

FOR
**Call of
Cthulhu**
1920s

**Trouble
Along The
Way**

FEARFUL PASSAGES



NICK SMITH

M. Anderson, P. Anderson, Bjørksten,
Gillan, Hatherley, Jeffery, Kluskens, Love,
Morrison, Routt, Rowland, Smith, Willis



Fearful Passages

Nine Terrifying Journeys On Three Continents



H. P. LOVECRAFT 1890 – 1937

FEARFUL PASSAGES

Nine Tickets To Terror

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Introduction

TRAVEL broadens the mind; horror unravels it. The aim of this book is to give *Call of Cthulhu* travelers a taste of both. Here are nine scenarios, each focused around a mode of transport, all set in the 1920s.

The golden age of travel occurred between 1880-1939. The terrors of the Second World War precluded leisured travel and impoverished the leisured classes. When the war was over and holiday-makers reappeared, they chose to fly. As traveling time shrank, *destination* became more important than *journey*, a notion now so commonsensical that we blink to think that not long ago the reverse was truer.

In the 1920s, luxury services such as the Orient Express and liners such as the North-Atlantic-running *Mauretania* were supreme, and were counted among the genuine privileges of class. Modern equivalents such as the Concorde or the bullet trains of Japan and France pale in comparison. Elegance of manner has been sacrificed upon the altar of physical speed. If it is too much to say that then luxury served to protect passengers against the hazards of slowness, neither is the idea very wrong.

Here is a brief return to the 1920s, when travel was by turns long, arduous, luxurious, and debilitating, but always full of incident and meaning. Bon voyage!

The Scenarios

- The first three scenarios present three classic forms of transport: plane, train, and auto. These scenarios have no narrative hooks: they begin when the investigators utilize the appropriate vehicle and when the keeper has a mind to make their journey worse than might be expected.
- The second set of three present more esoteric modes—airship, diving suit, and canal boat. Helium-filled airships have offered convenient transport for teams of *Call of Cthulhu* investigators since the beginning of the game. Diving suits are not a widely-used form of transport, but they are the only means by which investigators can traverse the ocean floor in the period, and their potential ap-

plication repeatedly arises in scenarios. Canal boats, used widely in England and northern Europe into the 20th century, did not much occur in the United States. We note the existence of similar craft (ones unrestricted in width by the squeeze of canal locks) in the Mississippi-Ohio waterways, and the universal presence today of rental houseboats on lakes and reservoirs.

- The last three scenarios present more exotic conveyances. Armored cars are perhaps not quite the stuff of holidays, but paranoid investigators (and players) seek the effect of things like them.

In the 1890s and 1920s, elephants offered comfortable and relatively speedy rural transport in portions of India and Southeast Asia. Horse-drawn sledges were a comparable mode of transport along the St. Lawrence in North America, and and in the higher latitudes from Sweden and Germany to Siberia on the Eurasian continent.

— L.W., M.M.

CALL OF CTHULHU 5th EDITION

Fearful Passages has been prepared using the skills list from the 5th edition of *Call of Cthulhu*, which differs slightly from previous editions.

New Skills	Old Skills
Art	Sing
Biology	Botany, Zoology
Conceal	Camouflage
Locksmith	Pick Pocket
Martial Arts	new
Medicine	Diagnose Disease, Treat Disease, Treat Poison
Natural History	Botany, Zoology
Navigate	Make Maps
Other Language	R/W Language
Own Language	R/W English
Persuade	Debate, Oratory
Physics	new

Fear Of Flying

Wherein the investigators become aviation pioneers, enjoy magnificent views before only dreamed of, and learn that everything they see may not be real.

FLYING: it's fast, convenient, and very modern. The best people are doing it, and it's the only way to travel if you're in a hurry. By the mid-1920s, civil aviation is coming along in leaps and bounds. Already there are gigantic aircraft that can carry ten or more passengers in relative luxury, true liners of the air. The investigators are to travel on such a plane, a British-built Tabor airliner with a crew of three and seating twelve passengers.

This adventure can be used independently, when a long-range commercial air journey is required in the keeper's campaign, or as part of another independent scenario. The flight could be planned within the United States, or between countries in Europe or Latin America. Regular trans-oceanic service awaits the mid-1930s and a new generation of aircraft.

Run fully, it is a complete adventure. However, many keepers may want to pull bits and pieces from it in a succession of sessions, alternate use which the episodic stages promote.

Be sure to learn if the investigators have flown before, what those experiences were, and study their investigator sheets to note any applicable sanity problems.

Sources, Acknowledgements

A shorter and very different version of this material appeared in *White Dwarf* #72. As ever, many thanks to Francois Prins for the use of diagrams and other information from his article, "Mister Tarrant's Tabor," and for new information on aero-engines and other components. Inaccuracies in aviation terminology, design, and performance figures are the fault of the author, not Mr. Prins.

Other sources include *Death in the Clouds* (Agatha Christie), *Diamonds In The Sky* (Pettifer/Hudson), *The World's Worst Aircraft* (James Gilbert), *Airliners* (Robert Wall), and *Slide Rule*, Stephen Morris, and *So Disdained* (all three by Nevil Shute).

Early Passenger Aircraft

Books and films about First World War aviation usually feature glamorous fighters and Zeppelins, but rarely mention that both sides developed large long-range bombers, capable of carrying tons of bombs hundreds of miles. After the war many of these aircraft were converted to passenger use, or served as prototypes for civilian airliners.

European aircraft dominated civil aviation through most of the Twenties, since planes like the Handley-Page W8, Vickers Vimy, and Bristol Pullman carried eight to fourteen passengers, and since the normal distances between important European cities were short and profitable compared to routes in the Western Hemisphere or Australia.

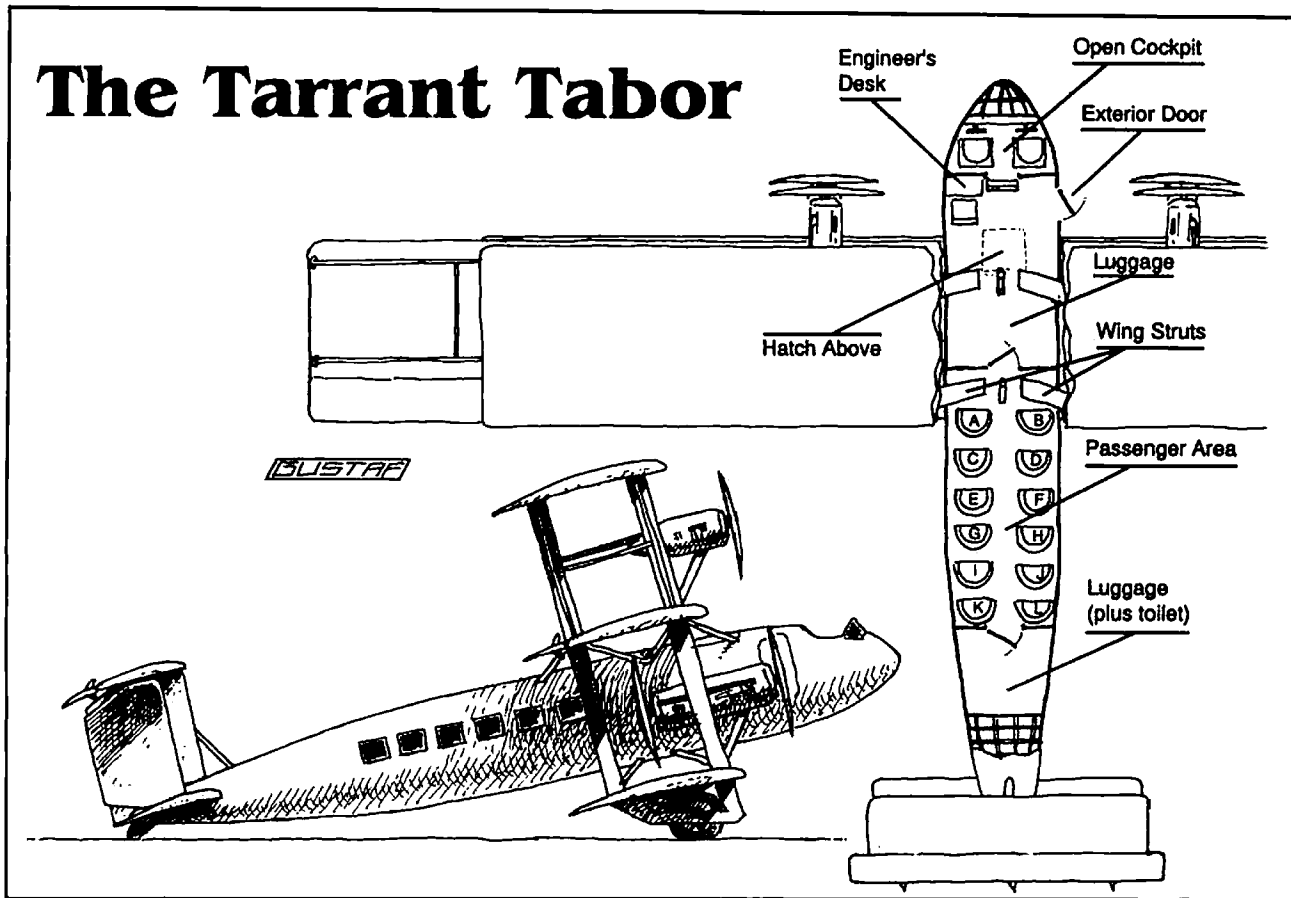
Though U.S. manufacturers concentrated on fighters and light aircraft until the mid-1920s, by decade's end a new generation of multi-engined aircraft spanned deserts, mountains, and inland seas with ease.

By our standards, commercial aircraft in the 1920s were primitive. They were biplanes or triplanes made of wood and fabric, with the passengers seated in wicker chairs. Given a good tail wind, speeds reached 80-120mph. Most early models lacked navigation aids except for a hand compass and a barometer. Some had the unreliable radios of the day, but most did not. Their pilots shadowed railway lines, roads, and canals to reach the right airport, very much as sailing ships once hugged coastlines, fearing to leave sight of land. Crossing deserts or wide waters, pilots couldn't use landmarks so they trusted to dead reckoning.

Flying was done in daylight. Bad weather automatically grounded a plane until the weather cleared, for these aircraft could neither steer around storms, nor climb above them. Faced with continuing bad weather, passengers sometimes disembarked and caught the next train instead.

Toilets were spartan. In-flight food was a hamper of sandwiches. There might be a flask of brandy, surreptitiously offered in the United States. Cabin crew weren't introduced until the 1930s, when dozens of passengers needed to be accommodated.

The Tarrant Tabor



The Tarrant Tabor

THE TABOR Aerial Yacht never existed, but it's based on a real aircraft, commissioned by W.G. Tarrant, a plywood manufacturer, to meet the Royal Flying Corps' need for a heavy long-range bomber. The first of two prototypes crashed on take-off in November 1918. Both pilots were killed. This accident was almost certainly avoidable: the aircraft was badly ballasted and fitted with engines much less powerful than the designer originally intended, and the pilot exceeded his instructions by attempting to take off during a taxiing test. In 1919 the project was abandoned and the second prototype scrapped.

