal joy across his face.

"They thought me mad!" he cries. "They said I was mad to try and heal her after her accident, but I proved them wrong! The book, the book holds the key! I have conquered death! My wife has returned to me!"

Hapgood's speech is cut short as an arm, living yet putrid and decayed, reaches from the back room and grabs Hapgood, dragging him off his feet. The door to the room slams closed, and from within the heroes hear Hapgood's anguished cries.

"My darling wife!" he cries. "It is I, John. I have brought you back, back to my side. What are you doing? No, no! Arrrrgh!"

Everything goes silent. If the heroes don't rush to enter the room to discover what is going on, Hapgood's creation comes looking for them! Inside the room, John Hapgood is dead, his neck broken, with a look of stunned disbelief forever etched on his pale face.

In the back room is a single bed, several lit candles, and a book entitled, *On the Subject of Life and How to Awaken it After Death*. A sorcerer who studies the book for 2d6 days can make a Smarts roll. With a success, he learns the *zombie* power and can cast it even

if he does not meet the Rank requirement. Only one Smarts roll may ever be made to understand the book.

Hapgood's History

John Hapgood's wife was killed in a tragic accident almost a year ago, crushed beneath the wheels of a carriage, her limbs shattered, her internal organs pulverized. So great was his love for her, that Hapgood's mind snapped.

Preserving her remains in vinegar, Hapgood scoured the country for a way to bring her back, consulting priests and medical men. All agreed that he was insane. As his quest turned from noble goal to insanity, Hapgood was contacted by a scholar who had heard of his plight. For the princely sum of £500 he sold Hapgood a book which contained within it the secret of life.

Hapgood earnestly studied the book, his already unhinged mind not balking at what grisly acts and perversions of medicine and God's Work he would have to commit in order to bring life back to his wife. After several failed attempts, the casting worked, though it was not his beloved wife's soul which inhabited the tortured body he had so lovingly made her.



The Monster

The monster is an abomination, made from parts of different female corpses crudely stitched together. Its eyes, though human, burn with an infernal radiance. Although it lives, it has no soul, and is totally amoral.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d12+3, Vigor d12
Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d4, Intimidation d8, Throwing d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6
Pace: 4; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10
Special Abilities:

- **Berserk:** The monster can go berserk at will.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken, no additional damage from called shots, half-damage from piercing attacks, not affected by disease and poison.
- **Fear:** Characters seeing the monster must make a Guts check.
- **Fearless:** The monster feels and fears nothing.
- **Shuffling Gait:** –2 pace; d4 running die.
- **Fists:** Str.

The Inn

Inns come in the form of taverns (also known as ale-houses) and inns.

Few villagers commute far during their daily lives, and almost every village has a tavern to serve the needs of the populace. The most common drink at such establishments is beer or ale, which is brewed on site. (For those interested in such matters, beer is brewed with hops (introduced in the 15th century), whereas ale is not.) Only in wealthy towns does one find wine. Many taverns also serve food, cooked either in a separate kitchen or, more commonly, over the central hearth.

Small beer, brewed in most private houses, is drunk at most meals, having a very low alcohol content. The brewing process, which involves boiling water, and the alcohol kill

most waterborne diseases, making beer a healthier option than drinking water. Even young children drink small beer once weaned off milk.

Taverns are also centers of the community, allowing the populace to gather in comfort and enjoy a gossip and drink.

The only real difference between a tavern and an inn is the latter has rooms to sleep guests. Inns may be found in villages or towns, but with the development of regular trade routes many are located along major roads, providing travelers with convenient places to break their journey or seek shelter.

Theft from and murder of guests is not an unknown practice, so travelers should take caution when staying in such establishments, especially ones off the beaten track. Check to see if the bedroom door has a locking bar. If it doesn't, use a chair to wedge the door shut or at least give warning of potential danger when it falls.

The Hunger

Lead In: This adventure can be run at any remote inn in Europe. It can be used as a travel encounter while the heroes are journeying to another adventure, or the heroes may be alerted to the disappearance of travelers along a stretch of road by local gossip.

An Inquiring Host

Inside are a number of patrons (equal to two per hero) and the innkeeper. A fire crackles lazily in the hearth, and a pot of stew simmers over the flames. The stench of pipe smoke and stale beer is pervasive. The innkeeper politely asks the wanderers their business, claiming there are bandits in the area and he can't take too many chances.

Heroes who have been traveling the roads for a while may automatically be suspicious. The innkeeper does his best to persuade them that they will be quite safe, and states that only the single rooms have a fire, where a character can dry his clothes and take the chill out of his bones. This should get the heroes slightly paranoid, but they won't get as far as sleeping before they are in trouble.

Should a hero ask about food, the innkeeper says he only has some bread and cheese. Heroes asking about the stew are told the pot contains some old bones the innkeeper is boiling down to make broth, but the soup isn't ready yet. To make up for his meager offerings, the innkeeper offers the heroes a free ale to help warm their bones. Characters who refuse to drink are accused of being insulting and mocking the ancient laws of hospitality. Make them feel bad for the poor old innkeeper.

The ale is drugged, and heroes who take as much as a mouthful must make a Vigor roll at –2. With success, they are Fatigued. Characters who fail are Exhausted.

Meat on the Menu

As soon as the characters show signs of grogginess, the patrons attack them. The hamlet has suffered several poor harvests, and the locals have taken to supplementing their diet with human flesh. The cannibals are desperate, but not stupid, and use Gang Up tactics to bring down the heroes.

During the fight, one of the cannibals falls into the fire (perhaps as a result of a fatal wound or a Trick), knocking over the stew pot. The contents spill across the floor, revealing a variety of severed hands. The larder was running low, and the hands were the last things left.

As the grisly stew hits the floor, several of the limbs begin twitching, then start crawling around. Have everyone make a Guts roll at this point. On seeing the hands move, the innkeeper cries out, *"I told you fools we should have let that warlock go in peace! He's cursed us!"*

The hands only attack the cannibals and fall lifeless when their murderers are all dead. Continue the fight to the bitter end (the cannibals know they'll hang for their crimes and thus have no desire to surrender).

Once the battle is over, a search of the inn reveals a stash of clothing and £1d6 in assorted coins stashed in the pantry, all taken from previous victims.

Cannibals (2 per hero): Treat as Citizens (see page 323), but they have Fighting d6, Parry 5, and carry clubs (Damage Str+d4).

Innkeeper: Treat the innkeeper as a Wendigo (see page 319).

Creeping Hands (6): See page 310.

The Port

The 16th century is an age of rapidly expanding exploration and commerce. At the center of this growth are the many ports of Europe and the Americas, of Africa, Hindoostan, and distant Cathay.

Although most ports are on the coast, many of the growing ports, like London and Bristol, lie on large navigable rivers, many miles from the roar of the ocean.

Inland, barges carry cargoes along mighty rivers, transporting cargo to and from ocean ports to towns and cities far from the coast. The mighty river Danube, which flows through Eastern Europe, has a bustling trade between the Black Sea port of Varna through the growing twin towns of Buda and Pest in Hungary, and onward to the Holy Roman Empire.

Wherever they are located, ports are crowded places, swarming with activity, and handling cargo from as far afield as Hindoostan and Cathay, as well as the newly opened lands of Africa and the New World. Merchants hawk their cargoes in bustling markets; sailors from across Europe babble to each other in different tongues, bonded by a common respect for the sea; mariners haggle for positions on ships heading to distant lands, dreaming of fame and fortune; soldiers patrol the streets; cutpurses ply their trade on the unwary; ladies of ill-repute strut like painted hawks, ready to swoop on any man who so much as catches their eye, offering their "services" to men in need of company; shadowy figures watch the passage



of ships, soldiers, and nobles from doorways, their faces lit briefly by the glow from pipes; beggars hold out withered limbs, hoping for a few coins from passing nobility or merchant princes; drunkards sway from inn to inn, singing rousing shanties with bawdy lyrics; and everywhere the eyes of countless rats watch from the shadows.

The older ports of the world have stone quays, newer ones making do with wooden structures. As the ports grow in economic power the wood is slowly replaced with more permanent structures.

Typically there is a road running along the length of the dock, with large warehouses behind. This allows cargoes to be moved from ship to storage, and vice versa, with ease, and avoids the town beyond becoming choked with the daily mass of rumbling carts.

Rats in the Woodwork

Lead In: While staying at an inn, the heroes are told of a recent spate of grisly murders in a nearby port. Several corpses have been found at the docks, badly slashed and hacked apart, as if by some maniacal butcher.

You can also run this adventure while the heroes are looking for passage on a ship, or simply passing through on their way to other adventures.

Body in the River

As the heroes arrive on the docks they spy a small crowd of people at the edge of the wharf. Two guardsmen are dragging a body from the water, which they dump onto the wharf in full view of the heroes.

The body has multiple deep lacerations. A character making a Healing roll notices the wounds are deep, made by a wide, flat weapon, perhaps an axe. With a raise, he realizes that the wounds are not the result of a swing, but are more like bite marks.

One of the guards gives the body a cursory examination, muttering, *"Devil take my soul! This is the fifth one this week!"*

If the heroes talk to the guard, he informs them there has been a string of murders recently, all at night, and all of the victims were found in the river with exactly the same type of wound.

He then points toward the main square, where the heroes can see a gibbet occupied by the decomposing corpse of an old woman. *"I blame that witch,"* he says quietly, as if fearful the corpse will hear him. *"This all started the night she died. Almost one death a night for the last week."* The guard will say no more on the matter. Heroes investigating the gibbet discover that it stands over a grate, which leads into the sewer.

Glancing into the river, the heroes see an opening leading back under the town. Any local can inform the heroes that a small tributary of the river runs under the town. The locals use it as a sewer and midden (a rubbish dump).

Investigation

Questioning the locals requires a Streetwise roll. On a success, the heroes learn that the witch was put in the gibbet just over a week ago after being duly tried and sentenced by the local magistrate. With a raise, they learn the witch killed herself, biting open her own wrists and letting her blood spill to the floor. As her life force ebbed away, she cursed the town, vowing that *"by my blood will I have revenge."*

Since all the deaths occurred at night, the heroes may want to patrol the streets after dark. An air of fear grips the town, and few citizens walk abroad after sunset. Should the heroes not take watch, they miss the next attack. While they sleep soundly in their beds, the murderer steps up his killing spree. During the night, he breaks into a peasant's house and attacks the family. The heroes hear of the massacre over breakfast as news spreads like wildfire.

Go to the section "Murder Most Horrid" as dawn breaks.

If the group keeps watch, there is a chance they can be close at hand when the trouble starts. That night a fog rises. The fog-shrouded streets are dimly lit by a handful of lanterns, whose pale orange glow does little

to illuminate the dark. Treat the lighting as Dim within the glow of a lantern and Dark elsewhere.

Draw a card each hour to see if the heroes are in the right place at the right time. On a Jack through Ace, they encounter a cutpurse, robber, or other criminal going about his evil business.

On a Joker, the killer the heroes are hunting strikes again. A cry slices through the darkness and the heroes are close at hand. Have each character make a Notice roll (don't forget the penalties for the poor lighting). Any who succeed spot a shape moving through the gloom away from them. Heading in the direction of the scream, the heroes find the door of a house open with what appears to be a bloody trail leading away from the house. Continue with the following scene, but bear in mind that it's still night, so the Notice penalty is still in play.

Murder Most Horrid

Investigating the scene requires both a Guts roll (to avoid nausea at the sight of the torn and shredded bodies) and a Notice roll.

With success on the Notice roll, the heroes find the wooden floor of the house is covered in scratch marks, several inches long, as is the front door. The scratch marks look like those of an animal.

During the search, the heroes find a child's room, but there is no sign of a child. Searching the house reveals no corpse (or dismembered parts). Questioning the locals, the heroes quickly learn that the family had a young daughter.

A hero passing a Tracking roll discovers a faint blood trail leading from the child's room and down the stairs. A second Tracking roll, this time at –2, is required to follow the tracks through the street. They lead straight to a sewer grate, which although in place has been forced upward at some point and no longer sits securely in the road.

Into the Sewer

The old sewers reek of decay, with a hint of something altogether more sinister masked by the foul odor. Any hero entering the sewer without covering his face with a damp rag must make a Vigor roll every minute or be Fatigued. This lasts until the hero leaves the sewer and gets 10 minutes of fresh air.

The sewers aren't very big and are detailed in the map opposite. The walls are ancient, built long before the port, and appear to have been used for some other purpose before the river broke through and flooded them. The walls show faint traces of mosaics, and the floor is paved. The entire area is filled with several inches of water and is extremely slippery. All Agility and Agility-based skill rolls suffer a –1 penalty. There are only three locations of note. The silted up tunnels are clogged with vile muck. And though there are narrow channels that eventually reach the river, they are too small for a human to pass through.

Rat Attack

When the heroes reach the crossroads have them make a Notice roll. Those who succeed hear frantic squeaking from up ahead, moving in their direction. Characters who were successful are on Hold.

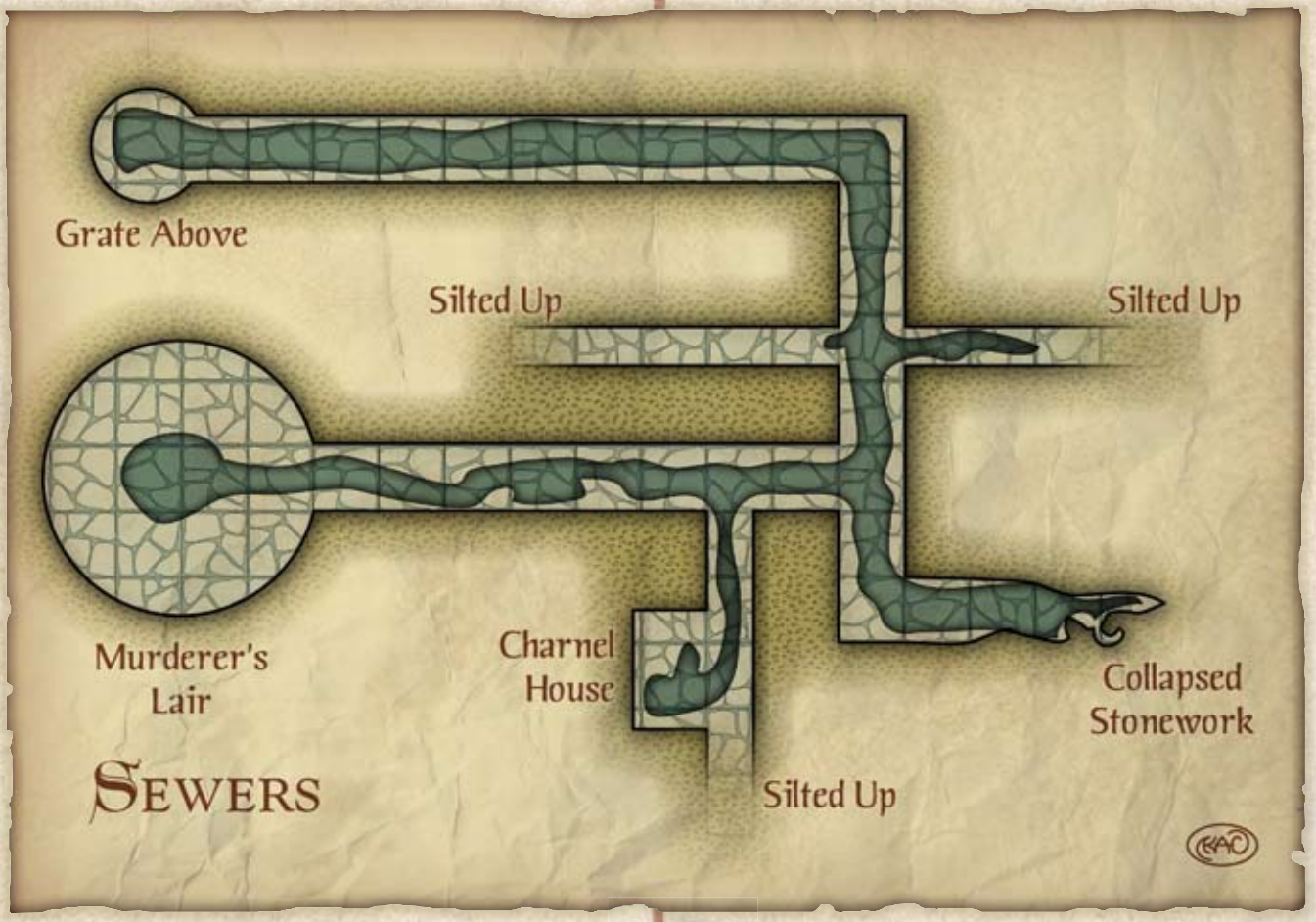
Seconds later, a swarm of rats bursts around the nearest corner and surges toward the heroes in a writhing, chattering wave of teeth and fur. The rats are fleeing from the murderer, and have no wish to stop and engage in combat. However, any hero caught in their path suffers an attack as the swarm passes over him. The rats move in a straight line away from the heroes.

Rats: Use the Swarm statistics on page 308.

Charnel House

The murderer uses this small chamber as a midden. Dozens of cat and dog corpses lie strewn about, and there are several human skeletons here as well. Have the wanderers make Guts rolls as they search this room. Failure means that the character suffers from nausea (–1 to all actions in this scene).

An examination of the skeletons coupled with a successful Healing roll reveals the bones have been gnawed upon. There are incisor marks like those of a rat, only much, much bigger.



The Murderer's Lair

As the party may have guessed by now, the murderer is in fact a giant rat. It was under the grate when the witch committed suicide, and lapped up her blood. The witch's curse caused the rat to grow to enormous size and gave it a taste for human flesh.

The young girl lies huddled in a corner, completely catatonic. The rat intends to eat her later. On sensing the human invaders, it rushes to attack, its enormous incisors chomping at the thought of devouring their flesh.

If the beast is slain and the girl returned to her surviving family, the characters are treated as heroes in the port. Should they seek passage elsewhere, there is no shortage of offers on all manner of ships. Information too is easier to come by for a while. Treat all NPC reactions as being one step friendlier than normal for one week.

Giant Rat

The rat has grown too large to get out of the sewer system except using the grate to the street. It attacks anything entering the sewer and fights to the death.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8(A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8
Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d6, AP 2
- **Fear:** Anyone seeing the giant rat must make a Guts roll.
- **Infection:** Anyone Shaken or wounded by a rat's bite must make a successful Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue from the bite. Cumulative bites can lead to Death. One Fatigue level is recovered every 24 hours or on a successful Healing roll.
- **Size +2:** The giant rat is the same size as a small horse. death.

The Dungeon

There are few places of human misery more disturbing than a dungeon. Oftentimes dank and moldy, infested with rats, usually unlit, and unsanitary; prolonged incarceration in a dungeon breaks both the prisoner's body and mind.

Dungeons may be found under nobles' castles, beneath the monasteries of the Inquisition, or sometimes even in towns, where they serve as prisons for those society would rather ignore. Usually reached only by a narrow, winding staircase, their location deep within the bowels of the earth prevents the screams of the inmates reaching the ears of those above.

Conditions

Those condemned to the dungeons are usually considered expendable, so there is little concern shown about conditions. As a result, dungeons are a place where only the strong survive. Rations are generally meager, barely enough to support life, and prisoners supplement their diet by catching rats (which they eat raw) or stealing food through right of might from fellow inmates.

Newer dungeons may have a few luxuries, like cells large enough for prisoners to lie down, though overcrowding means only the toughest get this privilege. In older castles, space is far more limited, and cells even for lone occupants may be barely large enough to sleep tightly curled. Often prisoners are forced to sit or stand for weeks or months at a time. Often they are bound, sometimes manacled, and occasionally even chained to the walls to prevent free movement.

In the worst prisons, inmates are ignored for long periods, left in cold, dark cells with no one for company but the rats and the voices in their own heads. As time passes, sanity ebbs away, leaving the unfortunate wretches completely insane.

Torture is commonly employed as a way of extracting confessions, or simply for the amusement of depraved guards. The rack, whips, iron maiden, toe screws, thumb screws, and hot pokers are among the tools of the torturer's grisly trade.

Among the leading proponents of the art is the Inquisition, whose task of rooting out heresy and witchcraft is as endless as their ingenuity in inventing new methods of inflicting misery.

Game Rules

For a character imprisoned in a dungeon, make a Spirit roll each month after the first. A failure indicates that he breaks and gives his captors what they want. A roll of a 1 on the Spirit die (regardless of the result of the Wild Die) means that his sanity is cracking and his Spirit is reduced by a die type. He also gains a minor Phobia Hindrance related to his ordeal in some way.

If a reduction in the Spirit die would reduce a prisoner's Spirit to below d4, the character's will breaks instead and he goes completely insane.

If the prisoner is being tortured at the time, these rolls are modified according to the skill and cruelty of the torturer, from –1 for regular beatings up to –4 for a cunning captor skilled in the arts of pain.

These rules should only really be used to represent prolonged incarceration. Solomon Kane is captured or thrown into dungeons on a number of occasions and it is likely your wanderers will also fall foul of the law or some corrupt noble. Generally, the stay will be short and unpleasant, ending in a daring escape, but occasionally, the character is left to rot, and these rules can quickly cover the passage of many months.

Escape

Generally though, characters will not want to wait that long. A slow, lingering death for the inmate is almost an inevitability if he isn't granted a speedy execution. For most heroes, escape is the only option. Depending on how frequent the contact with their captors is, prisoners may be able to overpower their guards or torturers. In cases where they are abandoned for long periods, prisoners may attempt to tunnel out. As many dungeons are below ground level, it's not uncommon for the walls to be damp, the mortar soft, or the stonework rough. Given sufficient time anything is possible, and for most inmates, time is all they have.

The Maiden's Kiss

Lead In: While traveling in Eastern Europe, the heroes come across a small village. The locals immediately panic when they see the wanderers. The women shriek and hurry their children indoors. A group of the menfolk of the village approaches the party, threatening them with pitchforks.

Mistaken Identity

With persuasion, the citizens realize their mistake and apologize, saying they mistook the characters for the soldiers of the Devil's Mistress.

Once reassured that the heroes are not who they thought, the villagers are open and friendly and invite the wanderers to dine with them, and offer what help simple folk can. If the heroes question them about their fears, they are reluctant to be drawn into conversation, for fear of what may happen. Any time the Devil's Mistress is mentioned, all present cross themselves repeatedly and mutter hurried prayers for deliverance.

Without going into detail, the peasants make it plain the Devil's Mistress is to be feared. If pressed, they can reluctantly point the heroes to the location of her castle.

Rescue the Maiden

Assuming they decide to get to the bottom of the fear in these parts, the heroes trek through the rough countryside toward the castle. Before they have covered more than a half-day's walk, they hear a young maiden crying for help.

Turning a corner in the road, you catch sight of young woman sprawled in the road. The girl's dress is torn at the shoulder and there is a large, purple welt on her face.

Standing over her are four burly men in armor, their tabards displaying the emblem of a black eagle, a drop of blood dripping from each talon. "You'll make a fine gift for our lady," one snarls, raising his clenched fist.



If the brave wanderers shout a warning to the guards, they turn and warn the heroes to leave now or face the consequences. They're on important work for their mistress, and have no intention of letting the maiden go.

Heroes who attack without warning the guards get Surprise, the guards being focused solely on capturing the maiden.

Guards (4): Treat them as City Watch (see page 323), but add breastplates (+3).

An Explanation

Once the soldiers are dispatched, the maiden thanks her rescuers. She introduces herself as Helga, and urges the wanderers to follow her to her father's house, warning that there may be other soldiers in the vicinity.

When the heroes reach Helga's house, her father rushes out and embraces her.

"Child!" he cries. "I told you never to go out in the day! When I heard the soldiers were seen nearby I feared the worst. Praise to God for delivering you safely to me."

Helga breaks the hold and gestures toward you. "Were it not for these brave travelers, I would have been on my way to... well, they saved me, but in doing so killed the soldiers."

"Bah!" spits Helga's father. "May the Devil take his own with speed. Please," he gestures toward his house, "join us for something to eat. We are not rich, but we can offer hospitality."

Over a simple meal of bread, cheese, and cold meat, Helga's father, Klaus, explains that the region is gripped by terror.

"The villages around these parts were normal once," he sighs. "Yes, we were poor, but we had our freedom. Then the Devil's Mistress began taking girls. At first we thought it was a blessing, for the soldiers told us the girls would be trained as servants. A lowly post to people such as yourselves, perhaps, but the money we were paid could feed us for an entire year.

"That was five years ago. We tried to arrange visits to see our daughters, but we were always refused. Then the next year the soldiers took more girls, and more the next. Last year they stopped paying us, taking our children by force.

"We began hiding our girls, but the soldiers burned down houses and killed livestock until we revealed where they were. Now we send our children away, to the town. Helga here refused to leave me, her poor, old papa."

Despite being eternally grateful to the heroes for saving his daughter from God knows what awful fate, Klaus is but a simple woodsman and can offer little real assistance. He can reveal that there are none in the area who dare stand against the Devil's Mistress, and will act as guide to the castle, if asked.

Lair of the Devil's Mistress

The castle is a vast brooding edifice cast in near-permanent shadow by the mountain on which it sits. If Klaus is with the party, he'll wait at the foot of the mountain to guide them back, but is very scared and will not willingly go closer.

A squad of four soldiers (use the stats on page 327) guards the main gate and curtly asks the wanderers their business. If the heroes are pushy or try to make demands, the guards tell them bluntly to be gone or face the consequences. They are trained, armed, and looking for trouble.

Polite requests for an audience with the owner of the castle or for hospitality elicit a slightly more positive response, but a hero must still make a Persuasion roll at –2 to convince the guards to allow them entrance to the castle—and even then they must hand over all their weapons.

The soldiers don't search the heroes, so small, concealed items, like daggers, can be smuggled inside. Refusal to comply results in permission to enter being revoked and the heroes ordered away. The soldiers engage in combat if necessary and there are other squads in nearby guardrooms who assist if the alarm is raised. This is not the way to enter a castle!

Once entrance is gained, the wanderers are escorted through the courtyard to the main hall, a grand affair decorated with many old tapestries, suits of armor, and displays of swords and axes mounted on the walls. A long table fills the center of the room, and a fire crackles in a grand fireplace at the far end of the chamber. Despite the trappings of life, however, the castle feels cold and empty, like a tomb.

It's a Trap

Once in the grand hall, the four guards turn their weapons on the newcomers, ordering them to surrender. They have absolutely no compunction about killing characters who refuse. If the party surrenders, their hands are bound with rope (Toughness 8) and they are led to the dungeon beneath the castle. See "The Dungeon" on the next page.

Should the heroes decide to try resisting they can either use their bare hands (or any smuggled weapons) or make a grab for the weapons on the walls. Snatching a weapon from the wall counts as drawing a weapon. Again, the soldiers do not think twice about using lethal force.

If victorious, the heroes are free to search the castle, otherwise they are bound and imprisoned as before. Have each hero make a Stealth roll and a Notice roll. Any failure on a Stealth roll results in a squad of 1d4+1 guards coming to investigate the noise.

Success on the Notice roll locates the doorway to the dungeon. Characters interested in looting can acquire £2d6 in jewelry and such like during their search of the castle.

The Dungeon

The rough-hewn stairs lead down to a large dungeon, whose cold, dank walls seem to leech the warmth from body and soul. The central chamber contains all the usual trappings of these foul places, but unusually it has two iron maidens, one of which is closed, the other open. In front of the closed maiden is a metal bowl, which is slowly filling with blood trickling through a narrow opening in the device's base.

Standing before the closed iron maiden, stroking it as if caressing a lover, is a stunningly beautiful woman, her black clothes in striking contrast to her porcelain skin.

This is the Devil's Mistress.

Two sides of the dungeon are lined with cells, in which huddle a dozen half naked young girls, wild-eyed with fear.

If the heroes are captives, the guards inform the Baroness that they have caught trespassers. The evil Baroness studies the prisoners closely and singles out the male with the highest Vigor (pick randomly if two or more have an equal attribute).

"A man will make a nice change to my master's usual diet," she purrs. "Let him taste the maiden's kiss," she says as she gestures to the open iron maiden. "Execute the others."

Unless the heroes want to die, it's time to make an escape attempt. Although their hands are tied, the prisoners still have their legs and heads.

Clever players may try to make use of the open iron maiden. Knocking someone into the maiden requires the victim to be within 2 yards (1 inch on the tabletop) and the attacker must make an opposed Strength roll as an action. With success, the victim is shoved back into the maiden. A raise means the door locks shut from the impact as well. Note that closing the door in the same round is another action, which results in a multi action penalty to the attack unless two heroes work together.

Anyone trapped in the iron maiden takes 3d4 damage when the door is closed and a further 2d4 damage at the beginning of each of their next actions. Opening the door and freeing a prisoner counts as an action.

Wanderers who found their own way down here see the same scene as above, but the Baroness is not alone. She has four guards with her. The only real difference in the scenes is that their hands are free and they are already armed for action.

On seeing the adventurers, the guards rush to attack while the Baroness points to the hero with the highest Vigor (as above), and says, *"Take that one alive! The master shall dine on his blood tonight!"*

When the guards are killed or when the Devil's Mistress takes two wounds, whichever comes first, she cries out, *"Master! We have need of thee!"* At the start of the next round, a section of the right hand wall crashes inward, and a hideous abomination oozes through. Deal it an initiative card.

Guards (4): Treat as City Watch (see page 323), but add breastplates (+3).

The captive girls are not much use in a fight, but if the heroes look to be doing badly, they could help by restraining a nearby guard who comes too close to the cells. If the wanderers set them free during the battle, most flee up the stairs and away rather than stay to join the fray. They are malnourished and frightened and certainly no match for the Baroness and her guards, let alone the fearsome Master.

If the master and his evil servant are slain, the heroes are free to set the girls loose and escort them back to the waiting arms of their grateful relatives. This should be reward enough for the wanderers, but there is more. The weapon wielded by the evil Baroness is one of the artifacts they seek.

The Devil's Mistress

The Devil's Mistress isn't a vampire, and the blood she collects is not for her, but for her "master." The Mistress discovered the beast five years ago, sealed deep in the dungeon, behind a wall that predated the castle by many centuries. She was instantly driven insane by the sight of it, and became convinced it talked to her, promising her immortality if she provided food for it.

The Spiked Mace was an heirloom that had been handed down through the male line for generations. As the only daughter, it came to her, but she has no idea of its importance.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10
Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Stealth d6
Charisma: +4;
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9
Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Spiked Mace:** Str+d8; the mace is one of the artifacts the heroes seek. See below.
- **Seduction:** Males suffer a –2 penalty to Fighting when attacking the Mistress.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness. No wound penalties; Called Shots do no extra damage. +2 to recover from being Shaken.

The Master

The Master is a huge sac of pulsating jelly, with blood red segments mixing with ichor green, putrefying blue, and all manner of other vile colorations. A throng of slimy tentacles, each tipped with a gaping mouth, sprouts from its gelatinous form.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d12, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12
Skills: Fighting d12, Notice d8
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 18 (4)
Special Abilities:

- **Armor +4:** Gelatinous body.
- **Fear (–2):** Anyone seeing the creature must make a Guts roll at –2.
- **Fearless:** Ignores Fear and Intimidation.
- **Hardy:** If Shaken, further Shaken results have no effect.
- **Large:** Creatures add +4 when attacking the huge body of the Master.
- **Size +6:** The Master is over 20' wide.
- **Tentacles:** Str+d8. The Master can make Fighting attacks against up to six foes within 3" each round without incurring a multi action penalty. Only two tentacles may attack a single opponent.

  Each tentacle is severed with a single wound, but severing a tentacle causes no harm to the Master.

Artifact: Spiked Mace



The spiked mace was first wielded in 1210 by Sir Johannes Kempler, a Teutonic knight, in the crusades against the heathen tribes of the Baltics and their vile shamans, who worshipped many dark and terrible gods. According to a family legend, one of Kempler's ancestor stole the gem which adorns the mace from the Holy Land centuries before. The mace vanished from history in 1410, after a joint Polish-Lithuanian army smashed the Teutonic Knights military power in the Battle of Grunwald.

The mace has a solid spiked metal head with a gemstone on the top. It inflicts Str+d8 damage, and weighs 5 pounds.

Against such supernatural and unnatural creatures, including evil shamans and sorcerers, it inflicts +1d10 with a raise on the Fighting roll instead of +1d6. However, each time this occurs, the mace loses one of its spikes, which is embedded in its victim's flesh. The mace begins with 10 spikes. When all the spikes are used, the weapon causes just Str+d6 damage.

It also allows the user to harm creatures otherwise immune to normal weapons. It retains this ability, even if all its spikes are used.

The Dark Continent

The Dark Continent is where the longest and best of Solomon's stories take place. Here we see everything from the gray Hills of the Dead to the ancient cities where flying demons and vampire queens rule.

Why Africa? Why is a Puritan—who should be consumed with the incessant battles of the church—drawn to the lush jungles and deadly savannahs of this primeval land?

Kane himself does not know, but he is drawn to the land, urged by some primal force to venture deeper into its dark interior. As Kane says to N'Longa:

> *"Once I dared the jungle—once she nearly claimed my bones. Something entered into my blood, something stole into my soul like a whisper of unnamed sin. The jungle! Dark and brooding—over leagues of blue salt sea she has drawn me and with the dawn I go to seek the heart of her. Mayhap I shall find curious adventure—mayhap my doom awaits me. But better death than the ceaseless and everlasting urge, the fire that has burned my veins with bitter longing."*
>
> *—The Hills of the Dead*

Getting There

Africa is a land of endless, burning desert and dark, ancient, impenetrable jungle, a land of mirages and quicksand, of hostile savages, of ancient and noble cultures, a land of dark gods and diabolical creatures. The term "Dark Continent" refers as much to its ancient soul as to its mysterious unexplored regions.

How easy it is to reach Africa depends on exactly where one wishes to go.

The Mediterranean coast is easy to reach from any European port, but the waters and lands are held by the Musselmen (as Muslims are commonly called), whose war galleys are rowed by slaves, and whose harems are full of fair-skinned maidens bought, traded, or captured from European lands and ships. From the great coastal cities of Tunis, Tripoli, and Alexandria, passage along the ancient trade roads that snake through the great Sahara can be arranged with nomadic traders or the natives of sub-Saharan Africa.

The lands beyond the desert are visited only infrequently by European explorers, who have built several trading posts along the Slave Coast in West Africa. Most captains are unwilling to land outside of the fledgling European ports for fear of attack by natives, though for a small sum of money they can be persuaded to stop long enough to unload parties in longboats.

East Africa is more difficult to reach for Europeans, though several small colonies have been founded. Musselmen have the luxury of being able to reach the coast from Egypt, Arabia, or Persia, but Europeans face a long and arduous voyage through the burning heat of the Equator and around the storm-wracked Cape of Good Hope before heading north again toward the spice island of Zanzibar, a major Musselman stronghold.

Hiring Guides & Bearers

Only a man who wishes to die wanders into the African wilderness without a native guide.

Finding A Guide: Finding a guide (or merchant caravan) requires a Streetwise roll. If the hero is in a major city (those shown on the map), he gains a +2 bonus to his roll. In

Booking Passage

Africa, at least the north and west, is a relatively easy place to visit due to recent European expansion into Africa.

To find a ship in Western Europe heading that way, the heroes may make a Streetwise roll at –4 once per week as a Cooperative roll. In Portugal (but not Spain), the Streetwise roll is made at –2 and may be attempted twice per week, representing the Portuguese presence already on the Dark Continent.

The fare varies, depending on where one is headed. Trips to the Barbary Coast are perilous and captains demand a high fee to brave the Barbary pirates. The cost is £1d6x5 per person. To reach West Africa, the fare is £1d6x1, whereas East Africa costs £1d6x2 to account for the greater distance involved.

A trip across the Mediterranean takes 1d4 days. Reaching West Africa requires a trip of 1d4+1 weeks, and East Africa a rather longer 3d4 weeks.

small villages, he suffers a –2 penalty instead. This roll can only be made once per week per settlement, and involves visiting markets and merchant outposts, giving introductory gifts, and buying copious amount of strong, thick, bitter coffee. Each roll costs the hero 1d10 x £0.1. With success, the hero locates a guide or merchant caravan heading his way.

Hiring: Once a guide has been found, the hero must then try to hire him, which involves fierce negotiation over price. The guide will increase his price depending on the needs of the expedition: whether the guide is expected to provide food and water, whether the heroes want mounts, and such like. Guides are likely to haggle over every aspect of the expedition, and to put a price on every conceivable complication.

Have the hero make a Persuasion roll at –2. Every £1 worth of gifts given grants a cumulative +1 bonus, to a maximum of +4. On a success, the guide agrees to escort the wanderers.

If the heroes are successful in their search, use the stats shown on the next page for both bearers and guides.

Note that nomads and native tribesmen have little use for coins, so any payment must be made in goods. European weapons are especially valued, though food and clothing are also valuable commodities. A typical price is £0.1 per day of travel, payable in advance, of course.

Dangers: Not every guide is as honest or as skilled as they proclaim. Despite all his reassurances of honesty and integrity, there are many slavers and murderers among their number. Once the guide is hired, the GM should secretly draw a card from the action deck.

A black face card (Jack through Ace) means the guide or merchant intends harm to the characters along the journey. See the Savage Tale **Turncoat** (see page 192) for details. A red face card means the guide has misled the heroes about his knowledge of the region. See the Savage Tale **Lost** (see page 201) for details.

Bearers: Put simply, bearers are two-legged mules. Their job is to carry a hero's gear, find safe camps, hunt for food, and such like. Unlike guides, they are hired for their muscle, not their knowledge of geography.

Each week in a settlement, a hero can make a Streetwise roll. In a major settlement, the roll is made at +2 to account for the greater number of available people. Each £1 spent on gifts adds a further +1, to a maximum of +4. In smaller settlements, there is a –2 penalty due to the smaller population. The Game Master should also give modifiers depending on the destination. Trips along well known routes or to major cities warrant a +2 bonus, whereas telling your potential guides you intend to travel to the Hills of the Dead gives a –4 penalty (no sane man wants to go there).

Each success and raise secures the services of one bearer for the duration of the trip. Use the stats on page 187 for a typical bearer. Bearers cost £0.05 per day.

Geography

AFRICA is a geographically diverse continent. The upper portion is marked by the mighty Sahara, which stretches from the Red Sea to the Atlantic coast. White men have not penetrated far into its depths, and their belief is that the entire region is sand, like Egypt, northwest Africa, and the lands around the Mediterranean coast. The interior is in fact a mass of mountains and sun-baked plateaus surrounded by rocky plains.

Despite European ignorance, the native nomads, among them the Berbers, Moors, and Tuaregs, have traveled the desert for countless generations, transporting goods from the Musselmen north to the native tribes south of the dune seas.

South of the Sahara, stretching from coast to coast, the land turns into savannah, the open grasslands. The term "grassland" should not be mistaken for "flat," however, for Africa is a rugged land of ancient hills and mountains worn by eons of relentless wind. The savannah consists of grasses and bushes, with clumps of acacia and baobab trees.

The jungle dominates the landscape of central Africa, its brooding mass extending along the Equator as far as the Great Rift Valley to the east. Along the Slave Coast, there is a tropical rainforest belt, which extends northward toward the savannah. North and south of the jungle lay dense forests of broad leafed trees.

In the south, the land is more arid. Here lie the Kalahari and Namib Deserts.

Rainfall varies greatly, being extremely rare in the deserts and common in the jungle. Yet Africa has many mighty rivers, including the Nile, Niger, and Congo, as well as great lakes, such as Lake Chad, and Lake Tanganyika.

Game Mechanics: Africa is both tropical and equatorial. In the north and far south, the air is hot and dry, while in the jungle it is hot and humid. Remember to use the rules for Heat and Thirst to add a little additional tension to your heroes' travels.

Baobab trees store water in their trunks, and areas of these trees grant a +2 bonus to Survival to find water.

Hiring Help

MOST parties of heroes will need assistance at some time during their travels. Expeditions into the dark places of the world are almost always conducted on foot, so all the provisions, weapons, ammunition and everything else a group of wanderers will need in the wilds must be carried with them on the journey. This either means buying pack animals or, if the terrain is unsuitable for beasts of burden, hiring humans to do the job.

Native Bearer

Bearers are hired to carry equipment, being little more than human mules. They're not combatants and are likely to flee at the first sign of trouble.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d6
Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d4, Guts d4, Knowledge (English) d4, Notice d6, Survival d6, Swimming d6
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Yellow
Edges: Brawny
Gear: Knife (Str+d4)

Native Guide

Guides are locals who know the way around the lands surrounding their home. Many are skilled trackers and hunters as well.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Knowledge (English) d4, Knowledge (Area Knowledge) d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Survival d8, Swimming d6, Tracking d6,
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: —
Edges: Alertness, Woodsman
Gear: Spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry), bow (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6) or pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1) as befits the guide's culture.

The Great Kingdoms

To all intents and purposes, 16th century Africa is divided into three main regions.

In the north of the continent, stretching from Egypt almost to the Atlantic shore are the Musselmen nations, ruled over in name by the mighty Ottoman Empire. Barbary pirates have launched raids from here since the time of Crusades, preying on ships in the Mediterranean and western Atlantic. With the Ottoman's recent expansion into Eastern Europe, control of the Mediterranean has become a key issue.

The northwestern part of the country is controlled by fierce Berber tribes. Though their great empire crumbled following the fall of their last holdings in southern Spain in 1492 (when they were the Almoravid and Almohad Dynasties), they remain a strong, proud people. For the most part, they hire themselves as caravan escorts, though they have been known to turn on their paymasters during hard times.

Before these kingdoms, back in days of legend when gods walked among men and ruled over their subjects in earthly form, were the great realms of Egypt and Axum to the east. Their mighty monuments, so large that only the gods could have built them, are now all that remains of these great empires.

On the dusty shores of the Mediterranean coast stand the ruins of Greek and Roman cities, as well as the shattered and salted ruins of once-great Carthage, whose might was crushed by the Romans long before the rise of Christianity or Islam.

South of the trackless dunes are the great native African nations, the Oba of Benin of sub-Saharan West Africa, the Songhai Empire which sprawls along the upper lengths of the great River Niger, the Munhumutapa Empire of southeastern Africa, and Kingdom of Kongo in southwest Africa. Older kingdoms, greatly reduced in power, linger in the form of the Ghana and the Mali Empires in the south-western Sahara, the Hasua States inland from Benin, and Kanem-Bornu around Lake Chad, among others.

Last, there is the interior, a mysterious realm of endless desert in the north and dense, sweltering jungle in the central and southern regions. Very few white men have penetrated these regions, and even fewer have returned. Those who have speak little of what they have seen, and none wish to make the journey again.

Solomon Kane's travels brought him to several great cities, so ancient that white men were cave dwellers hunting mammoths in the age these cities were at their zenith. How many of these cyclopean and timeless monuments of a bygone age exist, hidden among the jungles and mountains of the Dark Continent? And who built them? These are questions for later.

Factories

The term "factory" refers in this era to a fortified trading post. Constructed along the West African coast, they were originally used to store gold before it was shipped back to Europe, but quickly became prisons for African slaves awaiting transportation to the New World.

Factories were not simple buildings, but built to be complete towns inside fortifications as strong as any medieval castle, and protected by companies of musket-bearing soldiers and numerous cannons mounted on firing platforms.

Within these bastions of European expansion and military might were numerous storerooms, accommodation blocks, workshops for smiths, carpenters, and artisans, a church, a hospital, and a governor's residence.

The first factory in Africa was El Mina, built by the Portuguese in 1481. Its name means "the Mine," and refers to its chief export—gold. Like other factories, it soon became a slave factory. Typically, tribes raided each other and sold their captives to the Europeans for profit. From there the slaves were transported in packed ships with little to no food or water for sale in Europe or the New World.

Oba of Benin

European interest in sub-Saharan Africa began with the arrival of the Portuguese in Benin, a kingdom on the southern bulge of western Africa ruled by the Edo people, in the early 1480s under their emperor, the Oba. Long before white men began the trade in slaves, the Edo raided their neighbors for slaves. Some were captured to serve as actual slaves, but just as many were sacrificed to the gods and ancestors.

The Edo also had a female army. When they reached maturity, females were inspected by the authorities. The most beautiful were sent to the palace to become royal wives. Any who were considered physically unattractive, sick, or disabled faced execution. The majority, however, were conscripted into the army for a short period, after which they were allowed to return home and marry. (This is actually a practice not developed until the 1700s, but it suits the mysterious Africa of Kane's time, so we've brought it forward.)

The Portuguese quickly realized that Benin was a rich country, and trade began. The Europeans traded gold (America not having been discovered by Europeans at this point in history), ivory, and slaves for textiles and foodstuffs. Of course, the Europeans also had other resources the Benin wanted, primarily iron and firearms.

In 1481 the first European settlement in sub-Saharan Africa was constructed just west of Benin. Although El Mina initially served its purpose well, it did not stop the arrival of other colonial powers. The English reached Benin in 1553 and began trading with the Edo. The colonization of Africa, and the slave trade it produced, had begun.

Kingdom of Kongo

Portuguese expansion along the west coast of Africa soon brought them into contact with the Kingdom of Kongo.

Kongo was a large, developed nation, already the center of an African-wide trade network. This internal network was ideal for the Portuguese, who sought to use Africa to increase their country's wealth.

As well as natural resources and crafted goods, Kongo has long been a source of slaves. Most slaves were prisoners taken in war and sold in the great slave markets, which rivaled those of the Ottomans. As with the trade routes, the Portuguese were quick to gain a share of this lucrative trade.

The Portuguese reached Kongo late in the 15th century, and quickly began converting the natives to Catholicism. Although many natives were quick to adopt the cross, the old religions remain strong, and their practices are still common, concealed behind a thin veneer of Christianity.

The capital city is the mountain town of M'banza Kongo, which has a large Christian cathedral. However, natives hold that the true site of power in Kongo is Nsi Kwilu, the old capital. Located here is the ancient royal burial grounds, a site considered so holy that even to glance upon it is to invite instant death.

Munhumutapa Empire

Also known locally as Great Zimbabwe, Munhumutapa is an empire nearing the end of its time. A century ago it flourished as a vital part of the gold trade, its power stretching for hundreds of miles across the landscape.

But now the gold is gone. Rival factions vie for power over a decaying realm, and all the while the Musselmen of Zanzibar raid for slaves and the Portuguese hover at the empire's borders like hungry vultures, just waiting their turn to pick over the carcass.

Songhai Empire

Along the upper reaches of the River Niger, with tendrils stretching far north into the Sahara and east toward the Atlantic, lies the powerful Songhai Empire.

As Solomon Kane discovers elsewhere in Africa, kingdoms are often built on the last remnants of older civilizations, and Songhai is no different. Before Songhai, the lands were parts of the Mali Empire, its center the great trading city of Timbuktu. Timbuktu is not just a commercial center, however. The Musselmen constructed a university here to

rival any in Europe, and Timbuktu is regarded across the Musselmen world as a center of learning.

As the Mali Empire declined in importance, so the tribes under it fractured away. Of these, the Songhai were the greatest. From the remains of the Mali they built the Songhai Empire, with a new capital at Gao.

Songhai is a land of two religions. Officially, it is an Islamic state, but scratch beneath the surface and one finds the old ways very much alive and vibrant.

Yet the eternal cycle of growth and decay governs Songhai, just as it does other nations, and the Songhai Empire itself is now near its end. A civil war breaks out in 1582, weakening the Empire critically, and allowing Morocco to sack the capital of Gao in 1591. Despite a brave defense, the tribesmen are no match for troops armed with muskets.

The Songhai Empire never recovers from this catastrophic blow, and disintegrates into smaller states.



The City of Skulls

The city of Negari, home to the vampire queen, Nakari, is one of the most ancient structures on Earth, dating to an age before the first stones of the pyramids of Egypt were laid, the first flowers grew in Babylon, and before Noah led the animals into his Ark.

The Plateau

Negari is not the easiest city to reach. It sits atop a towering plateau, which rises steeply from the steaming jungle below. The only trail rises near-vertically at times, forcing visitors to make an arduous ascent over many long, finger-wrenching hours. Hand-holds, drilled into the cliffs by ancient slaves, grant only limited assistance to a climber.

The top of the plateau is flat for roughly half a mile before being broken by craggy hills to the west. Silence rules the plateau, for there are no trees in which birds can nest, no tall grass for lions to prowl. Yet the plateau is not lifeless; sentries from the city watch from concealed places for signs of intruders.

At the base of the hills lies a clump of dark, majestic trees, though no birds dwell here either. Warning totems—grisly corpses speared to trees, their withered arms pinned outstretched along branches by daggers—stand silent eternal vigil, pointing back across the plateau, warning travelers that they are not welcome in the lands beyond.

A rough trail, trodden by many feet yet not rutted by wheels, winds lazily in to the hills, steadily rising. After many miles, the hills are torn by a chasm, forty feet wide and hundreds of feet deep. When Kane visited, this was spanned only by a natural rock bridge, which marked the true boundary of the city of Negari: the Bridge-Across-The-Sky.

At that time, the bridge was guarded by dark-skinned warriors led by a mighty chieftain. These days the bridge is gone and no one stands watch, although there is an uncomfortable feeling of being observed by unseen things.

Beyond the chasm rise mountainous crags, whose sides are too steep to climb, and it is here that wanderers see their first glimpse

of Negari, a stone wall of immense size, as if built by giants, blocking a valley within the hills. A door, large enough for twenty men marching abreast and carrying spears ten times their own height, marks the entrance to ancient Negari.

It is worth noting that, when Kane visited, this was not the only entrance to the city. On the far side of the Bridge-Across-The-Sky, fifty feet into the chasm, was a cave mouth. The floor of the cavern rises steeply, toward the city, where it ends at a man-made wall. The wall is now in ruins, for the Puritan broke through into the secret bowels of the city.

Those who travel in his footsteps through the cave may face many dangers, including a giant constrictor similar to the one Kane fought, but ultimately find that the cave no longer reaches the ancient city. The tunnels that once connected the cavern to Negari have long-since collapsed.

The City Before Kane

Negari is actually two cities in one. The city itself is built into the winding cliffs, whose narrow streets follow the contours of the valley. These cliff dwellings have the outward appearance of majestic castles, many stories tall, whose form belies an older hand than that of the current rulers.

Magnificent engravings and wondrous columns, all carved with uncanny precision while the Greeks still lived in natural caves, face the buildings. Domes, constructed when the hills of Rome were barren plains, adorn the summits of many buildings.

At the center of the city rises a cyclopean black tower, the Tower of Death, its peak extending above the crag it nestles against. At its base is a platform, atop which lies the altar of Nakura, the local deity, where human sacrifices are offered each full moon. Within a niche in the wall sits the skull of Nakura, whose sightless sockets watch the blood spilled in his name, and whose deep, soulless voice carries messages to his worshippers.

Behind their exquisitely carved frontages, the buildings extend into the hills, carved externally to a size befitting gods more than mere mortals. Chambers, whose scale dwarfs the Classical temples and whose grandeur would humble a European monarch, are cut deep into the cliffs, forming a network of passages and rooms that make even the labyrinthine Palace of Knossos look like the work of a child.

And yet there is another Negari, one unknown to all but two inhabitants of the main city. Above, below, and within Negari run many miles of secret tunnels, carved when the city was new, before its true rulers fell into decay and the savage usurpers took control. Countless secret doors lead from the secret city to the public one.

River Tongue

Africa is a vast continent of many disparate cultures within its borders. Each of these has its own language. Rather than force heroes to take a dozen languages they may only use once, we use the same "trick" Robert E. Howard used in his stories. Thus, characters exploring Africa need just two languages.

Arabic is the dominant language in the north, the Sahara, and the Middle East. River Tongue is spoken by the natives of sub-Saharan Africa. Although dialects vary, it is considered a "common" language, shared by all cultures of the great rivers.

Game Masters should use the same basic principle in all areas. In North America, for example, assume most of the natives speak Indian sign language. In Central and South America, Portuguese and Spanish are common. In Cathay and Hindoostan, the languages are simplified to Chinese and Hindoo respectively.

By this method communication does require some language skills on the part of the wanderers, but at least keeps them from having to spend their limited skill points on the many hundreds of different languages they're likely to encounter—Navajo, Apache, Blackfoot, Aztec, Mayan, and so on.

Use the language barriers to emphasize difference as an problem to overcome, not an insurmountable obstacle.

History

The history of Negari stretches back through time before the rise of Christianity, before Rome or Greece rose from humble origins, before the great Flood of Noah's age, to a time when Atlantis, the fabled island nation, was preeminent.

The armies of Atlantis, far more advanced than the fledgling cultures of the New World or Europe, conquered all in their path. Those they conquered they enslaved, to work in their mines or row their mighty galleys across the world's oceans, for nothing was unknown to these giants of history, who had plumbed the oceans' depths, had scaled the highest mountains, and knew the contours of the continents long before the dawn of humanity's great civilizations. Across the world they constructed new cities on a scale befitting the gods.

The Atlanteans worshipped the gods Valka and Hotah, Honen and Golgor, gods who demanded regular human sacrifice. Ruling over Atlantis was a priestly caste, who alone knew the great mysteries of astronomy and navigation, science and religion.

Yet Atlantis is now but a distant dream, long lost beneath the sea. The slaves of Atlantis' distant colonies rose up, destroying all the cities created by their antediluvian overlords. All save Negari.

When the local native tribes rose up, the citizens of Negari retreated to their great city, walling themselves in for protection. Trapped by hostile tribes without, the pure Atlantean bloodline become corrupted by mixing with that of the slaves. Over time, the citizens of Negari devolved. Only the priests retained their pure Atlantean bloodline, but they no longer ruled. The nobles of Negari, though virtually pure through interbreeding, were weakened in power, and foolishly allowed the savage tribes to infiltrate the city.

A bloody revolt wracked Negari and all the pure-bloods except the highest priests were brutally slain. Those priests who survived became slaves, advisors to the new dynasty, feared and revered in equal measure. In secret they kept alive the faith of the old gods, practicing their rituals in the tunnels, which were unknown to the new kings.

For a while Negari grew powerful again under a new king. It was he who took the name Negari for his people. The new masters raided far and wide, turning the great rivers red with the blood of their victims. History's inevitable cycle ran its course, though, and as witnessed elsewhere in the world when a powerful king dies, civil war followed as others vied to fill the vacant throne. In Negari, the later kings were weak, and the fledgling empire collapsed.

Turncoat

The guide waits until the party is deep in the wilderness before revealing his true colors. If the guide has allies (nomads, caravans) enough to outnumber the heroes, he waits until a suitable moment, then turns on the heroes, demanding they hand over their weapon and valuables.

Naturally, the wanderers may resist. Should they surrender, or lose the fight, the guide doesn't kill them outright. Instead, he leaves them tied up for the beasts or elements to kill, thus, in his own warped way, absolving himself of any guilt over their deaths. This can make an interesting mini-campaign, as the heroes escape their predicament and go hunting for the traitor.

A lone guide isn't brave enough to turn on a well-armed party directly. Instead, he deserts the wanderers in a remote spot, preferably one with hidden dangers, like quicksand, or natural ones, like baking hot temperatures when their water is starting to run low. He may sneak off under cover of darkness, or pretend to scout ahead and then simply hole up in a cave, well out of sight.

In the latter case, the traitor tracks the strangers over several days, waiting for them to weaken or die before he comes back to rob them. Tough groups may not die, of course, and in this case the guide simply abandons them once he gets tired of waiting, leaving the party **Lost** (see page 201).

Faced with the threat of extinction, the priests worked in secret to protect the royal line, removing any plotters and rebels, but watching helplessly as the nobles slipped into insanity and depravity, a terrible blood lust welling within them, while the priests' own numbers dwindled.

Then came Nakari. A slave born of slaves, Nakari was the daughter of a lesser priest, a native who served the priests of Atlantean descent. She was no savage, however, and learned many secrets of the holy men, spying on them whenever she could. Nakari learned of the existence of the secret tunnels and used them to her advantage.

Nakari assassinated the king and claimed sovereignty over the city, dominating the priests who her forbears had so feared. In a short but bloody action, she had all but one of the priests tortured and killed.

There would be no one to undermine her authority.

Nakura

The citizens of Negari worship the skull of Nakura. During his life, Nakura was a renegade Atlantean priest. He betrayed his bloodline, aiding the revolt which led to native supremacy in the city. So Nakura was followed in life, worshipped in death.

When his mortal shell died, the citizens placed his skull in a niche in the Tower of Death, and Nakura became a god. The blood sacrifices once made to the gods of Atlantis were now made to Nakura.

The new rulers believe that Nakura speaks to them, for his deep, resonating voice can clearly be heard emanating from his skull. In truth, this is a parlor trick designed to keep the masses in line. Behind the skull, hidden from the casual eye, is a secret chamber. A priest stands here, speaking through a funnel to amplify and alter his voice.

Once, in the time of the Atlantean-blooded priests, the words spoken in the Tower of Death were actual prayers. Nowadays, the African-blooded priests speak the words without knowing their meaning, and, like the rest of the city, they have become corrupted and debased.

The City After Kane

Any who visit the city after Solomon Kane discover that the cyclopean splendor of dark Negari is no more. As Kane shattered the skull of Nakura with a single pistol shot, a terrible earthquake struck the city. The hollowed cliffs and monstrous towers collapsed, crushing the depraved occupants, obliterating tunnels and chambers thousands of years old in the blink of an eye. The outer wall was breached, and the Bridge-Across-the-Sky crumbled into the fathomless depths below.

Negari the great, a remnant of a past age, a darker age, lies as shattered as any ruin of Rome or Greece.

The Cult of Nakari

Lead In: While anywhere in West Africa, the heroes hear tales of the legend of Negari, and how a White God destroyed the city by causing the earth to grumble and shake. Heroes who make a Notice roll also sense the natives aren't telling the whole story. A successful Intimidation or Persuasion roll convinces one of the natives to talk.

"We thought the city destroyed," whispers one of the tribesmen. "Bad ju-ju gone at the hands of the White God. But bad ju-ju stronger and come back. Vampire queen lives again and demands tribute."

Background

Nakari, the vampire queen of Negari, like her followers, died in the city, but it was only her flesh that expired. Her spirit, indomitable and crazed, refused to depart and remained trapped with her rotting flesh. No beast would dine upon her corpse. Even the great vultures, whose wickedly hooked beaks have torn apart vampires, avoided it.