The Tabor had features which made it uniquely suitable as a civilian airliner. The fuselage was wider than a modern Concorde airliner, almost free of internal spars and bracing wires, and it should have been able to carry a heavier load for a longer range than any other aircraft of the day. The design included a radio and navigational aids. The designer was W.H. Barling. He later moved to

America and designed the Barling bomber, which was in most respects a scaled-down replica of the Tabor.

For this scenario it's assumed that the second Tabor prototype was completed and flew, and that the Tarrant factory went on to produce the Tabor models described. We chose this aircraft because it's big for the times, and because one can go outside on it while in flight.

Structure

The Tabor is a huge airliner, designed as a bomber but converted to peacetime use at the end of the Great War. This passenger version has four Rolls-Royce Condor engines; two between the middle and upper wings, and two more between the middle and lower wings.

The engines are surrounded by a maze of control wires, fuel and cooling pipes, and other plumbing, all essential to the safe operation of the aircraft, as well as by support struts and bracing wires. The main components, apart from the engines themselves, are mostly made of wood, fabric, and wire—twin-ply laminated plywood for the fuselage, and spruce and other timber for various beams and spars, with a maze of strong wires bracing the structure. Most of the outer surfaces are covered with a layer of fabric, doped and stretched to glossy smoothness. Wing edges and propeller blades are made of polished wood.

Tarrant Tabor Aerial Yacht

Maximum ranges (Normal/Maximum fuel loading):

6-8 hours @ 113mph (6 engines) 670-900 miles
9-12 hours @ 91mph (4 engines) 810-1090 miles

Engines: Rolls Royce Condor IIb,
650 hp (x6)

Pusher propellers: diameter 10 ft 7.5 in (x2)

Tractor propellers: diameter 12 ft 6 in (x4)

Wingspan, top/bottom: 98 ft 6 in

Wingspan, middle: 131 ft 3 in

Total wing surface: 4950 sq ft

Overall height: 37 ft 3 in

Overall length: 73 ft 2 in

Max. body diameter: 11 ft

**Vertical gap
between planes:** 14 ft 9 in

Chord: 15 ft 2 in

Dihedral: 4x on all planes

Area of ailerons: 105 sq ft each (x2)

Area of fin: 42 sq ft each (x2)

Area of rudder: 31 sq ft (x2)

Area of tailplanes: 184 sq ft (x2)

Total elevator area: 216 sq ft

Span of tailplane: 30 ft

Gap of tailplane: 10 ft

Landing wheels: 5 ft diameter,
1 ft track width (2 x3)

Max. fuel capacity: 1600 gallons

Normal fuel load: 1200 gallons

**Maximum
loaded weight:** 44672 lb

**Max. passenger /
cargo capacity:** 9000 lb

Takeoff speed: 60mph

Fuselage Layout

The nose contains instruments and ballast. The two pilots sit side by side in an open cockpit, protected by a small windscreen but otherwise exposed to the elements. They have identical linked controls, mostly operated by hand wheels (rarely found in smaller aircraft) and foot bars.

A hatch leads to the engineer's compartment, which is crammed with instruments, a radio transmitter/receiver, a flare pistol, and a large rubber life raft. The raft is inflated via a foot pump, and is in no way suitable for use as an improvised parachute. This compartment is the main entrance to the rest of the aircraft, and also has hatches for access to the wings. The wireless can't be used during take-offs or landings: it has an extremely long wire aerial which hangs below the fuselage in flight, but must be reeled in near the ground. This compartment also has room for some luggage. The heaviest trunks and cases are put here to be near the center of gravity of the aircraft.

A narrow door leads back into the cabin, which is equipped with seats for twelve passengers, and with

overhead net racks for hand luggage and coats. A baggage compartment at the rear of the cabin can hold up to a half ton more luggage. Here also are kept 12 passenger parachutes. The fuel tanks are below the cabin and engineer's compartment.

Operation

The Tabor was designed to allow a bombing flight from Britain to Berlin and back, but no commercial airline could risk operating aircraft at the limit of endurance. Although it has the same capacity as its military ancestor, it usually flies with about 3/4 of the maximum fuel load, increasing cargo and passenger capacity at the expense of range.

The airliner normally lands before sunset, for refueling and a good night's sleep. Regardless of length, the same crew stay with the aircraft throughout the flight; no regulations limit the number of hours pilots can spend in the air.

The pilots don't operate the engines. Instead they are controlled by the flight engineer, who must constantly monitor and adjust dozens of dials, pumps, and valves. Serious problems occur if his control station is left unattended for more than a few minutes. The engineer is also expected to climb out into the wing rigging and make minor engine repairs in flight if necessary. In many ways he's the most important person aboard.

As an example of the complexity of this huge aircraft, and of the problems it might pose for crew who don't understand its special features, try starting the engines. The airscrews are much too large to be swung by hand, and there are no electric starter motors powerful enough to turn them over. Instead the Tabor uses the Maybach system, a potentially explosive process involving hand pumps, compressed petrol and ether sprayed into the engine inlets, and a hand-cranked magneto to detonate the mix. Without detailed instruction it's virtually impossible to use this system successfully, and the most probable result of failure is a catastrophic fire.

The Tabor also has an unpublicized design fault: the upper engines tend to pull the nose of the aircraft forwards and downwards. This effect is masked when the lower engines are operating normally, but if one of the lower engines stops working, then the diagonally opposite upper engine also must be throttled back.

For maximum range the engineer can shut down the two upper engines after takeoff, reducing the maximum speed but extending its range by 150-200 miles.

Two variants on the Tabor design are in service. The Tabor bomber is still used by the RAF, its roomy fuselage packed with fuel tanks and its bombs hanging from racks below the wings. And one luxury passenger model also has been built, equipped for six passengers, carrying a steward, a small kitchen and bar, and other refinements. It belongs to a British newspaper tycoon.

Keeper's Scenario Summary

The investigators need to get somewhere fast. They have enough money to be able to fly, and the weather is good. What they don't know is that this flight will be a most unusual one. Boarding passengers include a movie star, an entity of the Cthulhu Mythos, two arms manufacturers, and a crooked private detective.

Dawn Peachtree is the movie star. Hiram Hilton, her agent, might be an old friend of the investigators. He calls them the day before they fly, and discreetly asks them to keep an eye on her, without letting her know what they're doing. Her former lover, mobster Rico Galetti, has just been released from prison and was found murdered in an alley. The public has almost forgotten her relationship with this notorious criminal. New publicity connecting them might wreck her career. It transpires that she hardly remembers him.

If the keeper finds it amusing, she falls in love with someone equally unsuitable—the investigator seated across from her.

Gerhardt Stumpff is a Swiss industrialist with armaments holdings all over the world. He has arranged to fly with Ed Gillespie, an American mining magnate, to hammer out the details of a complex deal which will let Stumpff illegally import helium from Gillespie's wells in the United States.

The banker, Alfred Clarke, is actually *Ssilith*, a serpent person disguised by the Consume Likeness spell (see the *Cthulhu* rulesbook for its parameters). He has ideas for chemical weapons potent enough to wipe out humanity, and needs the resources of some large company to develop them. He plans to kill Stumpff and take his place, then start research. At present he is studying Stumpff, preparatory to casting Consume Likeness again, and intends no action during the flight.

A final complication is the private detective. Arthur Mallow has been hired by lawyers working for one of the investigators' old enemies. Mallow already has evidence of enough illegal activities (burglary, massacre of cultists, carrying weapons without licenses, etc.) in enough states to get them put away for years. He has no interest in why our heroes performed such deeds, but is trying to decide if he can make his time more profitable by blackmailing the investigators.

Whether any of these complications are put in motion depends on the will of the keeper.

Crew And Passengers

Statistics for crew and passengers occur at the end of this adventure.

The Tabor is British-built, and for a while the most experienced pilots of multi-engine aircraft are former members of the British armed forces. Even if the campaign is set in America, with a hypothetical American airline (Trans-National), that line has hired British-

Describing Damage to the Tabor

Unless the keeper has good reason, use the following only as a general source of ideas for what might happen to the aircraft. If you keep track of aircraft hit points, be sure not to announce progressive point totals to the players, since your purpose is to describe and dramatize, not to prove by totalling up. If using hit points, those lost need to be recorded for different parts of the plane, and keep the current airspeed as a separate indicator.

- Each engine (and associated plumbing) has 25 hit points, but stops running after losing 13 hit points. The aircraft loses 10mph flying speed for each stopped engine, 5MPH for each engine that's throttled back. An engine could be repaired with a successful skill roll, as the keeper wishes, in the air or on the ground.
- The wings have 150 hit points. The aircraft loses 1D6mph for each ten hit points of damage done to the wings. The Tabor stalls and goes out of control when its airspeed falls below 40mph. Unlike engines, wing surfaces have no chance of being repaired in the air.
- The fuselage is made of laminated plywood with reinforcing ribs, formed into a strong monocoque shell. There's a small chance that a bullet penetrating the hull hits some other part of the aircraft. The chance of this happening is left to the keeper. For example, a shot fired straight forward along the fuselage has a tiny chance of hitting one of the cockpit crew; a shot fired through the floor is likely to hit a fuel tank, perhaps starting a fire or causing a dangerous fuel leak.

The fuselage has 150 hit points, but damage after the first 20 hit points seriously weakens the aircraft. Each time such incremental damage occurs, roll D100. If the D100 result is less than the total of all the fuselage hit points lost, roll 1D10 on the table below. Bullets doing 5 or less hit points of damage might be able to pass through the fuselage without other consequence.

Fuselage Disasters Table

1D10 Disaster Result

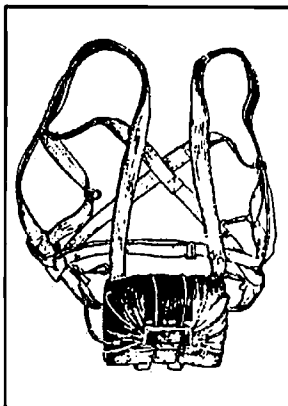
- 01-03 **The plywood cracks!** Roll D100 each successive round after this happens. Each time the D100 result is less than the current fuselage hit points lost, then lose 1D4 more fuselage hit points.
- 04-06 **A bracing-wire anchorage rips free!** The pilot must reduce the airspeed by 2D4mph.
- 07-09 **A support-strut anchorage breaks away!** Lose 2D6 fuselage hit points and reduce airspeed by 3D6MPH. Make another percentile roll to check for further effects.
- 10 **A main support-strut snaps!** The aircraft starts to break up. The pilot must attempt an immediate emergency landing.

Parachutes

Aboard the Tabor, pilot and co-pilot wear their chutes. The engineer's is handy to him in his compartment. Passenger chutes are stored in the baggage/toilet area. In case of an emergency, Villiers or a passenger chosen by him distributes them.

The seat-pack parachute was standardized by the U.S. Army in 1919, and was at that time recognized as a reliable safety device. With straps and buckles, the whole weighed about 18 pounds. The main chute is pulled open by a small pilot chute, in turn opened by the ripcord. The main parachute is usually 24 feet in diameter after being opened. It is not nearly as maneuverable as modern parasail designs, but does the job, descending at from 16 to 24 feet per second, the actual rate depending on the weight of the parachutist, the diameter of the parachute, and the air density.

The hazards of such parachuting are four: the



Parachute harness and pack ready for service

opening of the chute must be delayed until free of the aircraft, the chute must have been properly packed so that the shroud lines deploy properly, the chute must open at least 150 feet above the ground, and the chutist must avoid falling on such lethal items as boulders and power lines, or being entangled and drowned after falling into water.

Such a parachute is difficult to maneuver: just where one lands is mostly a matter of pilot judgment in finding a congenial drop zone, and luck in receiving friendly winds which keep the parachutist on-target. Even experts regularly break bones. An investigator probably does not need a Parachute skill, but the keeper might call for some sort of anti-panic roll based on Sanity or Luck by which the investigator keeps his or her head.



The way a parachute is worn in an aeroplane

trained personnel for their expertise. The situation has completely changed by the 1930s, of course.

Capt. James Sutton-Smythe (open cockpit)

Sutton-Smythe served with the Royal Flying Corps (RFC), later the Royal Air Force (RAF), and was awarded the Military Cross before he was shot down and captured, spending six months in one of the nastier German POW camps. He is the pilot of this aircraft, senior pilot for the airline, and content, but he misses those days in his Sopwith Camel. He carries the lucky rabbit's foot that brought him through the war alive.

Peter Fincham (open cockpit)

Fincham is the Canadian co-pilot. He also served with the RFC, eventually discharged on medical grounds. During the Great War he made a forced landing in the Arabian desert, and was captured and tortured by worshipers of Nyarlathotep. He was rescued by T.E. Lawrence, the famous Lawrence of Arabia, and spent some weeks with those irregulars. He carries an autographed photograph of Lawrence flanked by two heavily-armed Arabs.

Harold Villiers (engineer's compartment)

A native of Virginia, Villiers was one of many Americans who joined the British Army at the outbreak of the Great War, then transferred to the U.S. Army when America



Dawn Peachtree

joined the conflict. He spent most of the war in the trenches, and joined the Air Corps only a few weeks before the Armistice. He is the flight engineer.

Dawn Peachtree (seat A)

Miss Peachtree lives in Beverly Hills. She has starred in three Biblical epics and two westerns. She has a strong Australian accent, and will fall out of favor when sound is introduced. She imagines that great actresses always exaggerate their emotions. In consequence, her 'tinkling laugh' is like scrapes on a chalkboard, and her swoon like a sprawling penguin. Nonetheless, she's reasonably kind and brave, and of ox-like constitution. If the keeper wishes, she falls passionately in love with the investigator who sits nearest her. Miss Peachtree suffers loudly from a mild fear of heights.

Gerhardt Stumpff (seat C)

Stumpff is a wealthy industrialist with international holdings. His arms interests are thought to have drawn out and intensified the Great War. During the war his German

factories impressed prisoners-of-war as forced labor, and many died from harsh treatment. Since the war there have been threats against him, and two unsuccessful attempts to kill him. He is always armed. The last murder attempt attracted a lot of publicity, and an investigator making a Know roll remembers hearing of the incident. Stumpff's eyes glint balefully.



Gerhardt Stumpff

Ed Gillespie (seat D)

J. Edward Gillespie controls vast oil and mineral holdings, many important to the arms trade. He is looking forward to a profitable helium trade with Stumpff—much more than he could make selling to the U.S. government. Nearly all existing helium is extracted from U.S. wells. Gillespie would secretly build his own extraction plant, and sell the gas to Stumpff's clients aboard. Gillespie is a small, well-dressed man intent on impressing Stumpff and getting enough money to compensate for betraying his government. There is no picture of Gillespie.

Alfred [Ssilith] Clarke (seat J)

He is a serpent-man scientist and time-traveler from the Permian era who was accidentally stranded in this time. He is appalled at the way mammals have come to dominate the earth, and plans to develop chemical weapons to eradicate mammalian life forms. That done, he anticipates that the degenerate survivors of his race will speciate into a new and re-vigorized serpentdom. As Alfred Clarke, he looks about fifty, and his papers identify him as an American banker. He has trouble relating to humans, but most soon lose interest if he starts talking about his bowel operation. He's supposedly taking a vacation to recuperate.

Ssilith's spells make him look human, but his shadow reveals his true shape. He is adept at maneuvering to conceal it.

Arthur Mallow (seat K)

Mallow is a former NYPD sergeant who resigned some time ago to avoid impending corruption charges. He is currently shadowing the investigators on



"Alfred Clarke"



Arthur Mallow

behalf of a client. Mallow is an average looking fellow with a square jaw, red hair, and chews gum constantly.

Investigator Information

THE AIRPORT is a grass landing strip with a few simple buildings (tents in remoter locations). There is always a windsock. Important airports maintain a teletype for weather reports and for specific

Other Passengers

There are 12 passenger seats on the aircraft. The investigators can fill as many remaining seats as necessary. If you want to fill up remaining empty seats, take additional passengers from among the following. These supernumeraries have no weapons or relevant skills, and no statistics for them are provided. They are literally filler, but present them with as much personality as any of the other people aboard the aircraft.

- **DOCTOR ALEX PHIPPS** — an English musicologist. Handsome, homosexual, and not at all effeminate. He is happy to talk about music and the fine arts.
- **LETITIA TEMPLETON** — she is an attractive, rich, and fun-loving American, well on the road to alcoholism. Stopping on the ground, she is likely to get messily, noisily drunk.
- **JENNIFER PETTIGREW and CHARLES PETTIGREW** — a British honeymoon couple. They hold hands, lean across the aisle to kiss, and address each other as "Darling" and "Sugarplum." On the ground, they hold hands between courses and pay no attention to conversations around them. Finishing dinner, they disappear upstairs.
- **OLIVER COLT** — this loud-mouthed American tourist wears flashy shirts, and seeks to impress his neighbors with how much money he makes and what important people he knows. Napping, he snores thunderously. At the dinner table, Oliver Colt talks endlessly about his travels. While describing some remote location the investigators have never visited, he sketches a peculiar inscription he saw there. It looks as though it might have some Mythos significance, but the sketch is too poor to tell for sure.

news about scheduled destinations, and even boast meteorological gear, but at lesser fields the pilot holds up a finger to gauge the wind, checks the sock for direction and gustiness, and squints at the sky as his weather forecast.

The largest airports keep in contact by radio. None have yet built what amount to control towers, nor have landing-lights been installed. Though lighting can be rigged, at night planes have great difficulty finding the landing strips.

The investigators and their luggage are weighed. Each investigator must state his or her *SIZ*, and the *SIZ* of his or her baggage to ensure even distribution of passengers and cargo. The practice also lets the keeper choose where to seat the investigators in the aircraft.

Announce seat numbers that spread them around the aircraft. Put an attractive male investigator in Seat A. Other vacant seats are E, F, G, H, I, and L. Fill the remaining seats with people from the Other Passengers list, boxed nearby.

Travel by air is novel enough to be newsworthy. A reporter and cameraman hang around, hoping for a story. Plane crashes make the front page. Banker Alfred Clarke stays in the background to ensure his photograph isn't taken.

There also might be a policeman in the area, making sure that wanted criminals don't escape justice. He looks long and hard at everyone. If people in the area are poorly dressed, the policeman grills them on the spot. He is the only security. No one is searched or asked about weapons or other contraband unless this is an international flight.

The passengers can see the aircraft from the airport waiting room. It's a huge triplane, the length of a couple of buses and taller than a house. It dwarfs the mechanics who are working on the engines and filling the fuel tanks.

Ten minutes after the passengers are supposed to board they are still waiting. The flight is being held for a late arrival. About fifteen minutes later Dawn Peachtree arrives in a huge limousine, accompanied by two more newsmen and a chauffeur stumbling under a mountain of luggage. The reporters avidly fire their flash guns as she is weighed (135 pounds including mink coat and jewels, *svelte* for the era). then take more pictures of the tantrum she throws when told that most of her luggage will have to follow by train. Investigators who have only seen her on the silent screen may be surprised by her strong Australian accent and even stronger language. Eventually she reluctantly selects two cases, leaving the rest to her perspiring chauffeur. She sulks, but brightens enough after a while to tell a dirty joke.

Boarding

The engines of the aircraft thunder into life. A series of backfires draws loud curses from the mechanics. A clerk calls out the names of the passengers and their assigned seats. (When they enter the aircraft, each passenger also finds a card bearing his or her name on the assigned seat.) This is a good opportunity to announce the names of the other passengers, and to describe their appearance and

mannerisms. Then one by one the engines die, a ladder is wheeled to the plane, and crewmen climb down.

Captain Sutton-Smythe and co-pilot Fincham come to the lounge to welcome everyone to the flight. They explain the route, stops to be made along the way, and basic rules for air travelers (wrap up warmly, stay in your seats, don't open a window and stick your head out). They personally greet and thank each passenger, pose for photographs with Miss Peachtree, and then lead the way to the aircraft.

The passengers leave the tiny terminal by an ordinary door and stroll across the grass to where the airliner awaits. They climb the 15-foot-high open-work boarding ladder-like stairs, but with an extreme angle of rise. At the top is the open hatch into the flight engineer's compartment. Special attention is given to aiding each woman as she climbs. Attendants wait at the top and bottom of the ladder until everyone is aboard.

As the passengers enter, a photographer closes in and shouts "Hold it, Dawn!" He raises his camera for a last picture. A mechanic tackles him and knocks the instrument away. If the investigators inquire, the burning magnesium flash powder might have ignited gasoline vapor in the air.

The flight engineer's compartment is crammed with instruments and complex-looking machines, and a pile of luggage secured under nets. Some tools are stored here, including a flare pistol strapped to the wall. The pilots climb another small ladder and squeeze through a hatch into the cockpit. The flight engineer concentrates on instruments.

A steward ushers the passengers aft into the cabin past some awkward diagonal wooden struts, and into the correct wicker seats. There are no seat belts, but there are leather hand grips fixed to the fuselage. He passes out travel rugs, blankets, and kits containing sick bags, cotton wool ear plugs, tissues, souvenir maps, chewing gum, and sweets. If it is a long non-stop flight he also hands out packets of sandwiches, each wrapped neatly in waxed paper—roast beef and chicken salad are today's choices. The steward then leaves the aircraft (which can't afford to carry his weight) and closes the hatch. Attendants pull up the ladder.

One by one, the engines return to life. Their roar is deafening and alarming. Down field, ground crew fire a shotgun to scare off birds. The plane moves onto the runway, then hesitates while the crew makes a final check.

Up, Up, and Away

THE DELAY is just long enough for everyone with appropriate phobias to feel apprehensive, then the engine roar increases and the Tabor rapidly accelerates down the main airstrip. It's possible to slide a win-

dow open and lean out for a better view, but the rush of wind annoys the other passengers and soon brings tears to the eyes.

With a last bump the Tabor soars up from the field, pitching from side to side. Some travelers prepare the brown paper bags that a thoughtful airline has provided.

The plane levels off and steadies to relatively smooth flight at 3000 feet. Passengers who haven't been chewing gum or sucking sweets until their ears pop must now swallow or belch to relieve pressure on the ear drums. Fountain pens full of ink start to leak.

It's too noisy to talk easily. The airline has provided ear plugs, and most of the passengers use them. Unless they are absorbed by the magnificent vistas, they soon grow thoroughly bored. Hopefully they remembered to bring crosswords or something to read.