Years passed since the earthquake toppled the black spires of Negari, and Nakari's flesh shrunk and decayed. Within the sun-bleached bones, whose stark whiteness contrasted her black heart, her spirit lay dormant, waiting for the moment it could claim release.

Captured

If you want to expand this adventure, you can have the heroes captured. The natives perhaps don't fear the guns of the White Gods.

Thrown into the shattered remains of the city, the heroes are visited by Nakari, who tries to seduce them into becoming her champions. She is unused to having her wiles resisted, and reacts strongly against any hero who turns her down.

The heroes can attempt an escape, perhaps wandering into several of the secret tunnels, and finding an intact room which details the rise and fall of ancient Negari. This latter suggestion is primarily included for players who haven't read the stories.

Around a year ago, a lone girl, fleeing from cannibals, staggered into the crumbled ruins of Negari. Nakari saw her opportunity and possessed the girl. The vampire queen had been reborn. Using her powers, she enslaved a local tribe, who now believe her to be a goddess. The tribe occupied Negari, and began building a new empire amid the ruins.

The New Empire of Negari

The journey to the plateau on which the ruins sit takes a month. You can either cut straight to the plateau (describing briefly the long walk though the jungle, the heat, and so on), or add a few encounters along the way, such as a ferocious lion, a tribe of cannibals, or perhaps even a lone warrior who befriends the party and volunteers to aid them.

The New Bridge

Climbing the plateau requires three successful Climbing rolls from every character. Each failure results in bumps and scrapes, short falls, and the like.

After a walk of several miles, the heroes reach the chasm. The Bridge-Across-The-Sky collapsed during the earthquake, and in its place hangs a rope bridge, crudely made, but serviceable.

Standing in front of the bridge are several warriors and a chieftain. Knowing the story of the White God who destroyed Negari, the chieftain immediately orders his men to attack. With a cry of "Nakari!" they rush forward with murderous intent.

The warriors have also heard the story, and suffer a –2 penalty to their Guts rolls if any wanderer uses a firearm. The chieftain, fanatically loyal to Nakari, suffers no fear from firearms and attacks suicidally.

Once they are defeated, the party can cross the bridge and move toward the city. Note that the cavern Kane wandered through after crossing the bridge has collapsed, so players who know the story won't be able to use any "secret knowledge."

Chieftain: Treat as a Tribal Chieftain but add the Berserk Edge (see page 329).

Warriors (2 per hero): Treat as Tribal Warriors (see page 328).

The City

The outer wall of the city has collapsed, forming a gigantic pyramid of rubble. Beyond, the twisting canyon floor lies choked with worked stone and boulders from the cliff face. Amid the remains jut pieces of bone, the remains of those savage souls who once called Negari home. High on the cliffs are dark holes, like the sightless eyes of a skull, entrances to the many tunnels and chambers of Negari which lie hidden from view.

Further in, toward the center, where once stood the sinister Tower of Skulls, the ground has been cleared of smaller debris, leaving colossal stones standing like the edifices erected across Europe by ancient men.

As the heroes wind their way through the forest of stones, a lone voice calls to them from on high in the tongue of the river people.

"Behold!" it cries, echoing through the canyon like thunder. "The White Gods return to destroy Negari once more! This time you shall not be successful! Where my former followers once worshipped a dead god, now they worship me, for I am eternal! Destroy them!"

Looking up, the wanderers spy a lone female, dark-skinned and of exquisite beauty. She gestures toward the heroes, and a host of warriors, their spear points glistening like the teeth of some ferocious beast, surges from the ruins to attack. Nakari is 50" from the heroes, out of the range of their guns, and darts back inside the safety of the tunnel once combat begins.

Though they outnumber the strangers, the savages still suffer from acute fear of firearms and suffer a –2 penalty to Guts rolls.

The standing stones can be used for Cover. The debris patches count as difficult terrain (see page 72).

When half the warriors are dead or have fled in fear, Nakari, accompanied by a trio of comely, ebony-skinned maidens, emerges from a portal to urge her warriors on with her Leadership Edges. Behind her entourage walks a burly savage, a glistening white skull held in his arms. The savage provides the skull Medium Cover because of his muscular arms wrapped around it.

If the heroes are taking a beating and decide to surrender, Nakari orders them disarmed and taken prisoner. She has other uses for them. See the sidebar Captured for some ideas.

- **Warriors (4 per hero):** Treat as Tribal Warriors (see page 328).
- **Maidens (3):** Treat as Citizens (see page 323).
- **Skull Bearer:** Treat as a Tribal Chieftain (see page 329).
- **Nakari Reborn:** Use the stats for Nakari (see sidebar).

The only way to permanently kill Nakari's spirit is to destroy the body she inhabits *and* her skull, which is harder than it sounds.

If "Nakari" is killed, her spirit simply moves to another female body (she can't use male forms) within 24" and tries to possess it. This takes an action and requires an opposed Spirit roll. With success, the victim immediately gains Nakari's stats and appearance. A character seeing this must make a Guts roll or suffer the effects of Fear. On a failure, the spirit returns to the skull, regardless of how far away it is, where it remains until a woman comes within 24". If the skull is destroyed, and her spirit has nowhere to go, it is sent howling to whatever Hell awaits her when her body is slain. Hopefully the heroes will "kill" Nakari at least once, only to watch her reappear in a new body a short time later. Even when the skull is destroyed, Nakari can try to switch bodies.

Knowing that they must kill an innocent woman to defeat Nakari should present an interesting moral choice for the players.



Nakari, Vampire Queen

Ruler of the ancient city of Negari, Nakari was once a slave and secured the throne by assassination and guile. Her exquisite looks conceal her devious and cruel heart.

She keeps herself young by drinking the blood of young girls sacrificed to Nakura, a former priest and now deity of the city.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d12, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d8, Intimidation d12, Notice d6, Persuasion d12+2, Stealth d8
Charisma: +8
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Arrogant, Clueless (events outside her city), Greedy, Habit (drinks blood)
Edges: Charismatic, Command, Command Presence, Fanaticism, Fervor, Hold the Line, Level Headed, Natural Leader, Noble, Very Attractive
Gear: Skimpy costume, concealed dagger (Str+d4)
Special Abilities:

- **Life Drain:** Nakari is a vampire, though she is very much alive. Each sacrificial victim whose blood she drinks keeps the queen youthful for a month.
- **Puppet:** The Queen's unearthly beauty is difficult to resist. She can use the *puppet* power using her Spirit attribute as her arcane skill. Nakari suffers no Casting Modifier to this, but may only try once per day per person. Men have a –2 penalty to their rolls to resist.



Nakari's Skull

Nakari's skull is the center of her power and keeps her spirit tied to the mortal realm. It must remain within 12" of her, otherwise her body falls lifeless and her spirit returns to the skull.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d12, Strength d4, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d10, Stealth d6, Taunt d8
Pace: —; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Special Abilities:

- **Bite/Headbutt:** d4.
- **Flying:** Pace 6.
- **Scream:** The skull can emit a terrifying scream as an action. This works as the *fear* power. The skull uses its Spirit as its arcane skill and suffers no Casting Modifier.
- **Size –2:** The skull is a human skull.
- **Small:** Attackers are –2 to attack rolls against the skull because of its size.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; Called Shots do no extra damage. No wound penalties.

Firearms & Fear

While the northern Musselmen have had guns for as long as the Europeans, the tribes of sub-Saharan Africa are not accustomed to such devices.

Several times during his travels, Solomon Kane came across tribes who regarded him as a god because of his pistol, a stick which emitted a frightful noise and could kill a man dead at 50 paces, seemingly without cause. To them, the pistols were a magical tool of truly awesome power.

In game terms, this means warriors from any undeveloped nations who have not seem firearms before must test against Fear the first time they see one in use at relatively close range—Terror if the result of the firing is particularly bloody (causes a wound).

Such natives also suffer a –2 to resist Intimidation when the attacker wields such a "magical" device.

The Hills of the Dead

Further east from Negari lie the Hills of the Dead. To find them, one must leave behind the jungle, venturing into a realm where the trees fade to tall grasses, then to savannah. Beyond the scorching savannah rise a chain of somber mounds, the Hills of the Dead, also known as the Vampire Hills.

Several trails lead into the hills, across ravines and past great boulders, which lie as if some gigantic child had discarded marbles he grew tired of playing with. Throughout the climb, one cannot help but notice the many caves which line the hills, their black entrances gaping like hungry mouths.

From the peak of the highest hills one looks down onto a grassy plateau, a natural basin. At the bottom lies a city of colossal proportions, the City of Vampires.

History

In ages past, when the priests of Atlantis ruled the world, they built many colonies in Africa. The City of Vampires was one such colony, though in those days it was known as Engazi.

The Atlanteans surrounded the city with a high stone wall, which though crumbled in places, still protects the city. Masters of all they surveyed, the Atlanteans were still fearful of the natives, for where the Atlanteans were few in number, the tribesmen were countless and often revolted.

Within the walls, the Atlanteans built their city of huge stone blocks, lifted into place using science long-forgotten by the lesser men they once ruled. Many of the buildings remain standing, nearly intact save for a few crumbling walls.

Atlantis slipped beneath the waves long ago and the numerous colonies came under attack by those they had dominated. Engazi was no different. The Atlantean rulers retreated behind their sturdy fortifications. Countless warriors died assaulting the walls, and the city was eventually breached. Faced with extinction, the priests of Atlantis worked their fell magic, raising the fallen tribesmen as vampires to aid the defenders.

The plan worked, for the savages were driven back, never to return. But the priests, their numbers depleted, had created far too many vampires, and fell to the last beneath a frenzy of teeth and claws. Fearful of the vampires, the native tribes shunned the city, leaving it to crumble beneath the relentless whip of the wind. Today, nothing lives in the City of Vampires.

Solomon Kane notes this strangeness when he gazes upon the City of Vampires, for the city is easily defended even after a thousand years of neglect. N'Longa, Kane's trusted ju-ju man ally, can offer no explanation, but suggests that perhaps the place is not as safe as it appears, and that falling roofs forced the vampires to seek shelter elsewhere, deep in the caves surrounding the city that was once their home.

The City After Kane

Even though the City of Vampires was already a crumbling remnant of its former glory when Kane saw it, it was at least still standing then.

Following Solomon Kane's battle against the vampires, and more specifically N'Longa setting fire to the grassy plain, the city is now just a blackened mass of tumbled buildings and cracked stone. Its faded majesty is now all but undetectable among the city's charred ruins.

However, even though the city itself lies desolate, the surrounding caves remain untouched. The fire did not sweep through these empty hollows in the earth, and there is still something about the place that chills the blood.

Even now no living creatures hunt around the City of Vampires and the local tribes still avoid the area. For, although the bodies of the vampires have turned to ash and blown away, their final death scream—the only sound their race had uttered in a thousand years—can be heard echoing maddeningly on the wind.

Even after all this time, the City of Vampires and the ancient caves that surround it, still have a haunted air.

Beneath the City of Vampires

Lead In: The legend of the Hills of the Dead was well known in the region. While passing through a village, the heroes are warned by the tribesmen to avoid the Hills, for the vampires again walk the earth.

Background

Although Kane and N'Longa thought they destroyed the vampires, a handful managed to seek refuge from the conflagration in the tunnels deep beneath the city. There they hid for long months, fearful the vultures were waiting for them on the surface, terrified that the ju-ju man and his white man companion lurked in the shadows. Now, half-mad from starvation, they have braved the surface. Finding no sign of their would-be destroyers, they have resumed their old habits.

The Village of Death

Hearing that the vampires are again abroad in this land, the heroes will no doubt travel to investigate, despite the dire warnings of the villagers. As they journey across the savannah toward the Hills of the Dead, the heroes spy a small village of crude mud huts with thatched roofs. There is no sign of life within—neither people nor beasts stir.

On investigating, the heroes discover the villagers and their livestock dead. A hero making a successful Healing roll while examining the corpses reveals the cause—the bodies have been exsanguinated. A search of the village locates just two survivors, a young native girl in her early teens and her brother, hiding beneath a straw bed. She is terrified, and the heroes must make a Persuasion roll to elicit any information from her.

"They came in the night," she says. "They fell upon us like lions, clawing and biting. Our best warriors could not stop them. The dead have come back! The dead have come back from the hills!"

The girl insists on taking her brother to a nearby village for safety, and refuses any assistance. The only hills the heroes can see lie some three days' walk away.

The Hills of the Dead

On reaching the hills, the wanderers quickly discover a trail that winds steadily up the steep slope. Along the way are dozens of caves. The heroes are free to investigate them, but there is little inside except piles of bones, feasts from days before Kane came to this land.

Eventually the party reaches the hills above the city. Beneath them lie the blackened and cracked buildings of the City of Vampires, surrounded by a scorched patch on which no grass will grow. An eerie sound, the faint and distant death scream of a thousand souls, rides on the winds like some dark, demonic messenger—a sound that gnaws at the heroes' minds maddeningly. Have every adventurer make a Guts roll. With a failure, the hero suffers the effects of Fear for the remainder of the adventure in the Hills of the Dead.

Clambering down the slope toward the remains of the city requires a Climbing roll. Failure results in a level of Fatigue from bumps and bruises as the wanderer slips and stumbles down the rocky incline.

Within the city, the heroes can quickly judge that the fire that swept through here reached very high temperatures. Stone walls, each as thick as a man's arm, have cracked and splintered. Stone roofs, which survived countless millennia of weathering, were split by the raging inferno and collapsed, choking the buildings with rubble. The very ground itself is scarred by the blaze and is left barren and blackened.

Have the heroes make a Notice roll while searching the city. With success, they spot a set of stone stairs descending into the darkness below the city. A pile of rubble stands nearby, its scattered stones quite different from the other piles around. A Common Knowledge roll reveals that the stones have obviously been moved recently. These had fallen over the stairwell, protecting the foul creatures hiding beneath from the fire that scoured the city.

Since the conflagration, the foul creatures that sheltered underground have once more cleared the entrance to their lair and again ventured outside.

The Tunnels

If the wanderers are to put an end to the trouble caused by vampires, they must venture into the dark tunnels and kill the monsters in their ghastly lair.

The tunnels are a series of basements and subterranean chambers linked by corridors. All are stone lined. There is no light within the tunnels, save for that the explorers bring with them. The vampires are tough foes, so if the heroes are lacking suitable weapons, place a few torches in sconces. Each is very old but still ignites with flint and steel or other source of ignition.

Rather than rush the invaders, the few remaining vampires prefer to use cat-and-mouse tactics to pick off the intruders. They are wary of white men these days, and choose to use their advantages of night vision and stealth over brute force.

Run this section with atmosphere. Describe the darkness beyond the group's pale light sources and the faint scrabbling up ahead. In combat, imitate the sudden blur of claws and teeth as a vampire rushes from a dark corridor before retreating into the perpetual gloom after a slashing attack. Don't feel you have to rush this encounter—a long, drawn out walk through the darkness will be remembered by your players far longer than a quick battle.

The only chamber of any note contains an ancient faded mural. Here the party can learn the history of the city in pictorial form. They can discover how the builders came under attack by the savage tribes and raised the dead to save them, but were eventually crushed by their own abominations. Have the wanderers discover this room when there is only a single vampire left stalking them. Then, as they are distracted by the mural, the beast springs from the shadows to attack. If they kill the creature, they are witness to the dawn of the race (in the mural) and its demise.

There is no map provided for this Savage Tale as the search is for only a single room in a maze of tunnels and chambers. Make the search through the tunnels as long or short as you feel is dramatically appropriate.

African Vampires (1 per hero): See page 317.

Eyrie of the Demons

FAR to the east of the Slave Coast, on the edge of the jungle, dwell many cannibal tribes. They care not for the color of a man's skin or the name of his God, seeing only flesh and marrow ripe for their pots.

Beyond these lands the jungle gives way to savannah, but here prowl ferocious lions, who hunt man and beast without thoughts of morality. In this region of Africa, flesh is food, and food means survival.

The lands beyond the savannah are gently rolling hills covered in thick forest, which end at the bottom of tall, craggy, barren hills. Here there are also creatures which hunt man and beast, but these are not lions or cannibals, but something far older—the akaanas, an ancient race of winged demons from a time unimaginable.

History of the Akaanas

Throughout his travels, Kane had heard many legends about Africa, one of which related to the akaanas.

A ju-ju man told him the story of how a great flock of winged devils flew over his lands, vanishing beyond the jungle far to the south. According to legend, the winged demons once lived far to the north, on the shores of a great lake filled with bitter water. Here they lived in great numbers, until a mighty hero, N'Yasunna, captain of a mighty war canoe, battled them, slaying many with sword and arrow. Those akaanas that survived fled south, across the bitter lake.

With a sudden realization, the sort that comes close to madness, for it opens doors of history which man was never meant to see behind, Kane deduces that N'Yasunna was none other than the Greek hero Jason, his war canoe the famed *Argo,* and the akaanas known to Classical scholars as the harpies.

GM Note: This use of Classical legend transposed to an alternate time and location is a fantastic tool you can use in your own games. Take the legend of the Minotaur, for instance. We have already seen that the ancient Atlanteans sacrificed virgins and young men to their gods. Is it coincidence that the Minoans of legend did the same, demanding them in tribute from Athens? What if the Minotaur was not a figment of an author's imagination, but some Atlantean created monstrosity, perhaps seen as a god manifest on Earth?

The Land Before Kane

When Kane arrived here, there were two villages, Upper and Lower Bogonda, so named because of their position on the hills.

Lower Bogonda had recently suffered a vicious attack, for no man or beast stirred, nor ever would again. Upper Bogonda, however, was a living community, ruled by Chief Kuroba and the priest, Goru.

Following a series of tribal wars, the Bogondi fled their homeland. The rolling hills they discovered were fertile, with plenty of game and many sources of water, and so the tribe settled. Then their children began to disappear. The Bogondi warriors scoured the lands for their sons and daughters and discovered many caves cut into the steep sided valleys.



A great battle ensued, but the Bogondi were no match for the winged demons. Unable to flee into the jungle because of the cannibals or the lands south because of their tribal enemies, the Bogondi retreated to their villages and hoped for the best.

The akaanas didn't follow up their victory, for they dined mainly on goats and wild pigs, taking human flesh only rarely. Then the rains stopped. Facing starvation, the Bogondi hunted the wild pigs, which in turn forced the akaanas to prey on the Bogondi. The inhabitants of Lower Bogonda fought back and were slaughtered to the last.

In desperation, the citizens of Upper Bogonda began leaving human sacrifices to appease the akaanas. It was one such sacrifice which first alerted the Puritan to the horrors of the country of the akaanas.

The Akaanas' Lair

Solomon Kane never ventured into the looming hills where the akaanas lived. Had he done so, he would have found no evidence of a civilization, for the akaanas were barbaric, and knew nothing of fire or tool-making.

Amid the numerous valleys and ravines, Kane would have found only scores of caves, each home to one or more akaanas, and each littered with the remnants of their feasts.

The Land After Kane

After witnessing the slaughter of the entire Bogondi population and enacting a fitting revenge, Kane left the blackened ruins of Upper Bogonda, satisfied that the akaanas were a dead race. Kane was wrong.

The Bogondi had told Kane that the devils had a king, but the king did not accompany his kin to their doom. More cautious than those who followed him, the akaana king circled the village, watching from a great height as the white man massacred his race.

The king still lives, and he is sorely vexed. He plots revenge against the pale-skinned men, who had laid his race low twice now. He cursed the memory of N'Yasunna and of Kane, and he plotted revenge, waiting until white men entered his domain for a third, and final, time.

King of the Demons

Lead In: The heroes hear friendly natives speak of a hostile tribe far to the east, who take prisoners and feed them to their "demon bird god." Following the native's vague directions, the wanderers roam for a while through the wilderness, before coming across a village under attack.

Background

Following Kane's near total destruction of his species, the akaana king came close to starvation. The western cannibals knew him to be flesh and blood, and did not fear a lone akaana. With the Bogondi obliterated by the greedy akaana, the savannah cleansed of wildlife by the actions of Solomon Kane and the predation of lions, the king had little choice but to hunt in the southern jungle, the lands the Bogondi had once fled in terror.

His presence was soon noticed, but after the savages' spears bounced off his hide, they feared and worshipped him as a god. Now the savages provide fresh sacrifices for their living god.

War

As the heroes crest a low range of hills, they see a small village at the base of the hills under attack. The defenders are badly outnumbered, having suffered heavy losses. All the attackers are warriors, whereas the defenders are families.

Should the wanderers be reluctant to get involved, they spy one of the attackers waving a standard comprising of a human skull topped by a crude carving of a "winged demon." If they still decide to sit and watch, the attackers win after another half hour of fighting, dragging away captives and corpses.

Should the heroes come to the aid of the defenders run the battle in full. Each player should control two allies in addition to his own character.

Don't forget the rules on black powder weapons and Guts rolls. The warriors have never seen a gun before.

When half the attackers are incapacitated, the rest flee into the jungle.

Friendly Tribesmen (2 per hero): Use Tribal Warrior stats (see page 328).

Akaana Tribesmen (4 per hero): Use Tribal Warrior stats (see page 328).

The White God of Old

The surviving villagers praise the heroes, showering them with gifts of food. The village elder (the chief was killed before the heroes arrived) talks to the heroes in the language of the river people.

"Thank you, White Gods," he says. "You saved us from the Gownari tribe. They worship a great winged god who feasts on flesh. Him very bad. Much ju-ju.

"Gownari tribe now called Akaana tribe after demon god. Very bad men. Hunt for sacrifices. Live in hills." He gestures to a range of hills visible on the distant northern horizon.

"Many demon men once live there, but other White God kill them. Only great god left. Now you come to finish fight?"

The elder, M'Bobo, can't provide any details about the "other White God," having heard the story only told and retold by other tribes.

His people tend any wounds the heroes have suffered, letting them stay in the village as long as they want. When they are ready to face the "winged demon god," they supply food and drink enough to get the heroes to the hills.

Recruiting Allies

The heroes may try to persuade members of M'Bobo's tribe to accompany them to defeat the king. M'Bobo is reluctant for his people to act alone, but agrees to summon the leaders of the surrounding tribes, all of whom have suffered raids. A week later, the chiefs gather at the village.

Have the heroes make a Persuasion roll. For every success and raise they score, 10 warriors from among the tribes are assigned to help them. Divide these allies as evenly as possible among the heroes and hand each one an Ally Sheet (using the same stats for friendly tribesman as before).

Lost

Whether through a useless guide, a guide who has deserted them, or simply because they didn't hire a guide to start with, the wanderers are now lost in unfamiliar territory. Heroes who are simply wandering where their feet take them are, technically, already lost, so you can reuse this section time and again.

This is the perfect time to introduce the Fatigue rules to the heroes, as their water runs down in the desert, or the icy winds of the mountains chill their bones. You can also have the heroes make use of their Tracking and Survival skills to find game, using the rules on page 23 to see how much food they acquire.

It's also perfect for introducing a new story. Perhaps the heroes, half delirious from thirst or starvation, sunburned or frostbitten, stumble across a lost city or a village plagued by a supernatural beast.

Each day, the guide (or a character who has journeyed the land before) can make a Knowledge (Area Knowledge) roll at –4 to spot a familiar landmark and get them back on course.

The Journey

The trip to the hills takes many days. Feel free to add a few extra surprises if you wish.

When the heroes reach the base of the hills, they come across a deserted village. In the center is a large burnt patch, littered with sun-bleached bones. A successful Common Knowledge roll quickly reveals the bones are not human. A raise, or a simple success on an appropriate Knowledge roll, reveals they belong to tall, bipedal, bird-like beings.

The Demon King's Eyrie

The akaana king lives in the barren hills his people inhabited since their expulsion from ancient Greece. The Gownari tribe has moved into the caves as well.



At the base of the ravine that leads to the caves, the heroes discover several skulls mounted on stakes, a warning that they are now entering the demon king's realm. Have the heroes make a Guts roll to avoid Fear. Each player makes a Group Guts roll for the warriors he commands.

The lower caves are all deserted, though the heroes may wish to confirm this for themselves. Further up, there are clear signs of activity outside caves, such as piles of fresh bones, smoking fires, and the like. However, there are no tribesmen to be seen.

The survivors of the raid have reported the appearance of white men to the akaana king. Suspecting they will come looking for him, he has arranged an ambush. When the heroes reach the point marked X on the map, the hiding tribesmen surge forth from the caves north of the ambush point.

The akaana king, as cowardly as the rest of his Godforsaken race, only joins the fray once his warriors have suffered 75% losses. At that point, he emerges from the northernmost cave.

If the akaana king be slain, his remaining followers immediately lose heart and flee to the north, throwing down their weapons in their panic.

Akaana Tribesmen (5 per hero): Use Tribal Warrior stats (see page 328), but they are armed with Nzappa Zaps (Str+d6).

(WC) Akaana King

The last known surviving member of his damned race, the akaana king is worshipped as a god. If forced to join the battle, he attacks like a winged fury. He bears a special malice for white heroes in his dark heart and singles them out before all others if any are in a party he attacks.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10(A), Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d8, Notice d10, Stealth d8
Pace: 3; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 11 (2)
Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Thick, leathery skin.
- **Bite/Talons:** Str+d8.
- **Death From Above:** If the akaana king hits with a raise, it causes damage as usual. In addition, the thing grasps its prey in its claws, soars back into the air, moving the remainder of its Flying Pace. The next round the creature drops its prey to the ground (see falling damage).

  Characters on Hold or who have not yet taken their action may attempt to hold on by making an opposed Strength roll. If successful, the prey continues to struggle. With a raise, the victim forces the creature close enough to a landing spot to jump free without taking damage.
- **Flight:** Akaanas have a Flying Pace of 12".
- **Infravision:** Akaanas halve penalties for Darkness against living targets.
- **Living God:** The akaana king has the Command, Fervor, and Hold the Line Edges.
- **Size +2:** The akaana king is much taller and broader than a human.

The Nameless Tombs

The story of the nameless tombs dates from Biblical times, from the reign of King Solomon, son of David (known to the Musselmen as Suleiman).

To learn the story of how the tombs came to be, we must delve into Islamic folklore, for the Christian Bible mentions nothing of King Solomon's imprisonment of the spirits known as the genii (singular genie).

Suleiman was the greatest of kings, wise beyond his years, able to see the hidden things of the world, and gifted by God with the ability to communicate with animals. In these ancient days, the genii lived as did men, for they were created by God as intelligent beings, though formed of smokeless fire, not the clay used to create mankind.

When Suleiman came to power, he ordered the genii to forsake their false idols and to worship God, whom many had forgotten. Many of the beings accepted and became Suleiman's followers, even joining his army. But just as many did not accept Suleiman's terms and rebelled.

Using powerful magic, Suleiman drove the genii out of his lands, imprisoning them behind seals of warding. Some were placed in copper jars and deposited at the ends of the earth or within the oceans. The more powerful fiends, some of which took the form of shapeless masses of pulsating flesh, humans with bestial features, or towering columns of fire, Suleiman drove far to the west and imprisoned in tombs whose locks were sealed for all time.

Why did Suleiman not destroy these foul creatures? Though Kane ponders the matter, he comes to no conclusion He speculates that perhaps the magic of man was too weak to destroy the demons. In fact, Suleiman the Wise imprisoned the genii so that one day they might repent for their sins and accept God's grace.

What became of these tombs remained a mystery, until Solomon Kane happened upon one while a captive of Musselman slavers.

The Tomb

The tomb found by Kane's captors is very similar to many others that dot the world, though what the others contain is unknown.

Kane's tomb was hidden in a clearing in a forested area, cut by an ancient path upon which feet walked before the Seljuks or Romans came to Africa. Surrounding the tomb was a ring of trees forming a boundary. Within this ring nothing grew, the ground desolate and blasted.

The tomb itself was a mass of stone, joined without the use of mortar yet with gaps so thin a knife blade could not pass between the blocks. Palpable evil radiated from it, washing over the clearing like waves.

The only entrance was a heavy, metal door, its great lock fused as is by intense heat and inscribed with mystic symbols. Upon the door, written in the ancient tongue of the Hebrews, was an inscription. Neither Kane nor his captors could decipher the glyphs, which read, "I, Suleiman, son of Dawud, have sealed this place. Let no man undo what God has decreed done."

Unfortunately, the warding spell placed on the tomb by Suleiman was designed to prevent the genii from getting out, not to prevent foolish treasure hunters or curious explorers from getting in.

Kane was in no hurry to explore the tomb once the red thing held captive within for almost two millennia was slain, preferring instead to heave the mass back inside and close the door. Had he entered, he would have found nothing remarkable—just a vast chamber, a prison for a genie who would not accept God's grace.

Other Tombs

Suleiman imprisoned hundreds of genii, scores of which were forced into tombs just like the one above. Scattered far and wide among the desolate places of the Known World, the tombs sit through the ages, the evil within growing in its hatred of God, the name of Suleiman, and all of God's work. Perhaps one day they will all be opened, but not until Judgment Day, when God will finally expel the wicked to the fiery depths of Hell.

The Red God

Lead In: You can run this Savage Tale in any dark corner of eastern Africa, the Middle East, or even amid the ruins of Greece. We've chosen to set the adventure on the African savannah.

The heroes hear talk of a strange stone building, in which the locals say a demon slept. According to the local shaman, the demon has escaped. Hunters go missing in the vicinity, and the whole area is now shunned.

A Grisly Find

Investigating the rumors of the cursed place they heard on their travels, the heroes discover one of Suleiman's genie prisons. The door is open, with no signs of forced entry. Carved in the center of the door is a six-sided star. Characters making a Common Knowledge roll at –2 or a Knowledge (History or Religion) roll with no penalty recognize it as a Star of David, the symbol of the Jewish faith.

Lying on the ground near the edge of the clearing in which the crypt sits are a dozen skeletons, their hands and feet cruelly bound with rope, their bones crushed by some elephantine force.

Half a day's travel later, the heroes happen upon a small village. It comprises a dozen circular mud huts with thatched roofs and a perimeter made of thorn bushes, ripped from the earth and hammered in place. In the center of the village is a large stake driven into the hard soil.

A group of warriors come out to meet the wanderers, cautiously inquiring as to their business in the region. Once the heroes have introduced themselves, the warriors seem to relax a little and invite the strangers to accompany them to meet their chieftain.

Invite Refused

Should the heroes refuse the invitation, the warriors allow them to depart in peace. That night, no matter where the wanderers make camp, the warriors find them and launch an attack.

The warriors are after captives, not corpses, so they carry clubs instead of spears. The remaining warriors flee if more than half their number is killed.

A casual examination of the corpses reveals they bear the same tattoos as the tribesmen they met earlier that day. Hopefully this is enough incentive for the heroes to return to the village in the morning.

Warriors (2 per hero): Use the Tribal Warrior stats (see page 328), but they carry clubs (Str+d4), which can inflict nonlethal damage, and have a Parry of 5.

The Ju-Ju Chief

The heroes are escorted to the chieftain's hut (the largest). Sitting on a wooden throne draped in lion skins is the chieftain, a gaunt man of advanced years, but with eyes belying a hidden, inner strength. Beside him sits a dusky-skinned man, his face haggard and his countenance one of utter dejection.

"Welcome, white men," says the chief, his deep voice in stark contrast to his frail form. "Me N'Gowa, mighty chieftain of this land. You guests of N'Gowa. You stay here for few days as guests."

Have the heroes make a Notice roll. With success, they see the dusky man move as if to speak, but a quick glance from N'Gowa silences him. On a raise, they catch sight of a talisman around N'Gowa's neck, a six-sided star, identical to the one on the mysterious mausoleum.

If anyone mentions this to the chief, he quickly stuffs it inside his robes and claims, "A trinket me take from slaver." He says no more on the subject.

Characters enquiring about the chief's companion are told he was a slaver who tried to raid the village, but was caught when the warriors drove off his companions. He is now the chief's slave.

Should the wanderers ask about the stake, the chief merely says that lions prowl the savannah. Goats are tied to the stake as bait, to lure the lions to their death at the hands of his warriors.

The Seal of Solomon

For the rest of the day, the wanderers are entertained with dances and feasts. As night falls, warriors escort the heroes to their hut.

An hour later, the guests hear a faint knocking at their door. Outside is the dusky captive, who introduces himself as Joshua Ben-Ruben. He says he has something vital to tell the heroes. Once inside, Joshua tells his story.

"My name is Joshua. I came from the holy city of Jerusalem to visit the peoples of Ethiopia, many of whom have accepted the faith of Judaism.

"Many moons ago, the tribesmen of this village found a stone building upon whose door was a six pointed star, the mark of Solomon.

"When I came to the village, the ju-ju man recognized my amulet, which he now wears, and took me captive, forcing me to teach him my language. Yes, that is not the tribe's true chief you saw. He is long dead.

"The ju-ju man found something in that crypt, something nameless, evil from the days when Solomon the Wise drove the demons from Israel. He needed my Star of David to control it, and my language to communicate with it."

"He had the thing kill the chieftain. Since then he has ruled in his stead, offering monthly sacrifices to what he calls the Red God. That stake is where they are tied."

With that the door crashes open. Standing in the doorway, his ebony skin glistening in the light of the full moon, is a hulking warrior, a veritable gorilla of a man. "Chief say you bad men," he spits. "You all be offered to the Red God. Throw down weapons!"

Outside the hut are 12 warriors (less any the heroes killed during the nocturnal ambush if they initially refused to enter the village). Joshua is not trained for combat, but he has seen what happens to those sacrificed to the Red God, and would rather die fighting.

Should half the warriors be killed, the ju-ju man clutches his Star of Solomon and summons the former inhabitant of the crypt, the Red Thing. It appears a round later. The shaman must concentrate to control the Red Thing. So long as he does, it only attacks the heroes.

Should the chief lose his concentration, be robbed of his Star of David (a successful Disarm maneuver), or killed, the beast is freed of his control, attacking the nearest person every round. Once the thing begins its killing spree, the remaining warriors make Guts rolls or flee in terror. Their Red God has deserted them.

A character cannot control the Red Thing simply by speaking Hebrew and holding the Seal, but he can harm the beast. Whoever holds the Seal treats all his weapons as magic weapons for the purposes of what they can harm (this includes the Red Thing, and other entities like ghosts).

Hulking Warrior: Use Tribal Chieftain (see page 329).



Warriors (12): Treat as Tribal Warriors (see page 328).

Chieftain: Treat as a Tribal Shaman (see page 329).

Joshua: Use Citizen (see page 323). He is currently unarmed.



The Red Thing

...and the red pulsing Thing was lurching toward Kane like a thick cloud of blood in the air, that continually changed its shape and form and yet somehow trod lumberingly as if on monstrous legs!"

— The Footfalls Within

The Red Thing is a genii, a nameless horror imprisoned for eternity by Solomon the Wise. It is a creature of contrasts, for it has form yet is not physical, has no limbs yet walks as if on elephantine legs. Although intelligent, it cannot communicate and has only base desires, primarily killing anything in its path.

The Red Thing is a slave to the ju-ju man, whose magic, use of Hebrew, and possession of a Seal of Solomon, has convinced it that he is Solomon the Wise.

It serves not out of loyalty, but out of fear of being re-imprisoned.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12
Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10
Pace: 4; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 14
Special Abilities:

- **Fear (–2):** Anyone seeing the Red Thing must make a Guts roll at –2.
- **Fearless**: Immune to Fear and Tests of Will.
- **Formless:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; Immune to poison and disease; No additional damage from Called Shots; No wound penalties.
- **Invulnerability:** The Red Thing suffers no damage from mundane attacks as objects pass straight through it. Magic items, weapons, and supernatural powers affect them normally.
- **Large:** Attackers add +2 to their attack rolls when attacking the Red Thing.
- **Shuffling Gait:** The Red Thing rolls a d4 running die.
- **Size +4:** The true size of the creature is hard to discern, but it is at least the size of an elephant.
- **Slam:** Str+d6.
- **Touch of Decay:** When the Red Thing hits with its Fighting roll, the victim is also splattered with corrosive slime. He must make a Vigor roll (at –2 if the Thing scored a raise), or suffer a level of Fatigue. This can cause Death. Nonmagical objects which touch the fiend suffer a permanent 1d4 reduction to their Toughness each "hit."
- **Unholy Stench:** Any creature that moves adjacent to the Thing or is adjacent at the end of the Thing's movement must make a Vigor roll or become Fatigued.

The City of Gold

Far to the south of the jungle, beyond the forested hills and across the wide savannah, lies yet another hidden treasure, the fabled City of Gold. Its name is known to the Musselmen and African tribesmen of the north, and is spoken of with a mixture of wonder and fear, for those who go in search of the city never return.

History

The city is as old as distant Negari, being constructed near rich deposits of gold by the conquerors from Atlantis. So rich were the deposits that the walls of the king's throne room were lined with sheets of gold an inch thick, the spires of the tall towers gleamed like needles of fire, and the priests wore so much gold around their necks they walked stooped.

Like the other cities, it suffered greatly from slave revolts. The rulers fled, leaving their gold behind. Sealing themselves and scores of slaves in the heavily-fortified mines high in the hills, they began a new city, deep underground.

Over time, the slaves stripped away all the gold, selling it to live debauched lives in parody of their former masters. The sounds of their drunken revelries filled the hills for long years before they turned on each other,

fighting to the death for the last scraps of gold. Within two centuries, the City of Gold was deserted, its once shining walls reduced to drab stone, the streets silent.

Within their tunnels, the priests ruled over an army of slaves. Their history slowly became twisted over time, until they came to believe that they were the victims of an unjust world. New generations mingled their blood with that of the slaves, and soon the line between master and slave was blurred.

Thousands of years passed beneath the earth. Inbreeding stripped away the last vestiges of humanity from the priests and their slaves.

The troglodytes would likely have remained underground until their extinction were it not for a powerful earthquake. Fleeing from their tunnels in terror, they emerged into the blazing light of day. Pained by the sun, whose warmth they had not felt in eons, the wretches blundered into their former city, seeking shelter from the burning light.

Though the arts of writing and speech had been lost to them, they could still recognize the imagery behind the faded murals and cracked statues. Some tiny spark of humanity was rekindled in those moments, though it was a perverse mockery. The troglodytes saw that they were the destined rulers of the city, and reclaimed it as their own.

Moving by night, they began raiding the neighboring tribes, taking slaves to help rebuild their city and to use as bloody sacrifices to the Moon, for they had relearned the old religion and were keen to ensure the protection of the silvery orb, whose pale light did not sear their flesh or blind their squinting, red eyes.

The City

The true City of Gold is but a distant memory. Its once-proud walls have crumbled under the weight of Time, its paved streets are cracked and choked with weeds, and the jungle has encroached far into the suburbs.

Only in the center, where stands the many-tiered, flat-topped Temple of the Moon, are there signs of renewal. The jungle vines have been cut back and new dwellings have been constructed, though these are crude affairs, with none of the cyclopean majesty of the older structures.

By day nothing moves within the tangled streets, and even animals avoid traveling along the ground, fearful of the creatures which lurk within the darkened buildings. But as the sun sets, so the city comes to life.

Lines of native slaves are marched to work by their pale-skinned, bestial masters, whose whips crack relentlessly while the priests chant meaningless gibberish and howl at the moon as their stone knives carve out the hearts of their unwilling victims.

The natives of the region have a new name for the city—they call it the City of Ghosts.

The City of Ghosts

Lead In: The story of the City of Gold is well known. In a coastal tavern or inland trading post, the heroes encounter a drunken Portuguese merchant who has wasted his life searching for it. He tells them the entire region where the city is supposed to lie is dangerous, for the natives believe white men to be fearsome ghosts, and attack them on sight.

Death to Ghosts

If the heroes are driven by greed or lust for fame, the rumor may be enough to draw them in. The adventure begins as they happen upon a small village in the vicinity of the City of Gold.

The sun is sinking into the west when you come across a small village. Like many others you have encountered in your many travels through the Dark Continent, the huts are made of mud, the roofs thatched, the perimeter marked by thorny bushes. Though you see no sign of any villagers, faint wisps of smoke are rising steadily from the huts and a faint, rhythmic drumming, the secret heartbeat of Africa, indicates there is life.

Wait until the heroes enter the village before continuing.

Were it not for the constant sound of drumming, which stirs your savage soul and speaks to you of primal desires, you would swear the village lay deserted.

As you walk between two huts, you spy a lone figure, a black shadow against the darkening sky, gathering dung for the fire.

The African hasn't seen or heard the heroes. Should they try to communicate with him, he is caught unawares. Continue by reading the text below.

The figure jumps, startled by your voices. His dark face goes ashen gray and a single word escapes his quivering lips. "Ghosts!"

Suddenly he bolts, shouting the same word over and over. Timber doors fly open from nearby huts. Warriors armed with wicked spears and decorated with white paint emerge.

On seeing you, they charge, their eyes wide with fear and rage.



The warriors have mistaken the Europeans in the party for the bestial inhabitants of the City of Gold, who have recently raided the village. They are subject to the rules on Fear and firearms.

Although the wanderers can fight back, it should be obvious to them that they have been mistaken for someone else. Attempts to pacify the natives require a Persuasion roll at –4. This can be made each round as an action. Initially Hostile (see the Reaction Table on page 127), the natives call off their attack if they reach Neutral, but still keep their spears leveled at the party.

Warriors (2 per hero): Treat as Tribal Warriors (see page 328).

The Ju-Ju Man Speaks

Once the situation is calmed, the heroes are approached by the tribe's ju-ju man. He studies any European characters from a safe distance, then warily approaches. He tugs at hair and beards, gazes into the heroes' eyes, and touches their metal weapons. Satisfied the heroes are not ghosts, he gestures to the warriors, who lower their spears.

"You no ghosts," he says in heavily accented English (or whatever common tongue the heroes speak). "Me ju-ju man, N'Ambi. You speak with me in hut. Tell story of why you here."

N'Ambi then leads the heroes to his hut and arranges for healers to attend to any wounds the heroes have suffered. He listens intently to his guests' tale, asking questions about specific deeds they mention. When they have finished, he speaks.

"Warriors think you from City of Ghosts," he says, gesturing vaguely to the east. "Ghosts with pale skin and red eyes hunt men. Take men away. No see men again. Ghosts come when moon is fat. Moon fat tonight so ghosts come."

As if to emphasize his words, a blood-curdling howl fills the night. The warriors immediately grab their spears and rush for the doors. N'Ambi looks at once to the heroes, gesturing toward their weapons and the door.

Ghosts in the Darkness

A group of "ghosts" is attacking the village, moving in from the gate toward the huts. Complete Ally Sheets for the village warriors and distribute these among the players. The number of warriors available equals two per hero, less any Incapacitated in the previous encounter.

The moon is full tonight, its glimmer illuminating the night in silver frost. Loping toward you are several pale forms, apelike in appearance, their hairy bodies hunched over, muscular arms dragging along the floor, and red eyes gleaming in the moonlight. Around their necks, displayed like grisly war trophies, are strings of grinning human skulls. With a fearful shriek they raise their crude stone axes and throw themselves at you.

The "ghosts" have never seen firearms before, and suffer the usual effects, as detailed on page 196. Faced with the skill of the heroes, the "ghosts" flee into the night if they suffer casualties equal to 50% or greater.

A hero who spends an action studying the "ghosts" discovers they are not apes, as their appearance implies, but humans, albeit highly devolved. This requires a Guts roll to avoid Nausea.

"Ghosts" (3 per hero)

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Tracking d6
Charisma: –4
Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7
Hindrances: Mean, Ugly
Edges: Brawny
Gear: Stone axe (Str+d6)
Special Abilities:

- **Berserk:** If Shaken, "ghosts" go Berserk. They add +2 to Fighting, Strength and Damage rolls, as well to their Toughness. They suffer –2 to Parry.
- **Weakness (Sunlight):** The "ghosts" are pained by sunlight. They suffer –2 to all Trait rolls while in bright sunlight, and –1 in dim light (such as a cloudy day or the effects of a torch or *light* spell).

Into the City of Ghosts

Should the characters not volunteer to investigate the City of Ghosts, N'Ambi prompts them, explaining how the "ghosts" have raided many lands and weakened the tribes. He can provide rough directions to the city. N'Ambi tells them the journey is just over a day, but he doesn't caution them to go into the city in daylight.

He's given the guests enough clues, and the troglodytes' albino appearance should provide further evidence that a daylight assault would be advantageous to the party.

The City

As described on page 206, the once-proud City of Gold is now a ruin, heavily overgrown with only the central area cleared of jungle and debris.

By daylight, the city appears to be deserted. Nothing moves amid the derelict ruined buildings, including animals. The wanderers can explore the outer regions without fear of encountering any troglodytes.

At night, the heroes must make a Stealth roll opposed by a group Notice roll for the troglodytes or be ambushed by 2d6 "ghosts" before they reach the cleared part of the city. Captured heroes are dragged off into slavery. Any escape or rescue plan is left to the GM and players to devise.

The core of the city is a construction site by night, with gangs of native slaves working to clear rubble and the encroaching jungle, all the while being whipped and beaten by their troglodyte masters.

Murals

Many of the buildings have murals and engravings telling the history of the city up to the point the original occupants fled. The engravings are extremely lifelike, carved by masterful hands. Have the heroes make a Smarts roll at –2. With success, paraphrase the early history of the city.

As well as these faded records, there are newer engravings. Much cruder in style, they show the former slaves as masters of the city. Another Smarts roll at –2 allows them to learn the fate of the city after the slave

revolt. The troglodytes have not created any new engravings since they returned, that skill being beyond their limited intellect.

The Slave Houses

The troglodytes and their slaves inhabit the area in and around the Temple of the Moon. The rulers live in the upper levels of the pyramid while the slaves huddle in the ramshackle houses surrounding it.

Each of the slave houses holds 2d10 slaves, guarded by 1d3 "ghosts," and there are a total of 12 occupied houses dotted around the temple. The doors are barred from the inside, and have a Toughness of 10 for the purposes of battering or chopping them down. Windows are covered with a curtain of woven vines, and allow for a stealthier ingress.

Combat in a house does not instantly alert neighboring guards. Make a simple Notice roll for the guards in all adjacent houses, subtracting 2 if the heroes won by stealth, and adding 2 if they used firearms, made excessive noises, or the battle moved into the street. With success, the alarm is raised and the guards come to investigate.

Rescued slaves are, naturally enough, extremely fearful of any white-skinned heroes, figuring them to be more ghosts, perhaps from a rival tribe. The slaves begin as Hostile on the Reaction Table (on page 127), though in this case it represents total fear, not violent hostility. It is up to the heroes to win them over.

A single Persuasion roll can be made in each liberated house to convince the slaves the heroes are not ghosts and are here to rescue them. Mentioning N'Ambi's name is worth a +2 bonus, as he is well known among the local tribes. Each group of slaves rescued so far grants a further +1 (no limit), and a dark-skinned speaker grants another +2. Each success and raise increases the slaves' reaction one step toward Helpful.

When one group of slaves reaches Friendly (requiring 2 raises, but possible once more slaves have been liberated), half the total number of freed slaves join the wanderers' side, acting as Allies, and allowing heroes with Leadership Edge to shine. They grab axes from slain "ghosts" or lumps of stone. Until this happens, they remain hidden in the houses.

Once the army is raised, remaining "ghosts" in the houses emerge into the street and the battle to free the entire city ensues. Each round thereafter, 1d4 "ghosts" emerge from the temple as reinforcements (to a maximum of 12). The wanderers also gain reinforcements—each house the heroes haven't already liberated can produce 2d4 slaves willing to risk life and limb for freedom. One house per round, chosen by the GM, produces reinforcements in this manner.

When the "ghosts" have been reduced to 10 in total (including any of the reinforcements from the temple), the "ghost" king strides from the temple, a wickedly sharp great axe in his hands and hatred in his eyes. He moves to attack the nearest hero immediately, ignoring any slaves.

- **"Ghosts":** See page 209.
- **Slaves:** Treat as Citizens (page 323), but with improvised weapons.



"Ghost" King

Unlike his followers, the "ghost" king is not pained by sunlight, being possessed of sufficient willpower to shrug off the effects.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d10
Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Tracking d6
Charisma: –4
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8
Hindrances: Mean, Ugly
Edges: Arcane Resistance, Berserk, Block, Brawny, Combat Reflexes, Frenzy, Improved Sweep
Gear: Stone great axe (Str+d10, 2 hands, –1 Parry)

The Temple

The temple is the true heart of the city, and home to the tyrannical ruler, a hulking brute possessed of sharp mind and unearthly strength. He is protected by 16 loyal guards (12 of these are the reinforcements who enter the battle above, leaving 4 with the king).

The entrance to the temple is blocked by a colossal stone, which lowers from the ceiling. The mechanism to open it is on the inside, and so the heroes cannot enter the temple until the slave battle begins and the stone is raised to allow reinforcements out.

Inside are more murals and the sleeping mats of the "ghosts". The murals are like those in the streets, but studying them requires just a straight Smarts roll due to their higher quality and better state of preservation.

Aftermath

Once the last "ghost" is slain, the heroes have succeeded in liberating the city. The tribes of the rescued slaves reward the heroes with lavish feasts, oaths of friendship, and a total of £2d10 per hero in assorted goods. Heroes who search the city for its fabled gold find nothing: every single ounce has been sold or stolen over time.

None of the local tribes wish to inhabit the city, and unless the heroes decide to use it as a base of operations, it is lost to the jungle within a few years, eventually crumbling to dust and fading from memory.

Basti, City on Nyayna

Several islands, collectively known as the Isles of Ra, stand in the middle of a great lake by the name of Nyayna. Of these isles, the largest is Basti, and it is home to an ancient city.

The shores of the lake are surrounded by quagmire, and reaching the gently lapping water is an arduous, perilous voyage. Being an island, the only way to reach Basti is by boat, for crocodiles make swimming the great distance between the shore and isle a suicidal venture.

Before one reaches the island of Basti, one spies the great, flat-topped pyramids which jut from its surface like the weathered and worn teeth of some gigantic, ancient beast.

On docking at the wharf, visitors follow a paved road through fields of golden wheat, irrigated by sparkling channels of water, which flow through the fields like veins.

The road ends at the mighty walls of the city, which are broken by a pair of gates framed by dozens of clawed moons, the holy symbol of Basti. Through the gates, there is a wide avenue which runs through the city to the Temple of the Moon, a massive pyramid located in the center of the city. Stairs rise steeply up the flanks to the top platform, where a circular temple dedicated to the Clawed Moon is surrounded by a low wall. Several grooved altars, each covered in scores of clawed moons lie there, their stone stained crimson with centuries of bloody offerings.

In forgotten parody of their former faith, the Khabasti sacrifice virgin women and young men to their god, spilling their blood on the great black altar by the light of the full moon. Although the sacrifice is dispatched with a knife, the victim is first forced to suffer excruciating torture, the skin being peeled from the flesh by wicked knives and eyes gouged out, yet both horrors are conducted in such a way that the victim lives.

Two other pyramids, smaller in scope yet no less impressive in their majesty, flank the Temple of the Moon. Within these pyramids are many small cells and chambers, once used by the ancient priesthood, who worshipped many gods when the city was new. As the

worship of the Moon rose to dominance, so other worship was forbidden and the ancient carvings of other gods which once adorned these walls defaced.

Surrounding the pyramids are shops and houses. Those nearest the pyramids are large, sprawling affairs with colonnaded courtyards and spacious rooms. These are the home of the Khabasti. Further out, toward the walls, lie the ramshackle mud brick homes of the Masutos, each building barely large enough to contain its occupants.

History

Like Negari and Engazi, Basti is a remnant of ancient Atlantis, though the city is newer than its hoary and distant neighbors. Among Atlantis' many conquests was the land of Egypt. Here the pure-blooded Atlantean elite forced slaves to construct the great Pyramid of Giza (whose true age is far older and its purpose more sinister than men of Kane's era would believe), and the lion-faced Sphinx, which later generations would recarve in the image of man once the shackles of slavery and oppression were cast off.

As elsewhere across the world, the native slaves of the Atlantean priests rose in bloody revolt when Atlantis sank. As Egypt had a higher proportion of slaves than the other Atlantean bastions, the cities there were overrun and the ruling elite fled deeper into Africa.

Here they found the isles of Nyayna, which at the time were deserted. Using their far superior technology, they enslaved the local tribes and forced them to build a new city, the city of Basti, named after their chief deity.

In Egypt, the Atlanteans worshipped many gods, among whom was the goddess Bast. Originally a solar deity, she was the clawed protector of Ra, the sun god and chief deity of the Egyptian Atlanteans.

Over the centuries, a dispute rose among the priests of Basti as to whether she was truly a solar deity, or a lunar one. What brought about this change of view is lost in the mists of time, but in a bloody struggle, the lunar faction won out, removing all evidence of the old faith and altering its rayed sun symbol to represent a clawed moon instead.

The Khabasti, as the Atlantean descendants called themselves, ruled over many slaves, their numbers were great, their army strong, their blood untarnished by interbreeding with "lesser races," and their city isolated from hostile tribes, allowing them to remain free of the fate which befell other Atlantean outposts. Here, isolated for countless years, they practiced their old and bloody faith, though in truth they had forgotten the real meaning of the old rituals their ancestors invoked so long ago.

The Populace

Ruling over the city are the Khabasti, a race of Middle Eastern descent. Beneath them are their native African slaves, the Masutos.

The Khabasti are not kind masters, beating, torturing, and abusing their servants with a cruelty that would make even the hardiest Inquisitor blanch. The slightest grievance is enough to warrant execution by crucifixion or having the skin flayed off one's back. The corpses of the victims of this terrible regime are used to fertilize the fields, denied even a pauper's burial.

The City After Kane

Before white men came to Basti, Agura, a wizened priest, ruled with a rod of iron. Though briefly overthrown by Jeremy Hawk, Agura led a revolt and ousted the White God in a bloody revolt, which greatly thinned the populace.

With the aid of Kane, Hawk made his way back to the city and once more claimed his status as a god. Agura's plan to sacrifice both men to the Moon went awry, resulting in the death of the old priest.

Jeremy Hawk still rules Basti, yet only in body. His soul resides in the Shadowlands, driven there by N'Longa, who now uses Hawk's physical shell as his own. N'Longa is the current king of Basti, though he still uses Hawk's name. Under his guidance, the city will, eventually, turn away from bloody sacrifices, but that is for the future. N'Longa knows that change must be gradual or it will only result in even more violence and revolt.

Claws of Basti

LEAD In: While in east Africa, the heroes are warned to avoid the area around Lake Nyayna. They are told of a city on the lake ruled by a white king, from where vicious warriors attack any who cross their pass.

Background

Since the downfall of Agura, N'Longa has ruled over Basti in his guise of Jeremy Hawk. But things are not going to plan. A hard-line element, fanatical devotees of the Moon, have imprisoned N'Longa and reclaimed the city. Though N'Longa could quite easily break out, he has sensed the approach of the wanderers and has decided to wait, planning on testing whether the heroes are worthy of his support in the future.

Raiding Party

The heroes are in the jungle near the shores of Lake Nyayna when a lone African comes bursting out of the jungle. On seeing the heroes he falls to his knees and begins pleading with them in broken English.

"Help me!" he cries, his head buried in the dirt. "Bad men from forbidden city come take me."

With that, a small group of burly warriors crash through the jungle. At the sight of the white men, their eyes gleam with a cold, calculating evil, then they charge to attack, their maces, shaped like clawed moons, held high.

Warrior of Basti (2 per hero): Use the Tribal Warrior stats from page 328 but replace their spears with clawed maces (Str+d6). This lowers their Parry to 5.

To Basti

The native the soldiers were chasing thanks the heroes for rescuing him, praising them as White Gods if any of them used firearms.

"Forbidden city lies on great island in lake," he says, gesturing back the way he came. "Bad men hunt my tribe. Take away many men and women. No come back from forbidden city."

The man, whose name is M'Moto, agrees to show the heroes to the edge of the great lake but refuses to cross the water. During the trip to the shore, the heroes encounter a patch of quicksand (see page 304). M'Moto misses it, by fortune, but the newcomers may not be so lucky.

Tied to a tree stump at the lake's edge is a long canoe. Across the lake, the heroes can just make out the island of Basti. As they near, they catch their first sight of the pyramids, rising into the sky like the jagged teeth of some prehistoric beast.

When the heroes reach the dock, the workers there fall at once to their knees, murmuring something about "White Gods returning to free their friend." They are too scared of the strangers to engage them in conversation, or even look up, and positively scream in terror if touched.

Four soldiers guard the main gate to the city. They eye the wanderers warily as they approach, leveling their spears and demanding to know their business. If the newcomers





N'Longa

N'Longa, a former slave, is the most powerful ju-ju man in Africa, and perhaps the world. He is extremely old, and measures his lifetime in centuries.

He befriended Solomon Kane during Kane's first visit to Africa, and has aided his blood-brother many times since. He is currently the ruler of Basti, his soul possessing the body of Jeremy Hawk.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d12+2, Strength d6, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d12, Intimidation d12, Knowledge (English) d6, Knowledge (Occult) d12+2, Notice d6, Shamanism d12+2, Stealth d8, Taunt d10
Charisma: +2
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7
Hindrances: Elderly, Loyal
Edges: Arcane Background (Shamanism), Charismatic, Expert (Spirit, Knowledge (Occult), and Shamanism), Hard to Kill, Harder to Kill, Improved Arcane Resistance, Improved Level Headed, Improved Strong Caster, Master (Shamanism), New Power
Gear: Knife (Str+d4)
Powers: *banish spirit, barrier, beast friend, dispel, entangle, fear, ghost form, grave speak, light, obscure, puppet, shape change, spirit servant, spirit ward, summon beast, transfer soul.*
Treat as a Legendary character.

mention the raiding party, the guards just laugh, saying "Basti rules these lands. We do as we please here."

Eventually one of the guards knocks three times on the huge gates with the shaft of his spear, the thuds resounding like cannon blasts. After a wait of several minutes, the gates swing open, revealing over 30 warriors, their spears poised for attack.

"You come with us," sneers one of the guards. "Priest want to welcome you."

The adventurers may wish to engage in battle despite being severely outnumbered. Simply add more and more warriors in groups of 10 until the heroes get the message.

Warrior of Basti: Use the Tribal Warrior stats from page 328.