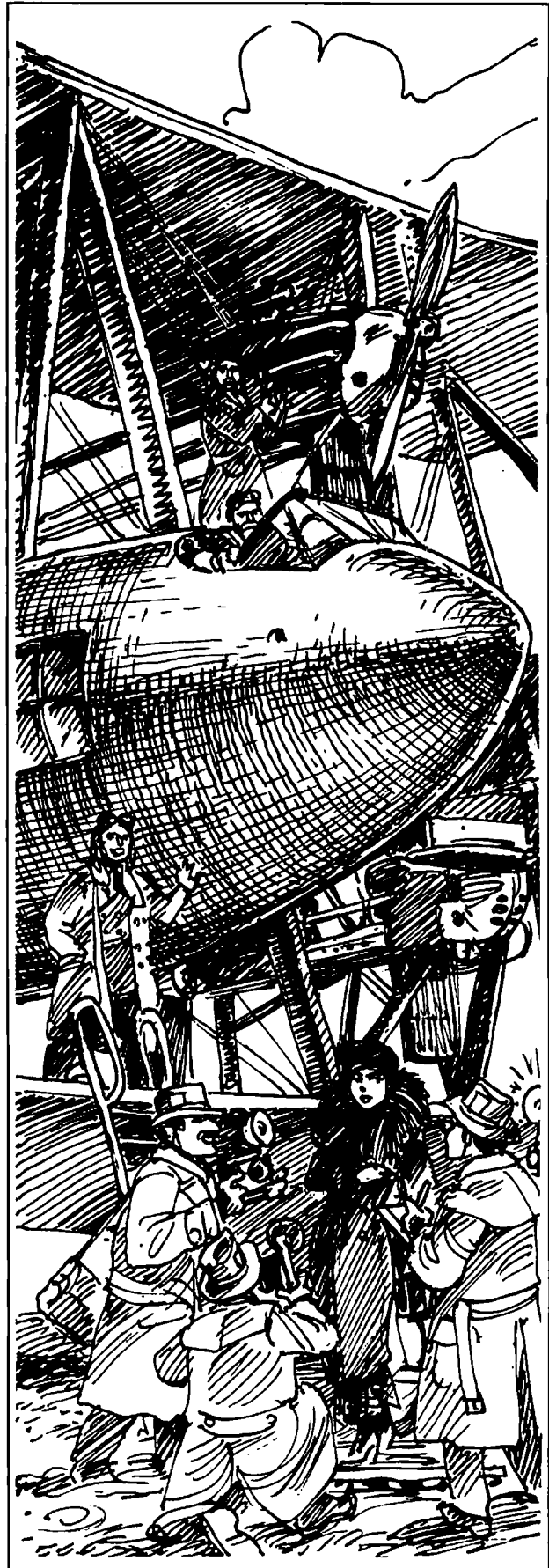
The remainder of this scenario is broken into several sections, corresponding to the progress of a long flight. Each stage takes place in the air, and each stop occurs on the ground. How many happen depends on the actual route. For example, a flight from New York to San Francisco would take three or four days, depending on the route used, and a flight from London to southern Africa via European capitals would take a week or more. The aircraft must land at night, and will need to land several times each day to re-fuel as well.

Stage 1: Flight

The first leg of the journey is without incident. The aircraft takes off and flies for several hours. It passes one or two navigational reference points—a bridge, a mountain, a light ship—before landing again. Passengers are cold, deafened, and bored.

It's possible to move around inside, but the aircraft rocks slightly whenever someone moves from his or her seat. If more than three people are out of their seats the rocking increases, and Villiers walks back from the engine controls and asks passengers to return to their seats, because they are upsetting the trim of the aircraft. If they persist, the aircraft rocks even more and starts to lose height, as the pilots struggle with the trim controls. It levels out after a few hundred feet up, and the pilots will prove to very annoyed.

- ☐ Anyone sitting near Stumpff and Gillespie notices that they seem to spend a lot of time leaning across the aisle and shouting or corresponding in shorthand. Occasionally one passes the other some fat document.
- ☐ Ssilith-Clarke consistently watches to absorb details of Stumpff's behavior and speech patterns. Anyone watching Ssilith-Clarke realizes after a successful Idea roll that he rarely blinks.
- ☐ Anyone looking at Mallow might notice that he seems to be watching one or other of the investigators, but that he always looks away hurriedly when he thinks that he is being observed.



- Dawn Peachtree talks loudly about how she “never liked heights much but is really enjoying the flight.” She rarely takes her left hand off the wall strap, and avoids looking out of the tiny window. In consequence she spends a lot of time chatting to the investigator sitting across the aisle to her right, distracting him from the conversation behind.

After a couple of hours, Villiers leaves the engine controls to hand round cups of mediocre coffee (tea if the aircraft is British-owned) to the passengers. He pours from a vacuum flask. The liquid tastes of boiled milk. Repeat with minor variations as needed during the flight.

Stop One: Nowhere

If the trip is to be a long one, the aircraft lands after a few hours to re-fuel and give passengers a chance to eat lunch and stretch their legs. These stops are little more than bumpy fields. At one end are tents, a field kitchen, dining tables and chairs, a pit latrine for each sex, and other simple facilities. These stops are only an hour or so. Passengers are discouraged from leaving the field. Reboarding, they take the same seats as before.

Stage 2: Disaster

This incident occurs about an hour before the aircraft is due to land for the day. Over the sea or wilderness, the airliner flies into a flock of large birds—albatrosses, gulls, buzzards, geese, vultures, storks, or flamingoes will do, as appropriate.

Paranoid investigators wisely wonder what made the birds fly into the plane. Optionally, one and only one investigator gets a fleeting glimpse of something indescribably horrible. This is what chased the birds toward the aircraft. The vision of the twisting changeling mass is so brief that it might easily have been a trick of the imagination, and any sanity roll here is optional. The flying polyp passes out of sight beneath the aircraft and is not seen again, but the investigator may now greatly fear birds.

A series of dull thuds and the crashing sounds of splintering glass are heard, along with alarmed human shouts. The Tabor dips and yaws alarmingly, then steadies and resumes her heading. Almost immediately, Villiers pokes his head out and beckons to the nearest investigator. “We require your immediate assistance,” he shouts.

In the engineer’s compartment, he explains the situation. A collision with a flock of birds has shattered the pilots’ windscreen, knocked out Fincham the co-pilot, left Sutton-Smythe badly cut, and damaged pipes and wires. The Tabor is slowly losing altitude, and must crash in ten minutes or so unless Villiers can climb onto the wing to make extensive repairs.

But the engine controls can’t be untended for more than a few moments. Someone needs to man the post, Fincham needs first aid, and Sutton-Smythe needs help

controlling the aircraft and clearing the cockpit of broken glass. As he gestures, the investigators notice that his hands are bloody—mostly from bird parts he has helped get rid of. Have the investigators organize themselves, and ask at least one skill roll of each.

- A pilot would be preferable, but anyone strong who can follow instructions will help Sutton-Smythe. The Tabor is a huge ungainly aircraft, unlike anything else in the skies, and flying it is a feat of strength and endurance as well as skill. It requires successful D100 rolls of STR x3 and CON x3 to do the job well. The pilot has throttled back the aircraft as much as he can, but just trying to breathe directly into a gale can be an ordeal.
- Villiers explains how to keep the engines running (by watching some gauges, and twisting taps and valves to keep needles on their current settings) while he climbs out onto the wing to patch a leak in the fuel feed to one of the engines. Needless to say, the gauges start to oscillate wildly within a few seconds. Keep control with a successful Mechanical Repair or INTx3 or less D100 roll.
- A successful First Aid or Medicine roll can revive Fincham. Then he can return to the cockpit to spell Sutton-Smythe, so that the captain can be treated for facial cuts and slight shock.

Don’t penalize failed skill rolls too harshly. At worst they should result in shaken passengers and minor injuries, not broken bones or death.

Eventually the Tabor reaches the next airfield. The landing is rough, and there’s a loud bang as one of the huge tires blows. The Tabor slews around in a circle, the tail lifts a few feet and thuds down again, and everyone is bruised and shaken. Ground staff rush out with extinguishers and buckets of water, then help everyone disembark from the aircraft.

Stop Two: The Hunter

If this is an international flight, the passengers’ papers are quickly inspected and stamped by a customs officer. If no one looks suspicious, he doesn’t search their luggage.

The passengers are escorted to a fleet of chauffeur-driven cars, which drive off as airline officials, Villiers, and the pilots assess the damage to the aircraft. The airline has arranged for first-class accommodations at the local hotel.

Dinner is at eight. The passengers are seated at a long table, attended by scurrying waiters serving excellent food and wines (except where prohibited by law), while a string quartet plays Strauss and Mozart.

After he has had several glasses of wine, Mallow’s dinner conversation could revolve around strange unsolved mysteries in which the investigators have been involved. The keeper should consider whether or not to do this, and its purpose in continuing play. Nonetheless, active investigators probably have broken the law dozens of times. Leading remarks such as “Did you hear about the peculiar fire that burned down that odd little church in

Boston last month?" will start the investigators worrying. Mallow may mention that he is a detective, implying that he is on their trail officially. He doesn't speak about his retirement or that he is a private detective.

Dawn Peachtree tries to get close (very close) to her traveling companion, the man to whom the crew turned in their hour of need. "I felt close to death today," she says. "I feel close to you tonight." She lavishes attention and implication. Let the investigator respond as he will. If he responds as she wishes, he'll read about it soon.

Stumpff and Gillespie eat in silence, occasionally jotting calculations and shorthand messages on scraps of paper and passing them to each other. A typical example: *if standard cylinder output increased four-fold, the enhanced utility of application to third-party airships should actually raise unit price. Do you agree?* Stumpff slurps his soup, and only grunts if anyone talks to him. Gillespie is barely more civil.

Ssilith-Clarke eats little, since raw meat isn't on the menu. He says he's been ill, and can't strain his digestion. Wine might settle his stomach.

Villiers arrives. The aircraft isn't badly damaged, and Fincham has fully recovered. The flight will resume as scheduled the next morning.

After dinner, Stumpff and Gillespie adjourn to the smoking room, followed by Ssilith-Clarke a few minutes later. Mallow visits the bar, then continues to observe the investigators.

If the evening's stop is somewhere out-of-the-way, a single reporter for Reuters or INS interviews Miss Peachtree concerning the near-disaster. If this is a major city, dozens of newsmen fill the hallways. *Flash! Film Star Avoids Certain Death!* In the interview she mentions the bravery of her favorite investigator. If she and the investigator spend the night together, in a follow-up interview the next morning she adds that she has met "the man of her dreams" during the flight, and hopes that "There'll be wedding bells soon." She doesn't name the investigator, but from now on all the male passengers are subject to relentless scrutiny.

Mallow intends to continue observing the investigators, perhaps gathering evidence of new crimes, but they may force his hand. A search of his room reveals a dossier on them containing newspaper clippings, copies of affidavits and police reports, and many carbon copies of notes and conclusions. Confronted, Mallow pretends to be surprised, then says that he's interested in their adventures. He thinks that they'd make a splendid novel. He adamantly refuses to reveal what he's done with the original notes, except to say that they are in safe hands. He suggests that some thousands of dollars might persuade him to hand over everything.

Murder In The Dark

During the night Ssilith-Clarke climbs out of his bedroom window, walks a few hundred yards, finds a dog,

and kills and eats it. Coming back, he takes a wrong turn and approaches the hotel from the side opposite to his intention. He climbs to an open window which he thinks is his own, but is actually that of a room occupied by a sleeping investigator.

Call for a Listen roll. If not succeeding, the investigator sleeps. Next morning he or she sees a trail of blurred muddy footprints crossing the carpet, a smear of blood on the door knob, and an unlocked door. The trail ends at a last muddy smudge in the middle of the corridor.

If the Listen roll succeeds, the investigator wakes, hearing stealthy footsteps crossing the carpet, and a faint rasping of breath. Ssilith-Clarke pounces if the investigator stirs, slamming a clawed hand across the investigator's mouth and casting his Mesmerize spell. The investigator sees a blurry dark form with eyes that glow. Match Ssilith-Clarke's POW against the investigator's.

If the investigator's POW is overcome, the spell succeeds, and Ssilith-Clarke commands in English to "Sleep and forget." The voice is a rasping whisper. The affected investigator instantly falls into a deep sleep, waking to find the traces described above, and four punctures, like claw marks, on one cheek. After weeks, the spell may wear off, and the investigator dimly remembers what happened.

If the spell fails, or the victim isn't an English-speaking native, Ssilith-Clarke realizes that there is a problem, and tries to kill the investigator. The other investigators cannot intervene unless the victim manages to break free and make a noise. If help comes, Ssilith-Clarke escapes out of the window. He makes his way round to his own room and re-enters the hotel unobserved.

If forced to kill an investigator, and given time, Ssilith-Clarke mutilates the body with a razor to disguise his claw and tooth marks, cuts the throat, then takes a few valuables and climbs out. He scatters the valuables in a trail leading away from the hotel, then returns and climbs back to his own room. Later, he plants the bloody razor in Mallow's briefcase.

The police decide that the victim must have been killed by a burglar attracted by Miss Peachtree's jewelry. It takes a full day for the police to investigate, take statements, and eventually decide to let the aircraft continue.

The investigators may think that the intruder was native to the area, not another passenger on the flight. If they want to stay behind and investigate, no one forces them to resume their flight. They later hear that the aircraft has crashed, as described in Stage 4.

Stage 3: Rough Passage

The passengers are driven to the airport. Reporters and photographers appear, concentrating on Dawn Peachtree, though friends of any murder victim are also questioned and photographed. If Miss Peachtree and an investigator

are now very good friends, that complication should be explored.

Passengers take the same seats as before, and the aircraft takes off without incident. An hour later clouds loom ahead, lacy white puffs which gradually solidify and darken into an ominous layer of grey. The pilots attempt to climb over the storm, and everyone's ears pop, but it's soon apparent that the clouds are much too high. They have to descend, feeling their way down and emerging beneath the cloud ceiling at little more than a thousand feet.

Change the weather to suit the area. Over the sea there's a fierce storm with high waves, and flashes of lightning stabbing down into the water. Over land it can be a gale or the edge of thunderstorms and tornadoes. Rain streams across the windows, and drips into the cabin through hitherto-insignificant holes. The plywood hull and struts creak loudly. As it hits air pockets the Tabor surges up and drops, again and again.

Summarize the storm's effect by causing each player to make D100 rolls against certain characteristics:

- ☐ roll STR x5 or less, or the investigator is thrown out of his seat and loses D3-1 hit points.
- ☐ roll SAN or less, or the investigator loses 1D3 Sanity points to the violence of the storm.
- ☐ roll CON x5 or less, or feel nauseated the rest of the day.

Anyone going forward finds Villiers wrestling with the engine controls, much too busy for courtesy. He curtly orders the passenger back into the cabin, warning that movement unbalances the aircraft even more. If anyone stays to argue, the aircraft starts to dive again.

Eventually the Tabor wins through the storm, and emerges into comparatively clear weather. Amazingly, there doesn't seem to be any damage. Villiers comes back to announce that no hot drinks are available. The flask was broken when the Tabor hit an air pocket.

Stop Three: Refreshment

In view of the flight's increasing notoriety, the management has decided to serve up a banquet. The menu includes whatever luxury foods are appropriate to the area—caviar, salmon, turtle soup, quails' eggs, a chocolate soufflé (a little the worse for wear after the bumpy journey to the airstrip), gâteaux, éclairs, and fine wines and spirits. It's all totally inappropriate for a group of people who feel extremely ill. Most passengers barely manage a bowl of soup.

Dawn Peachtree eats a healthy meal, commenting that there's "Nothing like some good tucker" to get you feeling well again. She does her best to persuade the new love of her life to eat.

More photographers arrive. Before Ssilith-Clarke has a chance to duck out of sight, one photographer takes a group picture, which the serpent man knows will show his true appearance.

Ssilith-Clarke waits for an opportunity to approach the photographer unobserved. While the reporters are clustered around Dawn he casually raises his hand to his mouth, spits some venom onto a claw, and strolls behind, brushing his hand against the photographer's arm as he passes. Seconds later the photographer rubs his arm, says "Must have been a wasp," then collapses. While the on-lookers drag him to one side, Ssilith-Clarke helpfully picks up the camera and brings it along, taking care to remove the slide before 'accidentally' pulling out the plate-holder on the back of the big press camera and ruining the exposed image.

With a successful Medicine roll, an investigator realizes that the reporter is seriously ill, not just drunk or fainting. The keeper can arrange for a doctor in the house, if desirable. With prompt diagnosis and treatment, the photographer survives. Otherwise he develops a high fever and dies. The only clues are a small inflamed scratch on his arm and tiny rips in the sleeves of his coat, jacket, and shirt, surrounded by small patches of discolored fibers. No identifiable poison is found.

Meanwhile Sutton-Smythe is ready to take off, and stewards try to herd the passengers aboard the aircraft. The captain's prepared to hold departure for up to an hour, if one of the investigators is a doctor and is looking after the reporter. If the delay seems likely to be longer he asks those concerned to either board or arrange for alternative transportation.

Stage 4: Crisis At 3000 Feet

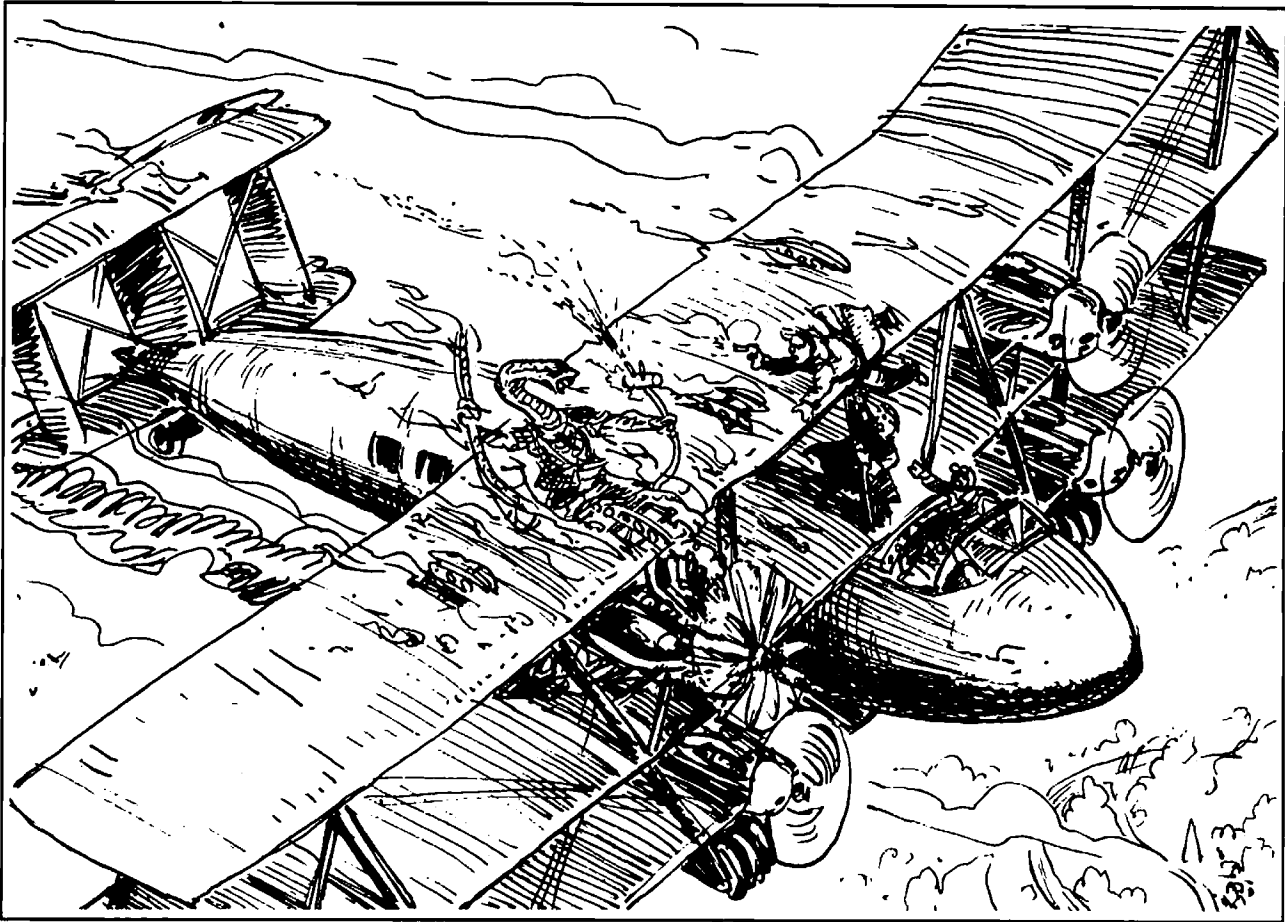
This stage takes place over woods, wasteland, or the sea, wherever the aircraft can't land safely.

(If all the investigators have stayed behind they never know what happened; all they learn is that the aircraft vanishes and is found wrecked days later. Stumpff and Clarke are never found. The remaining bodies are recovered hideously mutilated by wild animals.)

As Villiers serves the afternoon coffee, the aircraft hits a patch of turbulence. He tries to brace himself on the back of Ssilith-Clarke's seat, but misses his hold and touches the ersatz banker's head instead. He feels scales where he sees hair and flesh, and recoils. As he does, he spills steaming coffee onto the serpent man, and the scalding liquid burns him for 1 hit point, enough to break the spell that disguises him. Everyone now sees his true appearance. Gasps are universal.

It takes a few seconds for Ssilith-Clarke to realize that his cover has been blown. He tries to act normally, mopping himself with a handkerchief and complaining about the spill. Villiers staggers back and screams, and Ssilith realizes that his Consume Likeness spell has collapsed.

Ssilith has no hope of resuming his disguise. He seizes Miss Peachtree as hostage and shield for the moment (remarkably, she does not swoon), then chooses one of the following courses as seems best.



Engine Trouble

- ☐ To try to kill all the witnesses, force the pilots to land the aircraft, then kill them too.
- ☐ To exit onto the wing as he has seen Villiers do, and from safety there force the pilots to land (threatening to sever the fuel lines and cause a catastrophic fire if they do not).
- ☐ To parachute to the ground.
- ☐ To negotiate a safe landing and escape from this death trap of a vehicle.

The investigators must organize and decide what to do. If they are at all hesitant, then he seizes the chance to negotiate. He prefers to be landed safely; parachuting is a distant second choice, since he has no experience with it. In its favor: the jump would be dangerous enough that probably no one will try to follow him.