The Priest of Basti

Once subdued, the heroes are stripped of their weapons and their hands bound. They are escorted along the wide central avenue to the foot of the great pyramid. Here they are forced to kneel.

After a few moments, a lone figure descends the steps from the temple, slowly making his way to the throng below. The figure wears a robe of flayed skin decorated with symbols of a clawed moon, which shimmer with his movements like a host of silvery spiders.

"You have come to release your companion," he says, the phrase a statement rather than a question. "I do not fear you as gods, for I know that you are flesh and blood! Soon your blood will serve as offering to the great god and your flesh shall feed the fields! Take them away and prepare for the sacrifice."

The heroes are led away into one of the smaller pyramids and thrown into a small chamber. Sitting on a wooden bench is another white man, though his serpentine eyes betray a soul more ancient than any white man could possess. He studies them for a while then beams a huge smile.

"Welcome to my kingdom," he laughs. "Me not seen white man since blood-brother Kane go away. Me N'Longa, mighty ju-ju man. Wearing skin of Hawk of Basti."

Naturally, the characters may be rather suspicious of these strange claims, perhaps convinced their fellow inmate has gone mad. If pressed, N'Longa relates the tale of Hawk of Basti in brief.

"N'Longa rule city for long time as Hawk of Basti. Try to help people change. But some people always bad. N'Longa thrown in here. N'Longa knew you come soon, so he wait for you."

N'Longa doesn't have an escape plan of any sort. He's quite happy to sit back and let the heroes puzzle out how to escape. The classic method of faking illness can be used, and is treated as a Smarts Trick. Instead of

the usual results, the guard carefully comes in to investigate if he fails the roll. Breaking down the cell door is a little tougher as it has a Toughness of 12. Given that the heroes are unarmed, this requires a bear of a character, and makes a lot of noise. The party may have to be more devious instead.

Once free, N'Longa accompanies the party, though he doesn't aid them in any way unless they are having real trouble.

The Sacrifice

By the time the heroes escape, the ceremony has already begun. The high priest is atop the great pyramid, a victim already selected from the African slaves (the heroes are the main attraction, this is just a warm up), and a throng of blood hungry citizens has gathered at the base. The guards line the steps up to the open temple.

To reach the pyramid, the heroes must survive three rounds fighting through the crowd. Firearms will serve them well here as the mob remembers the "power" of Hawk, and suffers an additional –2 penalty to their Guts roll. Once through the crowd, the heroes must battle their way up the steps.

By the time they reach the top, the priest is prepared for them. He has had a chance to cast his *deflection* spell and has spent two rounds preparing his *fear* spell.

- **Warrior of Basti (2 per hero):** Use the Tribal Warrior stats from page 328 but replace their spears with clawed maces (Str+d6). This lowers their Parry to 5.
- **Citizens of Basti (30):** As Citizen (page 323).
- **High Priest:** Treat as Tribal Shaman (see page 329).

Aftermath

How the heroes handle their victory is important to how N'Longa treats them. N'Longa hopes they will try to convince the citizens to repent the old ways forever and to accept "Hawk" as their rightful king. Trying to usurp power for themselves displeases N'Longa.

Note that there is a slim chance the heroes will try to kill N'Longa at some point. N'Longa currently has an Agility, Strength and Vigor of d8 but retains his own Smarts, Spirit, and spells, as well as all his Edges (see page 214). He's not particularly worried about dying, as his soul simply travels back to his own body should Hawk die.

Assuming the heroes do the right thing and put "Hawk" back in control, N'Longa rewards them for their service.

"You all blood-brothers like Kane now," he smiles. "Take this." N'Longa holds out his fist and unfurls his hand, revealing a number of amulets in the shape of a crouching leopard. "Big ju-ju magic help you keep safe. You have a long and dangerous road to go yet."

The amulets (there is one per hero) grant the wearer +2 damage when attacking supernatural evil creatures, and a mighty +2 Toughness when taking damage from these fiends, whether from their claws, teeth, weapons, or spells. Multiple amulets have no effect.

The power of the amulets only affects the person to whom it was gifted. Wearing any other character's amulet has no effect, even if one has lost his own. Ideally, if a character is killed, allow him time to gift the amulet to someone else, perhaps leaving it open for his next character by saying something like, "Give this to a worthy person. It has served me well, but now I freely pass on its power."

The City of Ninn

On the eastern savannah stands another ancient city, built before the followers of Christ or Mohammed set foot in Africa. This is the city of Ninn, wherein dwell the children of Asshur.

The Plateau

Ninn sits on a low, wide plateau, protected by crumbling cliffs no higher than 70 or 80 feet. Access to the plateau is via a broad, paved road of design older than the Romans who later colonized North Africa. For those who wish to reach the plateau summit via

alternate routes, the cliffs are climbable in several places, though as Kane notes, such climbs are for "active men."

Whereas the savannah below is arid, the grasslands atop the plateau are verdant and lush, fed by an intricate series of irrigation channels leading from a lake which lies on the far side of Ninn.

Around the shores of the great lake are beautiful gardens, meadows of grazing cattle, and fields of fruitful crops. Kane at first believes the sight, so vastly different to the bone dry savannah, to be an illusion.

The City

Ninn itself is protected by a high, thick wall, along whose ancient battlement-encrusted length are numerous guard towers. Sentries can be seen patrolling the walls, watchful for interlopers.

Within the great gates, flanked by colossal, rearing lions who seem to hold the gateposts in their vast paws, are broad avenues lined with columns and stone lions leading from the walls to the great central plaza like the spokes of a mighty wheel, with narrow side streets intersecting them to form a warren of buildings.

Every now and then, the avenues broaden to form open market squares, where brightly colored canopies cover stalls selling food, cloth, pots, and other common wares.

The older buildings and those of more important citizens are generally of stone, while the peasants dwell in simpler mud brick abodes. Both varieties have flat roofs, reached by stairs from within. On these sun-baked roof-tops the citizens sleep during the heat of summer, make flat bread, wash and dry their clothes, grind grain to flour, and eat their meals.

The Temple

At the center of the city of Ninn stands the towering edifice of the temple, a ziggurat of many tiers, stretching toward the heavens. On catching his first glimpse of the tower through his barred prison window, Solomon Kane likens the structure to the biblical Tower of Babel.

Within, the temple is constructed as a series of wide galleries around the central core, stairs and sloping passages leading in a tight spiral from base to summit.

At the bottom is the throne room of the king, a vast circular space between the walls and supporting pillars. The dominant feature is a gigantic statue, human, but without a trace of weakness or compassion, the image of the Ninnite's god, carved from the very wall of the temple. Across the chamber, facing the idol, is the king's throne.

In front of the idol, facing the throne, is a smaller throne. Before it stands a brazier on a golden tripod. This throne is reserved for the soothsayers of the Ninnites, through whom their ancient god speaks.

As Solomon Kane discovered, however, the soothsaying is not divinely inspired, but is instead a trick of the priests, who use hypnotic powders in the brazier to dim the senses of whoever sits in the throne. The speaker, unable to form cohesive sentences, utters meaningless babble which the priests "interpret" as suits the king's wishes.

Throughout the galleries of the temple are numerous wall carvings. Those near the top are newer and show scenes of hunts and battles. The hunts are always against lions, whose forms are beautifully carved, giving them a lifelike quality. The humans, horses, and chariots, however, are conventionalized, almost wooden in their poses, like those of the dark temples of ancient Egypt, hoary with the age of a thousand ages.

Of the war scenes, all depict the Ninnites in full armor. In some scenes their warriors are pursuing naked Africans, while in others they chase foes similar in appearance to themselves.

Nearer the temple, the engravings take on a different style and are clearly older, being worn and of grander scale, not diminished by centuries of decadence and decay. The figures are more lifelike here, leading Kane to surmise that these are the originals from which the higher tier carvings were copied.

Again, the central figures are Ninnites in appearance, but while they face Africans and men similar to themselves, they are also shown engaged in battle against a race

of non-Ninnite origin. These men are rarely shown in retreat, and often portrayed as victorious over the Ninnites. On closer inspection, these mysterious figures appear to have distinctly European features, and live in cities surrounded by rolling hills and lush grasslands.

Viewed as a continuous whole, the ancient engravings tell the history of the Ninnites, their wars against European forces and their subsequent journey to Africa where they warred against others of their ilk before finally decaying to a state where they attacked and enslaved only the weaker African tribes.

The Occupants

The Ninnites are fair-skinned, though duskier than Europeans, with black hair and beards, often worn tightly curled. Kane notes their similarity to the figures shown on carvings in Mesopotamia, and it is with some shock that he realizes the Ninnites are the descendants of Assyrians, who left their homeland long ago.

The populace of Ninn follows a caste system based on ancient bloodlines. The dominant members of society are of pure Assyrian blood, untainted by lesser cultures.

There are also the Kaldii, a caste of sorcerers and soothsayers forming the priesthood, who wield power second only to the king (who is also the high priest). Given that the ancient Chaldeans of Babylon were renowned astrologers and conjurers, perhaps they are one and the same.

Beneath the Kaldii are the Elamites, the "tools of the priest." They are a cruel caste, noted as "slayers and doers of strange and unnatural deeds."

Only two other bloodlines are disclosed to Kane, these being the Abdulai and Arbii.

The Army

The Ninnites are a warlike people and maintain an army of around 1800 soldiers. Whereas the native tribes they regularly raid for slaves are armed with spears and shields, the Ninnites, like their ancestors, wear scale armor and iron helmets and carry iron-braced hardwood shields and iron maces to war. Though primitive by European standards, they are technologically far above those they hunt.

The City After Kane

Life in Ninn has changed since Kane's visit. The current ruler of Ninn is King Nabashi. It was he who helped Kane escape the clutches of King Asshur-ras-arab in return for Kane's aid in deposing the tyrant. During the power struggle, Yamen, the chief priest, was brutally slain, as was his chief enforcer, Shem.

By the time Kane left the city, the old order has been swept aside completely and a new age begun.

The Lion of Ninn

Lead In: Since Solomon Kane's visit, the Ninnites have not further troubled the surrounding tribes. However, the local tribes have heard that the city is gripped in fear by a ghostly lion, which is killing the population.

Background

Heroes who visit the great city find they are greeted by King Nabashi and his men. They have not forgotten the aid of Solomon Kane, and hope the heroes can provide similar assistance.

King Nabashi's defeat of the tyrant Asshur-ras-arab was not without consequences. Yamen, the chief priest, and his adherents held strong sway over the people of Ninn. With the death of Yamen the Kaldii lost much of their power—King Nabashi does not trust the priesthood, (rightly) thinking they crave too much control over the people. While the Kaldii have not gone so far as to directly employ the Elamites against King Nabashi, they have recently been trying to foment rebellion against him through more subtle means.

The Legend of Kichala

The lions of the savannah have always been a sign of ill omen amongst the Ninnites, as illustrated by the many battles fought against them. Chief among their stories is that of a

great lion known as Kichala, a deadly beast that was feared by even the bravest hunters of Ninn. Legend has it that Kichala terrorized the Ninnites so badly that the King, on the advice of the Kaldii, organized his people to burn the savannah where Kichala laired. It is said the great lion, his fur a blazing inferno, came roaring out of the fire and killed a great many Ninnites before finally dying. The charred bones of Kichala were gathered by the Kaldii and buried to keep the spirit of the beast at bay.

The new chief priest of the Kaldii, named Mardokh, has decided to use this legend against King Nabashi. The Elamites have gathered the bones of Kichala and taken them to a hidden temple, where the Kaldii priests summon the spirit of the great lion. They have sent the ghost-beast to attack the Ninnites, choosing key targets to terrorize the people. Even if the brave warriors of Asshur "slay" the ghostly lion, it appears again a few days later. The Kaldii have been saying the attacks are a sign the Ninnites have not been faithful to the teachings of their faith. King Nabashi is unwilling to give more power to the Kaldii, but the Ninnites are demanding it in order to stave off the attacks of Kichala. It is only a matter of time before King Nabashi is forced to gives in to the demands of the Ninnites and restore full power to the Kaldii.



The arrival of the heroes raises suspicion amongst the Kaldii. If they decide to help King Nabashi rid Ninn of the ghost-lion, Mardokh sends some Elamites to shadow the heroes, and, if need or opportunity arises, eliminate them. The Elamites are fiercely loyal to the Kaldii, and would rather die than reveal Mardokh's plans.

Elamites (1 per hero)

The Elamites are remorseless assassins who fanatically serve the Kaldii priesthood.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Shooting d6, Streetwise d6, Throwing d6
Charisma: –4
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)
Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Loyal
Edges: Alertness, Dirty Fighter, First Strike, Thief
Gear: Short sword (Str+d6), bow (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6). Both weapons are poisoned (see below). Leather armor (+1).
Special Abilities:

- **Poison:** The Elamites coat their blades with a deadly poison. A hero who suffers a Shaken result or greater must make a Vigor roll at –2 or the victim takes an automatic wound. This is in addition to any damage the weapon causes.

The Ghost-Lion

If the heroes attempt to confront the ghost-lion, they can wait until night when another of the attacks is reported in the city, which doesn't take long. Allow them a chance to explore the city and perhaps detect that they are being stalked by the Elamites before using this scene.

They arrive to see a great ghostly lion attacking a group of Ninnites while some fearful Warriors of Asshur are doing their best to keep the apparition at bay. If the heroes

think to scan the area where the ghost-lion is attacking (a Notice roll at –2) they spot a darkly robed figure watching the battle intently from a rooftop. This is a Kaldii, controlling the actions of Kichala.

If the Kaldii is noticed, he flees the scene immediately. If chase is given, the heroes are intercepted by Elamites intent on allowing the Kaldii time to escape. The Kaldii attempt to flee back to the hidden temple, where the bones of Kichala are kept.

Elamites (1 per hero): See page 218.



Kaldii (1)

The Kaldii are powerful sorcerer-priests who want nothing more than to control the people of Ninn.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Religion) d8, Magick d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Taunt d6
Charisma: 0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: Arcane Background (Sorcery), New Powers, Strong Caster
Gear: Dagger (Str+d4).
Powers: *boost/lower trait, fear, spirit servant, spirit ward, summon spirit, viper weapon.*
Treat as a Seasoned character.

Kichala the Ghost Lion

Kichala the Ghost Lion was the leader of a mighty pride which roamed the savannah and terrorized the Ninnites. Now the Kaldii use the charred bones of this once-great hunter to secure control of the priesthood in Ninn.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Notice d8
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8
Special Abilities:

- **Ethereal**: Ghosts are immaterial and can only be harmed by magical attacks or truly courageous heroes. A hero can attack a ghost with his bare hands (not with weapons), by using his Guts skill in place of his Fighting skill. All modifiers associated with Fighting apply to Guts for this purpose.
- **Fear –2:** Kichala causes Guts checks at –2.
- **Ghostly Bite or Claw:** Kichala attacks with a chilling bite or claw causing Str+d8 damage. This attack ignores all armor except magical armor.
- **Improved Frenzy:** Kichala may make two Fighting attacks each action at no penalty.
- **Low Light Vision:** Halve penalties for Dim and Dark lighting conditions.
- **Size +2:** Kichala is a massive, if ghostly, lion.

Warriors of Asshur (5)

The Warriors of Asshur are loyal followers of King Nabashi and are powerful fighters.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Shooting d6, Throwing d6
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 9 (2)
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: Brawny, Combat Reflexes
Gear: Scale hauberk (+2), medium shield (+1 Parry), mace (d8+d6)

The Hidden Temple

Once the Elamites are defeated, the heroes can try to track the Kaldii. This requires a Tracking roll at –4. If they fail, they must wait until another attack for a chance to track the Kaldii. With a successful Tracking roll, the wanderers follow the dusty tracks to a non-descript building in a poorer area of the city. In the basement is a tunnel, which winds down through the plateau, emerging into a large, open-fronted cavern where the Kaldii keep the bones of Kichala and summon him from the spirit world. The place is guarded by Elamites and a Kaldii priest. Any character shoved through the cave mouth must make an Agility roll at –2 or fall 30 yards to the floor below.

Elamites (1 per hero): See page 218.

Kaldii (1): See above.

Confronting Mardokh

The wanderers may decide to tell King Nabashi that the Kaldii control the ghost-lion Kichala. Of course, the treacherous Mardokh denies everything.

Even if the heroes present the bones of Kichala, Mardokh simply says it is a story invented by outsiders to undermine the Kaldii and tear apart the Ninnite people. This may lead to a bloody confrontation, but King Nabashi does his best to prevent this from happening. The King does not want his citizens up in arms about outsiders attacking the priesthood.

However, if the characters lay the bones of Kichala to rest (either by burying or destroying them) they receive an unexpected surprise. The skies darken and a ghostly shadow appears in the doorway of King Nabashi's throne room. The ghost-lion Kichala comes to take vengeance upon Mardokh and the Kaldii!

The enraged ghost-lion roars and charges the terrified Mardokh and with a mighty bite tears the spirit out of him and devour it. Kichala retreats back to the savannah and his spirit is finally laid to rest forever.

- **Kaldii (1 per hero):** See page 219.
- **Warriors of Asshur (1 per hero):** See page 219. Should a fight ensue, the Warriors side with the king.



King Nabashi

King Nabashi earned the trust of Solomon Kane at one time. He is fiercely loyal to the people of Ninn but is distrustful of the Kaldii priesthood.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Persuasion d6, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Survival d6, Throwing d6
Charisma: +2
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command, Fervor, Level Headed, Noble
Gear: Scimitar (Str+d8).



Mardokh

Mardokh is highly ambitious and will stop at nothing to restore the power of the Kaldii. He prefers subtle methods over brute force whenever possible.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Religion) d10, Magick d12, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Taunt d8
Charisma: +2
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Greedy
Edges: Arcane Background (Sorcery), Charismatic, Improved Strong Caster, New Powers
Gear: Dagger (Str+d4).
Powers: *boost/lower trait, curse, deflection, dispel, fear, obscure, spirit servant, spirit ward, summon beast, summon spirit, viper weapon*.
Treat as a Heroic character.



The City of the Eagle

Lying within the burning sands of the Sahara is an ancient city, known to the Arab slavers who visit there to sell their human cargo as the City of Al-Tair (City of the Eagle).

Cities in the desert are rare, but they exist. Al-Tair is different for two reasons—its great age, and its leaders, white men who do not follow the teachings of Christ.

History

Back before recorded time began, when mighty Atlantis stood proud, her people conquered the world and built many cities, enslaving the primitive natives to work in the mines. Al-Tair (its original name is now long-forgotten) is one such city, built deep within the Sahara, on the shores of what was once a lake but is now a salt-encrusted depression, whipped by constant wind.

Here ruled the priests of Atlantis, overlords of native slaves dragged in chains from the jungle to the south and forced to mine great blocks of salt to the crack of the whip. Al-Tair

suffered a similar fate to the other Atlantean outposts, and the priests were violently deposed.

The slaves did not dwell here long, for they had always held the city to be cursed, evidenced by the endless drought which started soon after the Atlantean rulers were slain. Within a generation, the lake began to wither, and within a century it was just a distant memory.

For many centuries the city lay empty, a lost testament to a bygone age. Then white-skinned warriors came to northern Africa, subduing the native tribes and building great cities. Explorers discovered the city, partially buried in sand, and would have passed it by were it not for the salt mines.

Importing a great many slaves, the invaders cleared the sand and rebuilt the city. When the construction work was done, the new rulers set the slaves to work in the mines. The city was reborn.

Centuries later, the great empire of the collapsed, as is the way of all civilizations, but Al-Tair survived. Isolated from the chaos elsewhere in the empire, and rich from its salt, the city continued to prosper, though its rulers slid into decadence dwarfing that of other cities of its ilk.

The slaves of Al-Tair have revolted many times over the centuries, but the army of Al-Tair is well-disciplined, well-armed, and brutal. Thousands of slaves were crucified or sent to the great amphitheater as sacrifices, forced to battle each other to the death to the cheers of their depraved pale-skinned masters.

The rulers of Al-Tair no longer send out slaving parties, for their army is smaller than once it was and the desert is home to many dangerous tribes of nomads. Instead, they pay Musselmen slavers to bring them the slaves they need, trading human flesh for slabs of precious white salt.

The City of the Eagle

Al-Tair was constructed on the far edge of the great lake, nestled beneath scorched mountains and reachable only by a long, wide, paved causeway, raised above the lake



on stone pillars, which protruded from the waters like the fingers of a hundred drowning giants. The lake has gone, but the causeway remains.

At the start of the causeway stand two colossal pillars, each topped by an eagle of pure gold, their wings outstretched. Here begins the realm of Al-Tair.

The far end of the causeway ends directly at the great gates of the city, the only entrance through the cyclopean stone wall which runs in an arc around the nook in the mountains in which the city sits. There is no plaza, no courtyard, outside the gates, for these would give attackers a beachhead within striking range of the city.

Within, the city is divided into a series of squares, separated by wide avenues flanked with columns and statues of warriors twice the height of a man, and smaller, unadorned streets.

At the center of the city, on the remains of what was once a huge plaza, stand buildings designed by the white-skinned rulers in the style of their own people.

In the dead center stands the Arena of Death, a many-tiered, circular building whose walls are lined with rows of stone benches and whose sandy floor has soaked up the blood of those forced to fight here for over a millennia.

The Arena is both battleground and temple of the cult of the Emperor, the Divine Eagle. Games, as they are known, are held here daily, serving to feed the blood lust of the populace, to honor the Emperor with fresh sacrifices, and to dispose of criminals or rebellious slaves. Men fight each other or wild animals, which are imported to the city by Musselmen traders. The victorious earn the luxury of living for a few more days before their next appearance.

Located at regular intervals atop the great circular wall are numerous stone bowls, nests for the sacred eagles, symbols of the Emperor's divinity. Legend states that while a solitary eagle remains in Al-Tair, the city will never face ruin. When the killing ends, the eagles devour the flesh of the fallen.

On feasts and holy days, such as on the Emperor's birthday or the anniversary of the ascension to the throne, prisoners are tied to stakes in the arena and their bellies opened. The eagles then devour the offerings alive while the citizens praise the Emperor's name.

Beyond the arena is the Palace of the God-Emperor, who rules the city in a totalitarian grasp. Raised above the streets by many steps and flanked by columns as tall as trees, the steeply-sloped palace is a hive of intrigue and debauchery, where rivals for the throne plot bloody murder while guzzling wine and gorging themselves sick on sumptuous plates of food.

Surrounding the plaza are the houses of the wealthy rulers, military barracks, parade grounds, and market squares. The slaves live in crowded slums, hemmed into the dark corners of the city by internal walls, and guarded vigilantly by the legions of Al-Tair, their shining shields emblazoned with the emblem of a golden eagle.

Water is a scarce resource in Al-Tair. Where once the Atlanteans diverted water from the lake through underground channels into the city's colossal cisterns, the current rulers have been forced to dig deep wells, which provide a little brackish water for the slaves, and build aqueducts for the citizens and nobility, which instead feed the cisterns with precious water from the too-sporadic mountain rains and snow-melt.

Despite these innovations, however, water remains a precious commodity in Al-Tair. Most families have barely enough to get by, and many slaves perish for lack of it. To have it is a sign of wealth, and to give it as a gift to one's neighbor is a sign of great respect and generosity. Offering water to a guest to drink indicates the most lavish hospitality.

The Populace

The city of Al-Tair boasts a population of several thousands, the vast majority of which are slaves. Most of the slaves are Africans, but there are also Musselmen and Europeans, Indians (from Hindoostan) and even a few folk of far Cathay.

Above the slaves in Al-Tair's hierarchy are the common citizens. Citizens can own slaves and property, are free to marry, earn money for their work, and are allowed to attend the Arena. The division between the citizen and slave is based on hereditary rights, not skin color, for many families over time have interbred with slaves or foreign visitors. Theoretically, a slave in the City of the Eagle can earn his freedom, though it is a very rare event.

At the top are the white-skinned nobles, whose bloodlines are untainted by the seed of outsiders. Centuries of inbreeding have twisted their minds, however, largely leaving them depraved and debauched.

There is only one religion within the city—that of the Emperor. As a god made flesh, his word is absolute, his image sacred, and his wisdom infallible. To look upon the Emperor, touch him, or speak to him uninvited is to invite death. All citizens are required to honor the Emperor in their prayers and with donations (food, coin, goods, or even their daughters), lest they wish to become the next sacrifice in the arena.

The Blood Eagle

Lead In: While in a village or camp, the heroes hear of slavers who take their captives to a city deep in the desert, a city ruled by white men. In attempting to reach this place, however, the party begins to run low on water.

Background

Start this adventure when the heroes are in the northern Sahara and have run out of water. A guide may have sabotaged their water, or the wanderers may simply have forgotten to bring adequate supplies.

Each hero must make three Vigor rolls. The first has no modifier, the second a –1 penalty, and the third is at –2 (note that heroes with the Explorer Edge get a +2 bonus to each roll). Each failure gives the heroes one level of Fatigue.

With their lips cracked from lack of water, their skin blistering from the incessant heat, and their muscles weary, the characters spy a group of figures moving toward them, sunlight glinting off metal like a twinkling star. The heat haze distorts their form, and it is only when the figures are virtually upon them that they can make out the travelers to be soldiers wearing archaic armor. A hero making a successful Knowledge (History) roll recognizes their armor as that of Roman soldiers.

One of the soldiers, who wears a red-plumed helmet, shouts over to the heroes (in Latin) promising to lead them to the City of the Eagle if they will swear friendship.

"We mean you no harm, strangers, but extend the hand of friendship of the Divine Emperor. Come with us to our city, and we will give you water and food. You must hand over your strange weapons, however. No one may carry weapons in front of the Emperor save his bodyguards. They will be returned when you leave."

If the heroes agree, they are provided with water and led to the City of Eagles. Of course, the heroes may be belligerent about this, refusing to hand over valued weapons, but they only have two choices—surrender their weapons or die of thirst. This may seem heavy-handed, but gently remind them that sometimes they have to make hard choices in life. They can also smuggle a few weapons, anything small, like a pistol or short sword, in their clothing.

The centurion makes polite conversation with the travelers but reveals very little about the city, brushing questions aside as good-naturedly as possible.

"The Emperor will tell you all you wish to know, once we arrive at our fair city."

Or

"I would not be able to do the story justice. Let our noble Emperor speak with you on such matters."

He does try to allay any fears they may have, using kind words and promises of safe passage, and the patrol is well-equipped with provisions and (more importantly) water, which is the heroes' most pressing need.



Centurion

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (River Tongue) d4, Notice d6, Riding d6, Stealth d4, Throwing d6
Charisma: –2
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 10; **Toughness:** 9 (3)
Hindrances: Loyal, Mean
Edges: Block, Combat Reflexes, Command, Level Headed
Gear: Plate corselet (+3), open helmet (+3), short sword (Str+d6), large shield (+2 Parry)

Legionnaires (3 per hero)

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Riding d6, Stealth d4, Throwing d6
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 9 (3)
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: Combat Reflexes
Gear: Plate corselet (+3), open helmet (+3), short sword (Str+d6), large shield (+2 Parry), 2 javelins (Range 3/6/12, Str+d6)

The City of Eagles

Inside the city, the heroes are led through the streets toward a vast circular building in the center. Throngs of citizens stop to stare at them, a few reaching out to shake their hand or cheer wildly.

"This," says the centurion, gesturing to the vast structure, "is part of the great Imperial palace. Once you have had food and wine, you will meet our Emperor. We do not get many visitors here, and I am sure he will be very interested in you."

The heroes are lead down a narrow tunnel to a flight of stairs. The centurion tells them to follow the stairs to the end and bids them show proper deference in the presence of his Imperial majesty. He tells them (truthfully) that he is forbidden to go any further, for he would have to commit suicide if he were to look upon the face of his Emperor. Since the centurion rescued the heroes from certain death, they may believe him.

As soon as the heroes reach the bottom of the stairs, a thick iron grate crashes down behind them, bars sliding through holes in the floor and locking far below, sealing them in. Ahead is a single door, beyond which is a small room housing a few prisoners.

Hang On, It's A Trap

Some players will be instantly suspicious of NPCs being nice to them—gamers can be like that sometimes. They may suspect a trap and refuse to enter the room without a legionary or two accompanying them.

The centurion and his men swore an oath of loyalty to the Emperor, and if it is required that they enter the cell (and thus the arena) to lure the heroes in, they will do so. Once in the arena, they salute the Emperor and commit suicide.

Heroes who try to escape before they even get to the arena find the whole city turns against them—the citizens know what the wanderers are to be used for and want their amusement! There is nowhere to hide, and they can either be beaten and captured by an angry mob or surrender.

The Emperor's son, who aids them later, will not risk his neck trying to save them until they have proved their mettle by killing the arena beast.

The wnaderers' fellow prisoners aren't much for conversation. It takes a Persuasion roll to convince any of them to speak. With a success, an elderly man, certainly no skilled combatant judging by his weak frame, speaks to the heroes, telling them the city's history.

He further explains that the prisoners are to be sent into the arena where they are to fight for the amusement of the citizens. Those who survive will be trained as proper gladiators. Those who fall become food for the Emperor's giant eagles.

Shortly after the old man has finished his tale, one of the walls moves sideways, a stage prop, to reveal a set of bars, beyond which the heroes can see the arena. The gate opens upward to allow the fighters access to the arena. Further in they see their weapons piled together. The other prisoners shrink back against the far wall, which suddenly begins to move, grinding against stone as it pushes into the room, relentlessly forcing them toward the arena.

When the heroes eventually enter the sand-covered arena, the high, steeply-tiered terraces are crowded with many thousands of citizens screaming for blood.

The Arena

As you walk further into the arena, the crowd goes silent, all eyes turning toward a box bedecked in gold and purple.

An elderly figure with cold, black eyes and a nose like an eagle's beak walks into the box. A circlet of gold fronted by an eagle's head, its eyes dull red gems, marks this as the Emperor. On his left arm is perched a golden eagle, which eyes the crowd warily.

As one, the crowd rises to their feet and salutes, for this is the Divine Emperor of the City of Eagles. The Emperor then takes his seat and claps his hands loudly.

A gigantic gate beneath the royal box creaks open. For long seconds nothing happens, then something abominable slithers slowly into the light. A vast, slug-like creature, its mottled green skin

dripping foul ichor, moves toward you to the cheers and howls of the crowd. Unlike a slug, however, it has a vast, round mouth full of needlelike teeth surrounded by a mass of writhing tentacles.

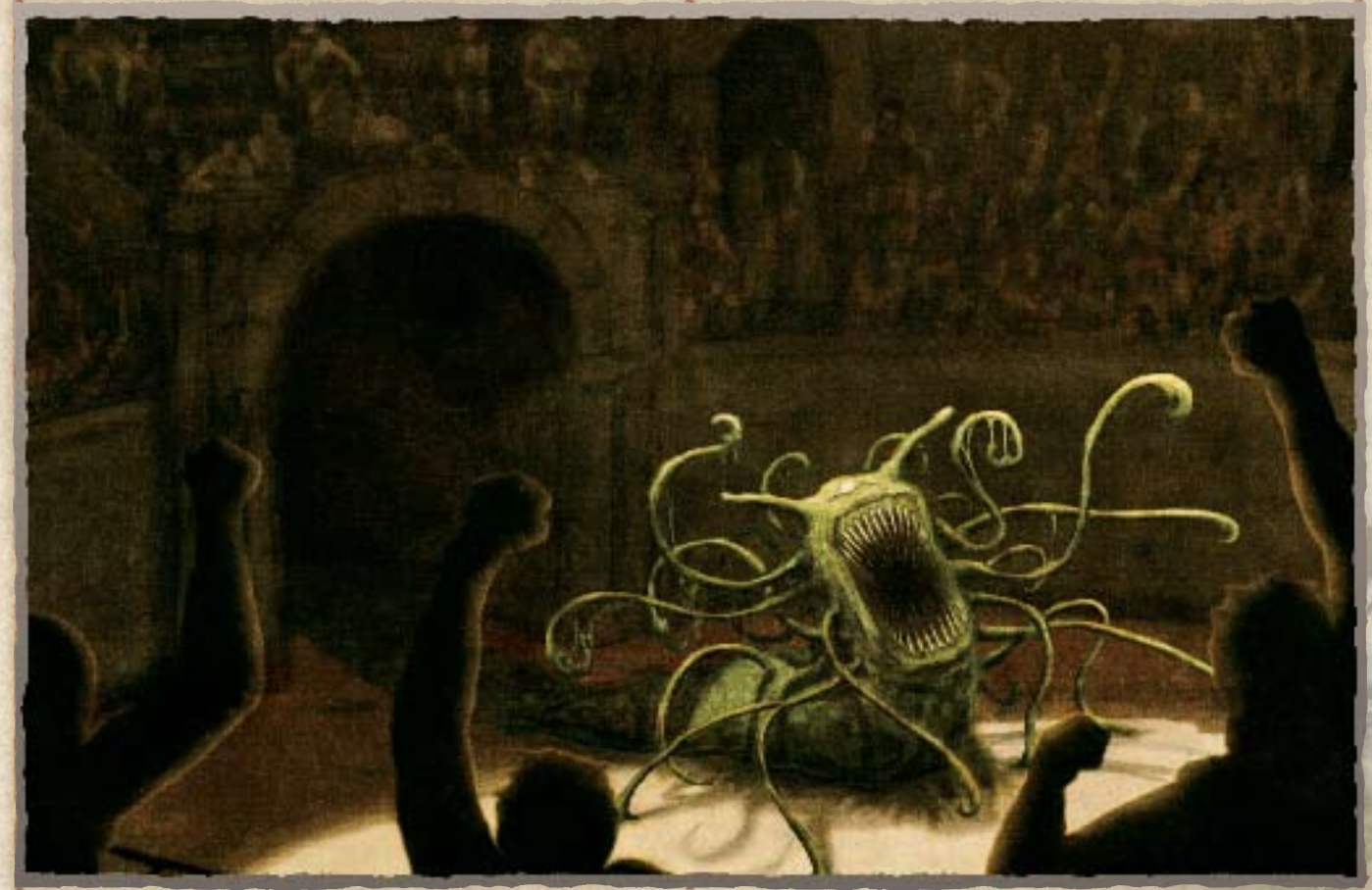
This is a fight to the death. It continues until either the fell beast or the captives are killed. The other prisoners are no use in this fight—they cower as the unearthly beast slithers forth, and die horribly in its jaws at dramatically appropriate moments.



Demon Worm

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+10, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d10, Stealth d6
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 19 (4)
Special Abilities:

- **Armor +4:** Thick layers of fat.
- **Bite:** Str+3
- **Fear (–2):** Anyone seeing the creature must make a Guts roll at –2.
- **Hardy:** The creature does not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice.
- **Huge:** Attackers add +4 to their Fighting or Shooting rolls when attacking the worm due to its size.
- **Size +8:** The demon worm is well over 30' long and 10' or more in diameter.
- **Slam:** Using its entire bulk, the beast can slam itself down upon a foe. The attack affects an area equivalent to a Cone Template. Everyone in the template must make an Agility roll opposed by the creature's Fighting roll or suffer Str+8 damage.
- **Tentacles:** The demon worm may make up to four attacks each round. On a raise, the creature has grappled the victim. An entangled victim may only attempt an opposed Strength roll each round to escape. Once grappled, the demon worm does its Strength damage automatically by rending with its "teeth." A victim killed by a demon worm's tentacles is usually devoured.



An Audience with Divinity

If the great beast is defeated, the crowd falls silent. A squad of 20 legionnaires emerges from the jail block and orders the heroes to throw down their weapons. If the victorious wanderers don't comply, they are attacked, much to the enjoyment of the crowd. On complying, or being beaten unconscious, they are led back to a different cell and their legs manacled.

An hour later, a squad of six legionnaires dressed in black armor, their corselets adorned with a golden eagle, enter the cell block and approach the heroes' cell.

"On your feet, dogs!" the leader growls. "The Divine Emperor sees fit to grant you an audience."

The wanderers' manacles are unlocked and then reattached so that the captives are chained in pairs. Accompanied by the guards, who shove and prod the prisoners at every opportunity, they are escorted out of the arena and through the city's streets, past the great temple of the Emperor on their way to his palace. Citizens stop to stare at the heroes, a few shouting encouraging words and anti-Imperial slogans before running off, chased by soldiers.

Once in the palace, you are escorted to the Emperor's audience chamber. The Emperor, dressed in a purple toga and his golden circlet, sits on an ivory throne carved to resemble an eagle with spread wings. In his hands he holds a gleaming short sword, a large gem in its pommel. He appears to be cleaning his nails with the tip.

You stare disbelieving at the Emperor, for he is not the old man you saw earlier, but a youthful, robust figure. Were it not for his nose and cold eyes, you would swear this was a different man.

The golden eagle perched on his arm, its bright red eyes glinting in the light of the many braziers placed around the room, eyes you with a cold malevolence. Four guards, dressed in the same black uniforms as those who led you here, stand in front of him.

Standing behind him is a young man, of similar appearance, but with eyes that sparkle with life. A unit of guards, with red eagles on their breastplates, stand behind him.

Around the walls stand a throng of lackeys and courtiers, all dressed in fine togas. They give each of you a disdaining look.

Your escorts take up positions behind you, forcing you roughly to your knees.

"So," says the Emperor, standing and walking toward you, "these are the slaves who defeated my pet. Never mind," he smiles, "its death has invigorated me, made me young again.

"I have ruled this city for a thousand years," he continues. "Every death in my presence feeds me, keeps me young, healthy, alive." The Emperor strokes his eagle's beak.

"But now I find I need more blood to have the same effect, or at least stronger blood. You are too dangerous to allow to live. I will not risk you gaining popularity in the arena. But your life fluid," he smiles insanely, "should keep me young for many years."

He gestures to the guards behind you and you hear the faint scrape of steel against wood.

"No, father!" screams the young man from behind him. "This unholy bloodshed must stop!" With that he whips out his short sword and slides it across the room toward you. "Red Guards!" he cries, "Aid them as you would me!"

Hand out completed Ally Sheets for the Emperor's son and his Red Guards to your players. They'll control the allies so you can concentrate on the bad guys.

Unless the heroes want to end up stabbed in the back they'll probably want to fight. Their first objective should be grabbing weapons from their guards. The lone short sword ends up 1" from the middle pair of heroes and can be grabbed as an action.

The soldiers' swords aren't drawn from their scabbards until their action card comes up, giving fast heroes a chance to grapple or attack without incurring the Unarmed Defender penalty (see page 80).

Note that the captives are still manacled in pairs by their ankles. Have the characters arrange themselves in pairs (placing their minis on the battlemat in the appropriate place if you're using minis). The chains don't have a long reach, and the heroes must remain adjacent of their partner.

Of course, the chains can also be used to perform Agility Tricks, such as tripping foes. Handle the Trick as normal, but with success the victim falls prone, and on a raise he is both prone and Shaken.

As soon as the Emperor is killed, move straight onto **A New Emperor**. If the heroes are having trouble dispatching the Emperor, his son cries out, *"The circlet holds his power!"* at some point during the fight.

Emperor's Son: As a Wild Card Noble (page 326), but currently unarmed.

Red Guards (1 less than the heroes): As Legionnaires on page 223.

Emperor's Guards (10): Use stats for Legionnaires on page 223.

Courtiers (20): (see page 326). They don't join in the fight, but instead cower in corners.

Emperor's Eagle (1): Use the stats for a hawk on page 303, but treat it as a Wild Card. The eagle is a combatant, and enjoys human flesh. Heroes who declare they are attacking the bird because they think it is the source of the Emperor's unholy power will find they are disappointed, but reward them with a benny for thinking along the right lines.



The Emperor

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Knowledge (English) d4, Intimidation d10, Notice d6
Charisma: –6
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Mean
Edges: Command, Fervor, Level Headed
Gear: Short sword (Str+d6, see below), golden circlet (see below)
Special Abilities:

- **Golden Circlet:** The God-Emperor's golden circlet is magical and protects him (and only him) from harm. He cannot be wounded while wearing it. He can be Shaken, but subsequent Shaken results do not cause a wound. Removing the circlet requires a Called Shot at –4. If stripped of his circlet, the Emperor immediately goes Berserk. See page 34 for further details.
- **Short Sword:** The Emperor's short sword is one of the artifacts the heroes seek. See the section on page 228 for more details.
- **Unholy Vigor:** Death in the presence of the Emperor makes him stronger while he is wearing his circlet within the city. Every person killed in his presence allows him to withstand an extra wound. Removing his circlet doesn't cause him to lose the extra wound capacity, but it does prevent it from increasing further.

A New Emperor

Depending on how the battle goes, this text may need to be altered. For instance, the Emperor's soldiers can't surrender if they are all dead.

As the Emperor's lifeless body slumps to the floor, his remaining soldiers drop their weapons. Red Guard and courtiers alike drop to their knees and bow before (insert name of character who killed the Emperor).

"My lord," says one of the soldiers, "you have fulfilled the ancient requirement for attaining Godhood. You are now our Emperor!"

This is one of those moments where the character (hopefully) gets to roleplay his Hindrances. It's a great chance for greedy or power hungry characters to grab the throne for their own, for righteous types to put an end to the murders in the arena, and so on.

A hero who wants to be Emperor (whether or not he wants the bloodshed in the arena to continue) is effectively out of the game, having to stay in the city to rule his subjects. Make sure the player realizes this before he accepts such an onerous responsibility.

One way of ensuring the city turns its back on its bloody ways once and for all is to immediately appoint the Emperor's son, Augustus, as heir, and then abdicate in his favor. Augustus is actually a fair and decent human being, and has a chance of bringing the lost City of Eagles from out of its dark period.

However the adventure ends, surviving wanderers are welcome to stay in the city until they are ready to leave. The doctors here are particularly skilled, and grant +1 to Healing and natural Healing rolls.

The Gold Circlet: This mysterious relic only functions for the duly-appointed Emperor of the City of Eagles and only within the city's walls. It does not register as magical if a hero touches it.

If Augustus is Emperor, he orders it melted down, though if a hero wants a souvenir of the adventure he is prepared to hand it over, so long as the character swears never to bring it back to the city.

The Short Sword: The artifact the heroes are searching for is a family heirloom, handed down through the Imperial line for generations. As such, Augustus is loathe to part with it, but if the heroes nobly made him Emperor, he can refuse them nothing. If they were more self-serving, he will need to be persuaded to hand over his father's sword.

The City of Snakes

Within the timeless, shifting sands of the Sahara lies the City of Snakes and its abominable living god.

History

In days of yore, when mighty pharaohs ruled the land of Egypt, in centuries before Moses wielded the cat-headed staff and led the Twelve Tribes to safety, the Egyptians worshiped many gods. Of all these faiths, one was practiced in secret—the worship of the demon snake-god Apep. Apep had always been regarded as the ultimate evil in the Egyptian pantheon. Even Set, the so-called dark god, began life as a force of good, and was thus accorded more respect.

As time passed and the ritual practices of the Apep worshipers began to involve more and more human sacrifices, so the pharaohs turned on the worshipers of Apep, rooting them out of their hiding places and executing them. In a short but bitterly contested battle, the remaining followers of Apep and their slaves stood against the military might of Pharaoh. They were crushed and driven from Egypt, fleeing into the western desert. They were never seen again.

Artifact: Short Sword

The sword is of ancient Roman origin, but the gem in its pommel, which gives it its magical power, is one of the six gems required to stop the great evil that has been unleashed on the world.

The gem was taken from Egypt during the time of Caesar and returned to Rome. By the reign of Emperor Trajan, the gem had been installed in the short sword. It was used to great effect in the Dacian Wars of 101-106, for a tribe of brutish vampires infested the region. A hero of the Dacian Wars carried the sword to the City of the Eagles, where it eventually fell into the hands of the Imperial family.

The sword functions as a regular short sword except when used to fight supernatural or unnatural creatures, including evil shamans and sorcerers. Against such foes, it inflicts +d8 damage on a Fighting roll, instead of +d6 as normal. It also allows the user to harm creatures otherwise immune to nonmagical attacks.



Exiled for eternity from their homeland, the followers of Apep settled by an oasis far into the desert and began to build their own settlement. What began as a village grew into a town, and by the time Egypt fell to the armies of Alexander it stood as a city.

During excavations, workers uncovered a sleeping serpent, protected behind a wall sealed with symbols of great power. Many priests died trying to cancel the wards, but they were at last successful. Beyond the wall lay a cavern of immense proportions, and in it they found their god manifest on earth: a monstrous serpent of incalculable age and supreme malevolence.

A stepped temple was constructed above the site, and a shaft dug down, through which sacrifices could be offered.

And so it was that the followers of Apep came to dwell in a city inhabited by a god, a city which has remained isolated in the formless dunes of the Sahara desert for many centuries.

The City

The City of Snakes was not laid out to any great plan. Houses, shops, and warehouses were built as required in whatever space was available, and the streets had a very organic layout. When Apep was first discovered, the buildings in the center of the sandy city were leveled to make room for his temple.

With their god physically in their presence, the citizens ensured the city was worthy of him—snake-motifs were carved onto every spare inch of wall. When the city was younger, quartz flakes and other minerals were crafted into the motifs, causing them to shimmer and glitter like the scales of a living snake. Wind and time have stripped the city of this splendor, mirroring the gradual decline of the perverse inhabitants.

These days, it is very hard to discern which buildings served what function. The great desert has rolled relentlessly forward, and half of the town lies buried beneath the sands. Vast dunes tower above the near-deserted streets like frozen waves, threatening to break at any moment and engulf the city in a cascade of silt.



Inhabitants

The small population, cut off from the outside world, quickly became inbred and even more insane than they were when they founded the city. Physical mutations became more frequent, a direct result of Apep's evil presence. Before long many of the city's inhabitants were similar in form to the ancient snake men (see page 316), a race that once worshiped Apep long, long ago, and which are now all but extinct.

Year after year, scores of citizens were offered to Apep, the great serpent, and year after year the population dwindled. By the age of Kane, just a handful of cultists still remain, insane part-man, part-snake vile abominations kept alive by the will of Apep to serve as his priests and throw him offerings whenever travelers or nomads can be captured in the drifting desert.

Apep has grown hungry over the years, but salvation is at hand, for a traveler has come to the City of Snakes.

A Road Ends

Lead In: This tale should be started immediately after the heroes have located the other five artifacts, and require only the cat-headed staff.

A Sign

When next you sleep, N'Longa the ju-ju man visits each of you in your dreams.

"You have done well," he says, smiling. "Much evil have you slain, but greater evil remains. Now we must complete cycle. To find the sixth artifact, you must be at peace. Let your minds open. Be calm, and it will find you."

Once awakened, have each hero make a Spirit roll. With success, they receive a mental vision of Africa and no more. Their search will be long, but at least they know where to begin. On a raise, they see an image of the endless desert of the Sahara. Still a vast realm, but at least their search is narrowed. With two or more raises, they also see a city, its walls decorated with serpent motifs.

If the characters attempt to glean more information by inducing additional visions, they must first complete adventures to find ways to bring on a trance. In Europe, for instance, they could seek out wise women or gypsies. In the Americas, they could enter a medicine lodge, or sample the strange plants of the South American rainforests. In Cathay, they could try meditation.

Each time the wanderers try, they require an additional raise to reveal one further clue. The closer they get to the City of Snakes, however, the stronger their visions become. Give them a +1 to their Spirit roll if they are on their way to Africa, and a +2 if they have already arrived in the Dark Continent.

How long it takes them to reach Africa is up to you, the GM, and depends where in the world the wanderers are when they have their vision. You could employ a cinematic technique, and cut straight to Africa, but it is more interesting to insert adventures along the way, making the journey long and dangerous. You should have a good idea of what your group wants by this stage.

It is worth noting that, with numerous powerful artifacts in the group, supernatural monsters are likely to be less of a threat to the party. Now is a great time to have them face mundane horrors, such as the Spanish Inquisition, wicked pirates and slavers, or those powerful enemies they've made on their travels.

An Ancient Land

Guided by their dreams, the heroes should head to Africa, specifically the Sahara Desert.

The City of Snakes is a well-known legend among the desert dwellers, though most believe the lost city to be a myth. Finding the city, even once they have dreamed it clearly, is not easy. They must describe their visions to those they meet in the hope they can gain a clue to the location of the city.

Those who have seen it rarely leave, and those who speak of it are often ridiculed. Each place the heroes stop, they can attempt a Streetwise roll. On a success, they can locate someone who is prepared to speak to them. It also requires a Persuasion roll to get any information, however.

If the heroes succeed on both rolls, roll on the table below to see what they learn.

Rumor Table

d8	Rumor
1	"You are mad, get away from me!" (The contact becomes hostile.)
2	"I've been there, I'll guide you." (This is a lie: treat the contact as an unscrupulous guide.)
3	"The city never existed—it's a myth."
4	"The city was destroyed by the Egyptians many centuries ago."
5	"The city has been lost to the desert, you'll never find it."
6	"Another white man asked me this. I told him the same thing." (Roll again, this was Kane.)
7	"The place you seek lies in the Great Sahara."
8	"I have seen the city—I will guide you, but will not enter." (The guide is telling the truth.)

Note that even though they've succeeded on the rolls, not all the information they receive is true. A raise on either previous roll confers a +1 bonus on this table.

Hostile Natives

The City of Snakes is being consumed by the desert. The outer suburbs have already been engulfed by huge dunes and the street is swathed in a blanket of sand. Low, flat-roofed houses line the streets, which lead toward a large, stepped pyramid in the center of town. On every building can be seen motifs of snakes—cobras, constrictors, asps, and other assorted slithering beasts.

While wandering through the city, some of the remaining not-quite-human residents attack the heroes, leaping out of doorways, dropping from sunbaked roofs, and so on. The snake men attack all at once. Check for Surprise, then read the following text.

Suddenly, the street is full of strange abominations, snakes in the form of men, Satan's children manifest on earth. Their scales glisten in the sun, forked tongues slither out between long fangs, and a sibilant hiss, a long, drawn out, "offeringssss," issues from their lipless, fanged mouths.

The street here is knee-deep in fine sand: treat the ground as difficult terrain.

Snake Men Warriors (1 per hero): See page 316.

A Deadly Climb

As the heroes near the pyramid, they spy two figures on the flat summit—one wearing a glittering robe, the other dressed in dark clothes, a wide-brimmed hat on his head.

There are six massive steps on the pyramid, plus the summit. Each step requires a successful Climbing roll to mount. The steps are only three meters high and worn enough to provide hand holds, but the stone easily crumbles, negating any bonuses they might otherwise grant. Each is four yards (2") wide.

Each time the first hero reaches the top of a higher step, except the top platform, snakes slither through cracks in the pyramid and attack climbers on the step. Roll a d6. On a 1-4, 1d3 constrictors appear. On a 5-6, a 1d2 venomous snakes attack.

Constrictor: See page 307.

Venomous Snakes: See page 307.

The Last Worshiper

At the top, the heroes see the last survivor of the Snake cult, and a face from the past.

Before you stands the snake priest. Though less reptilian in appearance than his followers, he has a serpent's black heart. His robe of snake skin glitters like jewels and the eyes of a snake-headed staff scintillate hypnotically. Standing beside him is a face you recognize, if only dimly—Solomon Kane.

Without warning, the vile snake priest shoves the Puritan in the back. Kane vanishes into a large, gaping hole. You hear him hit the ground with a thud—the hole is thankfully not too deep. The snake priest then turns toward you.



"Yesss, at lassst," he hisses, as a long and blasphemous black forked tongue darts from his human lips. "Ssss. Further sssacrificesss for Apep! Feassst on their flesssh, my massster!"

During the ensuing combat, any heroes who want to jump into the hole may do so—the drop is 10 yards (2d6+5 damage), but someone should see to it that the snake priest is dispatched before moving on, or he will continue to cause trouble from the surface while the wanderers try to deal with the thing in the pit.

Calling to Kane or lowering him a rope so he can climb to safety has no effect—the Puritan is engaged in bloody combat at the bottom of the pit with a true minion of Satan.

Snake Man Priest: See page 317.

The Mark of Kane

Apep's cavern measures 100" to a side (50" each direction from the central hole the heroes dropped down). Within 5" of the hole, the lighting is Dim. Beyond this, it is Dark.

If the wanderers decide to follow the grim Puritan down into the hole, they discover a fresh nightmare awaits them.

As your eyes begin to adjust to the dim light you notice a glittering wall ahead of you.

With horror, you quickly realize the wall is the body of a monstrous serpent! Its great head darts in your direction as it studies you quickly with cold, yellow eyes, its tongue, longer than a man, flicking incessantly as it tastes the air and plots your doom.

Suddenly it snaps its head back into the darkness and hisses loudly. "Do not turn your back on me, damned wyrm!" shouts a voice in English. "Let the spawn of Satan see that men still draw breath who cannot be corrupted by the defiler's insidious ways!"

Striding from the darkness, bloodied but unbowed, comes the tall, gaunt figure of Solomon Kane.

It's time to deal initiative cards. Whether you want to run Kane yourself or hand a copy of his stats to a player is up to you (the latter may spark a riot if your players are fans of the stories).

The first player who loses a character in this combat should be given Kane's stats and allowed to control the Puritan, to keep the player involved in the action. Either way, run this fight to the death.



Apep

Apep is as much a prisoner as a god. Once he dined regularly, but times have been lean for long years and Apep hungers. He has waited patiently for a meal for many years, and soon he will dine lavishly.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+10, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d10, Stealth d10
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 18 (2)
Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Tough scaly hide.
- **Bite:** Str+d8, plus poison.
- **Fear:** Anyone seeing this creature must make a Guts roll.
- **Gargantuan:** Heavy Armor. Attackers add +4 when attacking Apep due to the thing's immense size.
- **Hardy:** The creature does not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice.
- **Poison (–2):** Anyone Shaken or wounded by Apep must make a Vigor roll at –2 or be paralyzed for 2d6 rounds.
- **Size +9:** Apep is well over 50' long and 10' or more in diameter.
- **Slam:** Using its entire bulk, the Serpent can slam itself down upon an enemy. The attack affects an area equivalent to a Cone Template. Everyone under the template must make an Agility roll opposed by the creature's Fighting roll or suffer d12+21 damage.
- **Weakness (Artifacts):** The six artifacts can ignore Apep's Heavy Armor (but not its Armor rating). The heroes hold five of the artifacts, the sixth is the cat-headed staff, still wielded by Kane.

Kane's Legacy

If the wanderers aided by their Puritan ally manage to slay the snake god, they have achieved a great triumph.

Searching the chamber reveals a number of passages. Most are blocked by cave-ins or dead ends, but one leads to a tunnel that ends in a stone block fitted with iron rings. Pulling these causes the door to swing open, and the heroes emerge into the street at the bottom of the pyramid.

Once outside, Kane turns to them.

"I have walked many roads, and faced many evils. I have righted many wrongs and saved many souls, yet my work is endless. This body has suffered much, from the whips of Barbary pirates to the rack of the Inquisition. Knives, spears, and beasts have all tasted of my flesh.

"I thought few others would carry on my work, yet today I find like-minded souls who have seen the darkness of the world and braved its perils, seeking no reward other than the reward of lighting a dark place.

"Once I thought this staff a tool of the Devil; thought that black magic must be used to fight black magic. I know now that it is a tool for good, crafted in days before Time and passed on from one to another in an unbroken chain.

"Take it and use it wisely, for 'tis strong as steel and will not fail when your blade cannot bite home. Your destiny led you to me and our calling is the same. Carry the staff. Continue the endless work."

Kane's cat-headed staff is detailed in the sidebar on the right.

Once the staff has been accepted, Kane tells the heroes that N'Longa visited him in a dream last night.

"My old friend spoke to me of your coming. He asked me to relay a message to you, his new champions.

"You must take the artifacts to the city of Jerusalem, to a secret cavern far below the hill on which once stood the Temple of Solomon the Wise. Here you must use its magic to seal the many gates of evil

Artifact: Kane's Staff



Kane carries a magic staff given to him by N'Longa. Although at first Kane considers the staff to be an object of black magic, he eventually learns that it is a powerful force for good and the powers of light. The staff actually has a rather long history.

The head is shaped like that of a cat, and indeed was carved by a priest of Bast, the cat-headed deity of ancient Egypt, but over the top of a much older carving. Moses carried the staff when he faced Pharaoh's magicians, and King Solomon used it to drive the conjurers and genii from Israel.

Yet Egypt was not the staff's origin, for it goes back to a time before modern man, when ancient Atlantis ruled the world. Who crafted the staff will never be known, but Kane will not be the last champion to wield it in the eternal struggle between light and darkness, good and evil.

- The staff inflicts Str+d4 damage if used as a club and Str+d6 as a spear. Requires 2 hands to wield. Reach +1. Parry +1
- The staff counts as a magic weapon for the purposes of what creatures it can harm.
- The wielder gains +2 to damage when wielding it against supernatural evil creatures, and +2 Toughness when suffering damage from supernatural evil sources, including the weapons, claws, teeth, and magical effects of such creatures.
- The wielder can contact N'Longa in his dreams. This is a tool to allow the GM to provide clues to the wanderers if they are stuck, and only works when the GM requires it to.

across the globe. You will also learn the location of the Unholy Serpent, the root of this accursed evil, father of fiends like the one we have slain. Once the source of this evil is found, you must destroy it.

"The final challenge is yours to face," he says. "I have other important work still to perform while time permits."

The torch is passed, and the great Puritan sets off again on his travels. The heroes have located all six artifacts and have been tasked with a new mission. It is time to embark on the final Plot Point in the *Path of Kane*.

Jerusalem

Jerusalem, a holy city for the three major Western religions, lies at the very heart of the endless struggle against evil. Here in the Holy Land the heroes must face their greatest challenge.

History

Though the site of Jerusalem had been occupied for several millennia, its lasting importance came about in the reign of King Solomon the Wise, who ascended the throne around 970 BC. On the highest point of land, Solomon ordered the construction of a great temple, which became known as the Temple of Solomon, in which was housed the Ark of the Covenant.

Though of immense religious importance, what lay below the Temple was just as vital. Solomon had in-depth knowledge of the "old ones," beings from before time he wrote of as "demons" or "genii." Whether he had been schooled in such knowledge or had discovered it for himself was never known, though he does make vague reference to a "dark-skinned sorcerer" who for a short time mentored him.

Though legends speak of a magical ring called the Seal of Solomon, which gave its wearer power over demons, the Seal in fact refers to the secret chamber hidden beneath the Temple. It was here, using six ancient gems of power, that Solomon "drove the demons from Israel," sealing them into tombs for thousands of years.