The serpent man is not much concerned by his exposure. Passenger tall tales offer no evidence, and he can always assume another likeness. He might even mesmerize one or two witnesses to tell contradictory stories.

If he has to fight, he fights without mercy. He mesmerizes passengers and turns them against each other, or uses them to shield against gunfire. In the confined space, any shot that misses him may hit something or someone else.

Ssilith may come to a messy end, or escape cleanly. If he's killed while sabotaging an engine, he falls off, and may even end up falling through one of the propellers. If he's shot with Villier's flare gun, his body burns and probably sets the cabin on fire. If he's killed, his venom starts to break down his flesh, and over the course of a few hours there is nothing left but curiously formed bones and stinking, decaying offal.

Investigators On The Wings

Wing-walking even at what amount to sub-hurricane-force speeds is not done lightly. Halve any physical skills required. Injuries or wounds costing half or more of current hit points cause the target to lose hold and fall off the plane. Did he or she remember to don a parachute?

Aftermath

The rest of the flight is uneventful. Several loose ends remain, offering future exploitation.

Dawn Peachtree is still in love with an investigator, even more intensely if he was heroic in the fight. The investigator may want to disentangle himself from her.

Arthur Mallow has picked up more information for his report file. Who is he really working for, and what

will they do with the information when they get it? If there is a fight, how does he behave? What happens to Mallow's papers if he is killed?

By now the investigators may have some idea of Otto Stumpff's nature. A free market in helium might actually promote peace, and certainly would make travel by airship safer. Stumpff, though not a virtuous man, might be a good contact for all the peculiar weapons and supplies investigators need, such as belts of .50 caliber silver machine-gun bullets.

Finally, the investigators had a reason to set out on this journey. The story of this disastrous flight inspires the media, and the investigators reach their goal in a blaze of publicity, which may not be what they wanted.

Rewards

If Ssilith is killed or completely foiled, grant each investigator up to 1D6 Sanity points. No one believes that he was anything but a crazed banker, which is probably all to the good.

And Miss Dawn Peathtree is beautiful, rich, well-connected, and is tougher than she looks.

Statistics

CAPTAIN JAMES SUTTON-SMYTHE, Age 35, British Pilot

STR 15 CON 13 SIZ 9 INT 11 POW 11
DEX 13 APP 10 EDU 13 SAN 55 HP 11

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Astronomy 35%, Electrical Repair 35%, French 25%, German 13%, Mechanical Repair 45%, Navigate 44%, Photography (aerial) 25%, Pilot Aircraft 74%, Revolver 35%, Vickers Machine Gun 54%.

PETER FINCHAM, Age 33, Canadian Co-Pilot

STR 13 CON 11 SIZ 11 INT 12 POW 15
DEX 14 APP 15 EDU 13 SAN 32 HP 11

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 60%, damage 1D3

Skills: Arabic 35%, Cthulhu Mythos 5%, Dodge 35%, Electrical Repair 29%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Navigate 23%, Pilot Aircraft 51%, Revolver 35%, Rifle 30%.

HAROLD VILLIERS, Age 40, American Flight Engineer

STR 17 CON 10 SIZ 11 INT 12 POW 17
DEX 17 APP 11 EDU 10 SAN 85 HP 10

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Flare Gun 25%, damage 1D10+1D3 burn (1/2 shot per round, base range 10 yards)

Switchblade Knife 35%, damage 1D4 +db

Skills: Climb 65%, Dodge 56%, Electrical Repair 55%, German 25%, Mechanical Repair 75%, Operate Heavy Machine 65%, Pilot Aircraft 8%, Rifle 25%.

Seat: C.

ED GILLESPIE, Age 47, American Businessman

STR 8 CON 10 SIZ 9 INT 15 POW 13
DEX 10 APP 10 EDU 15 SAN 41 HP 11

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Accounting 53%, Bargain 80%, Credit Rating 84%, Fast Talk 21%, Geology 62%, Mining Engineering 55%, Oil Lore 74%, Persuade 58%, Spanish 35%.

Seat: D.

ARTHUR MALLOW, Age 38, Disreputable American Private Detective

STR 17 CON 10 SIZ 11 INT 12 POW 17
DEX 13 APP 11 EDU 10 SAN 55 HP 10

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: .32 revolver 51%, damage 1D8

Nightstick 42%, damage 1D6 +db

Grapple 45%, damage special

Skills: Climb 60%, Dodge 46%, Drive Auto 30%, Hide 48%, Italian 20%, Law 51%, Listen 46%, Locksmith 25%, Photography 27%, Sneak 53%, Spot Hidden 75%.

Seat: K.

DAWN PEACHTREE, Age 22, Australian Movie Actress

STR 12 CON 18 SIZ 10 INT 10 POW 12
DEX 15 APP 18 EDU 7 SAN 57 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 60%, damage 1D3

Skills: Art (Acting) 19%, Credit Rating 65%, Drive Auto 45%, Fast Talk 35%, Ride 55%, Swearing 55%.

Seat: B.

GERHARDT STUMPFF, Age 55, Swiss Arms Magnate

STR 8 CON 8 SIZ 11 INT 15 POW 6
DEX 10 APP 10 EDU 10 SAN 22 HP 10

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: 9mm Automatic 30%, damage 1D10

Skills: Accounting 65%, Bargain 75%, Chemistry 25%, Credit Rating 87%, English 23%, Fast Talk 35%, French 65%, German 75%, Italian 60%, Law 45%.

Seat: C.

SSILITH-CLARKE, Ancient Serpent Man

(parenthesized as Alfred Clarke, convalescing banker)

STR 16 (12) CON 15 (15)
SIZ 11 (11) INT 23 (11)
POW 19 (10) DEX 14 (10)
APP na (8) EDU 52 (15)
SAN 0 (50) HP 13 (13)

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Bite 70%, damage 1D8 plus poison POT 15

Ssilith can also spit venom onto his claws, allowing him to inject a smaller dose by hand. This attack is at 50%, causing 1D2-1 damage plus poison POT 7.

Armor: 1-point scales

Skills: Chemistry 85%, Conceal 55%, Cthulhu Mythos 61%, Dodge 56%, English 85%, Hide 60%, Occult 57%, Sneak 80%, Swim 85%.

Spells: Consume Likeness, Contact Yig, Mesmerize, Mindblast, Shrivelling, Voorish Sign.

Sanity Loss: lose 0/1D6 Sanity points to see his real shape.

Seat: J.

The Iron Ghost

Wherein the investigators board an ordinary-seeming train, and learn that evil extends beyond every boundary of time and space.

INVESTIGATORS are always catching trains to head for distant parts for strange reasons. This scenario is designed to fit into an existing adventure or campaign. It requires only that the investigators desire to travel overnight by rail.

The narrative is written so that the second night forces a climax, but the events of the scenario could be telescoped without difficulty into a single afternoon and evening. The adventure amounts to a bizarre situation from which the investigators must extract themselves. Much depends on quick perceptions of the players.

Reprinted from *Orient Express* are plans for an engine, corpse car, dining car, salon car, and sleeping car. The adventure does not require the exact plans shown, just the functions of the cars—change them as desired. Those five elements in that sequence comprise the train front-to-back. Additional cars referred to are resubstantiations of these master cars.

Summary

Ignoring a weird figure which emerges from the fog and performs a cryptic evocation, the investigators choose to board a train. They soon notice odd things about the train.

Recommended

Keepers may wish to further research the time periods from which the carriages of the train are drawn, although sufficient direction to run the scenario has been provided here. Among the references used in preparation of this adventure, special mention must go to Ludovic Kennedy's *A Book of Railway Journeys*. This delightful volume is highly recommended to anyone interested in the literature of railways, and is especially good for those new to the romance of the rails. Ellis' *The Lore of the Train* is a history of railways, incidentally displaying many drawings of evolving rail cars and engines; floor plans go all the way to contemporary bullet-trains. Chaosium's *Orient Express* includes a fair amount of information about the functioning of that famous service, especially an annotated drawing of the cab and controls of a period locomotive.

If they do much investigating, they find that passengers from many times and places inexplicably share the train—five sample space-times are given, but thousands more are possible. If the investigators manage to reach the corpse car, they see what their doom will be. If they can kill the horrible Driver-Thing and unlink the train, they can return to their own time. If they fail, their souls are devoured by Azathoth.

The Narrative

AZATHOTH, the daemon sultan, writhes mindlessly beyond the furthest star. Minions have created a vehicle which collects sacrifices to the god. This, the Train That Ever Was, prowls the rails of the world, abducting and digesting unsuspecting human cargo to an unenviable doom.

Boarding, the train appears normal to passengers, and they see illusions of countryside through the windows as the journey continues.

The conductors are strange creatures in human guise. They help convert the souls of the passengers into stuff suitable for Azathoth.

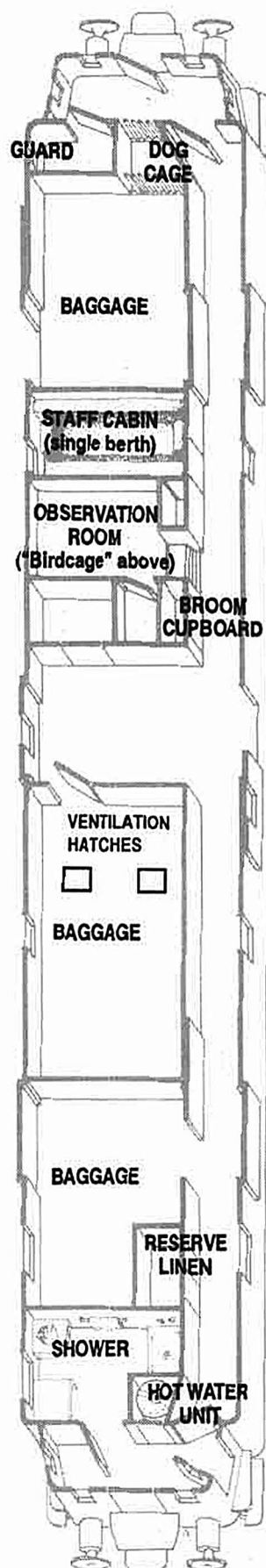
Some doomed souls have escaped from previous journeys of the train, and their ghosts have coalesced into a single being, the Spectral Traveler. This entity now haunts the rails as surely as does the train itself. The Traveler appears and attempts to warn travelers of their peril. It now tries to warn the investigators.