Jerusalem remained powerful for only a few centuries after Solomon's death, and in 586 much of the city, including the Temple, was destroyed. With the priesthood dead, knowledge of the Seal of Solomon drifted rapidly into myth.

The city survived the Romans (who destroyed the Second Temple), the Crusades, the conquests of the Ayyubids and Mameluks, before becoming part of the expanding Ottoman Empire, which captured the city in 1517.

Over time, the city has been ruled by Jews, Musselmen, and Christians, all of whom hold the city as an important religious site in their faith. The site of the Temple of Solomon now houses the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the third most holy site in the Islamic faith. But beneath the buildings of man, impervious to changes in rulership, uncaring of changes in faith, lies the Seal of Solomon.

Inhabitants

Despite have been bitterly contested for many centuries and having been bathed in the blood of countless innocents, Jerusalem is currently a religiously tolerant city (something of a rarity, especially amid growing Christian strife in Western Europe, which sparks the Thirty Years War in just a few short years).

Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent and his descendants have promoted religious unity, and Musselmen, Jews, and Christians are all allowed to worship freely, so long as they respect their neighbors' beliefs.

The Source of Evil

Lead In: No lead in is required for this adventure, the heroes already having been told where to go.

The Long or Short Route?

Getting to Jerusalem can be as long or as short a journey as you wish. There is much evil in the world still, and some of it may land in the heroes' path. The only ways to reach the city are on foot or via ship. The latter, should you want to introduce more evils, can prove very tricky—storms can delay ships, captains may ask a fortune to sail the

waters of the Barbary pirates, take a dislike to the heroes (especially if they are Christians in Musselman lands), or perhaps there are simply no ships in port for some reason.

However they manage it and however long it takes, the wanderers eventually bring the artifacts to the holy city of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem

The Temple Mount, where once stood the Temple of Solomon, is now a Musselman holy site, and strictly off-limits to outsiders. It is heavily guarded, and any attempt to storm the site results in a large percentage of the city's population turning against the heroes. Against such a fanatical mob, the wanderers would stand no chance. A successful suitable Knowledge roll, such as History or Religion, (or Common Knowledge for certain heroes, like explorers, historians, or priests) alerts the outlanders to this danger.

Visitors who wish to avoid a confrontation may instead make a Streetwise roll at –4. This can be a Cooperative roll. On a success, they are pointed toward an astrologer and wise man, Ibrahim ibn-Marduk, who lives in a quarter close to the mount. They are told he is wise in many things regarding the city.

Unfortunately, their questions rouse the attentions of the Scions of Solomon, an ancient sect dedicated to protecting the holy site of the Great Seal of Solomon, which the priest-king used to expel many demons from Israel during his reign. Over time, the sect has been corrupted—not by evil, but by time. They believe their sworn duty is to defend the site against any intruders, even ones bearing Solomon's staff.

As the heroes move through the narrow, winding streets of Jerusalem, two members of the Scions of Solomon move to kill them.

Scions of Solomon (1 per 2 heroes): Treat as assassins, see page 322.

The Astrologer

The astrologer lives in a dark and old part of town where few tourists ever come. His tiny shop is only open at night, a particularly dangerous time for outsiders to wander the streets in the old town.

Ibrahim has been an astrologer since he was a young boy and his lineage consists of an unbroken line of astrologers dating back, according to word on the street, "to the days of great Rameses himself." Ibrahim does not talk of such matters. In fact, Ibrahim only speaks Arabic and so the heroes may need to bring a translator with them.

Written in the Stars

Upon entering the shop the heroes notice how dark it is. Even with a number of candles lit there is surprisingly little illumination being cast. After a few moments, in which they may marvel at the huge collection of trinkets, charms, and other religious knickknacks, a wizened old man emerges through a curtain from a back room. He politely inquires how he may assist the heroes. Although frail in body his voice is full of power and authority.

His eyes narrow visibly and he takes a sharp intake of breath through his nose if the visitors mention their quest. *"You had better come with me, for such things are not to be spoken of in the open."* He beckons the heroes to follow him into the back room. The back room is extremely cramped; large numbers of mystical charts and diagrams cover the walls and strange contraptions cover the floor. Ibrahim sits on a rickety old stool and indicates his guests should also be seated. The only space left is on the floor.

"I know of your quest, for N'Longa has been a friend to me for many years, and I have been studying the legends and prophecies for clues. As he pores over ancient charts and scrolls, he reads to you what he has discovered.

"There is a stone wall beneath the mound, opposite the Western Wall. On a certain stone is engraved a six-pointed star, the Seal of Solomon. Place the head of the cat-headed staff of Solomon against this and the way will be shown to you."

"At the center is a great chamber—the Center of the World. Here you will find the Great Seal. Place one artifact at each point, and let the magic do its work.

"You (he points to the hero carrying the cat-headed staff) *must then use the staff in the center of the Seal. Only then will you find what you truly seek."*

Ibrahim knows little else of use to the heroes, although he sells them some trinkets and components for sorcerers if they so wish. Though the old man makes numerous lofty claims as to their potency (he has to make a living after all), these trinkets have no actual powers.

If any heroes ask to have astrological charts drawn up, Ibrahim foretells great suffering for them all!

The Secret Chamber

Searching the eastern wall beneath the mount for the Seal of Solomon requires a Notice roll—the symbol is very weathered and difficult to spot. Assuming Ibrahim's instructions are followed, the stone slowly pivots inward, revealing a narrow, musty corridor lined in worked stones decorated with hundreds of seals of Solomon (a ward against evil).

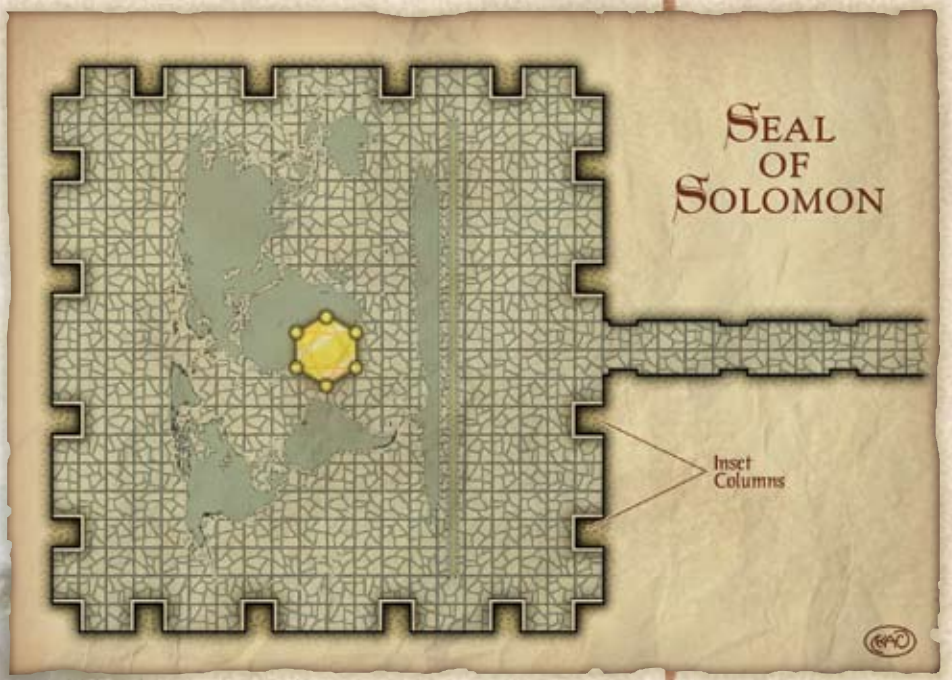
At the end of the tunnel is a large, vaulted chamber. In the center of the floor is a Seal of Solomon, inlaid in pure gold. Spread around it is a remarkably accurate map of the world, including complete coastlines of the entire Americas, something supposedly discovered only recently. At the points of each arm of the star are small steps, just wide enough for a man to stand on with his feet firmly together.

When an artifact is placed on each step, read the following. Until this is done, the heroes can't do anything else.

"As the final artifact is placed on the step, the golden lines of the Seal begin to glow, spreading outward from the six points to form the complete symbol. In the center, a pillar of intense white light forms, connected to the Seal by wisps of crackling, golden energy.

A single ray of light darts from the column and strikes the map somewhere in Africa, then another, in Europe, America, Europe again. The number of darts grows rapidly. Two, a dozen, a hundred, all striking across the globe. With each strike, you hear in your mind a tiny shriek, a whisper at first but growing in intensity as the number of darts increases. The sound is unearthly, inhuman—the sound of a thousand evil beasts being destroyed, or resealed in their tombs for another age.

Suddenly, the light is gone, as are the screams. The chamber suddenly seems intensely dark.



Have each character make a Guts roll at –4. Any who fail are at –1 to all actions while they remain in the chamber.

Just as old Ibrahim instructed, the character carrying the cat-headed staff must next stand in the center of the Seal. When he does, read the following.

The mouth of the cat's head staff opens wide, revealing a large diamond inside. A light begins to glow in the gem, starting as a mere spark, but rapidly brightening until it becomes too painful to look at, forcing you to turn your head away.

A beam of light stabs forth from the gem onto the map, and begins to move of its own accord, searching for something unseen, something no man has seen save in his most crazed nightmares, something no man should ever desire to see.

The light beam ceases its search, but remains pointing at a spot on the map. It points at Jerusalem. Suddenly the room is wracked by a terrible tremor. Charging from the tunnel come a gang of armed men, all crying out for your blood. A plume of dust from behind them indicates the tunnel has collapsed—you are trapped!

The Scions of Solomon have followed the heroes, convinced that they are evildoers trying to release the trapped entities. They intend to make sure the knowledge the heroes have gained never leaves this room.

Each round, after dealing initiative cards but before anyone can act, roll two d20. The chamber, as you will have noticed from the map on page 236, measures 20 squares by 20 squares. Read the first die along the bottom of the map and the second die up the side to locate a specific square. The stone floor in that square collapses. Any hero on the square must make an immediate Agility roll at –2 or fall into the vast chasm below, suffering 2d6+5 damage (the floor beneath slopes, actually dropping the hero over 400 feet, but along a chute). Repeat the process twice more each round the combat continues.

If the roll indicates a column, it collapses but leaves no hole. If all the columns collapse, the roof caves in at the end of the round and kills everyone still in the room outright.

The holes can be jumped, but anyone who steps onto an open hole automatically falls, as above. Enemies who fall down the chute die, either from the fall, the horror at what they see below, or because they are eaten.

Scions of Solomon, Leader (1): Treat as a Wild Card assassin, see page 322.

Scions of Solomon, Masters (1 per hero): Treat as assassins, see page 322.

Scions of Solomon, Followers (3 per hero): Treat as citizens, see page 323.

The Source of Evil

Sooner or later the heroes either fall down the holes or have no choice but to jump—the tunnel cannot be excavated before the floor collapses completely. There is nowhere to go but down.

At the bottom of the stone chute is a truly cyclopean chamber, many hundreds of feet across. Lying in this chamber is the Great Serpent, perhaps the hellish inspiration for Satan, the World Serpent, Jormungandr, Quetzalcoatl the Feathered Serpent, the Indian naga, and many other serpents of myth and lore.

With an air of malevolence, the beast turns to stare at the heroes, then moves to strike!



The Great Serpent

The monstrous form of the creature is vaguely serpentine, though it resembles no species of snake known to man. Its scales are the size of shields and glitter an inky black-green in the flickering torchlight. Where there should be a head there is only a swarm of long, grasping tentacles which thrash and writhe in time to some unholy, inaudible beat of evil. When the tentacles part the creature's maw, a circular hole filled with concentric rows of jagged teeth, becomes visible.

The rear of the beast is swollen, engorged, and pulses with the regularity of some unholy, unseen heart. The bulbous end swells larger and larger before discharging a slime covered thing—a spawn of evil, made by the Great Serpent in the very image of corruption.

Though the physical presence of the vile entity sickens the body, the foul emanations of evil—evil unhindered by any concept of morality or emotion; evil which calls out seductively to the darker nature in every mortal soul—threaten to tear apart the frail walls of sanity with which men surround their minds.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d12+6, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Stealth d8
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 23 (4)
Special Abilities:

- **Armor +4:** The Great Serpent is covered in thick, scaly skin.

- **Bite:** Str+d12.
- **Fear (–4):** Any who see the Great Serpent must make a Guts roll (–4).
- **Gargantuan:** Heavy Armor. +4 to ranged attacks from man-sized creatures. Using its entire bulk, the Serpent can slam itself down upon a foe. The attack affects an area equivalent to a Cone Template. Everyone in the template must make an Agility roll opposed by the creature's Fighting roll or suffers Str+12 damage.
- **Hardy:** The creature does not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice.
- **Size+12:** The great worm is well over 50 yards long!
- **Spawn:** Each round, before initiative cards are drawn, the Great Serpent spawns 1d3 Spawn (see below). Deal all the spawn a single action card.
- **Tentacles:** The tentacles are 10" long (20 yards). Once they grapple a target, they begin dragging them toward their maw. Each success and raise on an opposed Strength test drags the victim 1d6" closer to the hungry mouth. Each tentacle can take a single wound, but has a Toughness of 12. Bullets and impaling weapons cause half damage, while blunt attacks inflict no damage. Wounds inflicted on tentacles do not harm the Serpent.
- **Weakness (Artifacts):** The six artifacts can ignore the Serpent's Heavy Armor and its Armor rating (but not its Size rating). Against an attack from one of the artifacts it has Toughness 19.



Spawn of the Serpent

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d8, Stealth d6
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4
Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Blizzard of Tentacles:** Spawn are not big enough to hunt yet, but use their tentacles to distract their prey. A spawn gains a +1 Gang-Up bonus on its prey.
- **Quick:** Spawn discard action cards of 5 or lower.
- **Size –1:** Spawn are three feet long.

Aftermath

If the heroes survive the encounter with the great Defiler and manage to slay the Beast, they have successfully completed the *Path of Kane* Plot Point campaign.

An ancient tunnel at the far end of the cavern leads back to the surface, emerging outside the city walls. Outside, N'Longa is waiting for them. If they have met him at Basti and rescued him, he wears the skin of Hawk of Basti. Otherwise he is in spirit form, ghostlike and ethereal.

N'Longa gazes at you for a long while before speaking. "She will return," he says. "She not dead. She never die while evil in men's hearts, but she not be back for long time now. Much evil left in world. When you ready, pass artifacts to others so work may continue. Until then, you continue to walk the Path of Kane."

With that, he is gone, and the wanderers, like Solomon Kane, must set off on their next great adventure.

The New World

Solomon Kane makes at least one visit to the New World, though the story of his adventure there is told only in passing reference. He mentions fighting pirates in the Caribee and battles against red Indians, though these may well have been separate voyages. But why did Europeans go west in the first place?

The Ottoman Empire's blockade of the known trade routes to the Indies and Cathay forced European merchants to seek new routes by heading west across the Atlantic Ocean. In 1492, one month after setting sail to find a new trade route, Christopher Columbus became the first European to set foot on the islands of the Caribbean.

Within a decade, Columbus had completed three more voyages, but he had opened a door through which others would follow. In the north, the Cabots, John and Sebastian, discovered Canada; to the south Vespucci sailed the coast of South America.

What began as trade quickly turned into colonization and conquest. Portugal claimed the land of Brazil, while Spain grabbed huge territories to the north and west. The ancient cultures of the Americas were no match for European musketry, nor the many European diseases the sailers bore. Within 50 years of the first white man appearing, the central and southern Americas were outposts of European colonialism.

Native Indians were enslaved, and as the abundant wealth of the new World became apparent, countless thousands of slaves were imported from Africa to work the plantations and mines.

While the Portuguese and Spanish were colonizing the central and southern lands, England began attempts to colonize the northern landmass, founding a colony at Roanoke late in the 16th century. Although it failed, it marked another turning point in the history of the New World.

Getting There

The New World is relatively easy to find, since it runs from the Arctic Circle down almost to the Antarctic Circle.

The usual route for Europeans is to sail south to the Canary Islands off Africa, then ride the Trade Winds west across the Atlantic Ocean until land is sighted. A northerly route involves heading into the iceberg-strewn northern Atlantic, past Greenland, and then traveling south along the rugged coast of Newfoundland.

Of course, this takes the traveler to the east coast. Adventurers wishing to reach the west coast must either cross the continent by land or take a ship down the entire length of South America, round Cape Horn, and back up the other side.

While the central belt is relatively narrow, both the northern and southern landmasses are thousands of miles across, inhabited by hostile tribes, and full of strange beasts.

Travelers should note that during the late summer and early fall, colossal storms of awesome power sweep through the eastern Caribbean and along the southeast coast of North America.

Bearers and Guides

Use the guidelines on page 187 for hiring bearers and guides. In the Americas, of course, the natives are American Indians, but their stats are the same..

Geography

The New World, as a whole, is a vast landmass, encircling half the globe. In essence, however, it is comprised of three distinct regions, each of which is described separately below.

North America

North America runs from the Arctic Circle to the Tropic of Cancer. The continent is geographically very diverse, with a range of landscapes and extremes of temperature.

In the far east, the land comprises low mountains and forests. As one heads west, these gradually fade into the Great Plains (in the central region) and the many lakes of the frozen north. Beyond the Great Plains are the Rocky Mountains, whose majestic, craggy peaks stretch from the most northwest tip down to Mexico and on into South America.

Booking Passage

Despite the great expanse of storm-wracked waters between Europe and America, there is an abundance of traffic, especially heading to Central America, the most colonized region.

To find a ship in Western Europe heading that way, the heroes may make a Streetwise roll at –2 once per week as a Cooperative roll. In Spain (but not Portugal), the Streetwise roll is made with no penalty and may be attempted once per week, representing the extensive Spanish interests in the New World. Finding a ship heading to the east coast of the North American landmass, however, requires a Streetwise roll at –4 and may be attempted only once per month.

The fare varies, but this depends on where one is headed. Trips to the Caribbean cost £1d6x1. To reach the east coast, the fare is £1d6x5

The journey to the Caribbean takes 1d4+3 weeks. Heading further north or south increases this to 2d4+2 weeks. Reaching the east coast takes an average of 4d4+4 weeks.

From the north, one finds a land of forest and ice, broken by hundreds of lakes. As one moves south, the ice gives way to a variety of forests. In the southwest, the land is arid and rocky. A depression between the Rocky and Sierra Nevada Mountains, the Great Basin, is a desert of salt, perhaps the remnants of an ancient inland sea. Yet in the southeast, watered by many rivers, including the mighty Mississippi, and exposed to the moist sea winds, the low lying land is swampy.

Central America

Central America comprises a thin neck of land (forming a land bridge between North and South America), and the many islands of the Caribbean.

For the most part, the land is jungle-swathed mountains, broken only by the flat lands of the Yucatan Peninsula and the arid stretches of western Costa Rica and southern Panama.

The air is extremely humid, and the dark jungles are inhabited by tiny bloodsucking mosquitoes, large ferocious animals, and ancient lost cultures who practice bloody sacrifices. When it rains, it rains heavily, and mud slides and avalanches are a constant danger.

South America

The southern continent, like its northern neighbor, has several distinct geographical zones.

Much of the eastern coast comprises hilly terrain, broken in places by low-lying coastal plains. Heading west, the ground flattens, forming a natural basin in the north and a low, grassy expanse to the south. Behind these regions lie the Andes, which run from the southern tip to the very north, where they join with the mountains which will become the Rockies.

Unlike the Rockies, which are heavily forested for large stretches, the Andes are primarily arid, with few rivers having their origins there. The Inca of Peru speak of the Atacama Desert, which lies along the central west coast; a high desert where, in places, it has not rained since the time of Christ.

The far southern tip of the continent is predominantly arid grassland. A large belt runs along the eastern side of the Andes, trapped by the high peaks on one side and the forested hills on the other. Straddling the Equator, which runs through the northern part, the area is a mass of dense, humid, brooding jungle. The central jungle is mainly flat, contained within the basin of the River Amazon. To the south it rises into hills, while to the north it vanishes into the craggy mountains.

The Spanish Main

Though usually used to refer to a later era, the Spanish Main—the northern coast of South America and the eastern side of Mexico—has its foundation in this era. Spain has already established many colonies to extract the mineral wealth from the ground, and has been importing African slaves to work the mines and fields for almost a century.

Pirates are already hunting the waters, hungry for loot and searching for richly laden Spanish treasure fleets, and privateers such as Sir Francis Drake are already thorns in the Spanish flesh.

The Columbian Exchange

The meeting of the Old and New Worlds offered a boom time for merchants. Both sides of the Atlantic had things their distant neighbors had no knowledge of but were keen to try. Named after Columbus, the Exchange marked a glorious trade opportunity for explorers and traders alike, both keen to bring new discoveries back to the courts of Europe.

Europeans exported their domesticated livestock, including horses, cattle, goats, and pigs to the New World as foodstuffs, and returning with such exotic creatures as llamas, turkeys, and guinea pigs (a staple food in some parts).

The joining of the two worlds has also started a culinary explosion, especially back in Europe. New foodstuffs, such as avocados, a variety of beans, chilies, chocolate, maize, peanuts, pineapples, coconuts, tomatoes, and, of course, the potato (and sweet potato), found their way to European dining tables.



Tobacco was also imported into Europe, sparking a new fashion for inhaling the foul-smelling smoke of burning leaves, and created the pipe-making industry virtually overnight.

In return, the Americans had their first taste of bananas and sugar (both of which were then grown in the Americas on extensive plantations worked by slaves), citrus fruits from the Middle East and Mediterranean, apples, pears, onions, turnips, and cabbages from northern Europe, coffee from Africa, and wheat and rice, both of which were widely grown across much of Europe at this time.

As often happens when two previously separated cultures meet for the first time, the European travelers brought with them unseen contaminants, including cholera, bubonic plague, smallpox, tuberculosis, and syphilis. The indigenous tribesmen had no resistance to this new barrage of illnesses, with the result that the Europeans' diseases killed millions of the Indians of the New World.

The Old Empires

Many cultures existed across the Americas long before the white men landed. In the jungles of central America and the Andes mountains, great cities of stone stand testament to this age, but for the most part they are deserted, their people enslaved or displaced by the Spanish conquistadors.

It is worth noting that none of the native tribes make use of the wheel. The dense jungle and steep mountains prohibit the use of wheeled transport, and goods are carried by bearers or llamas.

Religion

Before the arrival of the Spaniards, the Aztecs and Mayans practiced a dark and bloody religion which demanded human sacrifice. Even the Incas, a thousand miles south, practiced human sacrifice.

Many sacrifices were prisoners, taken in so-called "flower wars" against neighboring tribes (where the objective was to capture prisoners, rather than slaughter each other), or criminals. In certain circumstances, they sacrificed their own citizens drawn by lots, even offering up babies to appease their bloodthirsty deities.

In other instances, two teams played a ball game, the objective of which was for the players to knock a rubber ball through hoops mounted high on the wall of the arena using only their elbows and knees. The losing team would be decapitated, and sacrificed to the gods.

Though the Spaniards have converted some tribes to Christianity, human sacrifice is still practiced in rural areas, and more than one European explorer has been offered to the gods, his heart ripped from his chest, his head removed from his shoulder, or his skin flayed from his living body.

The Aztecs

The Aztec Empire once dominated the central regions of Mexico. The Aztecs (who called themselves "Mixtec") were not the first people to live here, for their cities are built on an older empire, that of the Toltecs.

Until 1519, the Aztecs ruled the region, practicing their bloody religion, which demanded human sacrifice to appease the gods. They ruled from the great city of Tenochtitlan, built on raised platforms over the waters of Lake Texcoco. At its height, the city boasted a quarter million inhabitants, making it one of the largest cities on Earth.

Hernán Cortés (1485–1547), a Spanish conquistador, landed on the east coast of Mexico in 1519 with a small army and set off inland in search of the great empire he had heard about. Several tribes attacked Cortés' caravan, but the superior military technology of the Spaniards, combined with their cavalry mobility, quickly led to these tribes being subjugated.

The ruler of the Aztec Empire, Montezuma, welcomed Cortés to his city, believing that Cortés was an emissary of the Aztec god Quetzalcoatl, ("feathered serpent"), who would, according to legend, return to Mexico in the form of a white man.

Cortés promptly imprisoned Montezuma, though he allowed him to continue his rule as a puppet vassal of Spain. Faced with another Spanish army trying to steal his glory, Cortés left a token force in the city and went to meet his adversary. During this time, a riot erupted, and the token garrison of Tenochtitlan was slaughtered.

Angered, Cortés gathered his forces and ravaged the countryside, conquering city after city. Returning to Tenochtitlan, Cortés ordered a fleet of ships constructed while he captured the outlying villages. In a shock battle, Cortés' army was defeated, his use of guns negated by Aztec tactics which had taken these into account.

Fortunately for Cortés, another European weapon entered the war—smallpox. In a brutal campaign lasting many weeks, during which the Spaniards fought through the city street by street, building by building, Cortés defeated the Aztecs, leaving their once great city a smoking ruin.

In the space of just three years, the Aztec Empire was wiped off the map.

An outbreak of smallpox in 1545 and a typhoid epidemic in 1576 finished the Spaniards' job for them. The Aztec nation

was reduced in strength by 80%, its people forced into small villages or enslaved. All that remains are their great stepped pyramids, reminders of an age when the Aztecs were favored by the gods.

Incan Empire

Far to the south, high among the Andes Mountains and coastal plains of Peru, the Incan Empire held power. Built on the ruins of the Moche Empire, the Incas held power for around 300 years before the Spanish army arrived, under the leadership of Francisco Pizarro (1471–1541).

Driven south by the lure of gold, Pizarro's army landed on the coast in 1532. At this time, the Incan Empire was wracked by civil war. Emerging victorious from this was Atahualpa, the last true Incan emperor. His reign was brief, for Pizarro's army quickly encountered that of the Incan rulers and wiped it out. The Emperor offered Pizarro a vast ransom for his release. Pizarro accepted the deal, melted down a vast treasure haul, and then reneged on his part of the bargain. The Emperor remained in captivity for another year, at which time he was executed.

As with the Aztecs, the Spanish installed a puppet emperor on the throne while they set about destroying and looting other Incan cities. However, a lack of central leadership from Pizarro led to the Spaniards turning on each other, and a brutal civil war raged until 1541, when Pizarro was killed.

The Incan Emperor, Manco, rebelled against his Spanish overlords and fled into the mountains, where he and later his son, Tupac, would lead a guerilla war lasting almost four decades. The Incan Empire struggled on through the war, but came to an end in 1572, when Emperor Tupac was captured and executed.

The Incas were enslaved, and the last great empire ceased to exist.

Like the Central American cultures, the Incas were great builders. A network of roads ran throughout their realm, linking their cities and allowing trade to flourish. In the aftermath of the Spanish conquest, the remains of the great Incan cities now lie empty, their cyclopean temples quiet.

Mayan Empire

During the European invasion of Central America, the Yucatan Peninsula was home to the Mayan Empire. Like their neighbors, the Aztecs and the distant Incas, the Mayans were builders, constructing stone cities and temples.

When the Conquistadors came to Mexico, they were searching for gold and silver. While the Aztecs had these in abundance, the Mayan lands were poor, and for the most part the Spanish ignored them.

There were sporadic, half-hearted attempts at colonizing the region, but without the lure of wealth, and with the Mayan cities being independent entities with no central government to destabilize, the Spanish saw little reason to waste valuable manpower or resources on an all out war that would net them little gain.

Thus, in the time of Kane, the Mayans remain a free people, though not a great people. Hundreds of years ago, the Mayans controlled much of the Yucatan, but over time their borders shrank until, by the time of the European invasion, they were reduced to holding little more than the northern tip of the peninsula.

Famine, drought, disease, and war had swept through the nation over the previous centuries, and the Mayans are a shadow of their former glory, engaging in their bloody rituals in an attempt to persuade their gods to again rekindle the flame that once burned so brightly, but which now flickers on the brink of extinction.

Earlier Civilizations

In the dense, steamy jungles of Central America are the ruins of civilizations far older than those mentioned above.

Among these, the oldest are the Olmecs, whose reign began around the time of the siege of Troy (1200 BC) and lasted until the rise of the Romans (around 300 BC). The jungles of their former homeland are dotted with colossal stone heads, each twice as tall as a man. Like huge, silent sentinels, the Olmec heads watch over the jungle.

The Zapotec flourished in central southern Mexico toward the latter end of the Olmec period and were present when the Spanish Conquistadors landed, though their culture had declined. The Zapotec, long-time enemies of the Aztecs, sought peace with the Spanish, but were conquered anyway, though it took the Spanish invaders five years of hard fighting.

The Toltecs, whose empire lasted barely two centuries, were a militaristic race who conquered much of central Mexico, paving the foundations for the later Aztec Empire. They were wiped out by the Chichimecs, a confederation of tribes living in northern Mexico.

North American Indians

The vast lands of North America had been home to various peoples for many thousands of years before the arrival of white men. When Columbus first landed in the Caribbean, he was convinced he had reached the Indies, and so he labeled the people as Indians. Despite the error, the name has stuck, and all the indigenous peoples of the New World are referred to as Indians.



The Europeans re-introduced horses to the Americas, which were never in evidence in the south and had been hunted to extinction in the north. As with South America, they also brought with them disease and brutal ideals of conquest.

Many tribes of North American Indians at first dealt peacefully with the pale-skinned invaders, trading with them and teaching them how to live off the land. However, natural disasters, like drought, and European plans for expansion brought many of the tribes into conflict with the would-be settlers, resulting in many short but bitter wars.

Although the majority of the tribes live a hunter-gatherer existence, there is evidence that older cultures once existed here. All of these areas were deserted by the time white men discovered them.

At Newark (Ohio), there are vast earthworks dating back to the same era as the Roman.

At Cahokia (Illinois) stand the remnants of a huge city, its great earth temples similar in design to those of the Aztecs and Mayans far to the south.

In what is now New Mexico, the Anasazi people constructed the semi-circular, tiered city of Pueblo Bonito, which was linked to neighboring towns with unpaved roads, marked by low banks or stone walls.

Early European Colonies

The first European colony on mainland North America was St. Augustine, founded in Florida around 1565. At the time of Kane, it is a fledgling outpost of soldiers, missionaries, and a few settler families.

The English quickly made a land grab, establishing a colony at Roanoke Island. Kane's friend Sir Richard Grenville was captain of the Roanoke expedition, and Kane himself may have made the journey. Following the disappearance of the Roanoke colonists, England left the Americas in peace until the reign of James I, when it established several new colonies along the northwest coast, including Jamestown in Virginia.

Roads Inland

Very little of the North American interior has been explored by Europeans, whose colonies are situated along the coasts. Beyond the Rockies, the coast of California and Oregon have been sighted, but are not settled. California, claimed by Drake for the English, remains free of Europeans until the Spanish arrive in the 17th century.

The Spanish have launched expeditions north from their bases in Mexico, claiming the sun-baked flats of New Mexico in 1541 and eventually settling there in 1598 with the founding of the colony of San Juan.

As such, America is as unexplored as the Dark Continent, and yours, as the GM, to use as you will in your adventures.

The City of Dust

By the time white men come to North America as colonizers, the native Indians are predominantly nomadic, moving with the great herds they hunt. But this was not always the case, as white men discovered when they ventured into the deserts of the southeast continent, for here stand the ruins of great cities of stone and brick, testament to an older age. One such city is known to the neighboring tribes as Chanoth, City of Dust.

History

Sometime around 300 BC, the local tribes settled in what was then a more fertile region. They cultivated crops and built great cities, linking them with roads. Of these, Chanoth was the greatest. Their society slowly changed from a simple nomadic tribal structure to the complex bureaucracy required for regular planting, harvesting, and storing the crops necessary to feed a growing population. In many ways, they rivaled the distant, growing cities of Western Europe, which were guided by the hands of the Romans.

For many centuries, the cities prospered and grew into a powerful trading nation whose reach stretched across the land. Then came disaster. A bright light appeared in the heavens one night, a light which grew in intensity for several days before fading and then disappearing. The shamans spoke to the sky spirits, who warned that a great and terrible fate had been written for the cities.

A year later, the rains failed to come. And the next year, and the next, and the next. Offerings were made to the spirits; grain, water, and finally human blood. Still the rains did not come. Within a generation, the ground was baked hard and cracked, the river channels reduced to the merest trickle in summer even when the winter snows in the distant mountains melted, and the cities were largely abandoned, left to the fury of time and the elements. And still the rains did not come.

Four hundred years have come and gone, and the fertile land has become a desert. The once-great cities have been reduced to only a few feet of sand-blasted stone, or else have disintegrated into piles of sand as entropy eats at the mud bricks. What grew from the earth is slowly returning to it.

Most of the tribes who built the cities have moved on to other lands, but they still speak of Chanoth, and the darkness that lies within. During the migrations of certain herds, the tribes must pass close to their ancient home. They do so with fear in their hearts, for those who stray too close to Chanoth are found dead, all the moisture drained from their withered, mummified corpses.

One tribe, the Anasazi, sought refuge in a system of caves, through which flowed a subterranean river. They have not been seen since entering the underworld.

The City

No wall in Chanoth stands higher than a few feet. As such, there is no shelter from the wind, nowhere to hide from enemies. The city is laid open for all to see, as if the great builders had marked out the foundations but failed to complete their work. In truth, of course, the opposite is true, and the city is returning to the earth.

The city covers several square miles and is laid out in an organized, square fashion. At the center were the city's religious and administrative buildings, surrounded by the homes of the nobility. Beyond these were the shops and warehouses so vital to the city. The

outer regions were marked by tightly-packed streets housing workers, stable blocks, and workshops. The roads and zones of Chanoth were not built randomly as the city expanded, but carefully designed from the initial stages. Roads run straight as arrows, crisscrossing the city like a giant griddle was laid upon it.

Nothing of interest remains in the city. There is no treasure to loot, no storehouses to plunder, no skeletons to bury or mourn. There is only the sand, the wind, and the evil that desiccates those who dare approach.

The Thirst

Lead In: While the heroes are in North America, whether they choose to stay with the English colonists in the northeast or venture among the native tribes, the heroes hear the tale of Chanoth. The name is always spoken of in hushed whispers by the Indians, who speak of the desiccated corpses of their kin, and mockingly by the white men, who treat it as a myth, or at best a parable about the dangers of the wilderness.

Of the two views, the Indians have it right.

Background

The stellar event which led to the drought also released from imprisonment an ancient fiend, whose shackles had bound it beneath the land since the days of Atlantis. After millennia in chains it thirsted, a terrible, all-encompassing thirst which no human could hope to comprehend and remain sane. It sucked dry the wells and rivers, but its thirst was not abated. Then it turned on the puny creatures which lived in the stone cities, draining them of their moisture.

Now the fiend hibernates, recovering its strength as it slowly digests the water in its bloated stomach. It awakens only when it senses weak prey, and then it hunts and feeds remorselessly. Until such time as it is fully refreshed, it has no desire to wander outside of its lair.

When the wanderers get within five miles of Chanoth, they encounter a small band of Indians. The Indians have no hostile intentions toward the heroes, and are actually busy mourning one of their dead comrades. His corpse, which is being prepared for its final journey, is extremely withered, as if it had been out in the sun for many weeks. If the heroes ask about the poor individual, they are told the following.

"This is my brother," one of the Indians says, motioning to the corpse. "Last night he was alive and well, as fit as any of you. He went to look at the old city, but never returned. We found him like this early this morning."

Any character who examines the body and makes a successful Healing roll discovers a series of small puncture wounds in the hard flesh. On a raise, the hero gets the impression that the holes form a pattern, as if something covered in large thorns had wrapped itself around the unfortunate victim.

In order to discover the cause of the death, the explorers must venture nearer to the ruined city. The Indians try to warn the heroes to stay clear, and cannot be threatened or persuaded to venture any closer. Even death at the end of a blade is preferable to facing the horror they call the "kwickate," or "desert thing."

Ancient Treasure

As the heroes investigate the ruined city, a section of ground gives way beneath their feet. Every hero must make an Agility roll or fall 10 yards into a subterranean chamber some 16 yards wide and 20 yards long. Those who succeed spot a set of carved stairs leading down into the void.

The walls are decorated with frescoes, showing the history of the city. The story begins well, with images of bountiful crops and happy citizens. Further on, the scene changes to show the mysterious light in the sky. The last of the panels, some of which are unfinished, detail the decline of the city.

The desert fiend bursts through the floor of the chamber once the heroes have had a chance to review the frescoes. The creature keeps most of its bloated bulk beneath the earth, with only its long head and tentacles emerging, if possible.

Desert Thing

The desert thing is a loathsome horror, lurking beneath the soft sands of the southwestern deserts around Chanoth. It moves very slowly beneath the dunes, waiting by popular trails or among the low walls of the ruined city. When a hapless traveler passes by, the thing grabs its legs with barbed tentacles and drains the moisture from them.

The desert thing can sense approaching prey up to 25" (50 yards) distant with a Notice roll (opposed by Stealth if the group's being sneaky). When the prey gets within reach of its tentacles, the creature attacks.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8(A), Spirit d4, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d12+2
Pace: 2; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 16 (2)/9 (7)
Special Abilities:

- **Armor:** +2 for the body submerged in the sand, +7 on the creature's tentacles
- **Bite:** The creature's sharp proboscis does Str+d10, AP3.
- **Burrow (6"):** When the creature attacks, it makes an opposed Stealth roll versus the target's Notice. If the creature wins, it gains +2 to attack and damage that round, or +4 if it gets a raise. If the victim wins and was on Hold, he may try to interrupt the burrower's attack as usual.
- **Desiccate:** On a successful Grapple attack, the creature automatically sinks the barbs on its tentacles into its prey's flesh. Each round the grapple is maintained (starting on the round after the grapple is made), victims must make a Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue. This can lead to Death.
- **Improved Sweep:** The desert thing may attack up to 8 opponents with a Reach of 5" at no penalty. Each tentacle has a Toughness of 9, including Armor, and is severed if "wounded." Severing a tentacle causes no actual damage to the creature.
- **Large:** Attacks on the fully exposed body are made at +2 because of its size.
- **Size +6:** The enormous bulk of the desert thing is hidden beneath the sand.



St. John's Town, Virginia

ST. John's Town is a small but prosperous township on the coast of Virginia, some thirty miles from Jamestown.

History

Jamestown is the first true permanent settlement in Virginia, and was founded in 1607 by the London Virginia Company. St John's Town, known locally just as St. John's, was founded in 1608 by independent settlers who sought to become wealthy in the New World, but who did want to be beholden to the Company.

While life promised to be better in the New World, the dream has yet to be realized. The harvests have failed every year since St. John's Town was founded, and the ensuing disease and starvation have claimed lives. The town survives by the skin of its teeth, but there are signs of improvement, for one farmer has had good harvests in the past year.

Timing

There are currently only a very few European settlements in North America, and the heroes might visit St. John's before you are ready to run this tale. This opens a door of opportunity to a richer and more emotionally charged story.

The characters may befriend Peabody, perhaps becoming regular visitors while they travel the continent. During this time, he is a poor but charitable man, suffering terribly because of the crop failures. His transformation into a man of riches, and the demise of his family will then be a greater shock to the heroes than if they were meeting him for the first time.

Should you wish to use Peabody in this manner, you will need to slightly rework the scenario, especially the beginning. The heroes would likely know Martha as well, in which case she gives flowers to the traveler who has been kindest to her over the years.

The Town & Its People

By European standards, the town is closer to a village. In the center stands a small, wooden church, built by the settlers so they could follow their Protestant faith. There are only a handful of graves, victims of illness and the poor harvests that plague the town.

Surrounding the church are twenty single-story houses, as well as a smithy and a small store, which buys goods from Jamestown. Most of the town's inhabitants work for the landowners as laborers. Further out lie the houses of the landowners, who hold the reins of power in St. John's and who, along with the priest (also the schoolteacher), run the town council. There are six landowners, each claiming a large parcel of land as his own. At the center of their estates are grand, manor houses, built in English style.

The citizens have had bitter disputes with the local Indian tribes, though no bloodshed has yet resulted. When the harvests first failed, the settlers began foraging for food. Fortunately, the Indians have not fared as badly, or war would surely break out over the scant resources available.

An English Dragon

Lead In: While in Jamestown (the only port of entry into North America), the wanderers hear farmers talking about the famines at St. John's. They joke together that the Indians have cursed the inhabitants and that, if things don't change soon, the colony may perish.

Background

Nathaniel Peabody, a landowner in St. John's, Virginia, continually suffered from poor crops from the day he arrived. His meager fortune was waning and bankruptcy was on the cards.

Then, some six months ago, he happened upon an ancient scroll while dealing with a merchant from London. The scroll contained knowledge on crop fertility, but required human sacrifices to empower the magic. At first hesitant to tread such a dark path, the forecast of another poor harvest and the thought of hardship for his family drove him to desperation and he weakened.

Peabody arranged to have three Indians captured in secret, convincing himself that the use of pagan blood for his wicked pact would not stain his Christian soul. Nathaniel sacrificed his poor victims, sprinkling their blood on his crops and enacting the ritual. When the harvest time came, Peabody had a bountiful crop, restoring his wealth and making him the envy of his St. John's Town neighbors.

Unfortunately for him, one of the Indians was a shaman. With his dying breath he cursed Peabody with ruin and damnation, promising all that he had worked for would be taken from him. The spirit summoned by the shaman set about ruining Peabody slowly (outright death would be far too easy), and began by slaughtering his livestock.

Despite Peabody's claim that wild animals had taken his stock, his young daughter, Martha, witnessed one of these attacks and has gone insane, claiming to have seen a dragon. The creature has also been using its powers to cause nightmares within the household, taking the form of a dragon from young Martha's mind.

Unperturbed by the "wolf" attacks, bad dreams, or his daughter's mental illness, Mr. Peabody (whose reason is starting to unravel) has recently sacrificed three more Indians in preparation for the next planting season.

Totally enraged, the spirit now plans to destroy the family outright. This is poor timing for the characters, for the spirit has chosen the night of the characters' visit to enact its revenge.

Invitation to Dinner

Strangers are a rarity in St. John's, especially Europeans. While in the town, for whatever reason, they are approached by Elizabeth Peabody, Nathaniel's wife. Although very attractive, she looks tired, with noticeable bags under her eyes.

She speaks to them, asking where they have traveled from. Once the wanderers have had a chance to speak, she invites them to dinner that night with her husband Nathaniel, who she says would love to hear their tales.

Assuming the travelers accept, allow them to conduct their business in town, and then read the following text.

The walk from town through the night is refreshing, though a storm appears to be brewing on the horizon. As you near the house, you spy the carcass of a cow lying on the side of the road, no doubt killed by wolves, desperate for food.

On reaching the house, you are invited in by a servant, who takes your cloaks and capes, and then guides you through to the atrium to meet your hosts.

Nathaniel Peabody is a thick-set man of average height with graying hair who wears fine, if crumpled, clothes. He steps forward to greet you, his handshake unpleasantly weak. His wife, dressed in black and wearing a simple wooden cross around her neck, follows him.

"Ah, my wife's guests," Peabody says with a notable hint of distain in his voice. "Come, dinner is almost ready and we should take our seats."

The Dining Room

You are shown through the rest of the house on your way to the main dining room. Fortune has been kind to the family. The house is very well-furnished with paintings of the old country, small statues of Greek and Roman figures, quite possibly authentic, and porcelain vases imported from Cathay.

The dining hall has a white tile floor, decorated with blue patterning. A large fireplace is positioned against the back wall, warm flames crackling within. Above it hangs an old lance, obviously taking pride of place. Nine high-backed chairs surround an oak table in the center of the room.

Any hero worth his salt will bring up the lance in conversation sooner or later. Nathaniel is very proud to tell the characters its history.

"Ah yes," he says, a grim smile on his face. "That is a family heirloom, many centuries old. One of my ancestors carried it during the Crusades. It was passed down from father to son ever since. It will pass to my daughter's husband when she marries. You may hold it if you wish."

The lance has no true magical power, but it can harm creatures immune to normal weapons. Otherwise it has the same stats as a spear.

Meeting Martha

Once the characters are seated for dinner, read or paraphrase the following text.

As you settle down, wondering what delights Peabody has prepared for his guests, the door to the dining room opens and a young girl enters.

By her apparent age you assume she must be Peabody's daughter. She is dressed in a fine dress, with her dark hair plaited into two pigtails. In her hands she holds a garland of flowers.

When the next section of text calls for her to present the flowers and speak to one of the characters, pick the second player on your left (that way it is completely random).



The girl smiles and curtsies politely to you all. With a slight skip in her step she moves over to (insert character name) and thrusts the flowers toward you, smiling sweetly.

Wait until the character takes the flowers before continuing.

As you take the flowers the child speaks to you in a lilting voice. "These are for you, to mark your grave. You're going to die tonight."

Try to use the voice of a little girl while speaking for Martha. Her expression should be one of bright smiles with absolutely no menace in her voice at all.

The character she speaks to must make a Guts roll or suffer –1 to all rolls for the rest of this scene.

"Martha! Do not say such wicked things!" hisses her mother. She turns to (insert character's name). *"Please, you must forgive her, she has been suffering from a brain fever recently and is not herself.*

"She means nothing by her comments, she is quite distracted. Please accept my sincere apologies."

Whether or not the character wishes to accept Elizabeth's apology is up to them. Nothing changes if the character is offended by Martha's chilling prediction.

Pleasantries over Dinner

Once the guests have finished dealing with Martha's entrance the servants enter with the first course.

The dining room door opens and three servants enter carrying serving trays. They place the first course on the table before you and the smell of food soon fills the room.

Before you lie plates of roast chicken, pheasant, deer, suckling pig, fresh green vegetables, potatoes, cheese, and freshly baked bread with butter.

It seems that Peabody has spared no expense to entertain you.

After a simple prayer, the wanderers are invited by Mrs. Peabody to help themselves to the impressive meal.

Let the heroes talk to their hosts as they wish. It is probable that they will have several questions for the couple. A sample of typical questions and answers is given below. The GM will have to make up other answers as needed.

Q: When did Martha start suffering her brain fever?

A: About three months ago. She was found wandering the grounds at night by one of the servants. Martha kept babbling about a (whispers) "dragon." Poor child obviously caught a severe chill. The air here is so damp.

Q: We saw a cow carcass on the way here. What happened?

A: There have been some wolf attacks recently. I will be organizing a hunting party soon to clear them off.

Q: Are you having trouble sleeping?

A: It has been a busy harvest and the cattle killings have caused a few sleepless nights. Martha has also required a great deal of attention recently, haven't you my dear? (Nod from Martha).

Q: How can you afford this food?

A: We were very fortunate, and the harvest was especially bountiful this year.

Q: Why has your harvest improved so suddenly?

A: Maybe those lazy villagers are finally doing some work. Seriously, I put it down to my piety and the power of prayer.

Martha's Fit

This section is used the first time one of the characters mentions the "dragon" directly to Martha (she pays no attention to adult conversation otherwise) or if she is present when the beast first materializes.

On any subsequent occasion, the girl just curls into a ball and begins to emit a loud, high-pitched wail that continues for several minutes. Heroes witnessing this and hearing the awful sound must make a Guts roll or roll on the Fright table.

As soon as the word "dragon" passes your lips, Martha's hands fly to cover her ears. Her eyes become vacant and she begins dribbling uncontrollably.

"The dragon is coming tonight! It comes from the air! It wants to punish us for being naughty! Bad people, bad people, bad people!" Martha then collapses, sobbing heavily.

On NO account should you repeat any of this for the players' benefit. Their characters do not have the luxury of hearing this twice and neither should they!

Questioning Martha about the dragon or about what she meant by "being naughty" is pointless. The girl remembers nothing of what she said. Trying to force her to repeat what she said just makes her cry and run to her mother's arms. Elizabeth then chastises the character(s), reminding them in no uncertain terms that her daughter *"has been ill with a brain fever."*

Thunder in the Kitchen

Once the conversation has died down or the players are at a loss what to do next, they are again interrupted.

Nathaniel Peabody puts down his wine goblet and looks toward the dining room door. "Where are those damned servants!" You hear him hiss under his breath.

As if in answer there is a booming sound, like the sound of thunder, but clearly emanating from within the house. The very walls shake and several wine glasses tip over, spilling their ruby contents across the tiled floor.

Peabody leaps to his feet. "What in the name of the Savior was that?" he shouts, heading quickly toward the door.

If no characters offer to accompany him he turns to his guests and asks the men to help him investigate. He refuses any offer of help from a lady, though he doesn't take any action to stop them following.

Read on once at least one character is with him.

Peabody leads you through the house, calling out the names of his servants. There is no reply. After a brief search you enter the kitchen.

A scene from Hades greets your eyes. Every surface in the room is coated with blobs of a red jelly-like substance, flecked with white pieces of a harder material. The only sound is the goo dripping on to the tiled floor. At your feet lies the severed mangled head of one of the servants, his horrific eyeless sockets staring up at you. You cannot tell where, amid this carnage, the rest of his body may be. Aside from the bloody mess, the room is utterly deserted.

Peabody, his face ashen and his eyes bulging in fear, turns to you and shouts, "We must get back to the others!"

Witnessing this grisly sight requires a Guts roll or else make a roll on the Fright table. The bloody destruction in the kitchen is a terrible result of the Indian spirit manifesting there, but worse horrors still await when the heroes return to the dining room.



Death at the Dinner Table

As soon as at least one of the characters who went to the kitchen with Peabody returns to the dining room again, continue with this section.

Do not give the player a chance to say more than a few words before interrupting him.

No sooner have you entered the dining room than a high-pitched scream comes from Martha. Whipping your heads round, you see her pointing at her mother, her eyes wide with fear.

Turning to Elizabeth, you see a large reptilian creature, over 15 feet in length, materialize behind her. Seeing your stunned stares, Elizabeth begins to turn.

Before you can react, the thing lunges forward with the speed of a striking snake, catching Elizabeth's head in its jaws. With a snap of its jaw and a brief twist of its head, it bites clean through her neck.

As you watch in horror, Elizabeth's headless corpse falls forward, smashing onto the table. Plates clatter to the floor, a bright red fountain of blood covering the remains of your meal.

The beast whips its head to face you and howls, its open mouth revealing rows of jagged teeth. Then suddenly it is gone, as if it never existed, leaving behind the stench of fresh blood.

This scene calls for a Guts roll at –2 or the hero must roll on the Fright table. Any characters who are still in control of their senses should make Notice rolls. If any succeed, they witness the following event.

As horrifying as the sight of Elizabeth's brutal slaying was, something else caught your eye. Behind the creature, from the direction of the fireplace, you swear you saw a blue glow, which lingered for a few seconds after the beast vanished.

Martha has gone catatonic and remains that way for some ten minutes, regardless of the heroes' action. Nathaniel Peabody stands transfixed by the scene.

Come to My Study

Let the wanderers panic a bit—let them demand answers from Peabody if they feel he can be of any assistance. Peabody is in shock for several minutes and can only stare.

Read the following section once the heroes have calmed down or seem about to leave the room. Whatever happens, the characters *must* be separated into two groups. Peabody appeals to the weakest member of the party. Although he would prefer to deal with a single hero, he agrees if two wish to follow.

Peabody suddenly shakes is head. With wide eyes he turns to (character name). "I must speak with you in my study. I have something very important to show you. There's no time to waste, please, follow me. The rest of you wait here and… and… please, look after my daughter and cover my poor wife."

If the heroes refuse to go with him, he starts begging and pleading until they acquiesce.

Peabody leads you to his study, all the while muttering, "It's my fault! It's my fault!" He flings the door open and drags you in. As you wonder if Peabody has lost his grip on sanity, he opens a cabinet, searching for something inside.

"My God, I've done something terrible. I was just trying to make my crops grow better, so I could feed my family. I know what I did wrong. The earth spirits are angry with me for using Indian sacrifices. But I'll put it all right. Ah, here it is!"

With that Peabody turns to face you, his face contorted with madness, a curved dagger clenched tightly in his hand.

"I need another sacrifice for my crops," he sneers at you. "A proper sacrifice this time. Not those barbaric natives."

Suddenly, he lunges at you…

Peabody is totally insane, having witnessed the scene in the kitchen and his wife's decapitation in combination with his recent spate of human sacrifices. He fights to the death.



Nathaniel Peabody

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidate d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8
Charisma: 0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7
Hindrances: Greedy
Edges: Berserk, Brawny, Rich
Gear: Dagger (Str+d4)

Death to the Strangers!

Although Nathaniel and Elizabeth are dead, the spirit has plans for the guests. They may not be family, but they are with the family and so are guilty by association. Martha, as a child, is deemed innocent by the spirit.



The Dragon

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidate d12+2, Notice d12, Taunt d10, Stealth d12+4
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 14(4)
Special Abilities:

- **Armor +4:** Hard scales.
- **Claws:** Str+d6. These can only be used when the spirit is in physical form.
- **Ethereal:** The spirit can become ethereal as a free action. In this form it can only be harmed by magical attacks (including the lance).
- **Fear –2:** The spirit causes Guts checks at –2 when it lets itself be seen.
- **Size +3:** The dragon is over 15 feet long.
- **Spells:** The spirit can use *fear, obscure, puppet, spirit servant,* and *zombie* with no Casting Modifier. It uses its Spirit as its arcane skill. It can use its magic while ethereal.

The Lost Colony

The English colony of Roanoke was founded in 1584 to provide a base of operations for raids against Spanish interests in the Americas.

Led by Sir Richard Grenville, a small fleet of ships carrying many men, who would found the colony before settler families arrived, set sail from England. The venture did not begin well, for one of the ships struck reefs while approaching the site chosen for the colony and much of the provisions were lost. Relations with their new neighbors, the local Indian tribes, were also soured when a stolen silver cup led to their chief being executed.

With the colony established, Grenville appointed one Ralph Lane as governor and departed for England to collect new supplies. Due back in 1586, Lane and his 100 men would have to survive for almost 18 months.

As 1585 headed from spring to summer, it became clear that the annual rains were not going to come. The hard, cracked ground was useless for growing crops, and the Indians, who had traded with the colonists earlier in the year, stayed away, hoarding what little they had for the hard winter ahead.

Facing starvation, the colonists kidnapped the chief's son, demanding food for his safe return. Relations soured, then the Indians attacked an exploratory party. In retaliation, Lane and his men obliterated the Indian capital.

Grenville's fleet failed to arrive in time, and when Sir Francis Drake stopped there after warring against the Spanish he took the starving colonists back to England. Grenville's fleet did eventually turn up, late, but finding the colony abandoned he left a handful of men there to maintain an English presence and set sail for home again.

In 1587 a second wave of colonists arrived at Roanoke, this time including women and children. Arriving in the colony after being dropped off further down the coast and ordered to make their own way to Roanoke, the colonists entered the township only to discover the place deserted, save for a single skeleton.

Shortly after the colonists arrived, the first English colonist was born on American soil. She was named Virginia in honor of Queen Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen.

However, the Indians had not forgotten the brutal and bloody actions of the earlier colonists, and faced with growing unrest by the natives, the colonists sent Governor John White to England to fetch reinforcements.

Delayed first by bad weather, and then by the threat of Spanish Armada, which required all seaworthy ships to be turned over to the navy for the defense of England, White did not return to Roanoke until 1590.

Instead of a thriving colony, White found instead a deserted settlement. It was as if the 120 colonists had vanished into thin air. The only clue to the mystery was a single word scratched into a wooden post—"Croaton." The colony has been deserted ever since.

The Croaton

Lead In: While in Jamestown, the heroes overhear two fur trappers talking about Roanoke. One claims he had just returned from the area, driven off by strange voices he heard on the wind. He claims it is the voices of the disappeared citizens, calling out from beyond the grave.

Background

The disappearance of the colonists of Roanoke was due to the Indians they had attacked and robbed in earlier years (one item they stole was a sacred sun axe). Keen to rid their land of the white settlers, the Indians launched a raid. A staunch defense, and the advantage of black powder weapons, caused heavy losses to the Indians, who were forced to retreat.

Angered beyond reason, the chief ordered the tribe's medicine man to release a mighty demonic spirit the tribe had bound centuries earlier, the Croaton. Duly summoned and bound, the spirit wrought vengeance on behalf of the Indians, destroying the colonists' bodies and souls. Once its task was complete, it was sent back to the Spirit World.

The Deserted Colony

When the heroes arrive, it is late evening. They find Roanoke deserted. The houses are intact, with doors and windows open, and aside from some dampness are structurally sound. Food, now long spoiled, still lies on tables, letters, the paper dark with mold, rest half finished on writing desks, and crafters' projects remain incomplete, as if the settlers simply walked away from the colony one day. Many of the oil lamps are empty and their wicks burnt out, a sign they were lit when the colonists vanished.

If a hero has been to Roanoke in their past and met the colonists, he finds an unfinished letter addressed to himself. This could be a love letter or a simple correspondence asking the character when he will next visit.

A search of the village requires two Notice rolls. With success on the first, the heroes find the word "Croa" written on a piece of timber framing. On a raise, they find the word "Croaton" on a different timber. With a successful second roll, made at –2, they find a number of scratches pointing toward a water trough. There is nothing beneath the trough, though if they dig down a few inches they find a ceremonial sun axe wrapped in oiled leather.

As night falls, the wind picks up and a storm breaks (see page 305 for game effects). Have each hero on guard duty (or otherwise keeping an eye outside) make a Notice roll at –2 opposed by the Stealth of the Indians (see below). On a success, they spy a number of shadowy forms scaling the perimeter fence and skulking into the colony.

Indian Warriors (1 per hero)

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Throwing d6
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: —
Gear: Tomahawk (Str+d8), bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6).

The Indians saw the wanderers arrive and sent a scouting party to investigate. The Indian warriors have encountered firearms before, and don't need to make Guts rolls when one is fired. If half the war party is incapacitated, the rest flee into the night.

Indian Attack

Having determined that the white men are back, the local Indians decide to kick them out again. Any surviving scouts report how many invaders have landed.

Shortly after dawn, with the storm still raging, the Indians send out a war party. Again, the Indians aren't suicidal, and elect to retreat when they suffer 50% losses. After all, they have a secret weapon.

Indian Warriors (2 per hero): See above.

The Coming of the Croaton

Shamed once again by the white men, the chief orders the shaman to release the Croaton for a second time. As night falls, the elaborate ceremony takes place. At midnight, the Croaton rips through the barrier around the Spirit World into the mortal realm.

In Roanoke, a powerful lightning blast crashes into one of the unoccupied houses igniting a fire that burns with an unholy sickly green flame that crackles and hisses in the torrential rain but refuses to submit to its opposite element.

An hour later, the Croaton enters the colony, its ethereal form gliding unimpaired through the wooden stockade. Have each hero make a Spirit roll. With success, the hero resists and nothing happens. On a failure, he hears a faint but constant whisper. The words are unintelligible, but a subconscious understanding gives the hero the shivers. He suffers a –1 penalty to all Trait tests for the remainder of this scene as a result of the uncomfortable whispering. A wanderer who rolls a 1 on his Spirit die, regardless of Wild Die, senses the full meaning of the whisper, though he can make out no actual words: something very powerful and very evil is coming for them. He must roll on the Fright Table at +2 (which is a penalty, remember).

Feel free to play with the heroes at this point. Have them hear a knocking sound, which turns out to be just a loose shutter; a scrabbling in a dark corner of the room, which they reveal to be only a hungry rat, and so on. The Croaton takes a malicious delight in tormenting those who would be its prey before killing them, feeding on their terror. Use all the classic horror devices, to heighten the tension and get the players twitchy.

When they're nicely on edge, they hear a scream from outside. If there aren't any Extras, the scream is the Croaton itself announcing its arrival.

When the heroes get outside, have them make a Notice roll at –4. With success, they spot the ghostly outline of a gigantic, humanoid beast, its form highlighted only by the absence of rain in its location. Should they fail, the first they learn of the Croaton's arrival is when it attacks them.

Note that until a character has spotted the beast (a Notice roll at –4 each round as an action) or it reveals itself to him (see below), he cannot attack it.



Once the Croaton is destroyed, it ceases to exist, simply vanishing with a faint scream. The local Indians, stripped of their most potent weapon, are unable to prevent settlers from colonizing the region in the future.



The Croaton

The Croaton is a demonic spirit, called upon only in the most drastic circumstances. Its true form is that of a muscular humanoid creature with thick, glistening black scales and talons as long as a man's arm. Its eyes glow with green balefire, totally devoid of any human concepts like pity or mercy.

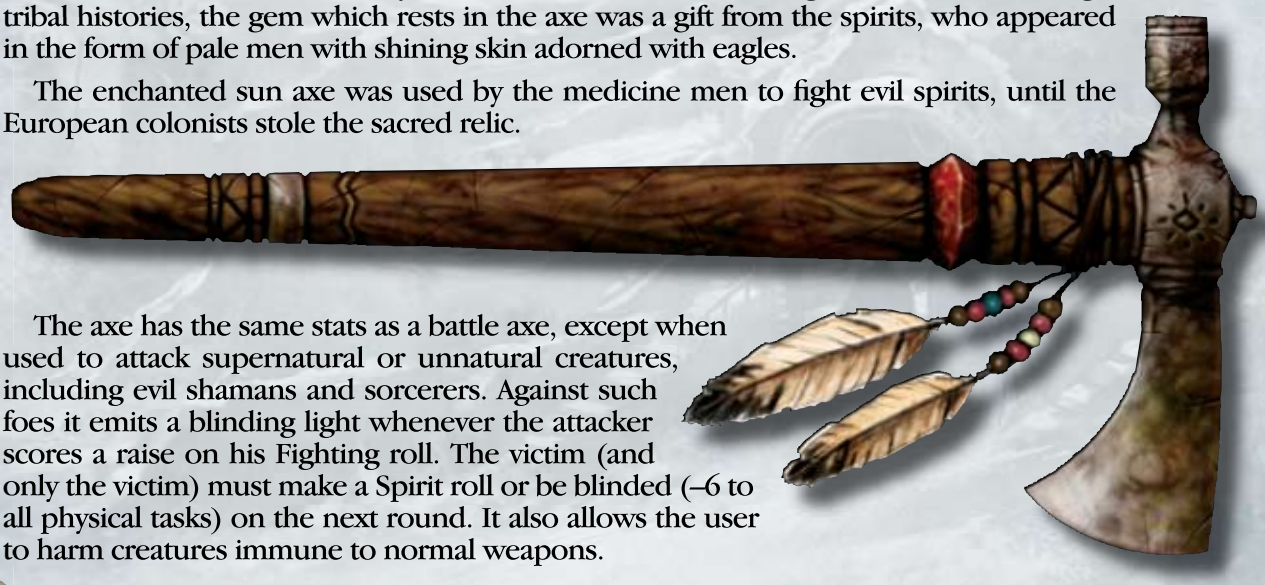
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10
Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 15 (4)
Special Abilities:

- **Armor +4:** Thick scales.
- **Body & Soul:** Any hero Incapacitated by the Croaton must make a Spirit roll or be instantly killed, his body turning to ash. Anyone witnessing this must make a Guts roll at –2.
- **Claws:** Str+d8.
- **Combat Reflexes:** The Croaton gets+2 on rolls to recover from being Shaken.
- **Ethereal:** The Croaton can turn ethereal at the start of its turn. While in this form it cannot affect the material world, nor can it be harmed by anything except magic, whether spells or magic weapons.
- **Fear (–4):** Anyone who sees the true form of the Croaton (see below) must make a Guts roll at –4.
- **Improved Frenzy:** The Croaton may make two Fighting attacks in the same round at no penalty.
- **Invisible:** Only the intended victim of the Croaton can see its true form. Each round it targets the hero with the highest initiative card. Another character may detect the Croaton's ghostly presence if he has a reason to look and makes a Notice roll at –4. Once detected, he may attack the foe at –4 as well.
- **Large:** Attackers have +2 to attack rolls.
- **Size +4:** The Croaton is over 20' tall.

Artifact: Sun Axe

The sun axe has been used by the local Indians for countless generations. According to tribal histories, the gem which rests in the axe was a gift from the spirits, who appeared in the form of pale men with shining skin adorned with eagles.

The enchanted sun axe was used by the medicine men to fight evil spirits, until the European colonists stole the sacred relic.



The axe has the same stats as a battle axe, except when used to attack supernatural or unnatural creatures, including evil shamans and sorcerers. Against such foes it emits a blinding light whenever the attacker scores a raise on his Fighting roll. The victim (and only the victim) must make a Spirit roll or be blinded (–6 to all physical tasks) on the next round. It also allows the user to harm creatures immune to normal weapons.

The Feathered Serpent

AMONG the Aztec pantheon is a deity called Quetzalcoatl, whose name means Feathered Serpent. Although the Spanish have imposed Catholicism on the local populace, centuries of ancient faith cannot be erased in just a few short years. Away from the eyes of the priest and missionaries, the old faith is as strong as it was before the Conquistadors, if not stronger, for where once the Aztecs ruled, now they are slaves.

Portrayed as a white-skinned man with a beard, Quetzalcoatl is not a figment of the Aztec's imagination, but a distant memory from a time before Time.

In these Timeless days, strangers from across the great ocean visited the Americas, bringing with them knowledge of civilization and technology far above and beyond that of the Indians.

The Aztecs believed these pale-skinned outsiders to be gods, and their leader became known as the Feathered Serpent because of his attire (a plumed headdress and clothes decorated with a snakeskin pattern).

According to ancient Aztec legends, the gods eventually left the earthly land, heading back across the sea to their sacred realm, but before they did, Quetzalcoatl transformed a servant into a massive feathered serpent. Sending it into a deep cave, he ordered the Aztecs to honor his avatar by the light of each full moon with sacrifices, and when he was most needed he would come once more to their assistance.

When Cortés landed, they mistook his bearded, white-skinned form for that of their serpent god, Quetzalcoatl. It soon became clear that Cortés was no god come to assist them as prophesied, but a warmonger and a brutal oppressor.

In days gone by, the sacrifices to the god Quetzalcoatl were performed on altars atop the Aztecs' great stepped pyramids. In these dark days, however, the Aztec priests go straight to the source of their god's power. For within a cave hidden deep in the jungle, where he has waited all these long years, Quetzalcoatl, the ageless Feathered God, lives and breathes.

Regaining his strength after millennia of dreamless slumber, their great Feathered Serpent is once again stirring. And the Aztecs, oppressed and ravaged by the diseases the Europeans brought across the oceans look to the avatar of their god to save them in their time of greatest need.

The Feathered God

Lead In: The heroes are told by Spanish traders that the monks from a mission have stopped coming to the town to trade. The Spaniards are too cowardly to investigate as the jungle has become dangerous. Hostile Indian tribes, they claim, have recently begun kidnapping Europeans.

Background

Angered at the white man's destruction of their civilization and enslavement of their people, a small group of Aztecs have begun sacrificing to Quetzalcoatl, hoping that the great serpent would awaken from his slumber and free their people. The beast has indeed risen, and it is hungry.

The first the wanderers learn of the god's reawakening is when they discover a Spanish mission deep in the jungle.

Getting there requires an arduous trek through the humid interior and at least one night under the jungle canopy (or more, if the heroes don't hire a guide). If the wanderers are unused to the climate and the environment, they can find the jungle a strange and hostile place, even with no enemies to guard against. Make use of jaguars and swarms of ants to keep the heroes uncomfortable and edgy through the night.

The Mission

Eventually, the heroes come across the remains of the devastated mission.

The walls of the church have been torn asunder, the stones blackened, the timber beams turned to ash, and the inhabitants slaughtered. Many have been scorched to skeletons, others show signs of terrible rend marks. Yet among the rubble one survivor remains, a Spanish Jesuit.

The man is beyond help. His skin has been seared off by the intense flame of whatever fate befell the chapel and a deep gash has ruptured many internal organs. With his last gasp, he hisses, *"The Feathered Serpent... my sister..."* As he slumps lifeless, his arm reaches out, his index finger pointing toward the dense jungle to the west. The "sister" the Jesuit refers to was taken by Aztecs devoted to Quetzalcoatl. Aztec warriors approached the mission just before dawn and grabbed the girl, intending to use her in a special sacrificial ritual, and fled into the jungle. The Feathered Serpent was then unleashed.

Heroes making a suitable Knowledge roll know the story of the legend of Quetzalcoatl, the Feathered Serpent god of the Aztecs. Alternatively, any friendly native guide can give them some of the mythology.

A Tracking roll around the edge of the mission finds a dozen sets of bare footprints as well as the impressions of a small pair of boots (the sister). The tracks head west, along an overgrown trail.

The Ceremony

If the heroes can follow the tracks, they emerge, after a day's march, onto a low bluff overlooking a clearing.

If not, they wander in the jungle, chasing half-clues and shadows until all the party are at least Fatigued. They then stumble by chance on the clearing as they hear the sounds of the poor girl's screams.

At the far edge of the clearing is a cave mouth, dark and foreboding, with an air of palpable evil. A crude log altar has been erected in front of the cave mouth, upon which lies a young European woman.

Surrounding the altar are a number of Aztec warriors, led by a priest wearing a feathered headdress and snakeskin cloak. As the wanderers watch, the priest draws an obsidian blade from his belt and raises his hand, preparing to strike at the girl. She begins screaming at the top of her lungs. Deal initiative cards at this point.

The priest is 20" (40 yards) from the heroes' position, the warriors just 15" (30 yards). The heroes have the benefit of surprise in the first round (none of the Aztecs get dealt a card) and the Drop. They'll need these advantages, because if the high priest isn't Shaken at the end of the first round he stabs the girl through the heart, killing her automatically. The high priest drops the knife if he is wounded.

High Priest: Treat as a Tribal Shaman (see page 329).

Warriors (1 per hero): Use the Tribal Warrior stats (see page 328) but they are armed with obsidian axes (Str+d8 damage). Their parry is reduced to 5.

The God Awakens

Once half the warriors are dead, the Feathered Serpent slithers from his cave, drawn by the scent of fresh blood.

Like the foul Serpent of Eden, Satan incarnate, an elephantine snake slithers from the dark cave entrance, its great, multicolored feathered wings unfurling once free of the constraints of his subterranean lair. The beast lifts its head, and its long, forked tongue stabs at the air. With a lightning move, it jabs forward, its fanged maw agape, revealing two fangs like ivory spears.

The shaman, if still alive, orders it to attack the intruders. Should he already be dead, the beast attacks whoever is nearest. It ignores the girl, preferring to save her for later when it can take time to savor her flesh.

Once the fight is over, the wanderers can investigate the cave. Inside are dozens of skeletons and some treasure thrown in by worshipers (there is £20 per hero).

The Feathered Serpent

Quetzalcoatl, the great Feathered Serpent, is not a construct of the imagination, but a living, breathing creature of enormous age and power. The Atlanteans knew of the beast and used it (controlling it with their powerful and now-forgotten magic) to keep the Indians loyal while they went back to their doomed island. Though they never returned, the beast was not forgotten by the natives.

The Feathered Serpent recognizes the ritual trappings of its earlier masters, those now worn by the Aztec priests in honor of the god, and it obeys them still.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8(A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+6, Vigor d12
Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d12, Intimidation d12, Notice d8



Pace: 4; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 17 (4)
Special Abilities:

- **Armor +4:** Scaly hide
- **Claws/Bite:** Str+d8
- **Fear (–2):** Characters seeing Quetzalcoatl must make a Guts roll at –2.
- **Fiery Breath:** Quetzalcoatl breathes fire using the Cone Template. Every target within this cone may make an Agility roll at –2 to avoid the attack. Those who fail suffer 2d10 damage and must check to see if they catch fire (see page 92). The beast may not attack with its claws or bite in the round it breathes fire.
- **Flight:** Flying Pace 12".
- **Large:** Attackers add +2 to their attack rolls when attacking the serpent.
- **Size +5:** The Feathered Serpent is over 20' long from snout to tail, and weighs in at over 3000 pounds.
- **Tail Lash:** Quetzalcoatl can sweep all opponents in its rear facing in a 3" long by 6" wide rectangle. This is a standard Fighting attack, and damage is Str.

Pantera, City of Claws

Though Cortés claimed to have destroyed every Aztec city and enslaved the people, his account of the campaign deliberately left out one incident.

In 1520, a small company of Spaniards was dispatched deep into the jungle on the periphery of the Aztec Empire where Cortés had learned of a small city. Concerned it could be used as a staging post for attacks against his flank, Cortés ordered his men to raze the city. None returned. Cortés then sent a larger force, but they too failed to return. Infuriated, the Conquistador sent a third army, bolstered by hundreds of Indian conscripts.

Of these men, whose total number exceeded a thousand, just one Spaniard, his flesh shredded as if by some ferocious wild cat, and ten Indians returned. The Spaniard lived just long enough to utter a single word: Pantera. Cortés had the Indians questioned by the Inquisition, but all he could learn was the city was considered a dark place by the majority of Aztecs, who never ventured near it, fearful of the "clawed men" who lived there.

Unwilling to sacrifice more soldiers, who would be needed for the main push on the Aztec capital, Cortés decided to ignore the distant city. By the time the war was over, the conquistador had forgotten about it. Records of the lost men were falsified and their deaths reported as "victims of the plague."

History

The city of Pantera, known to the Aztecs as Chichinenga (The City of Claws), was feared as far back as the days of the Toltecs, who spoke in whispers about the "men of endless hunger" who dwelt there.

Their legends filtered down to the Zapotec and the Aztecs, who after trying to pacify the city, decided to leave it well alone.

According to the ancient tales, passed down from the Toltecs, there existed a tribe of Olmecs whose principal god was called Tezcatlipoca ("Smoking Mirror"). Also known as the Dark Hunter, his totem animal was the jaguar, a creature feared by the Indians because it hunted at night, when their own eyes were next to useless.

The Olmec tribesmen were, according to legend, cannibals, blessed by their god with the ability to transform into jaguar men. Hunting by night, the jaguar men stalked the local tribes, dragging away captives to be eaten later. They survived the demise of the Olmecs, witnessed the birth of the Toltec Empire, and watched it fall into Aztec hands.

The Aztecs say that a warrior, Atalipoca, went in search of the fabled city, looking for his brother, who had been snatched from his bed at night. Atalipoca found the city and learned the name of the jaguar men's dark god. After avenging his brother's death, the hero returned to his own people and encouraged them to offer up sacrifice to Tezcatlipoca, for this would keep away the jaguar men.

Thousands of prisoners were offered to the god over the years, bound hand and foot and left in the jungle for the jaguar men. Sure enough, the privations stopped.

Cortés' war caused two problems. First, it greatly depopulated the region. The much weakened Aztecs could no longer leave offerings, and prey near Pantera has become scarce. Second, it taught the jaguar men that the "white gods" were not gods at all, for hundreds had fallen to their teeth and claws. With ever more "white meat" arriving, the jaguar men have new prey to hunt.

The City

The majority of the city of Pantera has long been swallowed by the jungle, for the jaguar men are in decline, weakened by sickness brought to their home by the Spaniards and starvation. All that remains clear of vines is the great temple to Tezcatlipoca and a score of single story buildings.

The great temple, like those of other Indian tribes in the region, is stepped, with a flat platform. In the center of the platform is a stone crescent, in which stands a tall mirror, carved from a single slab of polished obsidian. A fire, continually stoked by the priests, burns with thick, acrid smoke.

In front of the mirror is a low altar. Here the priests rip out the beating hearts of their victims, which they eat. They then skin their victims, fashioning grisly cloaks and shoes from their hides. The corpses are thrown to the baying jaguar men below, who tear into the flesh with their wickedly sharp teeth.

Claws of Pantera

Lead In: While in the jungle, a tribe of friendly natives makes the wanderers welcome in their village. After a hearty meal, the villagers claim "jaguar men" have been attacking outlying settlements. They expect help in return for their hospitality, and if it is not forthcoming, the heroes have made themselves a new enemy in the tribe.

Background

If the heroes are likely to have a hard time because they are low Rank (Seasoned or lower), let some of the natives offer up silver ceremonial weapons to combat the werejaguars among the jaguar men.

In recent months, the attacks on Indian villages on the edge of the dark jungle have increased. Children, women, and even fully grown men have been dragged off into the jungle in the dead of night. Reports of the attacks among the survivors conflict—some say it was a pack of great jungle cats, while some say it was savage jungle tribesman. Others claim it was the "jaguar men."

The Villages

Heroes wishing to follow up on these attacks must make a Streetwise roll. With success, they receive directions to another of the larger villages where the attacks have occurred. The villagers there are terrified and fear the return of the "jaguar men."

Naturally suspicious of outsiders, earning their confidence requires a Persuasion roll. On a success, the natives point them to the hut of the local wise man. The wise man bids the heroes come inside and questions them about their deeds. Only when convinced of their bravery does he speak to them of the jaguar men who live in Pantera, the ancient "City of Claws," where the people worship a powerful jaguar god. Long ago, the people of the village offered up regular sacrifices to keep the jaguar men at bay, but then the Spanish came and drove them away. Now the jaguar men have returned, more hungry than ever before, and the villagers now fear the worst.

If the wanderers decide to stay and defend the village from another attack they do not have a long wait. Three nights later, the village is raided again by a group of jaguar men.

The attack comes at night (treat as Dark lighting conditions), and is a stealthy raid rather than a full assault. The jaguar men attempt to take as many villagers as they can (preferably women and children) before they are noticed, taking out guards and fighting only when necessary. If they are detected and the heroes intercede, the jaguar men attempt to kidnap two or three villagers and make good their escape while the werejaguars keep the heroes at bay.

Werejaguar (1 for every 2 heroes): see page 320.





Jaguar Men (2 per hero)

The jaguar men are fervent followers of Tezcatlipoca and pay homage to their god with blood sacrifices. They emulate their jaguar god in all ways, sharpening their teeth, wearing metal jaguar claws as a weapon, and dyeing their skin with spots.

Some of those followers, who perform selfless service for their deity, are greatly blessed by the jaguar god and become werejaguars: part human, part jaguar—the living human embodiment of their sacred creature.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Survival d8, Tracking d6
Charisma: –4
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Illiterate
Edges: Combat Reflexes, Fleet-Footed, Improved Frenzy
Gear: Fighting Claws (Str+d6). The fighting claws are several short blades strapped to the back of the user's hand.

Through the Jungle

Finding Pantera is not easy. The jungle is thick and overgrown, the jaguar men are skilled at concealing their tracks, and native guides have avoided the territory of the jaguar men for generations. Have the heroes make a Tracking roll once per day (this can be a Cooperative roll.) The heroes must score a total of five successes or raises in order to locate the city of Pantera. Every explorer must also make a daily Survival roll. With failure, he suffers a level of Fatigue from the harsh terrain and unforgiving environs. This Fatigue recovers only after a solid eight hours of rest.

The Game Master should feel free to add some additional encounters throughout the journey if he wishes. These may include quicksand, hostile natives, or perhaps even a Spanish explorer and his guards braving the deadly jungle interior.

The City of Pantera

As described on page 360, only a score of one-story buildings and the main stepped temple remain free of vines. The jaguar men live in the low buildings while the priests and their guards inhabit the temple. There are also a large number of jaguars, which roam the city freely and act as guard "dogs." These great cats are revered by the jaguar men, while the jaguars sense the jaguar men are kin and do them no harm. The jaguar men, like the jaguars, are mainly active during dusk and dawn.

Arrogant in their sense of power, the priests post only a few guards throughout the city. If they detect anyone they let loose a cat-like yowling, which alerts the rest of the jaguar men to danger.

- **Jaguar Men (2 per hero):** See above.
- **Werejaguar (1 for every 2 heroes):** See page 320.

The Temple of Tezcatlipoca

Atop the temple is a large platform, in the center of which is a stone crescent with a polished obsidian mirror protruding upright from the middle. A fire set beside the mirror

belches thick, black smoke. A stone altar lies in front of the mirror, stained red by years of bloody sacrifices.

When the heroes arrive they notice a bound villager struggling atop the altar as the priests of Tezcatlipoca enact a ceremony. Tizoc, the high priest, has an obsidian dagger held over the heart of his victim. Behind Tizoc, two lesser priests, each one dressed in loathsome garments made of human skin, chant and stoke the fire by the mirror. Flanking Tizoc are two large pet jaguars.

If left to enact his grisly ritual Tizoc plunges the dagger into his victim's chest and tears out the still-beating heart as an offering to the jaguar god. The heart is then cut up and devoured by Tizoc and his lesser priests, who then begin to flay the victim. This calls for a Guts roll at –2.

The ritual to Tezcatlipoca continues every night as long as the jaguar men have victims to sacrifice. When they run out, they venture forth to capture more.

If the characters step forward to interrupt proceedings (as they should), Tizoc orders the jaguar men to attack while he attempts to complete the ritual sacrifice. This takes three full rounds, so the wanderers must act fast if they want to save the poor villager from the high priest's dagger.

Tizoc gains +2 to all his casting rolls while in the temple, another +2 if the savage ritual sacrifice is completed, and still another +2 if he devours the heart of his victim (this takes an additional round after the ritual is complete)!

The mystical effects of the hideous sacrifice last until dusk or dawn (whichever comes first). As soon as the ritual is completed (or if the heroes interrupted him), he turns his attention to destroying the intruders, by directing the surviving jaguar men and summoning extra allies, both magical and mundane.

The jaguar men gain their power through the rituals performed before the obsidian mirror. If the mirror is destroyed (Toughness 10), the link to their jaguar god is severed and the werejaguars lose the ability to turn into their jaguar forms. Any in werejaguar form immediately revert to jaguar men.

Jaguar Men (1 per hero): See page 262.

Werejaguar (1 for every 3 heroes): See page 320.

Temple Jaguars (2): As regular jaguars (see page 301) but with +2 to Toughness and damage rolls.

Jaguar Priests (2): Treat the Jaguar Priests as non-Wild Card tribal shamans (see page 329).



Tizoc the High Priest

Tizoc is the leader of the jaguar men of Pantera and high priest of Tezcatlipoca. His devotion to his god is absolute, and any who cross him end up on a sacrificial altar.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d12+1, Vigor d12
Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d12, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Knowledge (Spirits) d10, Notice d8, Shamanism d10, Stealth d12, Swimming d6
Charisma: –4
Pace: 8; **Parry**: 8; **Toughness**: 9
Hindrances: Arrogant, Bloodthirsty
Edges: Arcane Background (Shamanism), Strong Caster
Gear: Obsidian dagger (Str+d4, AP 1)
Powers: *boost/lower trait, curse, deflection, fear, obscure, smite, spirit servant* (smoke jaguar)*, spirit ward, summon beast* (jaguars only).
Treat as a Heroic character.
Special Abilities:

- **Immunity:** Tizoc is blessed by Tezcatlipoca, and suffers half damage from non-magical and non-silver attacks.
- **Jaguar Headdress:** Tizoc has an elaborate jaguar headdress. This grants +2 bonus to Intimidation rolls. In addition, it grants Tizoc a further +1 bonus to arcane skill rolls while within his tribal lands.
- **Shapechange:** An as action, Tizoc can make a Spirit roll to become a werejaguar. While in werejaguar form he gains all the Special Abilities of a werejaguar, but cannot use his shamanism.
- **Size +1:** Tizoc is a hulking brute.
- **Weakness:** Tizoc suffers normal damage from silver weapons.

The City of the Dead

Deep within the dark, heavy jungle, where clouds of vaporous steam rise like the breath of a gigantic, slumbering beast, in a land feared by the Aztecs and Zapotecs, there stands an ancient city.

History

Predating the rise of any Indian empire, the city squats on the edge of a towering volcano, leering down on the jungle below like a crouching beast waiting to pounce on unsuspecting prey.

Founded in days of yore by a race of men from across the great eastern ocean, the city has weathered the effects of Time. In these distant days, the foreign priests enslaved the local tribes, forcing them to mine silver and gold (which was shipped back to the island home of the invaders) and sacrificing them to the Moon, whom they venerated.

Cut off from the rest of their empire, the priests did not notice when their homeland sank to the ocean floor. Safe in their mountain stronghold, they continued as they had always done. As the centuries turned to millennia, corruption set in, and the priests began breeding with the Indians, mingling their bloodlines.

Centuries before the Olmecs appeared, the native tribes rose up against their oppressors and butchered them. Claiming the city for themselves, they founded a new realm, but it was not to last.

Soon, the rains stopped falling, the crops withered and died, and the people starved. Half mad with hunger, they cast their minds back to when they were slaves, wondering what power had kept the city fed and watered. And then, like waking from a nightmare only to find a worse nightmare, they realized—the gods demanded more sacrifices.

Dozens of innocents were sacrificed under the light of the full moon, their skulls cleaned and offered as totems. And then the rains fell. The sacrifices were vindicated.

Over the centuries, the citizens of the City of the Dead have become what they once despised—enslavers and executioners. Each year, hundreds of Indians are rounded up and offered to the Moon, their hearts removed and their skulls placed around the city.

Lying away from the main areas of Spanish interest and clinging to the side of a volcano, the city escaped the Conquistadors. Though a few explorers made it as far as the city, their skulls joined the multitude.

The City

To reach the city, one must travel for many weeks through lands where no man has dwelt in centuries, and where strange beasts lurk in the jungle mist.

Taking the right fork past a long-deserted village, travelers trek up a narrow, winding track, barely wide enough for a man to walk. Over many stretches, the narrow track forces them to turn sideways, hugging the volcano's side as they inch forward. Eventually the trail widens as it reaches a plateau, ending at a wide gorge many hundreds of feet down, ending in a meandering river.

A bridge of woven grass spans the gorge, anchored in place at each end by two huge stone pillars. At the base of each pillar, rising to a height of ten feet, is a pyramid of human skulls. Those at the bottom are yellowed and cracked with age, those nearer the top are glistening white, their flesh stripped only recently.

Beyond the bridge, which the Indians call the Bridge of Sighs (for it is said, if one stops halfway along one can hear the whispers of all those who have died in the city), another narrow trail leads up a steep ravine to a broad plateau on the edge of the smoking crater. There stands the City of the Dead.

No wall or fence surrounds the city, for the ravine is the only serviceable route to the top of the plateau, the other sides being near-vertical drops.

Dominating the skyline is the great Temple of Skulls, a many-tiered pyramid built of large, granite blocks which stands in the center of the city. In front of it is a wide, open plaza, its borders marked by a line of stakes, atop which sits a grinning skull. At the rear, the pyramid drops away vertically into the heart of the volcano.

From a distance the pyramid appears to have a zigzag motif of dark and light squares running across the three stepped sides from floor to the highest tier. Only on approaching can details be made out. The dark squares are hollow niches. Each of the white ones contain a human skull. Thousands and thousands of skulls line the walls, a grisly spectacle of power, faith, and depravity.

At the edge of the plaza, marking each of the cardinal points, are four smaller pyramids, each barely half the height of the central edifice. Further out is the city proper, marked by grand palaces and the houses of the city's occupants. All are showing some degree of decay and the encroaching jungle has claimed some of the outlying buildings, leaving only crumbled ruins.

The Inhabitants

The citizens of the City of the Dead are mainly of Indian stock, though those in authority display some traces of their ancient foreign masters.

Bedecked in feathered headdresses and adorned with necklaces of skulls, the priests rule the city as absolute masters. Each month they order the raiding parties to scour the jungle for sacrifices. Each month their razor-sharp knives carve through the flesh and bone of their screaming victims, and each year the rains continue to fall.

Beneath the priests are the soldiers, who impose their priests' laws on the citizens. There are no prisons within the city, for those who flout the laws or speak against the priests are welcomed onto the Temple of Skulls on the next Full Moon.

The citizens are a decadent, ignorant mob, who are keen for more and more bloody offerings to keep their city safe. Knowledge of writing is confined to the priesthood, and many of the crafts so vital to maintaining a city are forgotten, accounting for the decay of the city's once-proud monuments and structures.

Where once there ruled an advanced but despotic civilization, there is now only depraved barbarism. The City of the Dead and its degenerate population are now but a pitiful parody of their once-great nation.

Pyramid of Skulls

Lead In: While in the jungle or at a European port, the wanderers hear tales of the City of the Dead. The tales are vague, mentioning only rumors of an ancient city where the priests behead their captives and drink their blood (this isn't true, but it makes for a good tale and the story has been further embellished in the telling).

Should the heroes decide not to investigate, they hear about the city again a few months later. Several tribes, forced to expand their foraging due to poor rains, have disappeared, the other Indians blaming the occupants of the City of the Dead.

A Path Less Traveled

Once in Mexico (assuming they wish to investigate the rumors), have the heroes make a Streetwise roll. With success they locate an elderly Indian shaman who claims to know the way to the city.

He provides directions as far as the base of the volcano, mentioning casually that he received the directions from the spirit of a warrior who was taken captive and beheaded at the city. Unfortunately, no Indians will walk the Road of Death, and the heroes must venture into the deep jungle alone.

The journey takes several weeks of hard walking, during which time you should throw in a few encounters, such as a jaguar attack or quicksand. If you wish, a small raiding party from the city could attack the heroes, though only a handful of warriors are present. The heroes should reach the site under their own steam, not as captives.

Finally, the explorers see the smoldering volcano looming over the jungle, smoke rising as if from the nostrils of an enormous sleeping dragon.

The Narrow Path

The heroes begin their long climb up the treacherous trail. Have each character make an Agility roll. Those who fail slip on one of the narrower parts, the fragile path crumbling beneath their feet, the rocks bounding down the mountainside and into the steamy clouds of the jungle. After an agonizingly long time,

a distant splash can be heard. On a roll of 1 (regardless of Wild Die), a hero actually loses his footing and falls. The characters to either side of him may make an Agility roll to grab him in time, otherwise the character falls into the mist. Unless the hero can save himself somehow (perhaps using magic or a miraculous grab at overhanging branches with the Hard to Kill Edge, for instance), he perishes.

The Bridge of Sighs

Reaching a small plateau, the wanderers see the piles of skulls, marking the boundary of the city, as well as the seemingly fragile Bridge of Sighs.

Despite being made of woven grass, the bridge is perfectly sound. However, the spirits of the city's victims do lurk here, unable to cross into the next world so long as their skulls remain intact.

Halfway across, the wind picks up and the heroes feel it tugging at their garments. Have each hero make a Spirit roll at –2. Success means the character resists, and hears only the wind. On a failure, the hero hears the disembodied voices of the multitudinous spirit host begging and pleading for release from their earthly fetters. With a roll of 1 on the Spirit die (regardless of the Wild Die), the character actually sees the swirling phantoms pulling at his hair and clothing. He must make a Guts roll at –2 (as if he had seen a ghost).

After another short climb, the heroes finally reach the plateau on the edge of the volcano, catching their first glimpse of the city.

A Welcome to the Gods

Several guards immediately rush toward the team but stop short, their faces drained of color and their eyes bulging from their heads. They drop their weapons and fall to their knees, prostrating themselves before the heroes.

Although Europeans have reached the city before, this time the white men have come at a time of failing rains. The guards, as the Aztecs did with Cortés, have mistaken one of the European characters with a beard (and after being in the jungle for so long any male character will have one) as Quetzalcoatl. Although not purely Aztec, the natives of the city have captured thousands over the years and have adopted some of their religious beliefs. The other heroes are, obviously, Quetzalcoatl's servants, still gods, but not as important.

If the heroes say anything, the guards cover their ears and begin moaning, and speak in broken Spanish.

"Speak not to us, oh Great Feathered Serpent, your voice is like thunder," they cry out. "Let us take you to high priest, who is worthy among us to hear divine voice."

The High Priest's Test

The heroes are escorted through the city, where throngs of citizens throw themselves prostrate before the wanderers' presence. Eventually they reach the great pyramid (here catching their first sight of the skulls).

Entering through a narrow doorway in the base, the new gods emerge into an open chamber decorated floor to ceiling on every wall with skulls set in small niches. At the far end, on a throne made of skulls, sits Cibola, the high priest.

Cibola greets the character mistaken for Quetzalcoatl with a deep bow and words of welcome. The other "gods" get just a brief nod. The high priest is skeptical about the appearance of the gods, and plans to test them. His Spanish, while rusty, is better than that of the guards. To them, it is the language of the gods.

"Great lord," he says, a wry smile on his face, "you must have heard our prayers. The rains have stopped and our city is imperiled. But you must be tired after descending from Heaven. Please, let us show you to your chambers where you shall feast. I shall hear your wisdom when the moon rises."

The heroes are escorted back out of the pyramid and up to the next tier, where there is another opening. A short tunnel branches off into several well-appointed chambers. The guards then leave, waiting at the entrance



to the pyramid. Characters who search the room may make a Notice roll at –2. With a success, they spy several small holes in the walls. They can't see where these lead.

After a few minutes, the door to the chamber the heroes are using opens and a European male enters, carrying bowls of fruit and meats (the meat isn't human). The man looks around furtively, then whispers to the heroes.

"Thank God you have come," he sighs. "My name is Juan-Pablo de Noez. I am a Spanish missionary, who came to this city long ago to convert the heathens. Yet by God's divine plan I find myself a prisoner of these savages. But pray tell, what brings you to this accursed place?"

Juan-Pablo questions the heroes for a short while on their backgrounds, then gives them a brief history of the city, which he has picked up from their sacred texts. He describes their bloody religious practices and explains that the citizens are fearful the rains are failing as they did in the past, and that the appearance of the White God is a sign that things will get better soon.

What the wanderers don't know is that the holes in the walls utilize the Aztec's amazing understanding of acoustics. They act as primitive microphones and allow the priests to eavesdrop on conversations. Juan-Pablo, who speaks many tongues, was sent in deliberately on the hope the heroes would reveal their origins.

An Audience with God

Shortly after dark, the guards enter the chamber, bow to the "gods," and ask them to accompany them. If asked where they are going, they reply that the high priest begs an audience with them.

Rather than heading down the pyramid, they are escorted to the flat platform at the top. Looking back, they can see a throng of citizens gathered at the base of the temple.

The high priest waits at the apex. The guards take positions around the perimeter of the platform, standing smartly to attention. From their vantage point, the heroes have a very clear view into the volcano, wherein lies a mass of bubbling lava, a portal to the fiery depths of Tartarus.

"Great lord," shouts the priest, his voice carrying through the still night air, "you have come to us in our hour of need to save us! In the great tradition you yourself set down in the sacred texts, will you make the necessary sacrifice? Will you sacrifice yourself," the high priest smiles, gesturing at the volcano, "by offering your life to save ours?" He hands you an obsidian axe with a sparkling gem embedded in the head.

Of course, this is all part of the evil high priest's deadly trap. There is no sacred text demanding such a sacrifice, although the ignorant citizens don't know, and neither do the heroes (though they may suspect as much). And it's very unlikely a "new god" will throw himself into a volcano just to please some deranged heathen priest.

Should the heroes start to argue that such sacrifices are not the true way to appease the gods, try to deny their own status as gods, or draw their weapons, the high priest is ready for them. Pointing his finger in accusation, and turns on them at once.

"Then you are false gods!" he shrieks. "Cast the interlopers into the pit! Their flesh will appease the true gods of our people!"

Attempting to push someone over the side of the pyramid requires the intended victim to be close to the edge and the hero to make an opposed Strength roll. With a success, the foe is knocked back 1". On a raise, that increases to 2". If this moves the character off the edge of the pyramid closest to the volcano, they tumble into the crater below. Anyone who falls into the lava instantly takes 3d10 damage, with a further 3d10 each round. See the rules for fire and burning on page 92. Those who fall off any of the other three sides take 2d6+5 damage and land on the next tier down (5" below).

When Cibola takes his first hit (whether it causes a wound or not), he unleashes his secret weapon: the souls of the sacrificial victims. Read the following.

The priest, his eyes filled with insane rage, stabs his staff into the air and cries, "Let those who have gone hear my call!" As he finishes speaking, a ghastly wail begins to rise. A wisp of vapor curls upward from the skulls imbedded in the pyramid and forms a hazy cloud above the platform.

As the vapor drifts down toward you its strange nature becomes obvious—the swirling wisps are the trapped souls of the city's countless victims. Sacrificed to some pagan god, the souls are now bound to serve the priest by some unholy enchantment.

The only way to defeat the soul swarm is to break the priest's staff (or throw it into the lava). In order to damage the staff a hero must make a Called Shot (–2). The weapon has Toughness 12 and breaks if it takes a single wound. Throwing it over the edge of the crater into the volcano destroys the staff immediately. Once the priest's staff is destroyed, move onto "Final Revenge."

Cibola the high priest: Treat as a Wild Card Tribal Shaman (see page 329).

Warriors (1 per 2 heroes): Use Tribal Warrior (see page 328).

Who's got the axe?

Be sure to keep track of what happens to the obsidian axe the high priest handed to the wanderers. It is one of the artifacts the heroes are seeking, of course, and they should be careful in the ensuing battle not to drop it or leave it embedded in the high priest.

If they leave the pyramid without it when the volcano erupts, it's going to be a long time before they can go back!

The axe itself can survive the massive temperatures of the volcano, but anyone thinking of running back into the lava flow to collect it is almost certainly committing suicide. Going back to the location of the city weeks later, the heroes can pick through the still smoldering remnants of the city of the dead and could either find the axe atop the pyramid—now a smooth-sided glass mountain all but impossible to climb, or else clutched in the petrified hand of a fleeing priest caught and buried by the cooling flow.

Soul Swarm

Every skull in the city contains a soul, fettered to the mortal plane by the fell magic of the high priest and sworn to obey his every command. The swarm covers an area equal to a Medium Burst Template and attacks everyone within every round.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10
Skills: Notice d6
Pace: 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** —
Special Abilities:

- **Ethereal:** The spirits of the sacrificial victims have no physical form and can pass through solid objects.
- **Invulnerable:** The swarm is immune to *all* damage. Though individual attacks may "kill" a soul, there is an endless supply.
- **Swarm:** Parry +2.
- **Unholy Touch:** The tormented souls fly through their victims, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone in the template. Armor offers no protection.
- **Weakness (Staff):** Breaking the priest's staff frees the souls from their bondage.

Final Revenge

As soon as the staff is destroyed the soul swarm is freed from its bondage.

A terrible cry echoes through the city as countless souls gather in a dark cloud over the volcano. A single tendril darts out from the cloud, striking the high priest in the chest. He jerks rigid, his eyes blank. His mouth opens, and though his lips do not move he speaks in a deep voice, singular yet multitudinous. "It comes. We shall take our revenge on this accursed city and leave."

The high priest howls as his flesh suddenly begins to bubble and blister. Arms flailing he runs screaming toward the edge of the platform and straight into the volcano. From across the city, screams of torment rise up as the souls dart in and out of fleshy bodies, boiling flesh and melting skin.

As the turmoil dies down, the volcano belches forth a stinking cloud of sulfur, as if Satan himself was making an appearance. An enormous fiery form, a spinning globe of fire and ash, rises from the inferno, fiery tendrils lashing wildly.



Lord of the Volcano

The ageless entity was imprisoned inside the fiery cauldron eons ago, and doomed to remain in searing confinement until "the stars were right."

As it slumbered, the city rose around it. When it awoke, it found the inhabitants were ignorant of its existence, yet happily threw it sacrifices. It was pleased with the status quo, but now the heroes have tipped the balance of power.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d12, Shooting d8
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 15
Special Abilities:

- **Engulf:** The fiery fiend fills a Medium Burst Template. Objects within this template take 2d10 damage per round. They have a chance of catching fire.
- **Fear (–4):** Anyone seeing the creature must make a Guts roll at –2.
- **Fiery Body:** Nonmagical attacks "melt" as they impact the fiend's body. The Lord of the Volcano has 4 points of armor against such attacks and the attacker must roll a d6. On a 5-6, wooden weapons catch fire. On a 6, metal weapons melt slightly and cause 1 less point of damage until repaired by a blacksmith. Anyone attacking with bare hands suffers an automatic 2d10 damage.
- **Fiery Tendril:** Each round, the creature can shoot out a single fiery tendril to a range of 3". Victims takes 2d10 damage, with a chance of any character hit by a tendril catching fire.
- **Fearless:** The fiend is immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Huge:** Characters add +4 when attacking the body of the Lord of the Volcano due to its great size.
- **Hardy:** If Shaken, further Shaken results have no effect.
- **Size +8:** The fiend averages 30' in width.

Death of a City

Once the fiery fiend is slain, the lava begins bubbling wildly, rising rapidly to the top of the rim and spilling over. It's time for the wanderers to abandon the City of Skulls!

The escape is handled much like a regular combat round, except all the heroes really need to do is run really fast.

By the time the lava begins flowing across the city the heroes have a lead of 20". In order to reach safety they have to travel another 50". The first 15" are in the city suburbs, the next 30" are the descent out of the city, and the final 5" are across the Bridge of Sighs to safety.

Deal each hero initiative cards as usual and deal one for the lava as well.

The lava moves 10+1d6" on its action, relentlessly consuming everything in its path. Keep a track of how far each character and the lava has moved. If the lava ever moves to within 1" behind a hero, he suffers 2d6 damage from the heat. Should the lava and the character have traveled the same total distance, he is being caught by the molten rock and suffers 2d10 damage. In the event it ever overtakes him, he takes 3d10 damage as his flesh and bones melt in the infernal stream.

Don't just run this as a series of die rolls, though. Instead, describe the action. A hero who rolls a 1 on his running die doesn't just roll badly, he "Stumbles over the steaming bones of one of the city's former inhabitants, almost falling." If the lava begins to close in on the heroes, describe the heat, the crackling of molten rocks flowing end over end, and the sulfurous stench.

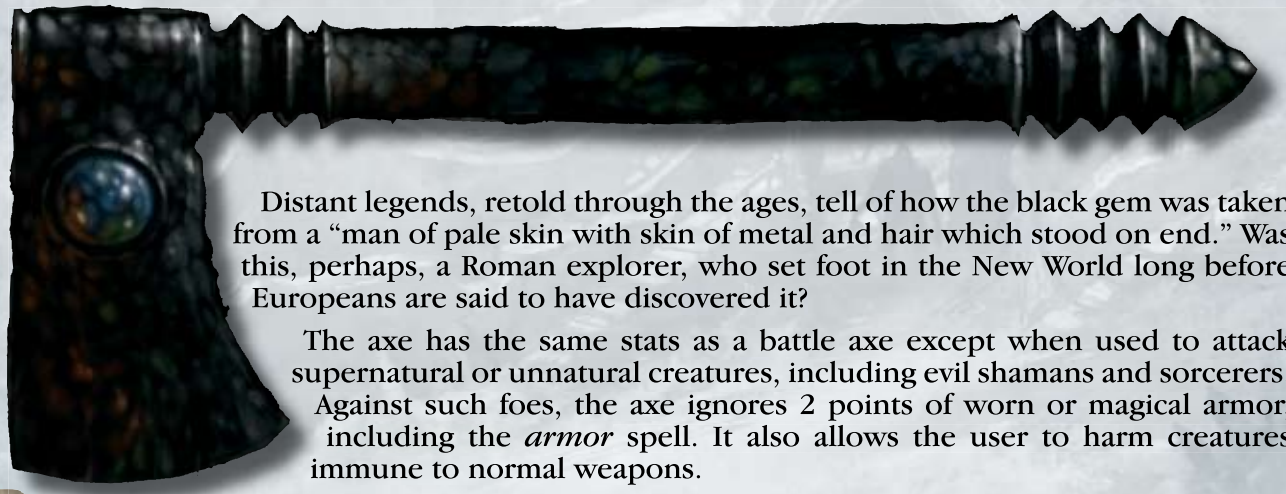
When the lava hits the edge of the chasm by the Bridge of Sighs, it begins flowing over the side, but not before it sets fire to the dry grass bridge. The bridge lasts for one round before the ropes burn through and the walkway collapses. Heroes on the bridge when the lava strikes must make an Agility roll to grab hold of the bridge or plummet to their deaths. Those who grab hold smash into the cliff face for 2d6 damage as the ruined bridge completes its arc.

Once safe, the heroes look back and see the lava cascading down into the chasm. The city, out of view from this vantage point, has been incinerated, buried beneath the hissing flow. As they watch, they see a strange, swirling cloud rise from the direction of the city. With a distant cry, the cloud (actually the released souls of the many sacrifices) spirals upward, quickly lost in the thick smoke and clouds of ash.

Artifact: Obsidian Axe

Crafted from volcanic glass and with an edge which slices flesh as easily as a hot knife passes through butter, the obsidian axe has a large, black gemstone piercing the blade on both sides.

According to ancient legends, the axe was crafted by the priests of the city to use in their bloody human sacrifices.



Distant legends, retold through the ages, tell of how the black gem was taken from a "man of pale skin with skin of metal and hair which stood on end." Was this, perhaps, a Roman explorer, who set foot in the New World long before Europeans are said to have discovered it?

The axe has the same stats as a battle axe except when used to attack supernatural or unnatural creatures, including evil shamans and sorcerers. Against such foes, the axe ignores 2 points of worn or magical armor, including the *armor* spell. It also allows the user to harm creatures immune to normal weapons.

Cathay and the Orient

Far to the east of Old Europe, beyond the borders of the Ottoman Empire, are the lands of Hindoostan, Cathay, and Nippon. For many centuries these lands were shrouded in mystery, believed inhabited by demons, men with dog heads, men whose faces were in their chests, and men whose feet pointed backward. Only a few centuries ago, the great armies of Ghengis Khan swept west across the plains of Hungary, where they laid low the powerful armies of Europe.

Trade between the Old World and the lands to the east had existed for centuries along the Silk Road, with Musselmen traders acting as middle men for the great nations on either side.

The first European explorer to reach distant Cathay was Marco Polo (1254–1324), who journeyed across Asia to the court of Kublai Khan, first Emperor of the Yuan Dynasty. Though Polo dispelled many of the myths about these distant lands, European exploration of the Orient remained negligible until 1498, when Vasco da Gama (1469–1524) landed at Calicut, Hindoostan. Between 1507 and 1515, Alfonso d'Albuquerque (1453–1515) explored the Persian Gulf and west coast of Hindoostan, capturing the port of Goa. He then journeyed across the sea to the Sultanate of Malacca, whose capital city he seized. Portuguese dominance in the East Indies was in its ascension.

Jorge Alvarez set off from Malacca in 1513, landing at Macao in Cathay that same year. Portuguese ships landed in Nippon in 1543, and inevitably were quickly followed by Jesuit missionaries.

The door to the Orient was now fully opened to the Europeans, and there was no closing it.

Despite capturing strongholds along the coast and erecting their own trading posts, the Portuguese lack the manpower and will to move inland. They hold the key trade ports, assuring a healthy annual return on their investments.

Getting There

The lands of the Orient are not easy to reach. The land route, though open, involves travel through Musselman territory and lands held by fierce, independent tribes who have defended their realms against attackers since the time of Alexander. Of course there is also a walk across thousands of miles of harsh, arid terrain.

By sea, the preferred route for Europeans, the wanderers must make contact with a Portuguese captain, for their ships are the only ones that travel to the Orient with any regularity. Even then, the voyage is long and arduous and involves traveling both west and east Africa's coast, then across the Arabian Sea to Hindoostan.

As well as the natural dangers of storms, becoming becalmed, and disease, ships must make frequent stops for water, bringing them into contact with hostile tribes and dangerous beasts.

On top of this, parts of the Arabian Sea are haunted by vicious Musselmen pirates who prowl the waters for rich Portuguese traders and take their captured cargoes and crews to the great ports of Basrah or Zanzibar.

Bearers and Guides

Use the guidelines on page 187 for hiring bearers and guides.

The Major Lands

For convenience, as with the other regions of the world, we have split Asia into a few key geographic regions.

Hindoostan

Hindoostan is a country hemmed in on all sides by impressive natural barriers. To the north lie the massive and impenetrable Himalayan Mountains, their highest peaks towering many miles above the low-lying lands to the south. West are the mountains of the Suleiman and Kirthar Ranges, which separate Hindoostan from the arid lands of the fierce Afghan tribesmen, and through whose valleys Alexander the Great marched at the head of his all-conquering army so many centuries ago. East, the flat, swampy lowlands of eastern Hindoostan rise steeply into jungle-swathed hills which mark the boundaries of the territories of the Second Burmese Empire.And around all the rest lies the great ocean.



Much of northern Hindoostan is flat and covered in light forest. In the northeast is the Great Hindoostani Desert, which spans from the coast northeast toward the Himalayas.

Further south, two parallel mountain ranges, both far older and more weathered than the craggy, snow-capped Himalayas, run west from the coast across to the flood plain of the Ganges far to the east. Behind these is the Deccan plateau. Bordering the plateau to the west are the Western Ghats mountains. On the seaward side of this range is a belt of tropical jungle.

Far to the east are the lowlands, whose swampy ground is prone to severe seasonal flooding when the monsoons come. Much of the coastal area is a wide delta into which flows the mighty Ganges, the most sacred of Hindoostan's rivers. The other great river, the Indus, begins as a series of streams high in the Himalayas before crashing through the grasslands above the desert and onward to the sea.

Hindoostan's climate varies greatly from a sweltering tropical heat in the south to cooler, temperate climes in the north near the Himalayan foothills. Seasonal monsoons can be extremely heavy, causing flash floods and mud slides.

Roads are few and far between in this era, and dusty tracks commonly mark the routes between settlements. Bandits, tigers, and Thuggee cultists make travel dangerous, and parties are advised to travel in numbers for reasons of safety.

Recent History

Hindoostani civilization stretches back to the era of the Mesopotamians and Egypt of old. Over that time, short in comparison to the entirety of human history, many cultures have come and gone.

In the era equating to the Middle Ages in the Old World, much of Hindoostan was under the control of the Delhi Sultanate, an Islamic dynasty, though their true base of power was in the north. In 1526, an army swept forth from the mountains and defeated the armies of the Sultanate. So began the Mogul Dynasty.

As the name implies, the Mogul Dynasty was founded by a bloodline of the ancient Moguls, though it has long converted to Islam. Like their distant forebears, the Moguls understood the power of cavalry, and it is said their invasion force comprised over 200,000 horsemen.

Initial Mogul power was based on the strength of the army, which was expensive to maintain. Unable to rule by force alone, the Moguls have been forced to make terms with their subjects, which include allowing Hindooism to be practiced, giving power to regional magistrates, and avoiding meddling in local disputes. Although the Moguls rule in name, Hindoostan is effectively a free country with a figurehead ruler.

In Kane's time, the Moguls rule only the northern and central districts, southern Hindoostan being a loose confederation of tribes, the remnants of the shattered Delhi Sultanate, and Portuguese enclaves.

Religion

Officially, Hindoostan's state religion is Islam during Kane's age, but the vast majority of citizens are Hindoos.

Whereas Islam is monotheistic, Hindooism is polytheistic. Hindoos worship a variety of gods and spirits, making offerings to them in the form of food, drink, and flowers. Only Kali, the dark earth mother, demands blood sacrifices. Hindoos also believe in karma (best summed as "you reap what you sow") and reincarnation.

Hindoos celebrate many ceremonies through the year, which are spectacles of colored clothing and flowers.

Cathay

Cathay is the largest country on Earth. To the west the land is mountainous and densely forested. For long months, travelers in this realm must climb forested ridge after forested ridge, slowly clambering ever higher toward the eastern peaks of the Himalayas.

Although people do live here, hardy mountain folk for the main part, a traveler can walk for many days, sometimes weeks, without seeing another soul.

Booking Passage

To find a ship in Europe heading to the Orient, the heroes need to be in a Portuguese territory, for theirs is the only Western presence of note in the Far East.

Finding a ship to Hindoostan requires a Streetwise roll once per month (this can be a Cooperative roll). Outside of Portuguese territory this roll suffers a –6 penalty. No ship goes straight from Europe to Cathay without first stopping at Hindoostan to resupply. Should the heroes need to swap ships in Hindoostan (roll a d10; on a roll of 1–4, their ship's final destination is Hindoostan), finding a ship sailing to Cathay or Nippon requires a Streetwise roll once per week.

The journey from Europe to Hindoostan takes 2d4+2 months. From Hindoostan, a ship can reach Cathay in 1d4+1 weeks and Nippon in 2d4+1 weeks.

The cost of passage to Hindoostan is £1d10x5 pounds. Further stages (from Hindoostan) cost an extra £1d6x1 to Cathay, and £1d6x2 to Nippon.

Further east the ground is flatter and well-irrigated by the many rivers, whose tumultuous waters cascade down from the mountains with the winter snow melt. In this fertile land is crowded the bulk of Cathay's vast population, the majority living in small villages, tending their paddy fields and livestock.

To the north, across the River Huanghe, lies the perilous Gobi Desert. In summer, the temperature is hot enough to boil a man's blood in his veins and in winter cold enough to freeze him solid. Isolated by the Himalayas to the south and the Sayan Mountains to the north, rainfall is scant all year round.

Further north still, beyond the great dunes, the desert fades into the rolling grasslands of the Mongolian steppe, whose hills echo with the distant memory of Ghengis Khan's Tartar horde. Here dwell tribes of nomads, the descendants of Ghengis Khan, moving

with the seasons, leading their great herds of ponies to fresh pastures. As with the Gobi desert, temperatures here reach dizzying extremes.

West of the Gobi, nestled in a crook between the western Himalayas and the Tien Shan Mountains, is Takla Makan, the Desert of Death. Along the north and south of this arid basin run parts of the Silk Road, which wind from Cathay to the lands of Arabia.

As well as several major rivers, such as the serpentine Huanghe River, Cathay's waterways have been extensively landscaped by the hand of man. The Grand Canal runs from Shanghai, a coastal port, through the landscape until it reaches the city of Beijing, linking with rivers and lakes along the route to form a navigable waterway covering over 30,000 miles.

Cathay has a massive population, yet much of the land is wilderness. Travel here is dangerous, for many warlords claim these territories as their own, and even in settled areas bandits are a common problem.

In many rural areas there are no roads of any sort. Nearer to Cathay's cities, Emperors of ages past ordered the construction of paved roads to ease the travel of Imperial entourages and armies. Maintained to this day, and guarded by forts, the roads provide easy travel for merchants and soldiers.

Of particular note is the Great Wall of China, which has served to help protect Cathay from invaders since the 3rd century BC. The Ming are currently extending the wall, which when complete will run for almost 4000 miles, separating Cathay from Mongolia and the lands beyond.

Recent History

Cathay has had an imperial ruler for over 1500 years, though not always over a unified country. The last dynasty was that of the Yuan Emperors, founded in 1279 by Kublai Khan, last of the Mongol rulers and a grandson of Ghengis Khan. Since the 10th century, Cathay had been comprised of rival kingdoms, but Mongol dominance brought that period to an end and reunited China under one ruler.

The Yuan rule was something of a disaster, for Cathay and in 1368 a Buddhist peasant led a rebellion. Naming himself Hung Wu, he became the first of the Ming emperors, a dynasty that will rule Cathay until 1644.

In an effort to start rebuilding Cathay, the new emperor reduced taxes and encouraged land reclamation, rewarding hard-working peasants with a portion of the land they cleared. Cathay looked beyond her own borders, conquering neighboring states and building a trading fleet, which ventured as far as the Persian Gulf and eastern Africa.

Yet this was only to be a brief period of prosperity. For centuries, attackers had always descended upon Cathay from the north, her most open border. The Great Wall, began centuries earlier, was repaired and lengthened, villages and towns fortified, and the door to the outside world closed.

Despite Cathay's isolationist stance, the Portuguese manage, through subterfuge, to establish a colony of Macao. Colonization began in 1557, which was followed by the arrival of Jesuits. The Portuguese have not sought to expand their immediate interests, Macao being a staging post for the trade ships between Hindoostan and Nippon.

Religion

During the Yuan Dynasty, the state religion was Taoism, but this has now been replaced by Buddhism. Buddhism teaches that life is suffering, and that through many lifetimes the soul can be purified until it eventually reaches Nirvana, a state of total perfection, with no wants or base desires. Naturally, Buddhists believe in reincarnation.

Confucianism, a philosophy that espouses deep study of one's inner self and the outside world, was popular with the Yuan, but has since fallen out of favor. It contains elements of animist practices and fortune telling. Despite the attitudes of the rulers, of course, the people of Cathay follow their own beliefs and Confucianism and Taosim are thriving among the population at large.

Catholicism has very few adherents, and then only around the Portuguese enclave. Nestorianism, a sect branded heretical as far back as 431 AD, had a very small number

of followers during the Yuan period, but the creed has since withered into obscurity. Nestorians believe Jesus was both man and Son of God, but as separate identities.