All Aboard

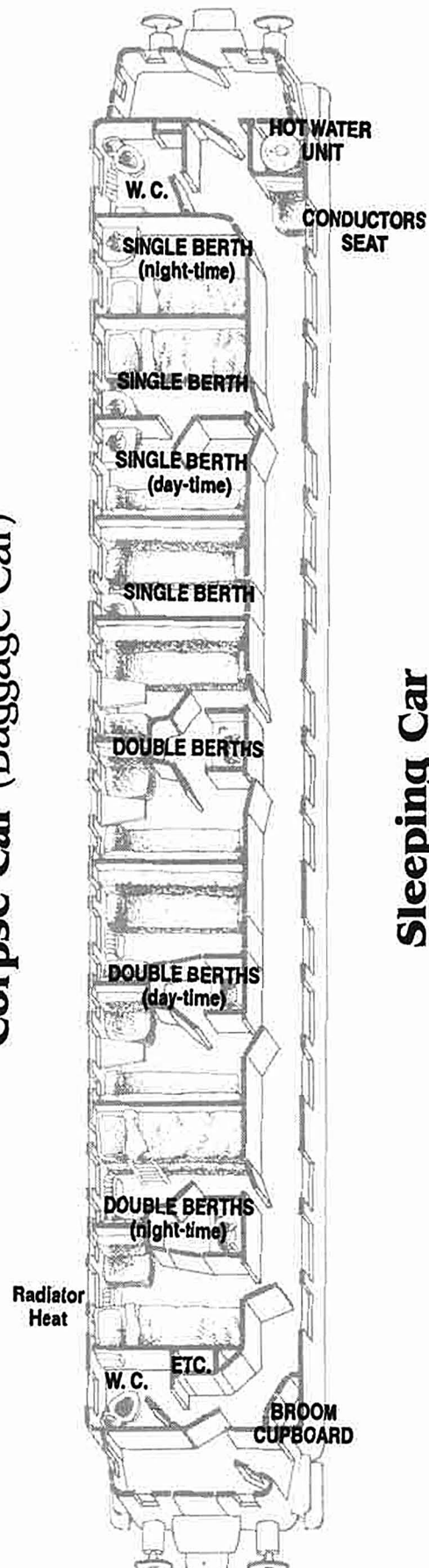
For whatever reason, the investigators are to catch a train and take an overnight journey. The station can be in any country, and in any era. It should be a smaller station (Arkham, perhaps), to make believable the limited number of passengers. A thick fog, faintly luminescent, drifts along the platform. It envelops the investigators, bringing with it a damp chill, and seems to cling to the very soul.



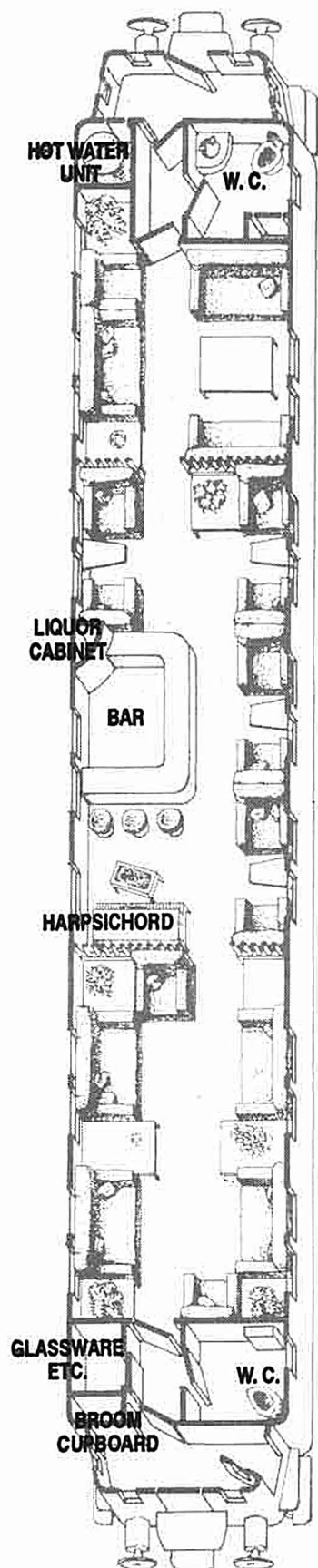
Locomotive & Tender



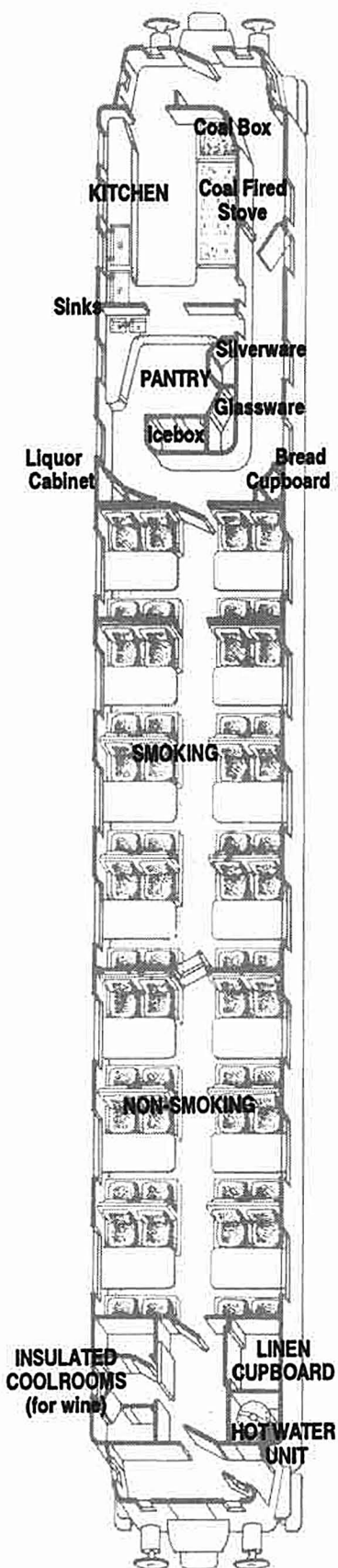
Corpse Car (Baggage Car)



Sleeping Car



Salon Car



Dining Car

The Train That Ever Was

(1920s Engine and Cars)

*The Spectral Traveller*

A dark figure looms from the fog. As it does, other activity on the platform falls out of the investigators' attention. From the far end of the platform the Traveler comes, in broad hat and heavy coat, heavy boots strangely silent upon the platform surface. It is the Spectral Traveler, come to warn prospective passengers against the Train That Ever Was. The Spectral Traveler's face is white and smooth, like a death mask, china-like in texture, with androgynous red lips and cadaverous cheekbones. Its eyes are mournful, and glow pale green.

The impossibly tall figure halts before the investigators. It breathes heavily and purposefully, the chest of the coat rising and falling as it stands in silence. It begins to exhale, deeply and pointedly. Green smoke jets from its mouth and nostrils, and the investigators retreat. The smoke forms into a solid recognizable shape.

This shape is that of a woman, small and pretty, mid-Victorian in style. The stranger breathes again, and creates a companion for this woman, a man in a military uniform (a History or Know roll identifies it as British Raj, circa 1910). Then it creates a final figure, a small boy in cloth cap and contemporary dress.

The Traveler indicates the figures with the flourish of a stage magician. It stares at the investigators, trying to will them to see the significance of this weird display. The smoke figures stand small and still, horribly alive but for their creation from gas. The Spectral Traveler does not intend harm, but its presence and handiwork costs 0/1D4 Sanity points to view.

The Traveler is unable to speak. Its presentation made, it glides to each green figure and breathes it back in, sucking them up like ghastly mucous. The train whistle blows. The Traveler thins as the head lamp of the train burns through the fog and cuts across the platform. The forceful glare diminishes and saps the Spectral Traveler as the light passes through it. Then the apparition joins the mist it strode from, vanishing utterly.

Express To Doom

The train now stands at the platform, the back end of it invisible in the fog. A conductor steps down. He swings the door open and connects tiny metal steps to the edge of the doorway for the passengers.

The conductor is a tall, sallow man, with a slight stoop and hunched shoulders. Greasy hair pokes out from under his cap. The backs of his hands are covered with black, stringy hair.

The station master unfurls his flag and blows his whistle. The investigators must board or miss the train. Once the investigators enter, the conductor pulls in the steps and secures the door.

If the investigators do not board, the keeper can have the Train That Ever Was return for them as the next train—this time without the Spectral Traveler, perhaps, or save this scenario for another leg of the rail journey. Or they could learn of other disappearances and be picked up in the course of their investigations.

The Arrangement

The entire train in sequence consists of *Engine, Corpse Car, Dining Car, Salon Car, Sleeping Car*: if the investigators manage to break through to another space-time, they find the same arrangement true for that time, too, but that the details of the cars (or their function and numbers) have changed. Each space-time car is a projection of an essential and unchanging master car, locked in some unfathomable place beyond our ken. Perhaps there are thousands of such projections, each culling a different human herd.

The Salon Car

The investigators enter at the front of this car. The salon car is new 1920s work—sturdy, plush, but not too ornate. There are a lot of comfortable seats and a bar. Prohibition excludes the sale of alcohol in the United States. There the bar serves coffee, soft drinks, and tea.

The bartender bears a startling resemblance to the conductor. The facial features are different, but the

greasy hair, morose look, the hunched shoulders and hirsute hands are all the same.

The conductor checks the investigators' tickets and takes them to their compartments in the sleeping car.

Passengers

There are five people in the salon car. Professor Douglas Shank of Harvard, a philosopher in a tweed suit, sits reading the works of Frederick Nietzsche. Mrs. Eileen O'Donnel, a woman in her late thirties, is talking to her two young children, Bill and Fran. George Hooper, a bank teller on vacation, is napping in his easy chair. None look up when the investigators enter from the front.

The Sleeping Car

The first-class sleeping car is decorated with inlaid woods and fine fixtures, but in elegant simplicity. Each compartment contains two berths, one upper, one lower, and has or connects to a small washroom. In the plan of the car, some compartments are shown with the lower berth configured as a couch, and the upper folded up and back against the wall, out of sight.

The only anomaly about the compartment may be found with a successful Spot Hidden. There is a small panel inside each door, decorated with a twisted, leering gargoyle-like face made from heavy brass. This mocking visage is out of keeping with the rest of the design and seems to serve no function.



The Conductor

The conductor is silent on the matter. Indeed, he is silent on everything. He hands the investigators a dinner menu, with the dining time circled as 7pm. Then he slumps out of the carriage.

Arrange the investigators as they wish, two per room. to double up, and also show them which other compartments are taken—only three, by the five passengers currently in the salon car. The train seems strangely unoccupied. The far door of the sleeping car is near the seat on which the conductor dozes during the night. The door beyond is locked.

A Rail Travel Perspective

Though the automobile has begun to rob suburban rail systems of their significance in the 1920s, the railway is still the king of long-distance travel in the United States for most of the two following decades.

In the 1950s, the increasing efficiency and cachet of air transport robs the rails of residual romance, and the funding on and initial work on the interstate highway system signals a national decision to use only the automobile on the ground. Those who have never driven two thousand miles on narrow, winding two-lane roads may not comprehend the magnitude of effort auto travel once demanded.

In the 1990s, the remnant Amtrak service does useful work in a few commuter corridors, but it mostly panders to curious and nostalgic tourists—travel by rail in the U.S. has become like a living exhibit or a theme-park entertainment ride. Yes, ambitious plans for high-speed trains continue to be broached, and yes those services continue not to be built.

In Europe, India, and Japan, the inter-city passenger rail system is of practical value. There the intervals between the most-used destinations are

shorter, and the intervening populations are much denser. In Japan and France, high speed rail service has been able to finesse air travel's cumbersome and tedious suburban departure/arrival system and become more efficient at certain intermediate distances.

In the 1920s, everybody uses rail passenger service. Anyone with the price of a first-class ticket can in theory meet—or at least be in the same dining car with—millionaires, senators, opera divas, archbishops, and cinema stars, the people who fill the roles of nobility and gods in a democracy. And even democrats are human. Like everyone else they exalt by fantasizing about, deferring to, and memorializing. Being near enough to allow personal communication creates an excitement fundamental to human psychology and probably to all primates. The manifestation of such people in spaces defined as *first class*, as well as the locomotive's primal speed and strength, is the source of the romance of the rails.