Nippon

The land known as Nippon is actually an archipelago consisting of four main islands, Hokkaido, Honshu (the largest, and the island most Europeans refer to when they say Nippon), Shikoku, and Kyushu, as well as thousands of smaller islands.

Much of the land is very mountainous and densely forested, leaving little agricultural land. Despite this, Nippon has a very high population, located mainly in coastal towns and villages. The region is also geologically unstable and prone to severe earthquakes, which rip apart the ground as easily as a man tears open a loaf of bread. Many houses are built of bamboo and paper, designed to collapse without crushing the occupants during these tremors and easily rebuilt afterward. Fire, of course, is a constant problem—arson is considered a capital offense, and punished by crucifixion.

Nippon's rulers follow a martial code and wars and uprisings are frequent. Great stone castles, whose majestic tiers and sloped roofs are in stark contrast to the functional, blockish European castles of the Middle Ages, protect the major cities and passes, and a network of paved roads winds through the rugged landscape. However, due to the mountainous terrain the inhabitants do not make great use of the wheel, transporting goods by bearers, with nobles traveling in sedan chairs or on horseback.

The weather in Nippon varies greatly according to the time of year, with cold, snowy winters that block the high mountain passes, and hot, humid summers that bring plagues of biting mosquitoes. During the summer the monsoon rains fall like a waterfall, washing away roads and causing floods and avalanches.

Recent history

Nippon is emerging from 150 years of civil war and dispute. Ended by Oda Nobunaga (1534–82), who shattered the power of the monastic armies and the Ashikaga family, the rebuilding work was continued by his chief military commander, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, after Nobunaga's forced suicide in 1582.

The peace is short-lived, however, for following Hideyoshi's death in Korea, his infant son is named as heir, though in truth the Council of Regents holds power. After another brief civil war, Tokugawa emerges as supreme ruler and is appointed Shogun by the emperor (whose position was largely ceremonial).

Nippon in Kane's time is a land of ninja and samurai, of honor and ritual suicide, and complex political maneuvering that would shame the clumsy intrigues of the Old World. It is both an orderly, civilized land, whose crafters produce exquisite works of art, and one of intense barbarism, where prisoners are used to test the sharpness of swords, and where a peasant can literally lose his head for not bowing low enough to his lord.

European Contact

Nippon's contact with Europeans begins in 1543, with the arrival of the Portuguese. Cathay had long closed its door to outsiders, but it was willing to allow the Portuguese merchants to act as intermediaries in trade between Cathay and Nippon. Quickly seizing the opportunity, Portuguese influence spread throughout the Orient.

Rather than allowing a free-for-all trade, the Portuguese crown auctioned off the sole exclusive rights for a single merchant ship (of considerable size) to trade with Nippon. Of course, where there is money to be made there are opportunities for others. Chinese smugglers, the Spanish, and even the English are all conducting limited trade with Nippon by the early 17th century.

Religion

Buddhism has existed in Japan since the 7th century, though it is not the only religion. Shinto is an animist religion, venerating the kami, who are both gods (greater kami) and spirits of places or objects (lesser kami). It remains popular with the noble families.

Unlike in the West, where Catholic and Protestant differences, both aspects of the same faith, have led to bitter wars, Shinto and



Buddhism exist peacefully side by side, with many adherents practicing both religions simultaneously.

Christianity in Nippon begins in 1549 when the Jesuits found a small mission. Within a few decades the faith was spreading slowly throughout southern Nippon. An order for missionaries to leave, issued by Hideyoshi, was ignored, which led to a mass execution of Franciscan monks in 1597. Hideyoshi went on to destroy many churches, but he was unable to oust the priests, many of whom went underground.

People of Note

Akbar (1542–1605): Emperor of the Mogul Dynasty (r.1556–1605), Akbar expands their territory, patronizes many forms of art, and is regarded as a well-educated man.

Jahangir (1569–1627): Son of Akbar and emperor after his father's death (r. 1605–25). An alcoholic, he nonetheless continues his father's support of the arts and institutes many cultural and political reforms.

Ishida Mitsunari (1560–1600): A very powerful daimyo (noble), who sides against Tokugawa. He is executed by Tokugawa.

Matteo Ricci (1552–1610): An Italian Jesuit, Ricci is a senior missionary in Cathay. He speaks fluent Chinese, and has argued (with some success) that animism is not a pagan belief, but merely remembrance of one's ancestors (preventing an Inquisitorial presence from appearing in Cathay).

Miyamoto Musashi (1584–1645): Only a youngster in Kane's time, Musashi goes on to become one of the greatest swordsmen ever and writes the Book of Five Rings, a treatise on warfare and strategy. He kills his first foe in a duel in 1596, at the age of just 13.

Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616): After a brief civil following the death of Hideyoshi, Tokugawa subdues Nippon and is appointed Shogun by the Emperor. Although he abdicates in 1605, he remains the power behind the Shogunate until his death.

Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–98): The great warlord Hideyoshi ends the numerous wars which have raged across Nippon for many years. He becomes ruler of a unified Nippon from 1582 until his death in 1598.

Wan-Li (1563–1620): Emperor of Cathay (r. 1572–1620). Wan-Li is a poor ruler, whose ineptitude leads to the downfall of the dynasty just 24 years after his death.

The Temple of Kali

The Hindoo goddess Kali is most often depicted as a four-armed goddess with skin as black as deepest night and a blood-red tongue. In two of her hands she wields weapons: a long spear in one, a wicked blade, curved like the crescent moon, in the other. One of her remaining hands holds a severed head, the other is held out as if expecting an offering.

Many Hindoos offer appeasements to her but few go beyond the traditional foodstuffs and flowers. However, there exists within Hindoostan a dark and evil cult of Kali, whose members are known as Thuggees and who worship at a grim temple. The walls are held

strong by mortar mixed with human blood, the floors are laid with bone, and Kali herself manifests there.

The Thuggee Cult

The Thuggee are a sinister and highly secretive cult, fanatically devoted to Kali. Their preferred method of killing sacrifices is by strangulation with a knotted scarf or garrote.

Disguised as common travelers, groups of Thuggees prowl the lonely, desolate trails of the Hindoostani backwaters searching for suitable victims. With kind words and offers of sharing food or a campfire, the Thuggees ruthlessly work their way into the confidence of innocent travelers, befriending them, swapping stories and news.

When the innocents are relaxed, the Thuggees strike, wrapping their scarves and garrotes around their victims' throats and choking the life from them. Should the intended victims be armed, the Thuggees first use tricks to disarm them, such as asking to see the weapons, pretending to admire their craftsmanship.

The corpses are then ritually mutilated and dumped in wells or rivers, where they sink to the bottom of the watery abyss.

Though the Thuggees rob their victims, this is a secondary consideration, and the stolen goods and coins used to fund the temple.

The Temple of Kali

The Thuggee temple of Kali is located deep underground within a network of caves close to a small village.

The village, which contains just 10 simple houses, is the headquarters for the cultists, and every citizen, from newborn babe to venerable, wizened crone is a member, their allegiance marked by a tattoo under their left arm. Strangers are welcomed here, treated like nobles, and then strangled at the first opportunity.

To a casual observer, the caves appear empty, just a natural feature in which one might seek shelter from a monsoon storm. But carved on one wall are several symbols of Kali, the crescent moon, representing her sword, and the circle, representing the severed head she holds aloft. These mark a secret door, beyond which is a complex maze of worked tunnels.

Many of the tunnels are dead-ends or else cleverly trapped, designed to lure curious intruders to their doom. Only by following the passageways marked with a circle can the heart of the temple be found safely.

At the core is a vast cavern, lit by braziers filled with human fat, whose thick, acrid smoke fills the grand hall with the stench of seared meat. The flames reflect across the smooth, white floor, forming pools of crimson, ebbing and flowing in time to some hideous, unseen heartbeat. An inspection of the floor quickly reveals that it is not stone, but the crushed bones of countless sacrifices, polished into a solid mass over the centuries by the footsteps of the cultists.

Against the far wall is a colossal statue of Kali, her hungry, red eyes leering down on those who call her mistress, her long, blood-red tongue licking her lips, as if in gruesome anticipation of the sacrifices to come.

In front of the statue is an altar, made of severed skulls bound together with mortar mixed with blood. Deep red stains are a dark testament to the atrocities committed here.

Hidden in front of the statue is a secret trapdoor. Activated by pressing a small switch on the altar, it opens over an underground lake. The Thugees deposit the bodies of their sacrifices here, which are then devoured by a swarm of hungry crocodiles, their scaly forms bloated from the regular meals.

Flanking the room are a series of smaller statues, resting in niches like silent guards. Each statue is an image of Kali's destructive aspects, some male, some female, but all brutal in appearance, with four arms, and wickedly sharp weapons that gleam in the firelight.

Several corridors, reachable only through the temple, lead to the cells where sacrifices are kept awaiting their turn at the altar. The stench of fear has pervaded the walls of these chambers, adding to the horror the sacrifices feel as they hear the screams of those taken before them while awaiting their own grisly fate.

Other corridors lead to the chambers of the priests, whose walls are decorated with flayed skins painted with images of Kali, and to the great treasury, where is stored the vast wealth appropriated by the Thuggees.

The Knotted Scarf

Lead In: While in some Hindoo village, the heroes hear warnings to be careful on the roads. Several merchants and workers have gone missing recently, and the locals suspect bandits prowl the region. Then, while on the road, they get a sinister warning from a group of apparently friendly fellow travelers.

On the Road

While wandering through a backwater of Hindoostan late one afternoon, the heroes come across a small group of Hindoos camped by the side of the dusty trail. They greet the heroes warmly and invite them to share their fire and food, warning them that the roads are not safe after dark and large numbers tend to deter the bandits who prowl these roads, so they should stick together for safety.

The Hindoos make small talk, asking the wanderers where they have come from and where they are going. If questioned in return, they claim they are itinerant workers, hoping to find employment in the fields now that the harvest time is drawing near.

As the sun sets, a few of the Hindoos begin to stretch their legs, casually making their way around behind the heroes. Without warning, the Hindoos attack, looping knotted scarves around the heroes' necks.

Check for Surprise, but the heroes have a –1 penalty to their Notice rolls because of the twilight. The Hindoos make Called Shots to the Head to use their garrotes (see below) and they have the Drop on the first round. If they succeed in fighting off their assailants, the heroes can try to learn more about their would-be assassins.

Anyone searching the Thuggees can make a Notice roll at –2. With success, they find a small tattoo in the shape of a circle under each cultist's arm. The Thuggees also have £2d6 in assorted coins and items looted from previous victims.

Thuggees (1 per hero, +2 extra)

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Stealth d8
Charisma: –6
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Mean
Edges: Quick
Gear: Dagger (Str+d4) and garrote (see below)
Special Abilities:

- **Garrote:** With a successful Called Shot to the Head, the Thuggee has managed to loop his scarf around a character's neck. Treat this as a grapple, except each round the victim must make a Vigor roll opposed by the Thuggee's Strength or gain a level of Fatigue. This can lead to Death, and is only recovered once the hold is broken.

Optional Beginning

Rather than using the start of the story we've written, the heroes could be in Hindoostan looking for a missing person. This could be a complete stranger they have been asked to locate, a family friend, or even a character's missing loved one.

Clues, carefully placed by the GM in earlier adventures, would lead the heroes to Hindoostan, possibly across several adventures, and then eventually into the region haunted by the Thuggees.

When the heroes reach the temple of Kali, they discover the high priest preparing to sacrifice the innocent victim to appease Kali.

Not only does this make the story more personal to the heroes, rather than just being another dark place to explore, it also echoes Kane's travels across Europe and the Near East and finally to the foul city of Negari as he tracks down the whereabouts of Marilyn Taferal.

The Village of Thuggees

After defeating the Thuggees, the heroes can continue their journey. A day later, they reach a small, impoverished village situated near a rocky ravine. The villagers, a motley bunch, apparently half-starved, gather to see the newcomers, smiling pitifully.

The crowd quickly parts and a Hindoo of stern appearance pushes forward. He bows to the travelers.

"Greetings and blessings upon you," he says. "Welcome to our village. It would please us greatly if you would accept our hospitality. We are poor and can offer no luxuries, but the gods would smile upon us if you accepted what we had to offer."

The headman introduces himself as Ragesh Chopur and shakes each hero by the hand, even the ladies. He then invites the heroes to accompany him to his humble house.

The heroes are offered cushions set in a ring in the center of the floor, in the center of which are bowls of rice and vegetables, and a few pieces of stringy meat of dubious origin. The villagers, including a number of women, accompany the party to the house, taking seats around the walls of the room, singing softly. Any guests who comment on this are told the villagers are singing prayers for them, telling the gods that they have accepted the villagers' hospitality.

Chopur makes polite small talk over dinner, and is very interested if the attack the previous day is mentioned.

"There are many very bad men on these roads," he sighs. "Mighty rulers live in great palaces far from here, and do nothing to stop the bandits. But it seems you, strangers in our land, have graced us by removing this threat. The gods will smile on you and bless you many times for aiding such poor people as ourselves."

At that, the Thuggees launch their attack. Heroes who state they are suspicious and are keeping an eye on the villagers get a +2 bonus to their Notice rolls to avoid surprise.

- **Headman:** Treat him as a Wild Card Thuggee (see page 278).
- **Thuggees (2 per hero):** As page 278.

The Cave of Death

Should the heroes win, they have wiped out the Thuggee village, but not the core of the problem. Searching the village finds just £1d6x0.50 in low quality goods, and a brief message, which is a reminder that all loot taken from sacrifices must be delivered to the temple as quickly as possible to avoid attracting unwanted attention in the village.

A Tracking roll around the village locates a worn path leading to a cave in the ravine.

At the cave, a successful Notice roll detects faint markings on the back wall, a crescent and a full circle. Searching around the area reveals, with a successful Notice roll, a secret door, activated simply by pushing hard against the symbol. Beyond, as detailed on the map on page 280, is a warren of worked tunnels, the stone blocks stained with mold, into which are scratched more symbols. Some of the passages are marked with the crescent, others with the circle. If the heroes cross a square marked X on the map, they've encountered a trap.

Traps

The system presented here is a quick way of making deadly traps. When you need a trap, draw a single card from the Action Deck and consult the Trap Table on page 281—this tells you everything you need to know about it type and lethality.

Detecting: Detecting a trap requires a Notice roll at –2. Unless a hero has Danger Sense, the search requires an action.

Disarming: Disarming a trap requires a Lockpicking roll. On a roll of 1 (regardless of Wild Die), the trap activates.

Initiative: Most traps activate with little warning to the victim. Use the Surprise rules. Count the trap as having a d10 Agility for the purposes of "interrupting" a hero's action. Traps with Fighting or Shooting dice make attack rolls. A trap catching a hero by Surprise also has the Drop (where applicable).

Area: Static traps, such as pit and blade traps, affect a 1" square on the battle grid. Projectile traps shoot from the wall affecting a 1" square. A boulder trap rolls in a straight line until it reaches a wall, where it stops.

Duration: Traps are one-use devices. Once activated, they must be reset to work again.

Effects: Check the card against the Trap Table (see page 281).

Notes: The following short codes are used on the table. Fi = Fighting skill; Sh = Shooting skill; Xdx = number and type of dice damage; ROF = the number of attacks a projectile trap makes against all targets in range, unless otherwise stated. Traps that use Shooting do not suffer any penalties for a Rate of Fire greater than 1. Pit traps are listed with the depth of the pit before their damage.

The Temple of Kali

Eventually the heroes reach the temple of Kali itself. Use the description on page 277 and paraphrase it to set the scene for the players.

Within the temple are the high priest and his bodyguards, who attack the intruders on sight. When the high priest takes his first wound, read the following aloud.

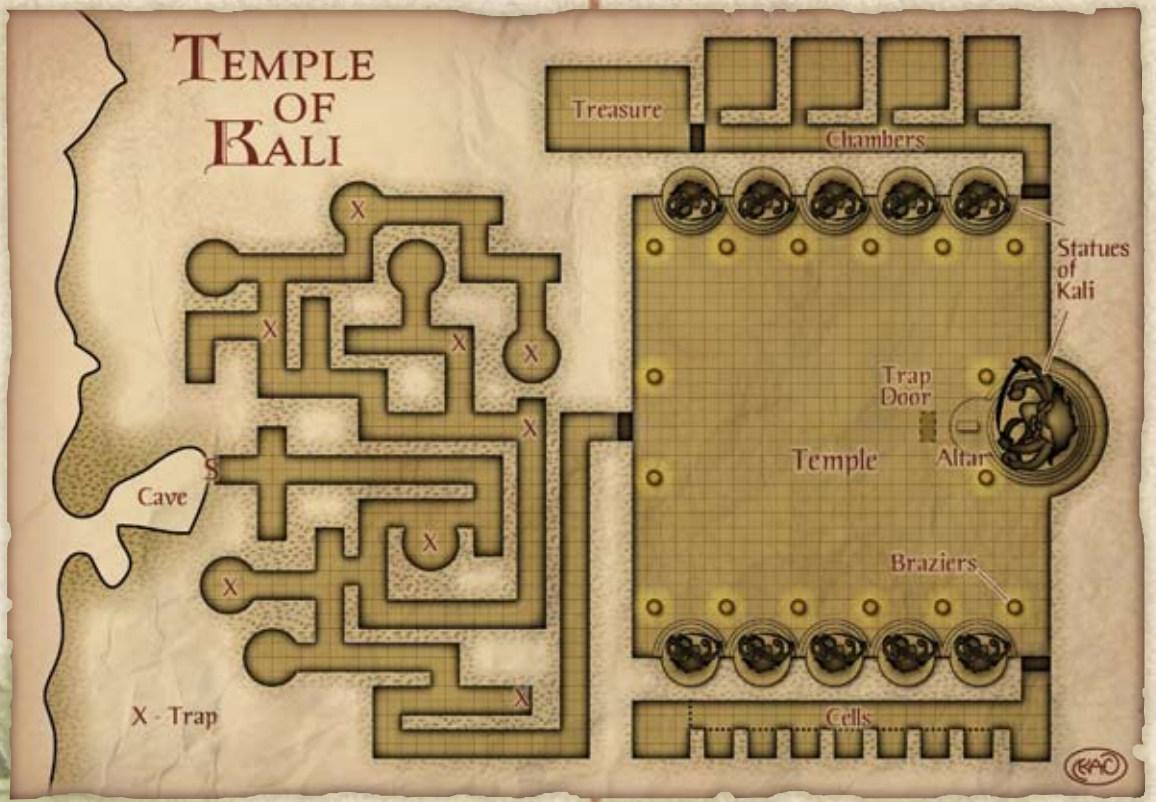
Your blow sends the priest reeling. With some horror, you notice his blood does not stain the floor, but is absorbed into it, vanishing completely from sight.

A wicked smile crosses the priest's lips and he stabs a gnarled finger into the air, gesticulating at some point behind you.

Turning, you see one of the statues of Kali's avatars of destruction, wickedly sharp swords held in each of its four hands, begin to twitch. With slow steps, the black-skinned statue, its red tongue licking its lips in anticipation, lurches toward you, raising two of its swords to attack.

Every time the high priest takes a wound, another statue animates, until four are activated. If the priest takes two wounds in a single hit, for instance, then two statues animate simultaneously. The statues continue fighting, even if the priest is slain.

- **High Priest:** Treat as a Tribal Shaman (see page 329).
- **Thuggees (4):** As page 278.



Aspects of Kali (4)

These four-armed humanoids are statues brought to life through the magic of Kali's priests. Each statue wields four cursed swords. They are mindless combatants, which is precisely what makes them so fearsome.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d4
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8 (2)
Gear: 4 Scimitars (Str+d6 each)
Special Abilities:

- **Armor (+2):** Wooden body.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken, no additional damage from called shots, half-damage from piercing attacks, not affected by disease and poison.
- **Fearless:** Statues are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Two-Fisted:** The aspects of Kali attack with two weapons with no multi action penalty. Attacking with the other pair of weapons incurs a standard multi-action penalty.



Aftermath

Clearing the temple of Thuggee cultists puts an end to the scourge of the cult... for the time being. There are countless gangs of Thuggee bandits roaming the Hindoostan countryside and though the heroes have struck a blow, the first gang to return to the area with treasure for the temple will find the carnage the wanderers leave behind.

If there was a single survivor left in the village (and remember that every Thuggee child is also a member of the cult—can the heroes really put the infants to the sword?), or in the temple of Kali, they inform the returning cultists of the wanderers' actions and the cult swears a blood oath against the heroes, vowing to hunt them to the ends of the earth. For the rest of the time the party is in Hindoostan, the heroes are dogged by occasional stealthy attacks from small groups of Thuggee cultists, bent on revenge. The GM could keep the characters on edge by having the attacks continue even after they leave Hindoostan, though more infrequently.

Trap Table

Value	Trap	Clubs	Diamonds	Hearts	Spades
2–5	Pit Trap	3 yds, 2d6	5 yds, 2d6	10 yds, 2d6+5	20 yds, 2d6+10
6	Spiked Pit	3 yds, 2d6+2	5 yds, 2d6+5	10 yds, 2d6+10	20 yds, 2d6+15
7–8	Projectile	Sh d6, 2d6, ROF 2	Sh d8, 2d6, ROF 3	Sh d10, 3d6, ROF 2	Sh d12, 3d6, ROF 3
9–10	Blade	Fi d6, 1d6	Fi d8, 2d6	Fi d10, 3d6	Fi d12, 4d6
Jack	Poisoned: Treat as Projectile. Vigor roll per hit or suffer an automatic wound.				
Queen	Poisoned: Treat as Blade. Vigor roll at –2 or suffer an automatic wound.				
King	Gas*	+0, KO 2d6 mins	–2, KO, 2d6 hours	+0, auto wound	–2, auto wound
Ace	Boulder	"Runs" in a straight line at Pace 8+1d6 running die. Causes 4d10 damage.			
Joker	The trap is faulty and does not function.				

** Victims must make a Vigor roll with the listed modifier or suffer the listed effects.*

Fukiwara Monastery

Off a little-used road, high among the peaks of Nippon's central mountains, stands the deserted Monastery of Fukiwara.

Three centuries ago, a group of Buddhist warrior monks (sohei) constructed the monastery on a patch of ground close to a natural spring. Unbeknown to the monks, the clearing was home to a water demon, who resented the monks' intrusion.

The demon manifested in its preferred form, that of a young child, and approached the monks, claiming to be an orphan. Unaware of the youth's evil nature, they took it under their care. For a decade the demon tormented the monks, stealing their meager possessions, desecrating the shrine, setting fires, and such like, all the while using its powers to blame one of their own for the ghastly deeds.

Eventually the monks learned the true nature of their ward and bound it into the shrine using powerful spells.

Twenty years ago, the great war spread to the mountain. The monks raised their army and joined the fray, but the warrior monks were massacred to the last man, their corpses littering the mountainside.

The victors, determined to utterly destroy the powerbase of the sohei, sacked the monastery, destroying the outer walls and shattering the shrine, inadvertently releasing the demon.

Little is now left of the monastery. Much of what remained above ground after the attack was robbed to construct a new bridge at the base of the mountain. The central flagstone floor of the monastery's temple remains in place, surrounded by the stumps of burnt timber pillars and scores of broken roof tiles. In the center of the temple stands the cracked altar.

One night, five years ago, while seeking a supposed treasure trove the monks hid in the altar, a group of peasants stole up into the mountain to search the ruins. When they failed to return, their wives alerted the authorities. A search found only their skeletons, their flesh picked clean. The local peasants have shunned the site since this time, figuring it cursed by some kami placed to watch over the treasure.

A new lord now rules the domain, Lord Kawari, and he has recently ordered the spring diverted to supply water to his lavish ornamental garden. Angered once more, the water demon has decided to wreak its revenge on those who disturb its peace once and for all.

The Imp of Heaven

Lead In: Word has spread far and wide about the strange murders occurring at the house of Lord Kawari in the central mountains of Nippon. When they land in Nippon, the wanderers overhear two Jesuit missionaries discussing the matter.

Background

Lord Kawari is beginning to fear his house is cursed. First, his best guard was badly hurt when his horse threw him by the nearby stream. Then his youngest son was found drowned within the pool in his ornamental garden. Treasured items have gone missing around the household, and strange howling has been heard at night coming from right outside the house. Lord Kawari is at his wits' end. His servants and guards talk of vengeful ghosts from the nearby ruined monastery, while his wife and children fear for their lives.

Kao, a water demon, plans to drive the Kawari household to ruination. It was Kao who spooked the horse of the house guard and he who lured Kawari's son into the pool to drown him. Kao plans to sow mistrust about the wanderers so that Kawari turns on them. Then he plans to revel in the resulting bloodshed.

The Kawari Household

Kao shapechanged into the guise of a young child to deceive the Kawari household. He showed up on Kawari's doorstep as a self-proclaimed orphan and offered himself as a servant. Kawari took pity on the bedraggled child and now Kao has earned the trust of the household—all except for one.

There is an old woman servant named Takiko who knows well the legends of the Fukiwara monastery, and pleaded with Lord Kawari not to divert the stream into his garden. When Kao arrived, Takiko thought he might be a vengeful spirit from the monastery and tried to tell her lord. Kawari thought the old woman to be a superstitious peasant and believed the tales nothing more than stories conjured by thieves seeking the sohei's imaginary treasure. Kawari wonders now if Takiko was on to something, but is more convinced it was the work of mountain bandits planning on looting his household.

Enter the Heroes

Lord Kawari is a proud man, and a Lord, so must be treated with appropriate respect. Failure to do so can have dire consequences in Nippon at this time. If the heroes present themselves to Lord Kawari appropriately, and offer their services, he is just about desperate enough to take them up on their offer.

The wanderers might have a hard time tracking down the water demon as he is deceitful. Kao slowly tries to paint the heroes as villains in hopes of driving them away. Kao begins by taking some of the items he has stolen—family heirlooms of the Kawari household—and planting them amongst the heroes' possessions. Kao then attempts to contaminate the heroes' food with his blood, which is a bitter poison (Vigor checks at –2 for all who consume it or they suffer a level of Fatigue from violent stomach pains). Kao's other tricks are left to the GM, who should be as devious as he wants while the players investigate. Eventually, Kao tries to steal one of their weapons and slay one of the other servants with it, thus implicating the owner.

The Imp of Heaven

The heroes' key to uncovering Kao's true form lies in the bridge just outside the lord's mansion. Heroes who ask the locals about the history of the region may attempt a Streetwise roll. With a success, they learn the history of the temple and the construction of the bridge. Several stones were removed from the temple to make the bridge, one of which is hollow.

Nippon Society

Nippon society is divided into four main social castes.

Imperial Family: First is the Imperial family, though they have limited actual political influence. European explorers have described the relationship between the emperor and the samurai as similar to that of the pope and the kings of Europe.

Samurai: True political and military power rests in the hands of the samurai caste. Led by daimyo, feudal rulers equivalent to Western kings, the samurai are equivalent to Western knights in power.

Peasants: Most of the population are peasants (craftsmen or farmers). Even merchants are grouped in this class, as dealing in finance is beneath a samurai.

Eta: The lowest caste is the eta, who deal with death in some manner, such as undertakers. They have very few rights under law, and few samurai will even talk to them without an intermediary.

Upon careful examination (Notice roll at –2), the heroes notice a glyph carved into one of the stones. If removed from the bridge, the stone feels very light. Smashing it (Toughness 4) reveals holy prayer beads from the sohei and a delicate parchment with the ritual for "Binding the Imp of Heaven." The parchment also states that the ritual must take place at a holy place. The ruined temple, the only holy site for many miles, still serves this purpose.

Completing the ritual takes a total of 10 rounds, at the end of which the sohei's magic automatically works (the power is in the scroll, not the reader). During the reading, the hero enacting the ritual can take no other actions, though he may defend himself. He is treated as an Unarmed Defender during this time because he can only dodge blows, but not physically wield a weapon and parry them.

When the heroes reach the temple, Kao immediately senses their presence (through his link to the temple) and moves to attack them, finally revealing his true form as he

erupts from the nearby spring. Kao must be restrained for the ritual to work on him—killing him causes him to revert to water and reform the next night at his mountain stream.

Restraining him is difficult, since he can change into water at will, but brandishing the sohei's prayer beads causes him to revert to his true demon form (see his weakness detailed below). Once the ritual is completed, Kao is drawn screaming into the temple ruins where he remains for as long as the temple ruins are undisturbed. Care of the ruins is taken over by Lord Kawari, who is ashamed of his earlier skepticism.

And what of the fabled treasure? Greedy heroes may no doubt want to search for the loot, eager for some material reward. In fact, however, it is just a myth, part of the story told to stir up trouble against the monks. The rumor was in fact started by Kao in his guise as the little orphan. Of course, it may take some exhaustive searching on the heroes' part to discover there's no treasure to be found.





Kao the Water Demon

Kao is a devious and malevolent water demon who wants to bring misery to the humans who desecrate his mountain stream without paying him proper respect. While he prefers his shapechanged form of a small child, his true form is that of a massive, blue, frog-like humanoid with solid black eyes, a great toothy maw, and long distended arms ending in blade-like claws.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Notice d10, Persuasion d12, Swimming d12, Throwing d8
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8
Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 12 in water.
- **Bite or Claw:** Kao's sharp teeth and massive claws do Str+d8 damage each.
- **Darkvision:** Kao never suffers any darkness penalties.
- **Fear –2:** Kao causes Guts checks at –2 when he reveals his demon form.
- **Invulnerable:** Kao can only be harmed by magical attacks. He can be Shaken by other attacks, but never takes wounds from them.
- **Improved Frenzy:** Kao may make two Fighting attacks each action at no penalty.
- **Shapechange:** Kao is a shapechanger who can change himself to the form of a small child (uses the same stats, except he loses his Size and Toughness is 6) or a pool of water as a free action. However, Kao can always be forced into his true form by faith (see below).
- **Size +2:** In his true form, Kao is a massive bloated frog-demon with blue skin.
- **Unholy Charm:** Kao can use the *puppet* power, but only in his guise of a young child. He uses his Persuasion as his arcane skill.
- **Weakness (Faith):** If a character within 12" of Kao presents a holy item to him, a contested Spirit roll is made. If Kao fails, he is forced into his true demon form and cannot shapechange out of it until he leaves the presence of the holy item (he must move further than 24" away).

LAIR OF THE IMMORTALS

CATHAY has had a great many emperors through its history. The first ordered the construction of an army of immortal warriors to guard him in the afterlife. For 2000 years the warriors have silently stood watch, but now someone has gained control of them and is using them to gain control of the empire.

HISTORY

Qin Shi Huang (260-210 BC) was the first Emperor of a unified Cathay. The region at the time was a collection of warring states, the most powerful of which was Qin, the future emperor's homeland. Qin Shi Huang was actually born in the rival state of Zhao. His father, a prince of Qin, was a hostage in that land at the time of his birth.

On returning home to Qin, the young prince secured the throne through the aid of a rich merchant Lu Buwei, who later became his chancellor. He was barely 13 years old, and served under a regent until he seized power at the age of 21.

Qin Shi Huang then set about conquering the other states with an unstoppable army. Where he got this army is unknown, and contemporary scholars referred to them only as the "Immortal Army," for their numbers never diminished and weapons did little to halt their progress.

By all accounts he was an autocratic tyrant, crushing all opposition and rebellion, and burying his enemies or critics alive. That said, he was instrumental in the unification of the state under one ruler, developed a network of roads and canals, standardized weights and currency, and even began the first Great Wall of China.

The Emperor died while searching for the Islands of the Immortals off the coast of northern China. On these islands was, legend had it, the secret to eternal life. According to Chinese myth, eternal life could be granted by taking a pill, but it was this that killed him. His alchemists had long used mercury as a curative, but the doses the emperor was taking proved fatal.

On his death, the Emperor was buried in a secret location with an army of some 8000 terracotta soldiers (his "Immortal Army"), each one an individual sculpture, as if a real army had somehow been turned to clay. It is said that everyone who worked on the tomb and who attended the funeral was executed to protect the secret.

Although the name of Qin Shi Huang is still remembered, the memory of his tomb is forgotten. At least, it was.

Lao Sheng, a cunning courtier of the current emperor, Wan-Li, is also secretly a sorcerer of considerable power. Though he hides his magical aptitude, his vaulting ambition is plain for all to see. He sees his lord Wan-Li as weak and arrogantly imagines himself a superior ruler. Through extensive study of ancient records and the expenditure of vast sums of money on explorations, Lao Sheng has located one small part of the first emperor's immortal terracotta army.

Initially he sought to locate the tomb and gather from it artifacts of the first emperor, hoping to use them to secure his right to the throne. But the discovery of the army set into motion a new plan. Unsure if ancient relics would truly be enough to secure the throne, Lao Sheng decided to use a tried and tested method of attaining the throne—he would take it by force.

Invoking ancient and terrible spells first used by Qin Shi Huang's mystics to create his "Immortal Army," Lao Sheng awoke his small force, sacrificing one peasant for each warrior, their spirits entering into the statue, bound to Lao Sheng's iron will—a small price to pay for helping him achieve such a powerful prize.

Over the last year, Lao Sheng has used his immortal army to terrorize the central province of Shaanxi. The imperial army has been unable to thwart the mindless minions, suffering heavy losses, though they do not know who controls the immortal soldiers. Emboldened by his successes, Lao Sheng has become more confrontational in court, accusing the emperor of weakness.

Wan-Li is finding his support dwindling, while Lao Sheng's is beginning to grow. The devious courtier has also staged battles

between the immortal army and his own personal troops. Needless to say, his soldiers have had seemingly-miraculous success in defending towns and merchants from the unstoppable army, and at court the nobles have started to look to Lao Sheng, rather than the emperor, for answers.

Lao Sheng houses his army in a large cave complex many miles from the emperor's tomb, having no desire to draw his rivals' attention to the site, or reveal the truth behind the army of the immortals. The army consists of just 50 warriors and 20 horses, hardly a vast force, but one whose magical construction allows them to defeat mortal warriors with ease.

The cave has long had a reputation for housing evil spirits, which makes it perfect for Lao Sheng' purposes. However, the talk of evil in the region may also be the courtier's downfall, for such talk is exactly what attracts the wanderers.

The Immortal Army

Lead In: The Army of Immortals is hot gossip across Cathay. Every village is talking about the recent attacks, which the Emperor seems powerless to stop. Many suspect his reign will soon end if the matter is not dealt with quickly. No one has any firm facts, other than the central Shaanxi Province has been affected the worst.

Background

While in Shaanxi Province, the heroes come across a small village being terrorized by part of the Immortal Army. The heroes may have been led here by talk of the immortal soldiers, or perhaps are simply following the trail to another destination, coming upon the settlement quite by chance.

Ahead of you lies a small village of a dozen bamboo huts, animal pens, and a central granary. There are no defenses of any sort. A smashed palanquin lies in the mud, surrounded by a small number of soldiers desperately trying to fight off what appear to be living statues. In the distance, two riders are heading away from the village at a gallop.

The terracotta soldiers cover the retreat of the escaping horsemen by attacking. Half the immortals (rounded down) are mounted, the others are on foot. As per their orders, they fight to the death. No attempt at communication with them, including magic, works. Whatever they try, the wanderers can learn nothing of the origins of the army, the location of their base, and such like.

The Chinese soldiers willingly fight alongside the characters. Fill out an Ally Sheet for the Chinese, and let the players control one soldier each.

Chinese Soldiers (1 per hero)

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Riding d6, Shooting d6
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (2)
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: —
Gear: Scale hauberk (+2), dao (Str+d8).

Immortal Soldier (2 per hero)

The terracotta warriors are statutes given unholy "life" by the spirit of a peasant Lao Sheng sacrificed. When they are "killed," their physical bodies are smashed and the imprisoned souls escape to whatever afterlife awaits them.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d12
Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Riding d8, Throwing d8
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7/6; **Toughness:** 10 (2)
Gear: Spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1) or dao (Str+d8), bow (Range: 12/24/48, Damage 2d6).
Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Terracotta body.
- **Construct:** The immortal soldiers gain +2 to recover from being Shaken; No additional damage from called shots; Piercing attacks do half-damage; Immune to poison and disease.
- **Fearless:** The terracotta army is immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Tireless:** Terracotta warriors never suffer Fatigue.

Immortal Horse (1 per hero)

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d8
Pace: 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 12 (2)
Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Terracotta body.
- **Construct:** The immortal horses gain +2 to recover from being Shaken; No additional damage from called shots; Piercing attacks do half-damage; Immune to poison and disease.
- **Fearless:** Terracotta horses are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Fleet Footed:** Roll a d10 for their running die.
- **Kick:** Str+d6.
- **Size +3:** Terracotta horses weigh between 800 and 1000 pounds.
- **Tireless:** Terracotta horses never suffer Fatigue.

A Favor Asked

Once the warriors are dispatched, the leader of the soldiers (who happens to be any surviving soldier), turns to the heroes and bows. He speaks at least one language known to the heroes, perhaps trained by a missionary or merchant. If all the Chinese have been Incapacitated, ensure that one of them passes his Vigor roll after the battle.

"Thank you, strangers," he says, bowing politely. "My name is Captain Dao Ming of the Imperial Army. We were escorting a tax collector when we were ambushed by members of the Immortal Army." He points to the remains of the terracotta warriors.

"Some say they are ghosts given form. Whatever created them, we see now they are not truly immortal. Unfortunately, the tax collector has been taken hostage. Two horsemen escaped with him as the battle commenced. We must find him or the Emperor will be most displeased, and we would be grateful of your assistance in this matter. Another force of my soldiers, delayed at a neighboring village, will be here shortly to join us, but I fear they may not be enough."

An hour after the fight ends, a force of 20 Chinese soldiers marches into the village. Captain Dao briefs them, and then orders them to prepare for a march.

Following the trail left by the two riders requires a Tracking roll at +2, due to the fresh tacks. The trail leads into the foothills of the nearby mountains, and ends at a dark cave entrance.

The Immortal Army

A narrow tunnel winds into the hillside for 50 feet before emerging into a vast cavern, 100 yards to each side. Seated at the far end is a Chinese man dressed in fine silk robes, wearing a porcelain mask of purest white. Kneeling before him is another Chinese man, his robes soiled.

The kneeling man, no doubt the tax collector, weeps openly, and is begging for his life. Standing before the figures in ten ranks of four is the immortal army of the terracotta soldiers.

As soon as you enter the cavern, the warriors begin to advance. The masked man snarls and leaps to his feet, knocking the prostrate tax collector unconscious with a ferocious kick.

The man in the porcelain mask is Lao Sheng. He planned to hold the tax collector hostage in return for a large ransom, but the heroes have spoiled his plans. Lao Sheng begins the combat by first casting *deflection*, then *armor*, and finally *boost Vigor*. He then advances close enough to use *lower trait* (concentrating on lowering Fighting and Vigor) and *entangle*, while his warriors keep the heroes occupied.

The wanderers and their Allies are greatly outnumbered, but the Immortals have a major weakness—if Lao Sheng is killed, the spell cast on the warriors is broken. When this happens, they immediately snap to attention and remain motionless, the trapped spirits freed.

Chinese Soldiers (20): See page 286. Any survivors from the first encounter can be added to this number.

Immortal Warriors (40): See page 286.



Lao Sheng

Lao Sheng is desperate to become emperor and is determined to let nothing stand in his way, especially not barbaric foreigners. When leading his army, he wears a mask to disguise his features.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d4, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Magick d12, Taunt d8
Charisma: +2
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Arrogant, Jingoistic (Major), Vow (Major; overthrow Emperor)
Edges: Arcane Background (Sorcery), Charismatic, Command, Improved Strong Caster, Strong Willed
Powers: *armor, boost/lower trait, curse, deflection, dispel, entangle, fear, speak language, spirit servant.*
Treat as a Heroic character.
Gear: Dagger (Str+d4)

Aftermath

In a small chamber at the rear of the cave is £200 worth of booty (weighs 5 pounds per £20), stolen by the terracotta army to fund Lao Sheng's rebellion. Neither the tax collector nor the Chinese soldiers have any objections if the heroes wish to claim it as reward (though the tax collector insists the heroes fill out a receipt). More altruistic heroes may return it to the population from whom it was stolen.

At the Game Master's discretion, the heroes may be invited to attend the Emperor at his court for further rewards (possibly money, perhaps seals of friendship, or maybe even honorary noble titles).

This should probably lead on to further adventures in Cathay of the Game Master's devising. The Imperial City is an exciting place, but filled with deceit and danger, as the Emperor's advisors and courtiers are jealous and constantly scheming, and suspicious of the influence the foreigners may wield over their lord.

Though the character's have found favor with Emperor Wan-Li, they may find that's no guarantee of safe conduct once they are out of the Emperor's sight.

Ruins of Takla Makan

Takla Makan is today a barren expanse of sand, the only remaining traces of human existence there being the marker posts of the Silk Road. But this was not always the case.

History

Ancient Chinese records refer to a great city, whose walls were built of stones the size of oxen, with houses tall enough for three men to enter, each standing on another's shoulders, and in whose precincts stood temples with spires so tall they shamed the peaks of the Himalayas.

These same sources record that the inhabitants were a race of giants, with hair as red as flame and sallow, pale skin. They wore kilts and shirts of patterned material, and on their arms they carried great torcs of pure gold.

Where they came from is not recorded, however, and Chinese stories speak of their city being built overnight by demons and howling spirits, summoned from the Otherworld by their necromancer-priests.

For a thousand years, the strange red-haired giants warred against the indigenous tribes, subduing them one by one and making them slaves. Under the crack of the whip the slaves toiled to create an irrigation system that brought the desert to life, and created verdant pastures where there had previously been nothing but sand.

The city prospered further with the founding of the Silk Road, but the inhabitants did not trade. Instead, they took what they desired by force, leaving the desert sands awash with crimson stains.

Fragments of records written by early Chinese courtiers in the 2nd to 9th centuries make mention of numerous visits to the city during this period. Keen to promote trade with the distant lands to the west but hampered by the privations of the red-haired men, the Chinese agreed to pay the city an annual tribute to leave the merchants in peace. For seven hundred years the tribute was paid, and each visit carefully recorded. All share one common notation, that the ruler of the

city was "a man who knew not death, for his skin was as cold as the grave and his eyes like the bottomless pits of the many Hells."

A thousand years passed between the arrival of the red-headed strangers and their demise. The Chinese claim that their army shattered the walls of the city and put the vile occupants to the sword. Turkish records claim the priests of the city overstretched their ambition, and summoned a genie of awesome power, which leveled the city in a single night. Other sources claim the city was razed by the Mongols, or flattened by an earthquake.

Whatever the truth, the city was reduced to rubble, the irrigation channels clogged beyond repair, and the survivors of the great disaster all driven into the surrounding mountains.

Freed from the burden of their tribute, Cathay expanded her trade to the west. Many caravans failed to cross the Takla Makan desert, but those who came after discovered their corpses The remains were withered and desiccated, their faces contorted in agony and terror, yet with no visible signs of injury. It was as if the desert itself had simply drained them of their life.

Over time, with the killings persisting, merchants began to leave offerings along the Silk Road, convinced that the ghosts of the red-haired men still haunted the barren trail.

The Truth

The ruler mentioned in all seven hundred years of accounts was, in fact, the same man. His body preserved for eternity by fell and powerful magic, the immortal ruler was a living mummy, soulless yet alive, terrible to behold, a mockery of God's plan that man should wither and die after his allotted years.

The Mummy Lord survived the destruction of his city at the hands of a Chinese army. Sorely wounded, the great lord fled into the Tien Shan mountains, seeking refuge in a cave while his wounds healed and his strength returned. After a recuperation which covered several centuries he began to spread his dark shadow across the land once more.

Trading companies

British East India Company

The Company began as The Company of Merchants of London Trading into the East Indies. The 125 shareholders' initial investments gave the Company a capital of less than £75,000. In 1600, Queen Elizabeth I granted the Company a royal charter, which entitled it to a monopoly on all trade in the East Indies for 15 years, a region which included lands already under the influence of Dutch merchants.

Early attempts to lessen Dutch control of the spice trade met with little success, and even founding a permanent trading post in the East Indies failed. In 1608, the Company finally struck lucky, establishing an outpost at Surat, in northwest Hindoostan. Profits began to climb almost immediately, tempting King James I to remove the monopoly and open up the sub-continent to a multitude of trading companies. Instead, he elected to renew the Company's charter, this time entitling them to trading rights in perpetuity, if the Company remained profitable.

However, the Dutch and Portuguese had no intention of sitting idly by while their profits diminished.

Dutch East India Company

England's main rivals in the East Indies, as opposed specifically to Hindoostan, are the Dutch. Arriving in the region in 1592, a Dutch expedition immediately opened hostilities with Portuguese traders and the natives. By the time they returned to the Netherlands, the expedition had lost half its crew, but brought a fortune in spices.

Dutch expansion into the East Indies began almost immediately, and within just four years vast profits were being made by adventurous captains and investors.

In 1602 the Dutch government formed the United East India Company, granting them sole monopoly over Asian trade routes. In 1611, the company establishes their first permanent trading post in Indonesia.



His first act was to kidnap seven local tribesmen and turn them into lesser versions of his own monstrous undead form. These became his trusted lieutenants, and served him without question.

The Mummy Lord was unwilling to reveal his presence to the world, for he had learned from his lieutenants that Cathay had grown into a formidable power during his long absence. He became little more than a bandit, stealing the riches that in his previous existence had been freely offered.

When the merchants began leaving tribute, he considered the old deal renewed and the killings stopped. Until recently, that is.

The City

The main city of the red-haired priests lies buried beneath the sands, its existence erased from the landscape as if by the hand of a deity ashamed of what his creations had achieved.

Forced from his ruined city, the Mummy Lord fled into the Tien Shan mountains, where he and his vile minions settled in a secret valley, enslaving the local tribes once more and forcing them to construct a new city for their master.

Built into the side of a cliff, the new city can be reached only by a precarious staircase carved from the rock. On the lower levels are the caves of the slaves, little more than holes in the mountainside with minimal furnishings, making them more like cells than houses.

Higher up the snaking pathway are the dwellings of the Mummy Lord's lieutenants. Within are many chambers, lavishly decorated with the tribute extracted from merchants, gifted them by their immortal master. When not carrying out their master's evil bidding, the seven undead lieutenants can usually be found here.

The highest level is both temple to the cult of the Mummy Lord and his dwelling place. Within the dark, columned halls, decorated with murals of his past glories and flanked by his undead minions, the Mummy Lord sits on his throne, plotting and planning for the day when he has the strength to venture forth from his mountain hold and become ruler of all Cathay.

Hold of the Mummy Lord

Lead In: News of the disappearance of trade caravans crossing the plateau has spread far into Cathay. In hushed whispers, the wanderers are told of the existence of the cursed city of Takla Makan and how it is now haunted by the ghosts of strange red-headed men.

Background

This adventure is suggested for heroes of at least Veteran rank. The Mummy Lord is a fearsome opponent and his lieutenants are also very powerful adversaries. Tackling the ageless lord of Takla Makan is not a task for inexperienced wanderers. The initial fight with Xi Bai should alert players to this fact.

Tilemoch was an ancient Celtic druid who formed a cult to aid in his relentless quest for power and immortality. The cult delved into demon summoning and necromancy, which granted Tilemoch the power he sought.

However, this also earned the wrath of his clan, which had lost too many innocents to Tilemoch's foul magick. Tilemoch and his followers were forced to flee. The foul cult traveled the world, gathering arcane secrets as it went, and growing more powerful as the years went on.

Finally, the cult settled in distant Cathay, intent on using their knowledge to become the lords and masters of a new civilization.

The rest is history. Tilemoch, through the magic of his cult, became the Mummy Lord and his great city rose and fell. He now seeks to reclaim the glory of his once-great city by creating an army led by his seven mummy servitors. The recent attacks upon caravans traveling through the Tien Shan Mountains have served two purposes—to gather wealth and supplies, and to gather humans to use as slaves and as soldiers for his growing undead army.

Road to the Mountain Hold

Heroes wanting to put an end to the depredations of the Mummy Lord must find where his hidden mountain hold is located. They may try to find the mountain hold by themselves, or they may elect to join a merchant caravan passing through the Tien Shan Mountains in hopes of encountering an attack.

Many locals know variations of the story of Takla Makan and most still believe vengeful ghosts of the old city are what are causing the disappearance of the caravans. The locals can give directions to the former site of Takla Makan (although nothing but sand remains) and the road to the Tien Shan Mountains. It is many days travel through the bleak, rugged, and dangerously cold mountains, so the heroes should plan accordingly. If they fail to take adequate precautions against the extreme temperatures, use the Fatigue rules on page 88, as it could have an important effect on the combat to come.

However the heroes reach the region, there is a chance of them being attacked by the Mummy Lord's chief servitor mummy, known as Xi Bai the Reaver. When a caravan is spotted, Xi Bai and his horde of zombies block off a section of a mountain pass with rocks. The zombies are buried by the side of the road with shrubs and sand. When the caravan encounters the road block, Xi Bai comes up from behind, mounted on his demonic steed.

Xi Bai, like all the servitor mummies, is garbed from head to toe in black silks with gold embroidery and wears a golden torc around his neck as a symbol of devotion to the Mummy Lord. The servitor mummy offers his victims two choices—serve his master in life, or serve him in death. If the caravan surrenders, they are taken captive and brought as slaves to the mountain hold. Otherwise the zombie horde springs up in ambush from all sides and the victims' corpses are taken to be later brought back to unlife by the Mummy Lord.

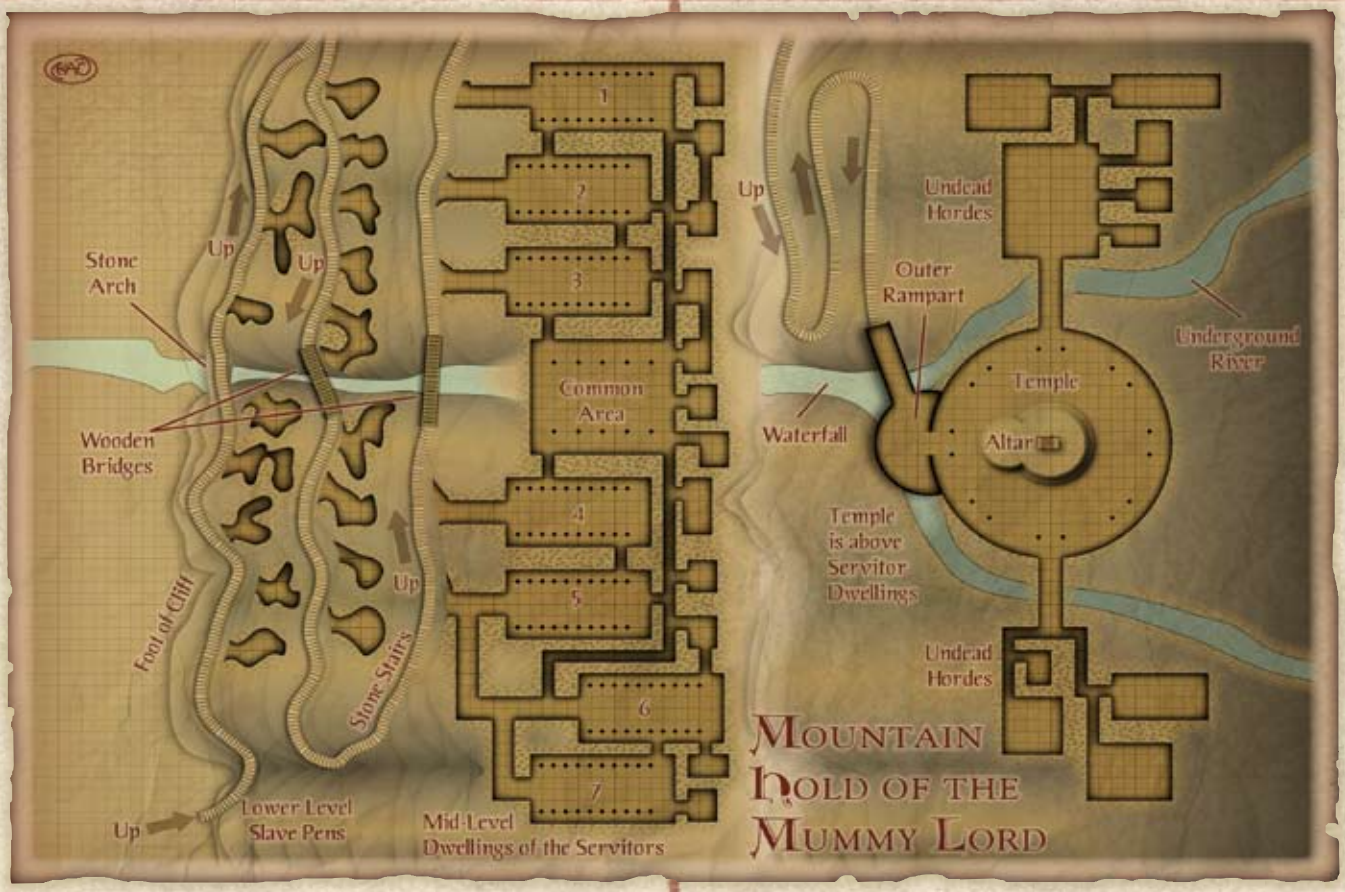
If the adventurers surrender, they are brought with the other captives to the slave pens in the mountain hold (see below). If they manage to fight their way through the undead attack, they can easily track the trail made by the zombie horde back up to the mountain hold. If defeated, Xi Bai's golden torc is likely to be sought by greedier heroes. While it protects them from some of the guardians of the mountain hold, it makes for a dangerous trinket when confronting the Mummy Lord himself!

Xi Bai the Reaver (1): Use the stats for mummies on page 315. Xi Bai is armed with a barbed whip. The whip has a Reach of 1, does Str+d4 damage, and can be used to Grapple targets at a distance of 1".

- **Demonic Steed (1)**: See page 310.
- **Zombie (20)**: See page 321.

The Mountain Hold

When the wanderers finally approach the mountain hold of the Mummy Lord—either as slaves or by stealth—they see the long, precarious staircase leading up the cliff face to the temple at the summit. With a Notice roll, they detect the flapping of wings coming from further up the cliff, such as might be made by large birds, and hear a high-pitched screeching mixed into the howling mountain winds. In fact, these are giant bats, summoned by the Mummy Lord to harry any intruders not wearing one of his golden torcs.



If the heroes are attempting to climb the staircase themselves and none wear the golden torc, every character must make three Stealth rolls. If any are failed, the bats detect the movement of the party and move to attack them.

The bats themselves are not too much of a threat, but fighting them on the staircase is difficult. If any hero is Shaken or wounded by a damaging attack from a bat, he must make an Agility test or fall from the staircase. The damage is 2d6+10, 2d6+20 or 2d6+30, depending on which Stealth roll the hero failed.

Giant Bats (2 per hero): See page 312.

The Slave Pens

The first dwellings the heroes encounter as they progress up the mountainside are the slave pens. The pens are nothing more than cells dug into the mountains, and they smell terrible. They are tended by another of the Mummy Lord's servitors, Huang, and his hellish beast.

If the heroes have been captured, they are stripped of their belongings and thrown into one of the pens. The other slaves present are from various caravans plundered by the mummies. Occasionally, slaves are taken to serve the Mummy Lord and his servitors in the upper reaches of the mountain hold. The slaves know the mummy who guards them as Huang the Slavemaster, and his hound is summoned from the Thousand Hells by black magic. Huang only ever leaves the slave pens if summoned to the temple by his Lord.

Any slaves who die are taken to the temple. The survivors assume the dead are eaten by foul demons. The slaves are terrified of their undead masters, and escape if given the chance, preferring to brave the cold winds and barren wilderness rather than be eaten by demons. However, they are unlikely to fight unless the heroes are truly inspiring!

Huang the Slavemaster: Use the stats for a mummy on page 315, except he is armed with a flail (Str+d6).

Hellhound: See page 314.

The Dwellings

Further up the mountain hold are the dwellings of the seven servitors of the Mummy Lord. These massive rooms were carved out of the rock by demons and are decorated with treasures plundered from the caravans. Fortunately for the heroes, only two of the seven servitors are present. Jianjun the Blademaster is practicing with his swords in the common area, while Huojin the Smith is forging a great sword on an anvil. Some slaves nearby are tending to their needs.

If they sneak up on the two servitors, the wanderers hear them bantering about how the Mummy Lord's army will soon be ready, and how they await the return of Xing, Gang, and Yusheng.

Jianjun the Blademaster: Use the stats for a mummy on page 315. He is armed with two daos (Str+d8) and has the Two-Fisted Edge.

Huojin the Smith: Use the stats for a mummy on page 315. Huojin is armed with a massive pudao with a red hot blade (Str+d10), which sets flammables on fire (see page 92).

Temple of the Mummy Lord

In the highest reaches of the mountain hold is the temple, where the Mummy Lord worships his loathsome masters so that they might grant him the power he needs to rebuild his strength and once again become a name to be feared and respected. There is only one entrance to the temple.

The main temple is large, circular, and lit by numerous torches and black candles. The lights illuminate arcane sigils scrawled across the walls, ceiling, and floor. In the center of the temple is a large altar, upon which the blood of many innocents has been shed to satisfy the cravings of dark gods. Two darkened wings lead off on either side of the main temple, from which emanates the putrid smell of rotting corpses.

Before the altar, facing the heroes, is the Mummy Lord himself, a massive figure dressed in a black-hooded robe made of shimmering scales and wearing a golden torc around his neck. As the Mummy Lord pulls back his hood, he reveals a pale, sunken face and hollow eyes surrounded by long braided red hair on his head and face. His voice is a gravelly whisper:

> *"You think you could invade my sacred temple undetected, mortals? I am Tilemoch! I have traveled the length and breadth of this world for a thousand years to master the darkest of magicks! I have shed the blood of innumerable victims and summoned the foulest of infernal beasts! Who are you to dare defy Tilemoch?"*

The Mummy Lord parleys with the heroes as long as he is allowed—he is curious to test the mettle of the strangers. When he grows bored, or if the heroes resort to violence, he summons forth the zombie army he has been gathering within his charnel halls. The zombies pour in from either side of the temple in a seemingly endless stream. If any adventurers are wearing one of the mummy servitors' golden torcs, the Mummy Lord can cast *puppet* on the wearer as a free action. The hero and Mummy Lord must still make a contested Spirit roll whenever control is attempted. Removing the torc breaks the Mummy Lord's control over the victim.

The key to defeating the Mummy Lord is to destroy his torc. Hitting the torc requires a successful Called Shot with a –6 penalty. It has Toughness 10. Much of Tilemoch's magic is bound into it, and destroying it causes his spells to falter—any magic cast on himself or the heroes ends, the zombies fall to the ground, now nothing but unholy corpses, and the mountain hold itself starts to collapse. Every character must make three Agility rolls to avoid falling rocks and debris during their escape down the steps. Every roll a hero fails gets him a level of Fatigue from bumps and bruises (see page 89).

A roll of a 1 on the Agility roll (regardless of the result of the Wild Die) means the character has fallen, taking falling damage as described on page 92 (depending on which roll they failed).

Zombies (10 per hero): See page 321.



Tilemoch

Tilemoch, the Mummy Lord, possesses a number of different types of magic, from ancient druidic rune magic to old Egyptian necromancy.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d12, Spirit d12, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12+2
Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d12, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Intimidation d10, Magick d12+1
Pace: 4; **Parry**: 7; **Toughness**: 11
Gear: Katana (Str+d10; see below), golden torc.
Special Abilities:

- **Crushing Grasp**: Str+d6. On a raise, Tilemoch automatically grapples his opponent.
- **Improved Arcane Resistance**: +4 Armor versus magic, and +4 to rolls made to resist magical effects.
- **Katana:** The katana is one of the artifacts the heroes are seeking.
- **Shuffling Gait**: –2 pace; d4 running die.
- **Powers**: *barrier*, *deflection*, *entangle*, *fear*, *obscure*, *puppet*, *summon spirit*, *zombie*. Treat as a Legendary character.
- **Undead**: +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; No wound penalties; Immune to poison, disease, and gas.
- **Weakness (Fire)**: The Mummy Lord takes +4 damage from fire, and suffers a –2 penalty to Fighting attacks against anyone who brandishes a torch or other open flame.

Aftermath

Three of the Mummy Lord's servitors are not present when the Tilemoch's mountain hold is destroyed. Xing the Silent, Yusheng the Wise, and Gang the Strong were abroad elsewhere in Cathay doing the bidding of the Mummy Lord when they felt the tie to him break.

What the three Mummy Lords do is up to the Game Master, but they would make excellent antagonists, tracking the heroes tirelessly across the globe in their quest for vengeance for the Mummy Lord's death! The three remaining henchmen are dangerous, resourceful, and utterly ruthless. It is not long after they return to the mountain hold that they pick up the heroes' trail, and set out on the hunt.

Xing the Silent: Use the stats for a mummy on page 315, but Xing has Stealth d12+2. Any Notice rolls to detect his approach are made at –4. If he isn't detected before he closes to strike, he always attacks with The Drop.

Yusheng the Wise: Use the stats for a mummy on page 315, but Yusheng has the same Arcane Background, skill and spells as his master, Tilemoch.

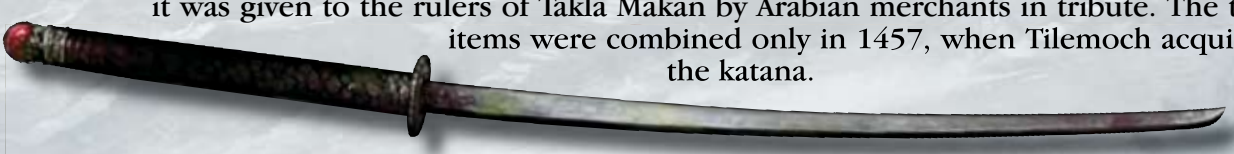
Gang the Strong: Use the stats for a mummy on page 315. Gang wields a Chúi (Str+d8) in each hand with no penalties. With a raise on a Fighting roll, he rolls an additional d8 instead of d6, on account of his prodigious Strength.

Artifact: Katana

Like the other artifacts, the katana has a magical gem empowering it. In this instance, the gem is in the pommel.

The weapon has the same stats as a regular katana, except when used to attack supernatural or unnatural creatures, including evil shamans and sorcerers. Against such foes, the katana causes double damage on a raise, instead of adding an extra +1d6. It also allows the user to harm creatures immune to normal weapons.

The blade of the sword itself dates back to the early 1400s, the first period in which these fine blades were manufactured. The appearance of the gem is first noted in the 8th century, when it was given to the rulers of Takla Makan by Arabian merchants in tribute. The two items were combined only in 1457, when Tilemoch acquired the katana.



The Horrid Beasts of Solomon Kane

"And I have slain a vampire shape that sucked a black king white,

And I have roamed through grisly hills where dead men walked at night

And I have seen heads fall like fruit in the slaver's barracoon,

And I have seen winged demons fly all naked in the moon."

—Solomon Kane's Homecoming

We've talked about heroes and their antics, and about the world and the game rules that regulate it. Now it's time to deal with the monsters, villains, and bad guys. Below are some common abilities available to your non-player characters. Game Mastered characters and creatures can also have any regular Edges or Hindrances you feel are appropriate.

One major word of advice before you go any further. Don't create monsters like player characters. Just give them the abilities you want them to have and spend your time and energy on better things, like the plot of the game or how best to entertain your group

Monstrous Abilities

Monstrous Abilities are like a type of special Edge only available to NPCs and creatures. They often represent common abilities that natural creatures have, like the ability to see in the dark or fly, abilities that heroes can only acquire through magic.

There are, of course, also supernatural Monstrous Abilities, such as the ability to become invisible or to ignore all non-magical damage. Such abilities should be reserved for special foes, or they become mundane.

Aquatic

The creature is native to the water. It is a natural swimmer and cannot drown. Aquatic creatures can generally move quickly through the water, their pace reflects this speed.

Armor

A creature's Armor adds to the creature's Toughness (we've already added this in to its statistics for you), usually in all locations. Thick, leathery hide generally offers 2 points of Armor. "Armored" creatures like a wyrm may have 4 or more points of protection.

Burrowing

Some creatures are able to burrow beneath the earth and move within it. These creatures can tunnel underground and reappear elsewhere for devastating surprise attacks against their foes. The distance a creature can burrow in a turn is written immediately after its Burrowing ability. A Burrowing creature may tunnel on its action, and may erupt from the ground at any point within its Burrowing Pace the same round if desired. It cannot be attacked while beneath the earth unless the attacker has some special means of detecting it and penetrating the intervening dirt.

Burrowing creatures strike by erupting from beneath their foes and taking them by surprise. To do this, the Burrowing creature makes an opposed Stealth roll versus the target's Notice. If the creature wins, it gains +2 to attack and damage that round, or +4 if it gets a raise. If the victim wins and was on Hold, he may try to interrupt the burrower's attack as usual.

Construct

Construct covers artificial lifeforms, such as golems and animated statues. Such beings have several inherent advantages.

- Constructs add +2 to attempts to recover from being Shaken.
- Constructs do not suffer any additional damage from Called Shots (unless otherwise specified in their description).
- All Piercing attacks (see page 75) do only half-damage, as constructs generally have no vital organs.
- Construct Wild Cards never suffer from Wound Modifiers.
- Constructs do not suffer from the effects of disease or poison.

Ethereal

Ghosts, shadows, and similar intangible creatures have no form in the physical world (or can turn it on and off at will). While Ethereal, they cannot be harmed by physical attacks, and cannot even be seen unless they desire to be. Ethereal creatures are always affected by magical items, weapons, and supernatural powers.

Most ethereal creatures can still affect things in the physical world, whether by throwing objects, wielding ghostly swords, or even pushing heroes down long, dark stairs.

Fear

Particularly frightening monsters cause Guts checks to all who see them. Some truly terrifying monsters may inflict penalties on Guts checks as well. A creature with Fear –2, for instance, causes those who see it to make their Guts checks at –2. See page 93 for Fear effects.

Fearless

Mindless creatures, such as zombies and the like, don't suffer from the weaknesses of the mortal mind. Fearless creatures never suffer from any Fear effects and cannot be Intimidated (though they may be affected by the Taunt tests of wills).

Gargantuan

Gargantuan creatures are those massive beasts that are at least size 9 or better relative to their normal environment. Such gigantic creatures have several abilities due to their great size.

Gargantuans have Heavy Armor, meaning they can only be hurt by Heavy Weapons, and all their attacks count as Heavy Weapons as well.

Gargantuan creatures suffer the penalty for being Huge—+4 to ranged attack rolls from man-sized creatures.

These creatures can also bring their immense weight to bear when moving over creatures or obstacles. Add their Size to their Strength roll when doing so, but subtract the Size of their foe as well. Don't add the "size" of vehicles, buildings, or ships—that's already figured into their Toughness.

Example: A truly huge ape (Size 12) steps on a man of Asshur (Size 1). The ape's Strength is d12+9, and its Size is 12, so his base damage when stepping on the soldier is d12+21 damage. Subtracting the soldier's Size of 1 gives d12+20 damage. The soldier has a Toughness of 10, which is pretty good, but he's still very likely to be squashed.

Hardy

Very tough and resilient creatures do not fall from lesser wounds, no matter how many they suffer. A decisive blow is needed to put one of these tenacious creatures down.

If the beast is Shaken, further Shaken results have no further effect—they do not cause a wound.

Infection

A horrid spider-like creature that injects eggs into its victim's wounds, or even disease-bearing scratches of rats are both examples of Infection.

Whenever a character is Shaken or wounded by a creature with Infection, the victim must make a Vigor roll. Modifiers to the roll are listed in the creature's description, as are the effects of failure.

Infravision

Nocturnal and supernatural beasts can often see in the infrared spectrum—meaning they can "see" by detecting heat. Creatures with Infravision halve penalties (round down) for bad lighting (see page 76) when attacking living targets.

Clever heroes may figure out ways to mask their heat from such creatures. Smearing cold mud over one's body or crouching by a roaring fire generally obscures the target from those with Infravision.

Creatures with Infravision almost always have normal sight as well. This is assumed in the creature descriptions, unless a particular description states otherwise.

Immunity

Certain creatures are immune to specific forms of damage. Immunities always apply to specific types of attacks, such as fire, cold, electricity, and so on. Such creatures aren't invulnerable (see below), they just ignore damage from the specific attack types named in their immunity.

Invulnerability

The Savage World of Solomon Kane is filled with violent combat, but many often feature desperate puzzle-solving or dark research into unholy horrors as well. To defeat an Invulnerable creature, you'll need a little of both.

Invulnerable creatures can be Shaken, but they can't be wounded by anything but their Weakness (all such creatures have at least one if not more). An ancient dark god given life by misguided cultists, for example, might be immune to mortal weapons, but remains vulnerable to shards of stained glass gathered from a church.

Low Light Vision

Many monsters and some animals are able to see in all but the blackest darkness. Low light vision ignores any penalties for Dim and Dark lighting (see page 76), allowing the creature to see perfectly in all but pitch black conditions.

Paralysis

Certain creatures and poisons can instantly paralyze a foe, rendering the victim easy prey for the thing's dark designs or ravenous appetite.

A target who suffers damage or a Shaken result from such a creature must make a Vigor roll or be paralyzed and incapable of any action—even speech—for 2d6 rounds or longer.

Poison

Snakes, venom-coated daggers, and so on inflict their victims with dangerous poison. Poisons are described in greater detail on page 92.

A creature with the Poison ability typically injects it via a bite or scratch. To do so, the thing must cause at least a Shaken result to the victim, who then makes a Vigor roll modified by the strength of the poison (listed in parentheses after the creature's Poison ability). The effects of failure are described in each creature's description.

Regeneration

Legend has it that certain creatures, such as vampires, can Regenerate damage caused to them.

Regeneration comes in two types: Fast and Slow.

Fast Regeneration means that a wounded creature makes a Vigor roll every round to heal any damage it has sustained—even after it has been "killed." Most creatures with this ability have a Weakness or Vulnerability as well, such as fire. If such a creature suffers a wound from its Weakness or Vulnerability, it may not regenerate it (it may still heal naturally, however). Such creatures also add +2 to Spirit rolls made to recover from being Shaken.

Slow Regeneration means the creature won't be suddenly healing itself during a fight, but may recover its wounds quickly between encounters. Creatures with slow Regeneration make a natural Healing roll once per day (see page 86).

Size

A creature's size has a lot to do with how much damage it can take, so we add a size modifier to its Toughness to reflect the beasts's tremendous mass. Note that a creature's size has nothing to do with Vigor—even a giant ape can catch a cold or tire out.

The various Toughness modifiers on the table below represent average specimens of sample species for comparison, but there are always exceptions. Not every Bull Shark has a +4 Toughness bonus. A young specimen might have a +3, while a larger fish might be +5 or even +6.

The same is true for humans, of course. Small humans suffer a –1 penalty, while those with the Brawny Edge gain a +1 bonus. Use the table as a baseline when creating your own creatures and then adjust from there as necessary for particularly large or smaller versions.

Minimum Toughness: Normal creatures have a minimum Toughness of 2 regardless of modifiers. Only insects and the like have Toughness scores of 1.

They Eat These?

Almost all of the natural creatures in this section can be eaten if necessary by starving characters.

A successful hunting expedition can often net several large beasts for a hungry character's pot.

Hunting for food isn't going to happen in every adventure, but shipwrecked crews or hardy explorers lost in the jungle need to eat something.

Figure that an experienced hunter (who makes a Survival roll) can gain 1d6 man days of food for an average-sized creature (no Size bonus). Every point of a creature's Size creates an additional 1d6 provisions. A bear (Size +2), for example, provides 3d6 man days of food.

The GM should adjust this based on the nature of the creature. Some things, like sentient or poisonous creatures just shouldn't be eaten.

Toughness Modifiers

Mod	Size of a...
–2	Cat, large rat, dog
–1	Large dog, small human
0	Human
+1	Brawny human
+2	Bull, gorilla, bear, horse
+3	Kodiak
+4	Rhino, bull shark
+5	Small elephant
+6	Bull elephant
+7	Orca
+8	Lukwata
+9	Blue whale
+10	Great Serpent

Small/Large/Huge

Creatures the size of mice or rats are very difficult to hit, especially when they're moving. Assuming such a creature is active, attackers must subtract 2 from any attack rolls directed at it.

Large creatures, at least the size of a rhino, are somewhat easier to hit. Attackers may add +2 to any attack rolls directed at Large targets.

Truly huge beasts (really only supernatural creatures, at least as big as Great Serpent) are +4 to be hit.

This particular special ability is relative. Two elephants don't get the bonus when fighting each other, but a rat who joins the fight adds +4 to its roll. If the elephant strikes back, it subtracts 4 from its roll.

Strength

Strength is a Trait, not a special ability, but because very large creatures exceed the normal human range of d4 to d12, you might need a little more information when creating your own creatures.

Creatures of human or lesser Strength should be expressed as a d4 through a d12, as you think appropriate. Stronger creatures, such as gorillas, and so on, have a d12 plus a bonus. The bonus depends on how strong the creature is and how well it can use that strength in combat. Just as with humans, there is variation within each species. So a

mother gorilla may have a Strength of d12+1, while its much larger mate has a Strength of d12+3.

Here's a quick comparison to help you figure out what strength creatures of your own creation should have.

Creature Strength

Creature	Strength
Gorilla, bear	d12+1 to +3
Rhino, shark	d12+3 to +6
Elephant	d12+5 to +8
Otherworldly horror	d12+9 to +12

Stun

A creature with the Stun ability often has an electrical attack, mild toxin, or similar trapping. When it successfully hits a character (even if it causes no damage), the victim must make a Vigor roll minus any listed penalties or be Shaken. A stunned character cannot attempt to recover from being Shaken for 1d6 rounds.

Undead

Zombies, skeletons, and similar Undead horrors are particularly difficult to destroy. Below are the benefits of being such an abomination.

- Undead add +2 to their basic Toughness.
- Undead add +2 when attempting to recover from being Shaken.
- Undead don't suffer additional damage from Called Shots.
- Undead Wild Cards never suffer from Wound Modifiers.
- Undead do not suffer from disease or poison.

Wall Walker

Some creatures have the ability to walk on walls. These creatures only make Climbing rolls in the most adverse and stressful situations—otherwise they automatically walk on vertical or inverted surfaces just as a human walks on the earth.



A Wall Walker's Pace when walking on walls is its standard movement rate. The creature may also run as usual when walking on walls unless the specific creature's text specifically says otherwise.

Weakness

Some creatures suffer additional damage or other effects when they're attacked by their Weakness. A creature made of ice, for example, might take double damage from fire. Likewise, a vampire might suffer from a Weakness to sunlight, causing it to catch fire and burn when exposed to solar rays.

Some creatures can only be killed by their Weakness. They may feel pain or even become Shaken from other attack types, but can only suffer wounds when struck by their Weakness. A werewolf, for instance, ignores wounds from swords and bullets, but suffers damage normally if hit by a silver weapon. Some other creatures are only affected by magical weapons.

See the creature's description for details of the particular effects of its Weakness.

Bestiary

Below is a sampling of some character archetypes and monsters common to the world of Solomon Kane. If you want to use stronger or weaker archetypes or monsters, feel free to adjust the attributes or skills, and add or remove Edges, to suit your vision. Remember, you don't have to create these creatures and characters in the same way as the players, just choose the attributes, skills and special abilities or Edges that you think suit the creature you want to make.

Of course, you should give some thought to how the heroes will fare against the character or creature, but it is really up to the player to find a way to defeat their enemies, or choose to retreat and fight again another day. A foe the party has to struggle to overcome is far more memorable than an army of creatures they wade through with ease.

Note that for some creatures, Smarts is listed relative to the animal world, and is thus followed by an (A) to remind you that this is animal intelligence, not people intelligence, so don't expect a wolf to drive off in your coach just because it's a relatively smart animal.

Where a weapon lists a bonus to Parry, this has already been included in the stat block. Should the character lose his weapon, he loses the Parry bonus as well. Armor is likewise figured into Toughness already and represented in parentheses, in case the heroes find a way to bypass the armor.

The section is divided into three sections, Natural, Unnatural, and People. Natural covers everyday beasts and natural hazards, such as lions, wolves, or quicksand. Unnatural includes supernatural fiends, such as vampires, weird but natural monsters, like the akaanas and giant apes. The People section has a variety of common archetypes.

Throughout the book, you'll have noticed sidebars detailing some of Kane's many foes. Though many of these foes are dead, killed by Kane's hand for the most part, by changing their name you can reuse the stats to create memorable villains for your own characters to battle.

Natural

These creatures are mundane animals found in the natural world. But they are no less deadly for that.

Alligator/ Crocodile

Alligators and crocodiles are common in the swamps and jungles of Africa and the Americas. The statistics here represent an average specimen, though they can grow to enormous sizes.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6,
Pace: 3; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (2)
Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Alligators have thick skins.
- **Aquatic:** Pace 8.
- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Rollover:** Alligators and crocodiles are notorious for grasping their prey in their vice-like jaws and rolling over and over with their flailing victims in their mouth. If one of these large amphibians hits with a raise, it causes an extra 2d4 damage to its prey in addition to its regular Strength damage.

Bear, Large

Large bears covers grizzlies, kodiaks, and massive polar bears.
Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Notice d8, Swimming d6
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10
Special Abilities:

- **Bear Hug:** Bears don't actually "hug" their victims, but they do attempt to use their weight to pin their prey and rend it with their claws and teeth. A bear that hits with a raise has pinned his foe. The opponent may only attempt to escape the "hug" on his action, which requires a raise on an opposed Strength roll.
- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Size +2:** These creatures can stand up to 8' tall and weigh over 1000 pounds.

Big Cats

Big cats can be found on every continent except Australia and Antarctica, both of which are undiscovered lands in Kane's time.

Jaguar

Jaguars are indigenous to Central and South America. Their spotted hide actually provides camouflage when they hiding in undergrowth. Jaguars have powerful jaws compared to other big cats their size.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Stealth d8, Tracking d6
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6
Special Abilities:

- **Bite or Claws:** Str+d8.
- **Improved Frenzy:** A jaguar may make two attacks each round with no penalty.
- **Low Light Vision:** Halve penalties for Dim and Dark lighting conditions.
- **Pounce:** Jaguars often pounce on their prey to best bring their mass and teeth to bear. It can leap up to 6" to gain +4 to its attack and damage. It's Parry is reduced by –2 until its next action when performing the maneuver however.

Lion

The kings of the jungle are fierce predators, particularly in open grassland where their prey cannot seek refuge.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8
Special Abilities:

- **Bite or Claw:** Str+d6.
- **Improved Frenzy:** Lions may make two Fighting attacks each action at no penalty.
- **Low Light Vision:** Halve penalties for Dim and Dark lighting conditions.
- **Pounce:** Lions often pounce on their prey to best bring their mass and claws to bear. It can leap up to 6" to gain +4 to its attack and damage. Its Parry is reduced by –2 until its next action when performing the maneuver however.
- **Size +2:** Lions can weigh over 500 pounds.

Puma

Also known as a cougar or mountain lion, pumas are similar in size and shape to jaguars but have less distinct markings. Pumas are indigenous to Central and South America, as well as parts of Florida.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8
Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Stealth d8, Tracking d6
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6
Special Abilities:

- **Bite or Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Improved Frenzy:** A puma may make two attacks each round with no penalty.
- **Low Light Vision:** Halve penalties for Dim and Dark lighting conditions.
- **Pounce:** Pumas often pounce on their prey to best bring their mass and teeth to bear. It can leap up to 6" to gain +4 to its attack and damage. It's Parry is reduced by –2 until its next action when performing the maneuver however.

Tiger

Lions may carry the title of King of the Jungle, but tigers are the largest of the great cats. Tigers are found only in Siberia (white tigers) and Hindoostan (the more common orange and black variety).

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+1, Vigor d10
Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d8, Stealth d10, Tracking d8
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10
Special Abilities:

- **Bite or Claw:** Str+d8.
- **Improved Frenzy:** Tigers may make two Fighting attacks each action at no penalty.
- **Low Light Vision:** Halve penalties for Dim and Dark lighting conditions.
- **Maul:** A tiger that succeeds in a Grapple attack has knocked its prey to the floor and may make a Fighting attack with no multi action penalty. So long as the victim remains prone, subsequent attacks are made at +2.
- **Pounce**: Tigers often pounce on their prey to best bring their mass and claws to bear. It can leap up to 6" to gain +4 to its attack and damage. Its Parry is reduced by

–2 until its next action when performing the maneuver however.

- **Size +3:** Male tigers can weigh over 1200 pounds.

Boar, Wild

Wild boars are hunted across Europe for their rich meat. They are tenacious fighters, especially when wounded.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d8 , Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7
Special Abilities:

- **Berserk:** When a boar is Shaken it goes berserk. It gains +2 to all Fighting and Strength rolls and its Toughness, but Parry is reduced by 2.
- **Gore:** If a boar charges at least 6" before attacking, it adds +4 to damage.
- **Hardy:** A second Shaken does not cause the boar to be wounded.
- **Tusks:** Str+d4.

Camel

Camels are not as comfortable to ride as horses, but they're better suited to travel and survival in arid regions.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8
Special Abilities:

- **Camel:** Camels do not start making Vigor rolls for dehydration until the 8th day after water runs out.
- **Kick:** Str
- **Ornery:** Camels are contrary creatures. Characters riding camels must subtract 1 from their Riding rolls.
- **Sand Walker:** Camels treat traveling across deserts as normal terrain.
- **Size +2:** Camels are only slightly larger than riding horses.

Dog

Dogs come in two varieties—guard and hunting. Pet dogs are treated as guard dogs, but have no Fighting and Parry of 2.

Guard Dog

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d10, Stealth d6, Tracking d6
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Fleet Footed:** Dogs roll a d10 when running instead of a d6.
- **Go for the Throat:** Dogs instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's most weakly-armored location.
- **Size –1:** Guard dogs are relatively small creatures.

Hunting Dog

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d6, Notice d10, Stealth d8, Tracking d10
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4
Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Fleet Footed:** Dogs roll a d10 when running instead of a d6.
- **Go for the Throat:** Dogs instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's most weakly-armored location.
- **Size –1:** Hunting dogs are relatively small creatures.



Elephant, Bull

Elephants are found in Hindoostan and Africa. They are actually smart animals, but can be highly aggressive if threatened or wounded. Elephants can also be used as mounts.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+5, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 13 (1)
Special Abilities:

- **Armor +1:** Leathery hide.
- **Large:** Attacks are +2 to all attack rolls when targeting an elephant.
- **Size +6:** Elephants weigh over a ton.
- **Trample:** Elephants can trample creatures of Size +3 or smaller. If the elephant runs, anyone in its path must make an Agility roll or be run down. Victims take damage equal to the elephant's Str plus its Size and are knocked prone.
- **Tusks:** Str+d6.

Game

The heroes encounter small game in abundance. Every character who spends the time may make a Survival roll to net 1d6 Provisions per success and raise. Make a group roll for extras assigned to this task and multiply the results times the number of people involved. A party of 18 foragers, for example, with a single success, rolls 1d6 x 18.

Gorilla

Like most animals, gorillas tend to flee from humans unless they feel threatened. Of course, that's not much fun for a pulp game.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10
Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Throwing d6
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9
Special Abilities:

- **Frenzy:** A gorilla can make two Fighting attacks each round at –2 penalty.
- **Size +2:** Gorillas are much stockier and larger than humans.
- **Slam:** Str.

Hawk

Hawk is a generic term covering hunting birds, as well as wild birds of prey. Hawks may not be big, but their talons can rip through flesh with ease.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d12+4, Stealth d8
Pace: —; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 3
Special Abilities:

- **Blind:** When attacking large prey (such as characters), hawks go for the eyes. If the hawk scores a raise on its Fighting roll, it has hit the character's face. The character must make an Agility roll. On a failure, he suffers the One Eye Hindrance until his wounds heal. A roll of 1, regardless of Wild Die, results in him gaining the Blind Hindrance for that time.
- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Flying:** Flying Pace 8".
- **Size –2:** Hawks measure up to 2' in height.
- **Small:** Attackers suffer a –2 penalty to attack rolls because of the beast's size.

Hazards

Hazards can be introduced to the game as a random encounter to add a little extra spice to an adventure, or designed into the adventure from the start.

Avalanche

Avalanches, whether they be rocks or snow, are common occurrences in appropriate settings, even in places they've never occurred before. Of course, villains can trigger these with a few well-placed kegs of gunpowder.

All characters in the party must make an Agility roll at –2. On a success, the character has managed to leap clear or find a nook in which to hide. On a failure, the character is swept along with the avalanche for 10+2d10", suffering 1d6 damage per 5" or part thereof. A roll of 1, regardless of the Wild Die, means the characters is swept 20+2d10".

Bad Water

Finding drinking water is a requirement for expeditions as well as explorers needing to replenish supplies. The characters find a river or pool, but the water is polluted. Unless precautionary measures are taken, such as boiling it, any character drinking the water must make a Vigor roll at –2 or be Fatigued for 24 hours.

Blizzard/ Sandstorm

Those caught in a blizzard or sandstorm must make a Fatigue roll at –2 every hour until they find shelter (Survival at –4, one

roll per group). A roll of 1, regardless of any Wild Die, indicates not only failure but the character wanders over a crevasse as well.

A typical storm lasts 1d4+2 hours, but you should have the storm last as long as your plot requires.

Cave-In

The ceiling of the tunnel or cavern the heroes are exploring collapses. Every hero in the area must make an Agility roll at –2. A success indicates the character managed to leap out the way and has avoided taking damage. A failure means the character is struck by falling rocks for 2d10 damage. A roll of 1 (regardless of the Wild Die) means the hero suffers 3d10 damage and is buried alive.

Buried characters cannot extricate themselves and must be dug out. This requires a Strength roll at –4. Depending on the width of the tunnel, this may be a cooperative roll or a lone endeavor. Each rolls requires an hour of hard work. Diggers with mining tools add +2 to their roll.

The Game Master may decide that the cave-in has separated the party. Roll 1d6+3 to determine how much of the area is impassable (in yards). Each success and raise on a Strength roll at –6 excavates 1 yard. Diggers with mining tools have a +4 bonus to this roll. Every roll represents an hour.

Crevasse

Crevasses exist in rocky or icy terrain. This result means such a formation lies in the party's path. Allow the lead character a Notice roll at –2 to detect the hidden crack. Failure means a tragic fall. The depth of the crack is 1d10 x 10". He can climb back out 10" with a successful Climbing roll.

Earthquake

A powerful earth tremor causes the ground to buckle and crack. The heroes must make an Agility roll or be thrown to the ground and Shaken. A roll of 1 (regardless of the Wild Die) means the character has fallen down a crack and suffers 2d6 damage. They are also stuck, and cannot move until they become un-Shaken.

Characters underground or in a building when an earthquake strikes suffer the effects of a Cave In instead.

Forest Fire

Forest fires are common when the ground vegetation is very dry. Still there's no reason why a villain can't start one deliberately.

To escape the fire, the characters must make a Survival roll at –2. With a failure, the characters suffer 2d10 damage from the combined effects of fire, heat, and smoke. On a critical failure, the characters suffer 3d10 damage.

Heatwave

The temperature rockets above to 90+1d20 degrees Fahrenheit and stays that way for 1d4+1 two—hour increments. Characters able to drink 2 quarts of water per four—hour period are sunburned, but suffer no other effects.

If that amount of water isn't available, the character must make a Vigor roll for each four hour period, as per the rules for Heat (page 91).

Poisonous Fumes

Sulfurous gases from volcanoes and swamp gas present hazards to heroes. A volcanic vent or gas bubble belches a large cloud of noxious gas over the party. Characters must make three Vigor rolls. Each failure causes a level of Fatigue. Incapacitated characters left in the area must make a Vigor roll every hour or die of asphyxiation.

Quicksand

Quicksand comes in two forms, wet (swamp) and dry (desert). The game mechanics are identical.

Allow the lead character a Notice roll at –2 to detect the hidden crack. Failure means he plunges in to his waist (neck for Small characters) and begins sinking.

Those stuck in the hazard sink completely in three rounds (one round for Small characters) unless extracted. They can make a Strength roll (–4) to pull themselves out. A success stops them sinking any further, and

a raise pulls them. On a critical failure the character is sucked under and immediately begins drowning.

Heroes aiding a sinking comrade need to make a Strength roll to drag the unfortunate being from the quicksand. On a critical failure they are pulled in and begin sinking as well.

Once a character is under the surface he cannot extricate himself and must be dragged out by allies on the surface. In order to find the character, those searching for him must first make a Notice (–2) roll. Extricating a submerged character requires a Strength (–2) roll.

Rockfall

An avalanche of rocks threatens to bury the characters alive. All characters in the party should make an Agility roll at –2. On a success, the character has managed to leap clear or find a nook in which to hide.

On a failure, the character is swept along with the avalanche for 10+2d10", suffering 2d6 damage per 5" or part thereof. A roll of 1 (regardless of the Wild Die) means the characters is swept 20+2d10".

Stampede

Stampedes are caused when herds of animals panic and charge across the countryside. These may be large animals, like buffaloes or elephants, or smaller animals like deer. Regardless of size, the large herd poses a danger to characters in their path.

Characters caught in a stampede have little hope of outrunning the herd, and so must seek cover. Finding cover in time requires an Agility roll at –2.

On a failure, the character is kicked by a few animals as they thunder past, and suffers 2d6 + the animals' average Size damage. So, a herd of adult elephants would typically cause 2d6+5 damage.

Should the character roll a 1 on his Agility die, regardless of Wild Die, he is caught in the path of the stampede and trampled. He takes 4d6 damage + twice the animals' average Size damage. The elephant herd would cause 4d6+10 damage, for instance.

Storm

Storms are typified by dark skies and lashing rain. The downpour reduces visibility (treat as Dark Lighting), extinguishes most normal fires within 1d10 rounds, and only volatile materials have a random chance of igniting from fire-based attacks.

Storm conditions inflict a –1 penalty to most actions due to slipping, difficulty hearing, strong winds, and so on. The Game Master must decide if other actions are affected.

Tropical Storm

Visibility is reduced to just 12" (and still subject to Dark Lighting) and the ground turns into a quagmire. Any character running must make an Agility roll or fall prone and become Shaken. Most actions suffers a –2 penalty due to lashing rain and strong winds.

Non-game effects include flash floods and lightning strikes, possibly damaging nearby buildings, drowning creatures, and preventing ships leaving or docking at port.



Hippo

Forget lions, the most dangerous animal in Africa, in terms of killing humans, is the river dwelling hippopotamus. Hippos are extremely territorial, far more so than any great cat.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+3, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Swimming d8
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 11 (1)
Special Abilities:

- **Armor +1:** Blubbery hides.
- **Berserk:** Hippos immediately go berserk if they sense intruders in their territory. While Berserk, its Parry is reduced by 2 but it adds +2 to all Fighting and Strength rolls, and his Toughness. The hippo gains the Hardy ability while berserk.
- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Dehydration:** Hippos must immerse themselves in water (salt or fresh) at least one hour out of every 24 or gain a Fatigue level each day until they are Incapacitated. The day after that, they perish.

- **Large:** Attackers gain +2 to attack rolls against a hippo due its size.
- **Semi-Aquatic:** Pace 8. Hippos can stay submerged for about 5 minutes.
- **Size +4:** Hippos weigh up to four tons.

Horse, Riding

Riding horses are medium-sized animals that manage a good compromise between speed and carrying capacity.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d6, Notice d6
Pace: 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 8
Special Abilities:
- **Fleet Footed:** Horses roll a d8 when running instead of a d6.
- **Kick:** Str
- **Size +2:** Riding horses weigh between 800 and 1000 pounds.

Horse, War

War horses are large beasts trained for aggression. They are trained to fight with both hooves, either to their front or their rear. In combat, the animal attacks any round its rider doesn't make a trick maneuver of some kind.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Notice d6
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10
Special Abilities:
- **Fleet Footed:** War horses roll a d8 when running instead of a d6.
- **Kick:** Str+d4.
- **Size +3:** Warhorses are large creatures bred for their power and stature.

Hyena

Hyenas are scavengers and hunters. The former is preferred, as it's generally easier. Hyenas have incredibly powerful jaws, voracious appetites (they can digest skin, flesh, and bone), and are brave enough to face off against lions. Their Taunt skill represents their unique laughing bark.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6(A), Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d10, Taunt d8, Tracking d6
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4
Special Abilities:
- **Bite:** Str+d8, AP 2.
- **Fleet Footed:** Hyenas roll a d10 when running instead of a d6.
- **Low Light Vision:** Halve penalties for Dim and Dark lighting conditions.
- **Size –1:** Hyenas are relatively small.

Mule

Mules are a cross between a donkey and a horse, and are usually used to haul heavy goods or pull wagons.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Guts d6, Notice d4
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 8
Special Abilities:
- **Fleet-Footed:** When a mule can be convinced to run, it rolls a d8 instead of a d6.
- **Kick:** Str.
- **Ornery:** Mules are contrary creatures. Characters must subtract 1 from their Riding rolls when riding them.
- **Size +2:** Mules are stocky creatures.



Rhino

Despite being armor plated and short-sighted, rhinos can do a lot of damage once they get fired up.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+5, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d4, Stealth d6
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 13 (2)
Special Abilities:
- **Armor +2:** Thick hide.
- **Fleet Footed:** Rhinos have a d10 running die.
- **Gore:** A rhino uses the Charge maneuver to gore its opponents with its horn. If it can charge at least 6" before attacking, it adds +4 to its damage total.
- **Horns:** Str+d6.
- **Large:** Attacks are +2 to attack rolls against rhinos because of their size.
- **Size** +4: Rhinos are large creatures.

Shark

A multitude of sharks roam the waters of the world.

Maneater

These statistics cover most medium-sized mankillers, such as tiger sharks and bulls.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d12, **Pace:** —; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5
Special Abilities:
- **Aquatic:** Pace 10.
- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Feeding Frenzy:** Once there's a significant amount of blood in the water (usually one wound), all the sharks present go into a feeding frenzy and add +2 to their attacks and damage for the rest of the fight.

Great White

These statistics cover great whites, 18 to 25 feet long, though larger specimens surely exist.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12
Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d8, Notice d12, **Pace:** —; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 12
Special Abilities:
- **Aquatic:** Pace 10.
- **Bite:** Str+d8.
- **Hardy:** A second Shaken result does not cause a wound.
- **Large:** Attackers add +2 to their attack rolls when attacking a Great White due to its large size.
- **Size +4:** Great Whites can grow up to 25' in length.

Snake, Constrictor

Pythons, boa constrictors, and other snakes over 15' long are rarely deadly to man in the real world because they aren't particularly aggressive toward such large prey. In games, however, such snakes might be provoked, drugged, or just plain mean.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d10
Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5



Special Abilities:
- **Bite:** Str.
- **Constrict:** Constrictors in this game are far more deadly than in real life. These creatures bite when they succeed at a Fighting roll, and entangle when they succeed with a raise. In the round they entangle, and each round thereafter, they cause Str+d8 damage to their prey. The prey may attempt to escape on his action by getting a raise on an opposed Strength roll.

Snake, Venomous

These stats are for a medium-sized snake with extremely potent venom. Larger varieties may have an even deadlier poison, and do more damage with the bite itself.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d4
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d12
Pace: 10; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 2
Special Abilities:
- **Bite:** Str.
- **Poison:** Snakes this size do little serious damage with their bite, but may in-

ject deadly venom. A character bitten by a rattlesnake or similar viper must make a Vigor roll at –2. With success, the bite area swells and becomes numb. The victim becomes Exhausted until healed. With a failure, the victim becomes Incapacitated and must make a second Vigor roll or die. More deadly snakes (cobra, Australian fierce snake, etc), cause death if the Vigor roll is failed. A few such snakes cause death in 2d6 rounds. Death in 2d6 minutes is more common, but a few take 2d6 hours to kill a full-grown man.

- **Quick:** Snakes are notoriously fast. They may discard action cards of 5 or lower and draw another. They must keep the replacement card, however.
- **Size –2:** Most venomous snakes are four to six feet long, but only a few inches thick.
- **Small:** Anyone attacking a snake must subtract 2 from his attack rolls.



Swarm

Sometimes the most deadly foes come in the smallest packages. The swarm described below can be of most anything—from biting ants to stinging wasps to filthy rats. The swarm is treated just like a creature. When it is wounded, the swarm is dispersed.

Swarms cover an area equal to a Medium Burst Template and attack everyone within every round.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10
Skills: Notice d6
Pace: 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7
Special Abilities:

- **Bite or Sting:** Swarms inflict hundreds of tiny bites every round to their victims, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone in the template (victims in completely sealed suits are immune).
- **Split:** Some swarms are clever enough to split into two smaller swarms (Small Burst Templates) should their foes split up. The Toughness of these smaller swarms is lowered by –2 (to 5 each).
- **Swarm:** Parry +2; Because the swarm is composed of scores, hundreds, or thousands of creatures, cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Area-effect weapons work normally, and a character can stomp to inflict his damage in Strength each round. Swarms are usually foiled by jumping in water (unless they are aquatic pests, such as piranha).

Wolf

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d10, Tracking d8
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4
Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Fleet Footed:** Wolves roll a d10 when running instead of a d6.
- **Go for the Throat:** Wolves instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's most weakly-armored location.
- **Size –1:** A wolf is relatively small.

Unnatural

Unnatural creatures include supernatural horrors, like ghosts and vampires, as well as mundane animals of unusual size.

Akaana

Akaanas are inhumanly tall, hairless, humanoid, flying reptiles, with leathery wings, They have long, muscular arms, beaks like a bird of prey, and long talons.

Their preferred prey are wild pigs and goats, though they have a taste for human flesh. Inherently cowardly, they prefer to make swooping dives under cover of darkness. Unless starving, they avoid the jungle, where their wings cannot lift them airborne, and the savannah, where ferocious lions unseen prowl in the long grasses.

Native to a small area of West Africa, the akaanas are actually the remnants of the harpy race, driven from Greece long ago by the hero, Jason, who was known to the Africans as N'Yasunna.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d10, Stealth d8, Taunt d6

Pace: 3; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8 (1)
Special Abilities:

- **Armor +1:** Leathery skin.
- **Bite/Talons:** Str+d6.
- **Death From Above:** An akaana that hits with a raise causes damage as usual. In addition, the thing grasps its prey in its claws, swoops into the air, moving the remainder of its flight pace. The next round the creature drops its prey to the ground (see falling damage). Characters on Hold or who have not yet taken their action may attempt to hold on by making an opposed Strength roll. If successful, the prey continues to struggle. With a raise, the victim forces the creature close enough to a landing spot to jump free without taking damage.
- **Flight:** Flying Pace of 12".
- **Infravision:** Akaanas halve penalties for Darkness against living targets.
- **Size +1:** Akaanas are taller than humans.

Albino Ape

Albino apes aren't just white-furred apes. They are vicious creatures, often employed by priests of ancient cults, to guard their treasuries. Unlike most apes, these have learned the basics of tool use, and can even craft crude stone axes. Many wear the skulls of their victims on lengths of dried skin, a clear sign that these beasts are more intelligent, and aggressive, than standard apes.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8(A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+1, Vigor d10
Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Throwing d8
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8
Gear: Stone axe (Str+d6)
Special Abilities:

- **Frenzy:** An albino ape can make two Fighting attacks each round at –2 penalty.
- **Leap:** Albino apes can leap 2" horizontally, or 4" from a running start. Each success and raise on a Strength roll grants one additional inch.
- **Size +1:** Albino apes are about the same height as humans, but are much stockier.



Ambalu

Found only in the lost places of the Dark Continent, the ambalu has the body and head of a rhino, but its has catlike legs and its skin is mottled like a cheetah. Despite its bizarre appearance, it fast and deadly.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+5, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d4, Stealth d6
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 13 (2)
Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Thick hide.
- **Fleet Footed:** Ambalus have a d10 running die.
- **Gore:** An ambalu uses the Charge maneuver to gore its opponents with its horn. For every 6" it runs when attacking, it adds +2 to its damage total.
- **Horns:** Str+d6.
- **Large:** Attackers are +2 to attack rolls against ambalus because of their size.
- **Size +4:** Ambalus are the size of a rhino.

Chonchon

Chonchon are flying heads. On death, the followers of certain gods allow their disciples to serve them as chonchon. Their ears grow to enormous size and begin flapping like wings. The head then rips itself away from the body and begins a new life.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8
Pace: 0; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4
Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Blood Drain:** A chonchon scoring a raise on its Fighting roll latches onto to its prey like a leech and begins sucking blood. Each round thereafter it remains attached, the victim suffers a level of Fatigue. Removing the chonchon is an opposed Strength roll.
- **Fear:** Anyone seeing the creature must make a Guts roll.
- **Flying:** Flying Pace 12".
- **Size –1:** It's a head, with wings.

Creeping Hand

Creeping hands are animated severed hands. The necromancer Roger Simeon had his hand severed and animated it while in prison awaiting execution, to enact revenge on John Redly, his so-called friend who turned him over to the authorities.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d10, Strength d10 (or as former "owner"), Vigor d8
Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d10, Notice d4, Stealth d10
Pace: 4; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 4
Special Abilities:

- **Scuttle:** Creeping hands roll a d4 running die, instead of a d6.
- **Size –2:** Creeping hands are small.
- **Small:** Attackers suffer –2 to attack rolls against a creeping hand, due to its size.
- **Throttle:** A creeping hand scoring a raise on a Fighting attack has grabbed its opponent's throat. Each round the grip is maintained, the victim must make a Vigor roll opposed by the hand's unearthly Strength or suffer one level of Fatigue. This can lead to Death. The victim may remove the hand with a successful opposed Strength roll.

Demonic Steed

Demonic steeds are jet black, with red eyes. Their bit and bridle are made from twisted, barbed wire, and their horseshoes hammered in with nails made from the ribs of sinners. They are primarily used by necromancers and witches, gifts from their dark master.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Notice d6
Pace: 10; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10
Special Abilities:

- **Fleet Footed:** Demonic steeds roll a d8 for their running die.
- **Kick:** Str+d6.
- **Rider Empathy:** If the rider of a demonic steed is evil, whether mortal or supernatural, he gains +2 to Riding rolls. If he is good, he suffers a –4 penalty and the steed tries to throw him at any opportunity.
- **Size +3:** Demonic steeds weigh between 800 and 1000 pounds.



Devilkin

Although witches often claim to have summoned the Devil, Lucifer is too powerful to answer to the beck and call of mortals. The creature summoned by these misguided fools is actually a devilkin, a minor minion of the Devil. Devilkin are humanoid, but have cloven hooves and the head of a goat.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Magick d10, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6
Special Abilities:

- **Fear:** Anyone seeing the creature must make a Guts roll.
- **Fiery Eyes:** As an action, a devilkin can shoot bolts of flame from its eyes. These have a Range of 12/24/48 and inflict 3d6 damage.
- **Kick:** Str+d4.
- **Powers:** Devilkin know the following spells: *barrier* (invisible wall), *dispel* (mystic sign), *fear* (evil aura), *obscure* (cloud of darkness), and *puppet* (hypnotic gaze). Treat them as Veteran Rank.

Dingonek

Native to the lakes and rivers of West Africa, the dingonek has a large horn, saber-toothed canines, and a barbed tail which secretes a lethal venom. It is also a highly territorial creature.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Swimming d10
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9
Special Abilities:

- **Berserk**: Dingoneks go berserk if they sense intruders in their territory. While Berserk, its Parry is reduced by 2 but it adds +2 to all Fighting and Strength rolls, and its Toughness.
- **Bite/Horn/Tail:** Str+d6.
- **Gore:** The dingonek can use the Charge maneuver to gore its opponents with its horn. If it can charge at least 6" before attacking, it adds +4 to its damage total.

- **Improved Frenzy:** Dingoneks make two Fighting attacks each action at no penalty.
- **Poison:** Any creature Shaken or wounded by a tail attack must make a Vigor roll or suffer an automatic wound.
- **Semi-Aquatic:** Dingoneks are "breath hold" divers and can stay underwater for long periods of time on just one breath of air. A dingonek gains a Fatigue level every 15 minutes it holds its breath. If Incapacitated, the beast makes an immediate Vigor roll (and another each minute thereafter) to stay conscious. If the roll is failed the dingonek drowns. Above water, it recovers a level of Fatigue every five minutes.
- **Size +2:** Dingoneks can reach up to 8' in length.

Flying Head

Among certain tribes of North American Indians, there exist stories of the flying heads. Each head is as a tall as a man and rests upon two powerful legs. At the end of each leg is a set of powerful claws. Their most fearsome aspect was their cry, which could turn a warrior's blood to ice. Although it is believed the flying heads were destroyed long ago, pockets of them may still exist to this day.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d8, Stealth d6, Swimming d10
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Special Abilities:

- **Cry:** As an action, a flying head can emit a terrifying howl. Any creature within a Large Burst Template centered on the creature must make a Guts roll. If multiple heads howl in the same round, there is –1 penalty to the Guts roll for each additional template a character is covered by.
- **Fear:** Anyone seeing the creature must make a Guts roll.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear (except lightning) and Intimidation.
- **Flight:** Flying Pace 8"
- **Kick:** Str+d6.
- **Weakness (Lightning):** Flying heads fear lightning. Seeing lightning causes them to make a Guts check. On a failure, they immediately flee the area.

Gargoyle

As the harpies of ancient Greek myth were based on the Jason's encounter with the akaana, so the gargoyles so popular with European church builders are a folk memory of an equally ancient race. They fly on leathery wings, which fold back flush with the body to prevent damage on jagged rocks. The hideous creatures spend long periods crouched on craggy rock faces, watching for prey; a tireless vigil that prompted their use in church architecture.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8
Pace: 4; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9 (2)
Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Thick, leathery skin.
- **Bite/Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Camouflage:** Gargoyles receive +2 to Stealth rolls in rocky terrain due to their skin color.
- **Flight:** Flying Pace of 8".



Ghost

Tortured souls sometimes return from death as specters, shades, and phantoms to haunt the living or fulfill some lost goal. Kane wrestled with the ghost of Gideon in the story *Skulls in the Stars*.

Ghosts can be mild or malicious, depending on whether they are seeking justice for some wrong that was done them in life, or merely trying to cause mischief.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidate d12+2, Notice d12, Taunt d10, Stealth d12+4, Throwing d12
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Gear: Thrown objects (Str+d4)
Special Abilities:

- **Ethereal:** Ghosts are immaterial and can only be harmed by magical attacks or truly courageous heroes. A hero can attack a ghost with his bare hands (not with weapons), by using his Guts skill in place of his Fighting skill. All modifiers associated with Fighting apply to Guts for this purpose.
- **Fear –2:** Ghosts cause Guts checks at –2 when they let themselves be seen.
- **Ghostly Touch:** A ghost's touch is soul-chillingly cold. If it succeeds at a Fighting attack, it does damage equal to its Spirit. The target gets no benefit from nonmagical armor.

Ghoul

Ghouls are vile scavengers, feasting on any carrion or unfortunate victims who cross their path. Whether they are a natural species or the creations of foul magic is unknown.

Ghouls have pale, rubbery skin with the texture of uncooked pastry. Their eyes are large and glow with a pale feral-yellow color. They have sharp claws and teeth, often with shreds of rendered flesh hanging from them.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d10, Tracking d8
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8
Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Infravision:** Ghouls halve penalties (round down) for bad lighting when attacking living targets.
- **Keen Nose**: Ghouls get +2 to Notice and Tracking rolls against living targets.
- **Paralysis:** Victims of a ghoul's claw attacks must make a Vigor roll at –2 or be paralysed for 2d6 minutes.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; No additional damage from Called Shots; Immune to disease and poison.



Giant Ape

Giant apes are abnormally-sized gorillas that are bigger, stronger, and far more aggressive than regular gorillas.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8(A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+6, Vigor d8
Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Stealth d4
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10
Special Abilities:

- **Frenzy:** A gorilla can make two Fighting attacks each round at –2 penalty.
- **Hardy:** A second Shaken result from a physical source does not cause a wound.
- **Large:** Attacks against giant apes are made at +2.
- **Size +4:** Giant apes are nearly 12' tall.
- **Slam:** Str.

Giant Bat

Giant bats are larger than regular bats. They can be encountered in isolation, but are usually found in groups of 2d6 members.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d12, Stealth d10
Pace: 0; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4
Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str.
- **Echo Location:** Giant bats do not suffer any penalties for bad lighting.
- **Flying:** Pace 8.
- **Size –1:** Giant bats are measure 3' long, but have a wingspan double that.



Giant Constrictor

Giant constrictors are capable of swallowing a fully grown human. These monsters can grow to immense lengths.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+1, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d10, Swimming d8
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9
Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Constrict:** Against targets of Size +3 or lower, the snake can Constrict whenever it scores a raise on a Fighting roll. On each of the snake's actions, the victim must make an opposed Strength roll or gain a Fatigue level. Breaking free requires and action and an opposed Strength roll. Once Incapacitated, the victim is unconscious for the next 1d6 hours—during which time the snake eats him alive! Fatigue recovers at a rate of one level every 15 minutes.
- **Large:** Attacks against the snake are at +2 because of its large size.
- **Size +4:** Giant snakes grow over 25' long.
- **Swallow:** If the creatures scores a raise on a Fighting roll with a bite attack against an opponent of Size 2 or smaller, it swallows its prey whole! The victim suffers Str+d8 damage each round until crushed to death by the powerful muscles or freed.

  A victim may try to break free, either with an opposed Strength roll or by using a small weapon to cut himself free, but all physical actions are at –4.

Giant Leech

Giant leeches are native to the rivers and swamps of tropical regions. These disgusting monsters drift in the dank waters, waiting for warm-blooded prey to pass by.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8, Swimming d6
Pace: —; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 6.
- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Blood Drain:** A giant leech succeeding in a Fighting roll attaches itself to its prey and begins to drink blood. Each round the leech is attached the victim must make a Vigor roll at –2 or gain a Fatigue level. Removing a leech requires an opposed Strength roll. Alternatively, the leech can be killed with weapons—a giant leech attached to its victim has a Parry of 2. Unfortunately, any failed attack roll strikes the victim on a roll of 1 on a d6. Fatigue recovers at a rate of one level every hour.
- **Size –1:** Giant leeches measure only half a yard in length.
- **Weakness (Salt):** A pound of salt causes 2d6 damage to a giant leech.

Giant Spider

Giant spiders live in the remote wilderness regions the wanderers are likely to travel. Spinning great webs to ensnare their prey, these monstrous beasts' lairs are littered with the bones of their unfortunate victims.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d6
Skills: Climbing d12+2, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d10, Shooting d10, Stealth d10
Pace: —; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5
Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Poison (–4):** The bite of the spider causes instant paralysis for those who fail their Vigor roll. It lasts for 2d6 minutes.
- **Webbing:** The spiders can cast webs from their thorax that are the size of Small Burst Templates. This is a Shooting roll with a range of 3/6/12. Anything in the web must be cut or broken free (Toughness 7). Webbed characters can still fight, but all physical actions are at –4.
- **Wall Walker:** Spiders can move on vertical or inverted surfaces at their full Pace.

Hag

These cannibalistic ogres have powerful magical abilities that they use to disguise themselves as beautiful women. They are fond of eating children, but are not picky and eat nearly anything made of meat.

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



Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Witchcraft) d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d12, Taunt d8
Pace: 5; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6
Special Abilities:
- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Curse:** A hag can curse one enemy within sight each round. The target must make a Spirit roll or be Shaken.
- **Fear:** Anyone seeing a Hag must make a Guts roll.
- **Illusion:** Hags appear to be beautiful women until they attack. Penetrating this illusion requires an opposed Spirit roll.

Hellhound

Hellhounds are monstrous dogs, often with black skin which steams from the heat of the beast's demonic blood. Their eyes burn with demonic fire and their teeth are oversized, protruding from their jaw at all angles. They are sometimes known as "black dogs."

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d10, Stealth d6
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7
Special Abilities:
- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Fear:** Anyone who sees a hellhound must make a Guts roll.
- **Fleet Footed:** Hellhounds have a d10 running die.
- **Go for the Throat:** If a hellhound gets a raise on its attack roll, it strikes its foe's least armored location.
- **Terrible Wounds**: The jagged teeth of a hellhound inflict terrible wounds, which do not heal quickly. Healing rolls, whether magical or natural healing, are subject to an additional –2 penalty.

Impundulu

Hailing from the eastern Cape of Africa, the impundulu is a witch's familiar passed from mother to daughter. Unfortunately, it is also a curse. Although it appears in the form of a handsome man, the impundulu is actually is a remorseless, insatiable killing machine. When attacking, its victims see it as a large, white bird with a red beak and legs.

The witch has little choice but to let it do its job, for to deny the creature its fill is to bring a terrible curse upon the family.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7
Special Abilities:
- **Attractive:** +2 Charisma.
- **Beak:** Str+d6.
- **Disease (–2):** A victim Shaken or wounded by an impundulu's bite must make a Vigor roll at –2 or catch a terrible wasting disease. Each day thereafter, the victim must make another Vigor roll (at –2) or suffer a level of Fatigue (which can result in death). A raise on the Vigor roll ends the disease, and lost Fatigue can be recovered at the rate of one level per 24 hours.
- **Merciless:** The impundulu has the Bloodthirsty and Mean Hindrances.

Lukwata

A lukwata is a huge water serpent, which favors rivers and marshes as its home. It's said that a lukwata's fiery eyes can actually project searing flames.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d12+8, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d10, Stealth d8, Swimming d10
Pace: 0; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 13
Special Abilities:

- **Aquatic:** Pace 10.
- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Fear (–2):** Anyone seeing this beast must make a Guts roll at –2.
- **Fiery Eyes:** A lukwata can project deadly fire using the Cone Template. Every target within this cone may make an Agility roll at –2 to avoid the attack. Those who fail suffer 2d10 damage and must check to see if they catch fire.
- **Huge:** Attackers gain a +4 bonus to attack a lukwata due to its size.
- **Size +8:** A lukwata is over 30 feet long and eight feet in diameter at his thickest point.
- **Tentacles:** The mouth of a lukwata is surrounded in tentacles. The beast may make up to four attacks each round. On a raise, the creature has grappled the victim. A entangled victim may attempt an opposed Strength roll each round to escape. The lukwata does its Strength damage automatically to grappled foes by crushing with its tentacles and rending with its fangs. A victim killed by a lukwata's tentacles is usually swallowed.

Malkin

Old wives tales talk about cats draining the souls from babies—the stories were true.

These creatures look like regular domestic cats. Indeed, unless one catches a malkin feeding, the two species cannot be told apart by any means. When feeding, a smoky tendril stretches from the malkin's mouth to that of its victim.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d10, Stealth d10
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 3
Special Abilities:

- **Size –2:** Malkins are the same size as cats.
- **Small:** Attackers suffer a –2 penalty to attack a malkin due to its size.
- **Soul Suck:** A malkin can suck the soul from a living being. In combat, it must score a raise on its Fighting roll to get close enough to its victim's mouth. It must then win an opposed Spirit roll with its victim. If successful, the victim suffers a level of Fatigue. The Fatigue cannot be removed until the malkin is killed, when the portion of soul it took is returned. Against a sleeping or unconscious target, the malkin need only make the opposed Spirit roll.

Mlularuka

Also known as a flying jackal, the mlularuka lives up to that description. They haunt the African savannah.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6(A), Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d10, Notice d10, Stealth d8, Taunt d8
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4
Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Flying:** Pace 8.
- **Size –1:** Mlularuka are small creatures.

Mummy

Mummies are the preserved remains of ancient dead, given life through dark magic. They are far from mindless, however. They can most often be found ruling over isolated, ancient cities, or guarding their former tombs from grave robbers.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8
Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10
Special Abilities:

- **Fear:** Anyone seeing this beast must make a Guts roll.
- **Shuffling Gait:** Mummies roll a d4 running die.
- **Slam:** Str.

- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; No additional damage from Called Shots; Immune to disease and poison.
- **Weakness (Fire):** The chemicals used in the preservation process mean mummies take +4 damage from fire.

Nandi Bear

Despite being labeled as a bear (there are no native African bears in the present era), the nandi actually appears to be a giant hyena. Unlike hyena, however, the nandi sits up a tree, swiping at the heads of prey as they pass beneath.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6(A), Strength d12, Vigor d10
Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Guts d10, Notice d10, Stealth d8
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9
Special Abilities:
- **Ambush:** A nandi in a tree gains The Drop against prey passing it beneath that have failed to spot the beast. Its first attack is always a Called Shot to the head.
- **Bite/Claw:** Str+d6.
- **Fleet Footed:** Nandi bears roll a d10 when running instead of a d6.
- **Infravision:** The nandi halves Bad Lighting penalties for attacking heat-producing targets.
- **Size +2:** The nandi stands around 5' at the shoulder and is over 8' long.

Skeleton

The skin has already rotted from these risen dead, leaving them slightly quicker than their flesh-laden zombie counterparts. The only living skeleton Kane encountered was a wizard in life, murdered by the innkeeper of The Cleft Skull, and whose bones animated to seek revenge on the killer.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6
Pace: 7; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7
Gear: Varies
Special Abilities:
- **Bony Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Fearless:** Skeletons are 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.

Snake Man

Snake men are humanoid, but have some distinctly serpentine characteristics. Some have scaly skin, other tails, or the heads of snakes. Some could pass as human, while others are unmistakably reptilian. All share one common feature, however: all have black forked tongues and black hearts to match.

Their society is broken down into two main castes—warrior and priest. The castes are hereditary, and priests are clearly distinguished from warriors by their cobra-like heads.

They are remnants of a civilization that flourished long before humans evolved from apes. An ancient war with early humans, combined with a change in global climate, left the serpent men race broken. They are now found only in the heart of dense jungles or deserts, living in their ruined cities and temples. They hate humans.

Snake Man Warrior

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Survival d6, Tracking d8
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (1)
Hindrances: —
Edges: Combat Reflexes, Frenzy, Quick
Gear: Scimitar (Str+d8)
Special Abilities:
- **Armor +1:** Scaly hide.
- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Poison (+0):** Snake men inject deadly venom through their bite. A character bitten by a snake man must make a Vigor roll. With success, the bite area swells and becomes numb. The victim becomes Exhausted until healed. With a failure, the victim becomes Incapacitated and must make a second Vigor roll or die in 2d6 minutes.



Snake Man Priest

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Astronomy) d10, Magick d10, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Tracking d8
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (1)
Hindrances: —
Edges: Arcane Background (Sorcery), Combat Reflexes, Command, Improved Strong Caster, Level Headed, Natural Leader, New Powers, Quick
Gear: Staff (Str+d4, Parry +1, Reach +1, Requires both hands)
Special Abilities:

- **Armor +1**: Scaly hide.
- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Poison (+0):** Snake men inject deadly venom through their bite. A character bitten by a snake man must make a Vigor roll. With success, the bite area swells and becomes numb. The victim becomes Exhausted until healed. With a failure, the victim becomes Incapacitated and must make a second Vigor roll or die in 2d6 minutes.
- **Powers:** *Armor* (hardened scales), *beast friend* (snakes only), *puppet* (rocking motion), *smite* (venom), *summon beast* (swarms of snakes or giant constrictor only).

Treat as a Veteran character.

Succubus/ Incubus

Succubi and incubi resemble beautiful females and males respectively. This form is illusory, however, and in their natural form they are winged demons with grotesque faces, leathery skin, and long claws. They use their illusory looks to lure unsuspecting victims into their deadly embrace.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d12+2
Charisma: +6
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Demon:** +2 to rolls to recover from being Shaken; Immune to poison and disease.
- **Life Drain:** These foul creatures have more than one way to kill. If a succubus or incubus kisses a victim, they must make a Vigor roll opposed by the demon's Spirit or lose one die of Vigor. If Vigor ever drops to zero, the demon has sucked out the victim's life force, killing him.

  Assuming the victim survives, lost Vigor returns at the rate of one die per day.
- **Lure:** Sometimes good looks isn't enough to lure prey to their doom. These demons can use the *puppet* power using their Spirit as their arcane skill. They suffer no Casting Modifier.
- **Very Attractive:** Succubi and incubi resemble stunningly beautiful creatures in their illusory form. They can assume the shape of any sentient being. Their illusory appearance gives them +6 Charisma.

Vampire, African

Inhabiting the Hills of the Dead, African vampires are fearsome foes. They are tall and gaunt, with dusty skins tinged with a hue of death. Their faces are almost apelike, with high foreheads, inhumanly red eyes, and huge, snout-like noses. When slain, they crumble to dust.

African vampires are true walking corpses, and have a palpable air of decay about them. Carrion creatures, like vultures, are attracted to these foul abominations, and it is part of their curse that they are susceptible to the attacks of such beasts.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8
Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9
Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Invulnerable:** African vampires can only be harmed by fire, magic (including summoned beasts), and carrion beasts. They can be Shaken by other attacks, but never take wounds from them.
- **Mute:** African vampires are truly dead, and cannot talk or utter other noises.
- **Nightvision:** The vampires have both Infravision and Low Light Vision.

- **Pyrophobia:** African Vampires have a fear of fire. They must make a Spirit roll at –2 to attack any character carrying a flaming torch or to cross over a fire. Even glowing hot embers can keep the creatures at bay.
- **Shapechange:** These fiends can take the form of large, black snakes. Use the stats for a constrictor (on page 297). They can change shape with a Spirit roll, which takes an action. This is not considered magical ability, and thus they never suffer backlash.
- **Soul Drain:** A vampire who succeeds in grappling an opponent can make a bite (Fighting) attack next round with a +2 bonus. When success, the victim must make a Spirit roll, –2 with a raise, or suffer Fatigue as his soul is drained through his blood. This can lead to Death.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; No additional damage from Called Shots; Immune to disease and poison.
- **Weakness (Sunlight):** Unlike Western vampires, the African variety do not combust in sunlight. However, vultures circle the skies during daylight, and fearful of these black carrion birds, African vampires avoid coming out in daylight whenever possible.



Vampire, Chinese

Hailing from China and found throughout Cathay, hopping vampires are a breed apart from the traditional Western understanding of vampires. Their skin is light green, their mouths full of sharp teeth, and their nails long and hard, like claws.

Chinese vampires are also widely known as hopping vampires. They get their name from their unusual style of movement, and they are actually incapable of normal movement. Even their arms are locked in the rigor of death, being fully extended and able to bend only slightly.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d10
Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9
Special Abilities:

- **Bite/Claws:** Str+d6.
- **Breath Sense:** Hopping vampires cannot see using their eyes, but instead sense the breath of the living. A character who wants to hold his breath in combat must make a Vigor roll at the start of each round. On a failure, he breaths and the vampire can detect him (and thus act normally against him this round).

  The maximum number of consecutive rounds a character can hold his breath without breathing is equal to his Vigor die. After this, he takes a level of Fatigue each round until he reaches Incapacitated. Once the character is breathing normally again, he recovers one Fatigue level per minute.
- **Extended Jump:** Hopping vampires can extend the distance they hop using a run action. They roll a d4 running die, however.
- **Jump:** In addition to hopping horizontally, a hopping vampire can move half its Pace vertically as well.
- **Sire:** Each time a victim is wounded by a hopping vampire he must make a Vigor roll or transform into a hopping vampire after 1d4 days.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; No additional damage from Called Shots; Immune to disease and poison; No wound penalties.
- **Weakness (Prayer):** Prayers written on rice paper can be attached to the vampire's forehead to render it immobile. The attacker must make successful Called Shot to the head (–4) to attach the prayer. With a success, the hopping vampire is rendered immobile by the prayer (Parry reduced to 2). Be warned though, for a strong wind can easily dislodge the prayer, allowing the vampire to move again.
- **Weakness (Rice):** Sticky rice sprinkled on the ground burns the feet of a hopping vampire. Each round it stands on the rice, even if only for a moment, it suffers 2d10 damage.



Vampire, Western

The statistics below are for a vampire somewhat below the legendary Dracula. This is a relatively young vampire minion, but still a challenge for a party of heroes.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d12+1, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Swim d8, Throwing d6
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9
Special Abilities:

- **Blood Drain:** A vampire who succeeds in grappling an opponent can make a bite (Fighting) attack next round with a +2 bonus. When success, the victim must make a Vigor roll, –2 with a raise, or suffer Fatigue from blood loss. This can lead to Death.
- **Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Frenzy:** Vampires can make two attacks per round with a –2 penalty to each attack.
- **Level Headed:** Vampires act on the best of two cards.
- **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. No wound penalties. Called Shots do no extra damage (except to the heart—see below).
- **Weakness (Holy Symbol):** A character with a holy symbol 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 Spirits.
- **Weakness (Holy Water):** A vampire sprinkled with holy water is Fatigued. If immersed, he combusts as if it were direct sunlight (see above).
- **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 (–6) must make a Vigor roll versus the damage. If successful, it takes damage normally. If it fails, it disintegrates to dust.
- **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.



Wendigo

Abhorrent as it may be, cannibalism is sometimes the only course action open to people lost in the wilderness or stranded on deserted islands.

For most, it is a matter of survival, never to be tried again once they are rescued. For a few, however, it becomes a craving. These individuals are said to be possessed by the spirit of the Wendigo, an American Indian cannibal spirit.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Notice d6, Stealth d8
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7
Special Abilities:

- **Bite/Claws:** Str+d4.
- **Combat Reflexes:** +2 to recover from being Shaken.
- **Foul Strength:** A wendigo who inflicts a wound on a foe with its bite gains +1 die in Strength and Vigor for the remainder of the scene, to a maximum of four extra dice. Outside of combat, each increases lasts for one hour.
- **Frenzy:** A wendigo may make an additional Fighting attack each round at –2.

Werecreatures

Werecreatures are ordinary men cursed, through some misfortune or dark pact, to change shape. This change can be voluntary or involuntary and can even sometimes be permanent.

The werewolf transforming from a man into a murderous bestial man-wolf in the light of the full moon is a classic example, found throughout Europe. But such tales aren't just restricted to the Old World. Many cultures have stories of people able to turn into animals, either through natural gifts or using magic.



Werejaguar

Werejaguars are found only in remote parts of South America. Werejaguars may be supernatural creatures, or priests of dark and bloodthirsty gods who grant their followers the ability to change form. Regardless of their origin, they are feared hunters in the wilds of Mexico.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d12+1, Vigor d12
Skills: Climbing d10, Fighting d12, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d10, Stealth d12, Swimming d8
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 9
Special Abilities:

- **Bite/Claws:** Str+d8.
- **Infection:** Anyone slain by a werejaguar has a 50% chance of rising as a similar beast.
- **Immunity:** These creatures suffer half damage from non-magical attacks.
- **Size +1:** Werejaguars are tall and stocky.
- **Weakness (Silver):** Werecreatures suffer normal damage from silver weapons.

Werelion

Found in Africa, werelions may be evil spirits able to assume a man-lion hybrid form, or witchdoctors with special powers. Not all werelions are evil, as the lion is considered a noble beast.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d12+3, Vigor d12
Skills: Fighting d12, Guts d12, Intimidation d12, Notice d12, Stealth d10
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 10
Special Abilities:

- **Bite/Claws:** Str+d8.
- **Improved Frenzy**: Werelions make two Fighting attacks each round at no penalty.
- **Immunity:** These creatures suffer half damage from non-magical attacks.
- **Infection:** Anyone slain by a werelion has a 50% chance of rising as a similar beast.
- **Size +2:** Werelions are tall and stocky.
- **Weakness (Silver):** Werecreatures suffer normal damage from silver weapons.

Weretiger

Weretigers are almost exclusively found in Hindoostan. Some feed among the lowest castes, living off the poor and sick. Others are born to the warrior or priestly castes, and see themselves as protectors of Hindoostan.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+5, Vigor d12
Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d12, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d12, Stealth d12
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 11
Special Abilities:

- **Bite/Claws:** Str+d8.
- **Improved Frenzy:** Weretigers make two Fighting attacks each round at no penalty.
- **Immunity:** These creatures suffer half damage from non-magical attacks.
- **Infection:** Anyone slain by a weretiger has a 50% chance of rising as a similar beast.
- **Maul:** With a successful Grapple attack the weretiger knocks its prey to the floor and may make an immediate Fighting attack with no multi action penalty.
- **Size +3:** Weretigers are tall and brawny.
- **Weakness (Silver):** Werecreatures suffer normal damage from silver weapons.

Werewolf

Werewolves are most frequently found throughout Europe, with a much greater concentration in the areas around the Black Forest and Eastern Europe.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10
Skills: Climb d8, Fighting d12+2, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d12, Swimming d10, Stealth d10, Tracking d10
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 8
Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str+d8.
- **Fear –2:** Werewolves chill the blood of all who see them.
- **Infection:** Anyone slain by a werewolf has a 50% chance of rising as a werewolf themselves. The character involuntarily transforms every full moon. He gains control of his lycanthropy only after 1d6 years as a werewolf.
- **Immunity:** Werecreatures can only by wounded by silver weapons. Non-silver weapons can Shake them, but never cause wounds.
- **Infravision:** Werewolves can see heat and halve penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets.
- **Size +1:** These beasts are roughly man-sized.
- **Weakness (Silver):** Werewolves suffer normal damage from silver weapons.

Wolf, Dire

Dire wolves are very large and feral wolves. They may also be found roaming in packs in the deepest, darkest woods.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Guts d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Tracking d6
Pace: 10; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d6.
- **Go for the Throat:** Wolves instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's most weakly-armored location.
- **Fleet-Footed:** Dire wolves roll d10s instead of d6s when running.

Zombie

Zombies are soulless corpses, given the semblance of life via powerful and dark magic. Many "zombies" are actually living people, controlled by evil villains using strange narcotics instead of foul witchcraft.

These "living dead" use the same game stats as true zombies; their senses are numbed by the drugs or sorcery such that they are indistinguishable from those raised from the dead.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d4, Stealth d6
Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7
Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Str.
- **Fearless:** Zombies are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; Called Shots do no extra damage.



People

Amazon Woman

Amazon women are fierce warriors from a matriarchal tribe. Men are considered only fit for breeding and slave labor.

Amazon Warrior

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Swimming d6
Charisma: +2
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7 (1)
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: Attractive, Woodsman
Gear: Leather (+1), spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry), bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6)

Making Other NPCs

In the following pages you'll find a lot of archetypes for common allies and foes the heroes may encounter in their travels. While the list is long, it is far from exhaustive.

So what do you do if your heroes head to Nippon and you suddenly need stats for a samurai lord and his loyal retainers? *The Savage World of Solomon Kane* is designed to make your job as a GM as easy as possible. Rather than inventing something from scratch, pick a suitable archetype and change it slightly to suit your needs.

For instance, a samurai lord could use the Knight archetype. His wooden armor acts like plate, and you can swap his long sword for a katana. If you want a more powerful lord, simply add whatever Edges you think are appropriate. Samurai guards could also use the Knight archetype, or perhaps even the Swordsman, just armed with a katana instead of a rapier.

All this means you don't have to worry about having an NPC prepared for every occasion, just concentrate on making exciting stories.

Amazon Warrior-Princess

Every Amazon tribe is led by a warrior-princess. Not only are they the best warrior in the tribe, but they're usually the best looking dame as well.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d10
Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d12, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Riding d10, Shooting d8, Swimming d6
Charisma: +4
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 10; **Toughness:** 8 (1)
Hindrances: Code of Honor, Loyal
Edges: Acrobat, Block, Combat Reflexes, Command, Hold the Line, Fervor, Level Headed, Natural Leader, Very Attractive, Woodsman
Gear: Leather (+1), long sword (Str+d8), bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6)

Assassin

Assassins are hired killers, usually working for money rather than in support of some particular cause.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8, Shooting d6, Streetwise d6, Throwing d6
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)
Hindrances: Various
Edges: Alertness, First Strike, Thief
Gear: Leather (+1), dagger (Str+d4), short sword (Str+d6), crossbow (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, AP 2)
Special Abilities:

- **Poison:** The quickest way to kill someone is with poison. A typical poison requires a Vigor roll at –2 or take an automatic wound.

Bandit

Bandits operate in gangs, robbing and murdering those weaker than themselves.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6 Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6
Charisma: –2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6 (1)
Hindrances: Greedy, Mean.
Edges: —
Gear: Leather armor (+1), various weapons

Bandit Chief

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Throwing d8
Charisma: –2
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 8 (2)
Hindrances: Greedy, Mean
Edges: Block, Combat Reflexes, Command
Gear: Chain mail (+2), various weapons

Citizen

Most of world's population lead simple lives as crafters, shop owners, laborers, and farmers. They have few skills beyond their trade and little interest risking their necks.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d4, Knowledge (one trade) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d4
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances & Edges: —
Gear: Knife (Str +d4), tools of the trade

City Watch

These are average town guardsmen. They are competent and brave, but not suicidal.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5 **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: —
Edges: —
Gear: Short sword (Str+d6), dagger (Str+d4), pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1), shot & powder (10). Some are equipped with muskets as well (Range 10/20/40, Damage 2d8)

Town Militia

Town militia are not as skilled as city watch, typically being part-time soldiers.



Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d4, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d6
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: —
Edges: —
Gear: Short sword (Str+d6), militia are usually given muskets just before a battle (Range 10/20/40, Damage 2d8), shot & powder (5)

Explorer

Explorers are the brave souls who investigate the forgotten corners of worlds, seeks ancient ruins of ages past, and search for new sources of wealth.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Knowledge (History) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Piloting d6, Shooting d6, Survival d8, Swimming d6, Tracking d6
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Curious

Edges: Explorer, Woodsman
Gear: Short sword (Str+d6), dagger (Str+d4), pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1), shot & powder (20)

Gypsy

Gypsies are found throughout Europe, with greater concentrations in the East. Some scholars claim they originally hail from Hindoostan, others point to Egypt or the Russian steppe. Whatever their origins, they are well versed in occult matters.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Knowledge (Occult) d6, Lockpicking d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Riding d6, Stealth d4, Streetwise d4, Survival d4, Taunt d8, Tracking d4
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Outsider
Edges: Dirty Fighter
Gear: Silver dagger (Str+d4), pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1), silver shot & powder (20)
Special Abilities:

- **Gypsy Curse:** Gypsies have the power to inflict a minor curse on those offend them. As an action, the gypsy makes an opposed Spirit roll against one target within 12". With success, the victim suffers a –1 penalty to all trait rolls until the next sunrise.

Wise Woman

Gypsy wise women are said to have the gift of second sight. God-fearing heroes should, if necessary, be reminded that such gifts are the tools of Satan.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigor d6
Skills: Guts d10, Knowledge (Occult) d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Taunt d10
Charisma: –2
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Elderly, Outsider
Edges: —
Gear: Tarot cards
Special Abilities:

- **Gypsy Curse:** Gypsies have the power to inflict a minor curse on those offend them. As an action, the gypsy makes an opposed Spirit roll against one target within 12". With a success, the victim suffers a –1 penalty to all trait rolls until the next sunrise.
- **Second Sight:** A hero may wish to consult a wise woman and learn of his future. Each hero may ask one question of the wise woman and may not ask again until a complete lunar cycle has passed.

  General questions, like, "Will we reach Africa on time?" can be handled using GM knowledge. If you are planning for a terrible storm to shipwreck the heroes, then you can give an appropriate answer. If you have nothing planned draw a card. Black means "no" and red means "yes." Redraw Jokers.

  For specific questions relating to your adventure, such as, "Do the fortunes favor us against the evil necromancer?" the GM draws a single card from the action deck. A red card means the hero or group is favored, and earns a free benny when the future event takes place (in our example, this would be the showdown with the necromancer). A black card spells a bad omen, and the character loses a benny instead. Should a Joker be drawn, the omen is especially powerful. Draw another card and double the effect. A second Joker means draw a third card and treble the effect.



Highwayman

Whereas bandits work in groups, highwaymen usually work alone, robbing coaches along lonely roads and using their mounts to make a quick getaway.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6 **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Greedy
Edges: Marksman, Steady Hands, Two Fisted
Gear: Long sword (Str+d8), dagger (Str+d4), two pistols (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1), shot & powder (10), riding horse, saddle



Immortal Queen

Whether she rules an ancient city atop a lost plateau or in the heart of a forbidding desert, or controls a temple in the deep jungle, the

immortal queen is a villain. She is kept alive through dark magic, which usually involves killing virgins and drinking their blood or draining the life from men through sex.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d12, d6, Stealth d6
Charisma: +2/–2
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Clueless (events outside her city)
Edges: Attractive, Charismatic, Command, Natural Leader, Noble, Strong Willed
Gear: Skimpy costume, concealed knife (Str+d4)
Special Abilities:

- **Life Drain:** If an immortal queen has sex with a man, the victim must make a Vigor roll opposed by the Queen's Spirit or lose one die of Vigor, two if the Queen scores a raise. If Vigor drops to zero, the queen has drained the victim's life force, killing him. Assuming the victim survives, lost Vigor returns at the rate of one die per day. Each die of Vigor keeps the queen youthful for a year.



Inquisitor/ Witchfinder

The Inquisition are the Catholic Churches watchdogs, charged with rooting our heresy and exterminating those of heathen faiths, a task they undertake with religious fervor. Witchfinders also pursue those accused of witchcraft, though without the the awesome might of the Catholic Church behind them. These solitary zealots are just as fearsome, however.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Torture) d10, Notice d8, Riding d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Streetwise d8
Charisma: –3
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Delusional (non-Catholics are evil), Habit (excessive cruelty), Mean
Edges: Arcane Resistance, Combat Reflexes, Level Headed, Strong Willed
Gear: Long sword (Str+d8), pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1), shot & powder (10)

Knight

The invention of blackpowder weapons revolutionized warfare, and led to the downfall of the armored knight. The few old-style knights who remain are usually found in Eastern Europe and parts of rural Germany.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Notice d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 9 (3)
Hindrances: Code of Honor, Command, Vow (usually to protect something)
Edges: Block, Sweep
Gear: Plate corselet (+3), plate vambraces (+3), plate greaves (+3), full helm (+3), long sword (Str+d8), medium shield (+1 Parry), horse

Naval Officer

Naval officers represent military personnel or privateers. Merchant officers use the same stats, but have no skill with Knowledge (Battle), have 1 die less in Fighting and Shooting, and have a Parry of one lower as well.

A junior officer may serve as an assistant officer on a large ship or be in command of his own sloop. Senior officers represent the commander of a ship.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Swimming d6
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: Command
Gear: Rapier (Str+d4, +1 Parry), pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1), shot & powder (10)



Necromancer

Necromancers dabble in the darkest of magicks, cavorting with demons and other unholy spirits.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Occult) d10, Magick d10, Notice d6, Taunt d8
Charisma: –2
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Mean
Edges: Arcane Background (Sorcery), New Power, Strong Caster
Gear: Knife (Str+d4)
Powers: *Animate hand*, *boost/lower trait*, *curse*, *deflection*, *fear*, *fly*, *grave speak*, *puppet*, *spirit ward*, *summon spirit*, *zombie*.
Treat as a Veteran character.

Noble

This entry covers both true nobles and their courtier lackeys, such as seneschals and chancellors. The generic noble is suitable for every noble rank from baron to emperor.

Courtier

Courtiers are more than just servants, they are advisors and often hold positions of importance within the court. Unless the characters know a noble personally, most dealings are conducted through a trusted courtier, typically a seneschal.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Riding d6, Streetwise d8
Charisma: +2
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Various.
Edges: Charismatic
Gear: Rapier (Str+d4, +1 Parry)

Noble

Some nobles are decadent dandies content with living a life of luxury. Others are rich landowners, skilled in business matters. Other noble types include military commanders, advisors to a higher authority, poverty stricken ones, robber knights, depraved and corrupt lords, and those who dabble in forbidden arts.

This version presents a typical middle-of-the-road noble.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Riding d8
Charisma: +2
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Various.
Edges: Command, Connections, Noble
Gear: Rapier (Str+d4, +1 Parry) in court; war gear varies with type of noble

Pirate

The pirates of the Spanish Main, South China Sea, and Barbary Coast are as varied as the lands themselves. Those who fall into this category are a mixture of ruthless killers and cowardly thieves.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d6
Charisma: –2
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Greedy (Minor), Illiterate, Mean
Edges: Dirty Fighter
Gear: Knife (Str+d4), cutlass (Str+d6), pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1), shot & powder (20)

Pygmy

Pygmies can be found in parts of South America and Africa, as well as eastern islands. As with most peoples, some are friendly, others hostile. A few tribes (not all of them instantly hostile) still practice cannibalism.

Pygmy Warrior

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Survival d6, Swimming d6, Throwing d6
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 4
Hindrances: All Thumbs, Illiterate, Small
Edges: Woodsman

Gear: Spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry), blowgun (Range 2/4/8, 1d6+1)
Special Abilities:

- **Paralysis (+0):** Pygmies dip their blowgun darts into paralyzing poison. Anyone Shaken or wounded by a paralysis dart must make a Vigor roll or be paralyzed for 2d6 rounds.
- **Poison (+0):** Some poison darts are coated with curare or other such deadly poisons. Anyone Shaken or wounded by a poison dart must make a Vigor roll or suffer an automatic wound. Deadlier poisons, which give a penalty to the Vigor roll, are sometimes used.



Pygmy Chief

Every tribe is led by a chief. In some tribes this is a hereditary title, but in others the best warriors compete for the right to lead the tribe.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Swimming d6, Throwing d8
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: All Thumbs, Illiterate, Small
Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command, Fervor, Frenzy, Woodsman
Gear: Spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry)



Pygmy Shaman

Pygmies are usually animists, believing in spirits rather than arcane magic or organized religion. At the heart of their rituals is a shaman. Each shaman is a follower of a spirit, and has spell trappings to suit. You should devise trappings as required.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d4, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Shamanism d8, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Swimming d6, Throwing d8
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: All Thumbs, Small
Edges: Arcane Background (Shaman), New Powers, Wizard
Gear: Spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry)
Powers: *Armor, boost/lower trait, curse, fear, obscure, shape change, smite, summon beast, vision quest.*
Treat as a Veteran character.

Sailor

Sailors typically run a ship or fire the guns, but don't participate in boarding actions unless it's obvious that they're likely to be overrun and are in real physical danger from their attackers.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d4, Guts d6, Notice d4, Shooting d4, Stealth d4, Swimming d6
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5
Edges & Hindrances: —
Gear: Knife (Str+d4)

Smuggler

Smugglers make money by selling goods through alternate business channels.

Some work with pirates, selling stolen cargoes, others are out to make money by bringing illegal goods into a country to sell on the black market.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Piloting d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Greedy
Edges: Connections
Gear: Cutlass (Str+d6), knife (Str+d4), flintlock pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1), shot & powder (20)

Soldier

Wars are frequent in Solomon Kane's time, and so soldiers can be found in most cities. Depending on the characters' backgrounds, some may be allies, others are dangerous foes, but all are loyal to their cause.

Foot Soldier

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d4
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8 (3)
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: Musketeer, Steady Hands
Gear: Long sword (Str+d6), musket (Range 10/20/40, Damage 2d8), shot & powder (20). Soldiers typically have plate corselets (+3) and steel helmets (+3).



Field Officer

Field officers rank from Lieutenant up to Colonel and run the gamut from the green behind the ears rookie to seasoned leaders of men in combat. This version holds the middle ground.
Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Notice d6, Riding d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9 (3)
Hindrances: Loyal
Edges: Command, Dodge, Hold the Line, Level Headed, Musketeer
Gear: Rapier (Str+d4; +1 Parry), pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1), shot & powder (20). Officers typically have plate corselets (+3) and steel helmets (+3).

Swordsman

Swordsman is a generic terms for hired swords, who fight duels on behalf of nobles, fencing masters willing to teach their skills to promising students, or just skilled ruffians.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Taunt d6
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8+; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Arrogant or Code of Honor
Edges: Quick. Pick four Edges from Block, Dirty Fighter, Florentine, Frenzy, Lunge, Riposte, Sweep, Two Fisted
Gear: Dagger (Str+d4), Rapier (Str+d4; +1 Parry)

Thugs

Big, dumb, and strong, thugs are hired muscle. Most operate in gangs, where they can rely on their fellows for support. They are usually reluctant to pursue a fight they are losing, and are most likely to withdraw, threatening to return at a later date and even the score. Tougher thugs have the Combat Reflexes and Frenzy Edges, as well as one or more die extra in Strength, Vigor, Fighting, and Intimidation.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6
Charisma: –2
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Illiterate, Mean
Edges: —
Gear: Dagger (Str+d4) or club (Str+d4)

Tribesman

Tribesman is a blanket term, covering indigenous peoples wherever they are in the world. Not all tribesmen share the same skills, of course. A desert nomad has little use for Boating, and the average Aztec doesn't have much call for Riding. Give the tribesman the skills you think he should have. Gear has been split into two categories—basic and advanced. Basic refers to non-technological cultures, whereas advanced covers cultures armed with blackpowder weapons.

Tribal Warrior

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Survival d6, Throwing d6
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6/5; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Illiterate, Loyal
Edges: —
Basic Gear: Spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry) and bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6).

Advanced Gear: Long sword (Str+d8) and matchlock musket (Range 10/20/40, Damage 2d8)

Tribal Chieftain

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Riding d6, Shooting d8, Survival d6, Throwing d6
Charisma: +2
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7/6; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Illiterate, Loyal
Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command, Fervor, Level Headed, Noble
Basic Gear: Spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry) and bow (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6).
Advanced Gear: Long sword (Str+d8) and pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1)

Tribal Shaman

Shamans invoke magic through spirits. Many wear simple jewelry, often their fetishes, though darker shamans may wear skulls or shrunken limbs.

Not every tribal cultures has shamans, and those as do exist are usual found in more technologically primitive cultures. Shamans may be animists or followers of an old faith, such as the Aztec or Egyptian pantheon.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Knowledge (Spirits) d10, Notice d6, Shamanism d8. Stealth d6
Charisma: +0
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Arrogant, Illiterate
Edges: Arcane Background (Shamanism), Strong Caster
Gear: Dagger (Str+d4), fetish bag
Powers: *Boost/lower trait*, *curse*, *deflection*, *fear, obscure, smite, spirit servant, spirit ward, summon beast, vision quest.*
Treat as a Veteran character.
Special Abilities:

- **Mask:** Some evil shamans wear elaborate masks. These grant +2 to Intimidation rolls. In addition, they grant any shaman a further +1 bonus to arcane skill rolls while within his tribal lands.

Witch

Witches are female practitioners of the dark arts and can come in many guises, from lithe and beautiful maidens to withered crones or hags. No matter the external appearance, however, all possess black hearts and serve dark masters. These stats are for a typical crone.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Magick d10, Notice d6, Taunt d8
Charisma: –4
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: Mean, Ugly
Edges: Arcane Background (Sorcery), Beast Master (familiar), New Powers, Strong Caster
Gear: Dagger (Str+d4).
Powers: *Boost/lower trait, curse, deflection, dispel, fear, fly, obscure, spirit servant, spirit ward, summon beast, summon spirit, viper weapon.*
Treat as a Veteran character.



Famous People

Solomon Kane encounters a number of memorable enemies and allies on his adventures. This section covers some of his most steadfast friends and deadly advesaries.

El Gar

Captain El Gar was a cruel Barbary pirate, to whom Sir John Taferal sold his niece, Marilyn. Kane tracked down El Gar in the Mediterranean, encountering him during a naval battle.

Kane slew him, and in his dying breath the cutthroat told Kane to whom he had sold Marilyn.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Boating d10, Climbing d8, Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Taunt d8, Swimming d6
Charisma: –6
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Greedy (Major), Mean
Edges: Block, Command, Really Dirty Fighter
Gear: Knife (Str+d4), scimitar (Str+d8)

Gulka

Gulka was the chief warrior of Chief Songa's tribe. He was famed for his brute strength and received the title "Gorilla-Slayer" for his prowess at hunting gorillas. Gulka had an apelike head and sluggish mind, with bestial arms and massive shoulders. Whether through bravery or stupidity, Gulka did not even fear N'Longa, the tribe's powerful ju-ju man.

He sided with le Loup and Chief Songa against Kane and N'Longa, and was eventually killed by a giant gorilla, whose mate Gulka had previously slain.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d12+1, Vigor d12
Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d10, Tracking d8
Charisma: –4
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 9
Hindrances: Mean, Ugly
Edges: Block, Brawny, Combat Reflexes, Frenzy, Improved Nerves of Steel, Mighty Blow, No Mercy, Professional (Strength), Quick, Two Fisted
Gear: Spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry)
Special Abilities:
- **Hands of Iron:** Gulka can inflict lethal damage with his fists, if he chooses.

Le Loup

A bandit chief of extreme cruelty and boundless treachery, Le Loup is also an expert swordsman. His brutal attack of an innocent girl put Solomon Kane on his trail, forcing the Frenchman to flee around the world, finally seeking refuge in Africa.

Kane eventually tracked down the man the natives called Eyes-Like-Leopard, and in a dramatic confrontation slew him.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d12, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6
Charisma: –6
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 11; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Greedy (Major), Mean
Edges: Combat Reflexes, Dirty Fighter, First Strike, Florentine, Improved Block, Improved Frenzy, Improved Nerves of Steel, Iron Jaw, Level Headed, Lunge, No Mercy, Quick, Quick Draw, Strong Willed, Sweep
Gear: Rapier (Str+d4, +1 Parry), pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1)

Sir Richard Grenville

Long-time friend to Solomon Kane, Sir Richard Grenville is mentioned frequently in the Puritan's tales. Grenville was a relative of both Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh. He originally trained as a lawyer, but went on to military service, fighting against the Turks in Hungary.

Grenville was admiral of the fleet that dropped the colonists off at Roanoke. A year later, Grenville returned to find the colony deserted. Back in England, Grenville had organized the defenses of Cornwall and Devon against the Spanish Armada, under Drake.

Sir Richard Grenville met his death in battle against a Spanish treasure fleet in 1591, a battle in which Kane also took part. For half a day, Grenville's ship, *Revenge*, held off a fleet of Spanish galleons alone before finally being boarded.

Grenville wanted to scuttle his ship, but this crew surrendered. Sir Richard died of his wounds, and Kane was led away in chains to face the Inquisition.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8
Skills: Boating d10, Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Notice d8, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Swimming d4
Charisma: +2
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 9 (3)
Hindrances: Arrogant, Curious, Loyal
Edges: Block, Combat Reflexes, Command, Explorer, Hard to Kill, Hold the Line, Level Headed, Natural Leader, Noble, Very Rich
Gear: Rapier (Str+d4, +1 Parry), pistol (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1), plate corslet (+3)



Solomon Kane

Solomon Kane is many things. A landless man, A Puritan, a wanderer. He is an expert swordsman, and a servant of God, relentless in his pursuit of right and justice. Above all, Solomon Kane is a hero.

Kane has a hard heart, yet is willing to go to any extreme—even to lay down his life—to seek revenge for those wronged who cannot avenge themselves. He does this not for personal gain or for fame and fortune, but because it is the right thing to do. The path he chooses is the path of righteousness.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d8
Skills: Boating d6, Climbing d8, Fighting d12+2, Guts d12, Knowledge (Battle) d8 Knowledge (Occult) d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Riding d10, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, Streetwise d8, Survival d8, Taunt d, Tracking d6
Charisma: +2
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 12; **Toughness:** 6
Hindrances: Code of Honor, Heroic, Loyal, Overconfident, Vengeful (Major)



Edges: Charismatic, Combat Reflexes, Command, Conviction, Dirty Fighter, Expert (Fighting), Florentine, Good Reputation, Harder to Kill, Improved Block, Improved Dodge, Improved Nerves of Steel, Improved Riposte, Improved Sweep, Improved Trademark Weapon (Rapier), Iron Jaw, Lunge, Marksman, Master (Fighting), Mighty Blow, No Mercy, Quick, Solid Determination, Strong Willed, Two Fisted, Wall of Steel
Gear: Rapier (Str+d4, +1 Parry), two pistols (Range 5/10/20, Damage 2d6+1), musket (Range 10/20/40, Damage 2d8), magic staff (Str+d4, see page 223).

Hands held him hard but the vagrant gleam in his eyes grew blind and bright,

And Solomon Kane put by the folk and went into the night.

A wild moon rode in the wild white clouds, the waves their white crests showed

When Solomon Kane went forth again, and no man knew his road.

—Solomon Kane's Homecoming (variant)

THE SAVAGE WORLD OF SOLOMON KANE

I,

born on, in the year of our lord,

in the lands of, do hereby swear that this is a true accounting of my knowledge and abilities, and that I have not borne false witness about any item contained herein, upon my honor and the honor of my fellow countrymen

Attributes

		Base	Mod
4 6 8 10 12	Agility		Charisma
4 6 8 10 12	Smarts		Pace
4 6 8 10 12	Strength		Parry
4 6 8 10 12	Spirit		Toughness
4 6 8 10 12	Vigor		

Hindrances:

Edges:

Skills

4 6 8 10 12		4 6 8 10 12	
4 6 8 10 12		4 6 8 10 12	
4 6 8 10 12		4 6 8 10 12	
4 6 8 10 12		4 6 8 10 12	
4 6 8 10 12		4 6 8 10 12	
4 6 8 10 12		4 6 8 10 12	
4 6 8 10 12		4 6 8 10 12	
4 6 8 10 12		4 6 8 10 12	

Earthly Possessions

Armor

Head:

Torso:

Arms:

Legs:

Total WT Carried:

Weight Limit:

Encumbrance Penalty:

Powers/Trappings	pm	range	damage/effect	duration

Weapon	range	ROF	damage	AP	WT	notes

Scars, brandings, and other permanent injuries:

Wounds -1 -2 -3 Inc -2 -1 Fatigue

5 10 15 20 25 30

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Allies, Lackeys, and Stalwarts

Agility	
Smarts	
Spirit	
Strength	
Vigor	

Pace | Parry | Toughness

Edges:

Hindrances:

Name | Personality | Notes

Fatigue
-1
-2
inc

Skills

- d ____ Climb
- d ____ Fighting
- d ____ Guts
- d ____ Intimidation
- d ____ Repair
- d ____ Riding
- d ____ Notice
- d ____ Shooting
- d ____ Stealth
- d ____ Throwing
- d ____ _____
- d ____ _____
- d ____ _____
- d ____ _____

Gear | range | ROF | damage (AP) | Notes

Ammo Track
Full
High
Low
Out

Allies, Lackeys, and Stalwarts

Agility	
Smarts	
Spirit	
Strength	
Vigor	

Pace | Parry | Toughness

Edges:

Hindrances:

Name | Personality | Notes

Fatigue
-1
-2
inc

Skills

- d ____ Climb
- d ____ Fighting
- d ____ Guts
- d ____ Intimidation
- d ____ Repair
- d ____ Riding
- d ____ Notice
- d ____ Shooting
- d ____ Stealth
- d ____ Throwing
- d ____ _____
- d ____ _____
- d ____ _____
- d ____ _____

Gear | range | ROF | damage (AP) | Notes

Ammo Track
Full
High
Low
Out

Combat Summary

Initiative

- Deal each Wild Card and group of characters one card.
- Reshuffle the deck the round after a Joker is dealt.
- A Joker allows the character to act whenever he wants in a round, and adds +2 to all his Trait and damage rolls that round.

Movement

- A character may move up to his Pace and perform an action, such as making a hand-to-hand attack, firing a ranged weapon, casting a spell, or making a test of wills.
- A character may attempt additional actions, such as running, but incurs a –2 penalty to all Trait rolls for each additional action.

Fighting

- The attacker makes a single Fighting roll. If the roll is equal to or greater than his target's Parry, the attack hits (see Damage). A raise on the attack adds +1d6 to the damage.

Shooting

- The attacker makes a single Shooting roll and subtracts 2 for Medium range and 4 for Long range. If the roll is successful (TN 4 or more), the attack hits (see Damage). A raise on the attack adds +1d6 to the damage.

Damage

- If the damage is equal to or greater than the victim's Toughness, he's Shaken.
- A Shaken character who receives a second Shaken result is wounded.
- If the damage exceeds the victim's Toughness by a raise, he's Wounded. Wounded Extras are Incapacitated and removed from play. Wild Cards can suffer up to three wounds.
- When a Wild Card suffers more than three wounds he is Incapacitated. Check the Knockout Blow table to determine the extent of his injuries.

Tests of Will

- The character makes an opposed roll against his chosen target. The defender uses Smarts to resist Taunt, and Spirit to resist Intimidate.
- Success means the attacker gets a +2 bonus to his next action against the defender. A raise on the roll gives the attacker the bonus and makes the defender Shaken.

Aftermath

- A Healing roll on an injured Wild Card heals 1 wound with a success and 2 with a raise. If the roll is failed, the wound must heal naturally.
- Incapacitated Extras roll Vigor to see if they are alive or dead.

Test of Wills Summary

Intimidate	Opposed roll versus Spirit; +2 to next action against this target with a success; +2 bonus and opponent is Shaken with a raise
Taunt	Opposed roll versus Smarts; +2 to next action against this target with a success; +2 bonus and opponent is Shaken with a raise

Attack Options Summary

Attack	Modifier
Aim	+2 Shooting/Throwing if character does not move
Area Effect Attacks	Targets under template suffer damage, treat cover as armor; missed attack rolls cause 1d6" deviation for thrown weapons, 1d10" for launched weapons; x1 for Short range, x2 for Medium range, x3 for Long range; no extra 1d6 damage for a raise.
Breaking Things	See Obstacle Toughness Table; Parry 2; No bonus damage or Aces apply
Called Shots	
Limb	–2 attack
Head	–4 attack; +4 damage
Small target	–4 attack
Tiny target	–6 attack
Cover	
Light	–1
Medium	–2
Heavy	–4
Darkness	
Dim	–1 attack
Dark	–2 attack; targets are not visible beyond 10"
Pitch Darkness	Targets must be detected to be attacked at –4
Defend	+2 Parry; character may take no other actions
Disarm	–2 attack; defender must make a Str roll vs. the damage or drop his weapon
The Drop	+4 attack and damage
Finishing Move	Instant kill to helpless foe with lethal weapon
Firing Into Melee	See Innocent Bystanders
Full Defense	Character rolls his Fighting, using the result as his Parry
Ganging Up	+1 Fighting per additional attacker; maximum of +4
Grappling	Fighting roll to grapple, on a success, foe is entangled; on a raise opponent Shaken. Defender can make opposed Strength or Agility to break free (any other action made at –4); Attacker can make opposed Strength or Agility to damage victim
Innocent Bystanders	Missed Shooting or Throwing roll of 1 (2 with blunderbusses) hits random adjacent target
Nonlethal Damage	Characters are knocked out for 1d6 hours instead of wounded
Obstacles	If attack would have hit but for the concealment penalty, the obstacle acts as Armor
Prone	As Medium cover; prone defenders suffer –2 Fighting, –2 Parry in melee
Ranged Weapons in Melee	Pistols only; Target Number is defender's Parry
Touch Attack	+2 Fighting
Trick	Describe action; make opposed Agility or Smarts roll; opponent is –2 Parry until next action; with a raise, the foe is –2 Parry and Shaken
Two Weapons	–2 attack; additional –2 for off-hand if not Ambidextrous
Unarmed Defender	Armed attackers gain +2 Fighting
Unstable Platform	–2 Shooting from a moving vehicle or animal
Wild Attack	+2 Fighting; +2 damage; –2 Parry until next action
Withdrawing from Combat	Adjacent foes get one free attack at retreating character

Knockout Blow

Heroes who suffer more than 3 wounds must check this table to determine their fate. Remember, you're checking the number of wounds caused by the knockout blow (the one that sent the hero to this table)—not the total number of wounds he has.

Don't forget to subtract the character's wound modifiers from any Trait rolls required by the table.

1 Wound: Battered & Bruised

If the wounded character was previously Incapacitated, this result has no further effect. Otherwise, your hero's had the wind knocked out of him. Make a Spirit roll at the beginning of each round. If the roll is successful, he becomes Shaken and can return to the fight.

2 Wounds: Incapacitated

Your character is beaten badly enough to take him out of this fight. The hero's Incapacitated and must roll on the Injury Table (see page 85).

3 Wounds: Bleeding Out

Your character is Bleeding Out and Incapacitated. Roll on the Injury Table and make a Vigor roll at the start of each combat round. A failure means the hero has lost too much blood and becomes Mortally Wounded (see below; begin rolling for the Mortal Wound in the next round). With a success, he hangs in there, but he's still bleeding and must roll again next round. With a raise, or a successful Healing roll, he stops bleeding but remains Incapacitated.

4+ Wounds: Mortal Wound

The injured hero has suffered a life-threatening wound and will not recover without aid. He is Incapacitated and must roll on the Injury Table. He must also make a Vigor roll at the start of each round. If the roll is failed, the character dies. A Healing roll stabilizes the victim but leaves him Incapacitated.

Injury Table

Roll 2d6 on the table below, then make a Vigor roll. If the Vigor roll is failed, the injury is permanent regardless of healing. If the roll is successful, the effect ends when all wounds are healed.

If the attack that caused the Injury was directed at a specific body part, use that location instead of rolling randomly.

2d6	Wound
2	**Unmentionables:** The hero suffers an embarrassing and painful wound to the groin. If the injury is permanent, reproduction is out of the question!
3–4	**Arm:** The character catches one in the left or right arm (determined randomly). The arm is rendered useless.
5–9	**Guts:** Your hero catches one between the crotch and the chin. Roll 1d6 on the sub-table below: **1–2 Broken:** His Agility is reduced by a die type (min d4). **3–4 Battered:** His Vigor is reduced by a die type (min d4). **5–6 Busted:** The hero's Strength is reduced by a die type (min d4).
10	**Leg:** The hero's left or right leg (determined randomly) is crushed, broken, or mangled. His Pace is reduced by 1.
11–12	**Head:** Your hero has suffered a grievous injury to his head. Roll 1d6 on the sub-table below: **1–2 Hideous Scar:** Your hero now has the Ugly Hindrance. **3–4 Blinded:** One of your hero's eyes was damaged. He gains the One Eye Hindrance (or the Blind Hindrance if he only had one good eye). **5–6 Brain Damage:** Your hero suffers massive trauma to the head. His Smarts is reduced one die type (min d4).

Fright Table

1d20*	Effect
1–4	**Adrenaline Surge:** The frightened character's "fight" response takes over. He adds +2 to all Trait and damage rolls on his next action.
5–8	**Shaken:** The character is Shaken.
9–12	**Panicked:** The character is Panicked. He must flee at his full Pace and receives a free run action. Each round thereafter, the character may make a Spirit roll as a free action. With success, he comes to his senses. On a failure, the poor soul must continue running away.
13–16	**Minor Phobia:** The frightened character gains a Minor Phobia Hindrance somehow associated with the trauma.
17–18	**Major Phobia:** The frightened character gains a Major Phobia Hindrance.
19–20	**The Mark of Fear:** The hero is Shaken and also suffers a minor cosmetic physical alteration—a white streak forms in the character's hair, his eyes twitch constantly, he becomes permanently jumpy, or some such oddity. This Mark of Fear reduces his Charisma by 1.
21+	**Heart Attack:** The character is so overwhelmed with fear that her heart stutters. The hero becomes Incapacitated and must make a Vigor roll at –2. If successful, the hero is Shaken and can't attempt to recover for 1d4 rounds. If she fails, she dies in 2d6 rounds. A successful Healing roll at –4 saves the victim's life, but she remains Incapacitated.

**Add the creature's Fear penalty as a positive number to this roll.*

Backlash Table

2d6	Effect
2	**Rift:** Something from the spirit world has been disturbed by the caster's dabbling and lashes out at him. He must make a Spirit roll at –2 or lose one die in his arcane skill permanently. If his skill die drops below a d4, he permanently loses his Arcane Background. Regardless, he also cannot use his powers for 2d6 days.
3	**Spirit Whip:** The character suffers a Wound. He also loses the ability to use his powers for d6 days.
4–5	**Spirit Blast:** The caster takes a level of Fatigue for 24 hours and can't use his powers for a day.
6–8	**Magic Feedback:** The caster is left Shaken and is unable to use his powers for d6 hours.
9–10	**Energy Fatigue:** The mental strain of dealing with such vast power has taken its toll. He is Shaken and can't use his powers for d8 Rounds.
11	**Magic Shock:** The caster is Shaken and may not use his powers for d6 Rounds.
12	**Power Surge:** The caster taps into a particularly potent source of magic and gains +2 to his arcane skill rolls for the next 24 hours.

Healing Modifiers

Modifier	Condition
–2	Rough traveling
–2	No medical attention
–2	Poor environmental conditions, such as intense heat, or rain
+0	Basic Medical Aid (bandages)
+1	Good Medical Aid (physician)
+2	Expert Medical Aid (surgeon: very rare)

Reaction Table

2d6	Initial Reaction
2	**Hostile:** The NPC is openly hostile and does his best to stand in the hero's way. He won't help without a very substantial reward.
3–4	**Uncooperative:** The character isn't willing to help unless there's some significant advantage to himself.
5–9	**Neutral:** The character has no definite attitude, and will help if the task at hand is very easy. If the task is difficult, he'll require substantial payment of some kind.
10–11	**Friendly:** The NPC will go out of his way for the hero. He'll likely do easy tasks for free (or very little), and is willing to do more dangerous tasks for fair pay or other favors.
12	**Helpful:** The NPC is anxious to help the hero, and will probably do so for little or no pay depending on the nature of the task.

Object Toughness

Object	Toughness	Damage
Light Door	11	B, C
Heavy Door	14	B, C
Iron Door	18	B, C
Lock	10	B, P
Manacles	15	B, P, C
Knife, Sword	14	B, C
Rope	7	C, P

B=Blunt C=Cutting, P=Piercing

Obstacle Toughness

Armor	Obstacle
+1	Glass, leather
+2	Leaded glass window
+3	Interior wooden wall
+4	Thick wooden wall
+6	Baked mud wall
+8	Brick wall
+10	Stone wall

Stealth Modifiers

Situation	Modifier
Crawling	+2
Running	–2
Dim light	+1
Darkness	+2
Pitch darkness	+4
Light cover	+1
Medium cover	+2
Heavy cover	+4

In combat, the roll covers a single round of movement. Otherwise, it covers up to five times the hero's Pace.

Tracking Modifiers

Situation	Modifier
Tracking more than 5 individuals	+2
Recent snow	+4
Mud	+2
Dusty area	+1
Raining	–4
Tracking in poor light	–2
Tracks are more than one day old	–2
Target attempted to hide tracks	–2

Each roll a hero makes generally covers following the tracks for one mile

Ally's Personality

d20 Roll	Personality
1	Young
2	Cruel
3	Old
4	Happy
5	Experienced
6	Fanatical
7	Lazy
8	Sneaky
9	Bright
10	Stupid
11	Crude
12	Agile
13	Observant
14	Clueless
15	Mysterious
16	Creative
17	Righteous
18	Fearless
19	Cowardly
20	Heroic

Character Summary

1) Race

• You can only play a human, but you get a free Edge (for which you must meet all the requirements).

2) Traits

• Your hero starts with a d4 in each attribute, and has 5 points with which to raise them. Raising an attribute a die type costs 1 point.

• You have 15 points for skills.

• Each die type in a skill costs 1 point up to the linked attribute. Going over the linked attribute costs 2 points per level.

• Charisma is equal to the total bonuses or penalties given by Edges and Hindrances.

• Pace is 6".

• Parry is equal to 2 plus half Fighting.

• Toughness is equal to 2 plus half Vigor. Go ahead and add the bonus granted by the armor worn on your torso to this value as well for speed's sake, but remember it may not count if attacks target other parts of the body.

3) Edges & Hindrances

• You gain additional points for taking up to one Major Hindrance and two Minor Hindrances.

For 2 points you can:

• Gain another attribute point.

• Choose an Edge.

For 1 point you can:

• Gain another skill point.

• Increase starting funds by £5

4) Gear

• Start with £5

5) Background Details

• Fill in any other background details you care to add.

Leveling

• Gain a new Edge

• Increase one skill*

• Increase two skills**

• Increase one attribute***

• Add a new skill at d4

*Equal to or greater than linked attribute

**Less than linked attribute

***Only once per Rank.

Load Limits

A character's load limit is equal to 5 x their Strength.

Every multiple of the load limit after the first subtracts 1 from a character's:

• Agility and all linked skills

• Strength and all linked skills

Skills Summary

Skill	Linked Attribute
Boating	Agility
Climbing	Strength
Driving	Agility
Fighting	Agility
Gambling	Smarts
Guts	Spirit
Healing	Smarts
Intimidation	Spirit
Investigation	Smarts
Knowledge	Smarts
Lockpicking	Agility
Notice	Smarts
Persuasion	Spirit
Repair	Smarts
Riding	Agility
Shooting	Agility
Stealth	Agility
Streetwise	Smarts
Survival	Smarts
Swimming	Agility
Taunt	Smarts
Throwing	Agility
Tracking	Smarts

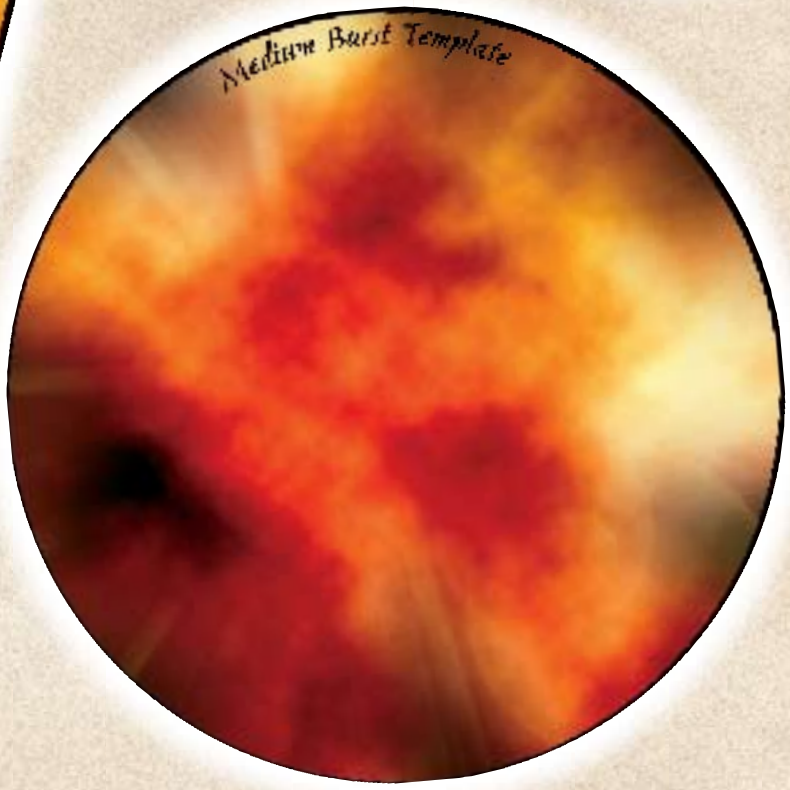
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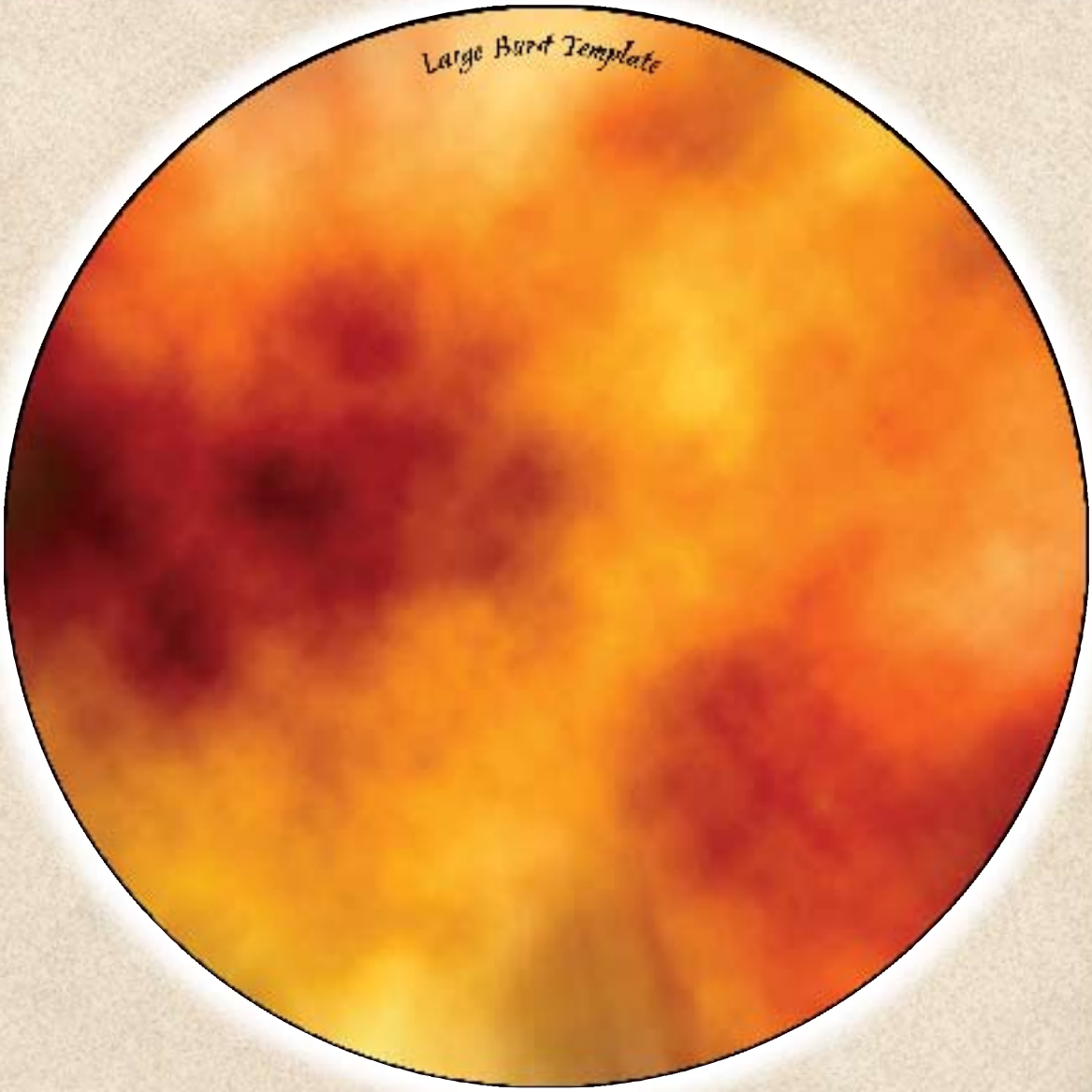
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Large Burst Template


Small Burst Template


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