It follows, then, that though money is needed for first-class rail travel in the 1920s, money is not the only thing needed. No service will allow a shabby,

foul-smelling tramp aboard its first-class service, no matter how much money he offers. Nor will persons of current notoriety or criminal intent be knowingly allowed, nor will be people obviously ill (even with attendants), nor will be people whose minds are disturbed, nor those whose skin happens not to be the preferred color or colors. These latter may well go aboard in other coaches, but not in first class, which must remain free of people and events which detract from the apparent status of the service.

Ticket-sellers and conductors will explain that they do not wish to offend or disturb other passengers, and this is true, but that is not the entire truth. If only money commands, then nothing else is important. Should an organization or institution lose its power to ritually judge and discriminate, then most of its status, for good or ill, is gone also. Institutions arise in order to wield such power. So long as its status remains, so does its power. Commercial institutions such as railroad lines sell status by creating arenas in which one's high standing seems to be confirmed.

The Dining Car

The door forward from the salon car is locked also. That door lets out to the dining car, and has inset in its upper half a pane of frosted glass. If the investigators try the door, Professor Shank looks up and advises them that they are early. He tells them that the dining car is patronized in shifts by those of the other carriages. He airily waves at them a printed sheet which tells about the train service, then returns to his reading.

The booklet is merely a four-page pamphlet with arrival and departure times, amenities noted, a few advertisements, and dining times. Breakfast is from 7-8am, lunch is from 1-2pm, and dinner is from 7-8pm.

A Know roll for any investigator who frequently travels by rail spies something odd about the dining-car door. Instead of the usual square or rounded aperture for a lock, which the conductor's passkey opens, this lock is star-shaped.

Set into the opaque glass of the locked door forward is a slightly clearer frosting of the rail company's trademark. Investigators peering against this and receiving a successful Spot Hidden roll catch a glimpse of the dining session prior to their own. The diners are men, women and children dressed in European fashions from the turn of the century. The carriage decor seems also of that era.

With a second successful Spot Hidden (or perhaps roll a CON x3 or less on D100 to test eyesight), outside the windows of the dining car, in the falling gloom, appears to a land of grassy plains and sparse trees, with lions roaming. Sanity loss for this is 0/1D3. This is entirely different to the view through the windows of the investigators' salon car, which shows the appropriate view.

A waiter in the dining car looks their way, steps to the door of the dining car, and pulls a shade down over the frosted glass window. When the investigators saunter

back past him, the bartender in their salon car glares at them, but remains silent.

Dinner

As though his voice had been turned on suddenly, the conductor comes through and announces in croaking tones that the 7pm sitting is now being served. He removes a large key from his jacket pocket. A Spot Hidden or Locksmith roll notes that the key is an odd shape. He inserts it in the star-shaped lock, and turns it clockwise. When the investigators pass through, each feels a twinge of nausea, as though the train had just lurched strongly.



The Waiter

The decor matches the salon and sleeping cars. There are two waiters in the serving section of the car. The kitchen area beyond is closed off from the main section. There is a smoking and non-smoking area, separated by a swinging door.

The menu offers simply-prepared courses of soup, fish, meat, salad, and coffee.

Any investigator who peered into this car earlier finds the decor and layout bewilderingly changed. The waiters speak only to take orders and answer questions about the menu. They stare blankly at other questions. All bear a disquieting resemblance to each other.

The meal goes by without incident, and the diners are asked to leave after an hour, so that the carriage may be cleaned. The passengers are free to go to the salon car, or retire to their rooms. When all have left, the conductor locks the door, again using the star-shaped lock. This time he turns the key in an anti-clockwise direction. Later on, the investigators feel hungry, as though they had never eaten. But by then the dining car is closed for the night.

About The Dining Car

Because the food is distributed to all the passengers, it makes a common link with the various space-times. Intersections of the space-times are most likely to occur here. That is why the car is isolated from the salon car by a star-shaped lock.

Emergency Cords

Like any proper train based on United States models, this one has emergency cords, signalling that an emergency stop must be made. In life, the reason for pulling the cord needs to be a good one. In many countries, the reason needed to be so good that such devices were never put in trains in the first place. On this train, though, pulling the cord only summons the conductor, and makes no change in the train's speed. The emergency cord does represent a handy way to do that, though, and may work to the advantage of canny investigators.

The Train That Ever Was

THE TRAIN defies natural laws, within and without. The following sections assist the keeper in understanding its weird layout. The explorations of the investigators provide most of the impetus for this scenario. Allow them to direct the plot.

The train consists of an engine and four cars. Many sets of the train exist simultaneously in different space-times, though the investigators cannot know this without moving through the locked door at the rear of their sleep-

ing car or through the locked door forward in the dining car.

Once through one or the other way, a space-time of the keeper's choice can exist. Sketches of five possibilities are boxed nearby. The passengers are unaware that the train is abnormal. The space-times are separated by doors with star-shaped locks. Each passage through a door with a star-shaped costs an investigator one magic point. The staff, being already present in those other space-times, ordinarily do not enter again.

The Staff

Entities on the train serve it, and keep the passengers in order. Those who show too much curiosity earn an immediate trip to the corpse car, as will investigators discovered in other than their 1920s space-time set of cars.

- **Servitors of the Express** — the servitors are the principal staff, and include the conductors and waiters. They are inhuman creatures which can assume human form. There are a dozen servitors on the train, and at any time there are six in the corpse car and six on duty. Though there are many sets of cars, only these twelve servitors exist. Why not, since each set of cars is earlier than one neighbor in the chronological string, and later than the other?
- **Vapor Masks** — the gargoyle in each sleeping compartment is alive. After a passenger has gone to sleep, the thing drifts off the door and silently glides to the face of the sleeper. Attached (and dangling behind as the mask moves) is a physical connection to the train, a long, flexible thing of gristle and bone like the spine of a snake. The gargoyle head softens, and delicately conforms to the sleeper's mouth and nose, and withdraws from the sleeper either magic points or points of Power, as will be described. These points power the train, or are transmitted into Azathoth's insatiable maw. Appearance of the vapor masks differs in each set of trains.
- **The Prowlers at the Threshold** — they are outside the train. These things are attracted by the presence of human souls, and may attack those who jump off or who clamber about on top of the train. Protean, they reform in congruence with the space-time from which the jumper emerges.
- **The Driver-Thing** — the Driver-Thing is a loathsome, puling entity. Squatting in the locomotive cab, it squeals incessantly at a nightmare landscape of endless plain, whining and worrying about matters it will never describe. A quick glance ahead shows no ties, no rail bed, no rails.

Other Space-Times

There is no need to describe train loads or give their statistics. Decide if these people are helpful to the investigators or not. Only passengers of particular interest are noted. There could be many more aboard each train set, and there could be hundreds or thousands of train sets.

Most are taken in by the train's elaborate facade. Babble about horrors and mysteries are taken to be evidence of disturbed minds. These good people will call the conductor if they are disturbed by a group of madmen in outlandish costumes.

Verdun Troop Train, 1916

SALON CAR: this wooden carriage is currently occupied by enlisted soldiers of the Great War. By day it is filled with the buzz of conversation and the pall of cigarette smoke. The soldiers sit on rough seats, back to back. Card games are played between the seats, and in the aisles. The soldiers wager cigarettes and argue vociferously about the honesty of their fellow players.

By night the car is quieter, with most of the soldiers snoring in the sleeping car. Some remain, though, and two card games continue: though the players have the dead stares of zombies, none are willing to give up the game. Piles of cigarettes like fortifications guard the winners.

On leave, only officers may carry arms. When the conductors lurch around this car, they speak French in the same monosyllabic style as their English.

Devastation might be glimpsed out the windows—craters dotting fields like some moonscape, or the skeletons of war beasts, animal and machine, discarded in the endless mud.

PASSENGERS: over fifty soldiers, all in the blue uniforms of the French artillery and infantry. All come from the battle of Verdun. They are being sent to the south of France to recover. Most are wounded. Some huddle in corners and babble nonsense to themselves. Others hack out their lungs in barking coughs, redolent of the mustard gas which ruined them.

Henri Montclair is among the soldiers (his details are in *Breakfast With Company*, above). He greets the investigators, while telling his comrades in French "These are the crazy Americans I was telling you about." Montclair is willing to explore the train with the investigators, to prove once and for all that the war is not over. He loses the bet.

SLEEPING CAR: here are tiers of bunks three high, covered with heavy army blankets. During the day they are all but empty. One young Frenchman lies moaning on his bunk, halfway along the car. He speaks no English and is delirious with fever.

By night tobacco, sweat, and disinfectant fills the air. The berths are packed. Groans, whispers, and nightmare screams break the silence.

On each bunk hangs a gas-mask. The blank insect eyes of the device glitter with malevolent intent. Each is in fact a vapor mask, discussed in the section *The Train That Ever Was*.

APPROPRIATE PROWLER: German infantry on a suicide mission.

By defeating the driver-thing and controlling the train, the investigators can save themselves and the other passengers.

The Journey

Three events occur during the trip. The Night Of Light Slumber is the first night aboard, and serves to deepen the investigators' suspicion of the vehicle. Breakfast introduces them to a passenger from another time period. The

Central Pacific, 1886

THIRD CLASS CARRIAGE: this route is a favorite for immigrants bound for the High Plains or California. These people cannot afford sleeping cars, and so are jammed into the small wooden car. The high ceilings aid ventilation, but there is little else of comfort. Wooden slats rest between some of the bench seats, and many slumber on them, day or night. Compared to the wagon trains which went before, this is great comfort.

The wood grain of the walls is whorled and knotted, concealing dozens of leering wooden faces. These are the vapor masks, one for each person in the car. The children delight in counting the scary faces, and discovering new ones. The adults humor the youngsters, little realizing the faces' sinister import.

Outside is sprawling prairie, broken only by marching telegraph poles, an occasional wide, shallow river, or an isolated water tower from which the engine sometimes drinks.

PASSENGERS: there are close to sixty in the car. Most of the men have heavy moustaches in the European fashion. They are mostly Germans and Scandinavians.

Among the passengers is Horst Van Temmen, a Dutch jeweler, a small spindly man in a baggy suit. He is alert to all that goes on around him, and his aged features belie a quick mind and fingers. He is suspicious about this train, about which he feels "something is not in effect right." Other passengers include Brigid O'Malley, a strong-willed young Irish widow with two small children, Patrick and Brenda, and Jerzy Masalanca, a thick-set Polish laborer, who has been admiring Brigid's looks from afar.

APPROPRIATE PROWLER: a mountain lion, or a pack of wolves.

Night Of Dark Slumber is the second and final night, when all the sleeping passengers will be drained and their husks moved to the corpse car, there for the servitors to nibble at. On the second night, the investigators probably can still save themselves, but no one else.

The Night Of Light Slumber

The first night that the investigators sleep aboard the train, the vapor mask in each compartment begins its evil task. Investigators who remain awake during the night become aware of an increasing torpor and a strange shimmering around the brass face on the inside of the door. Damaging the gargoyle or plugging up its maw kills the living mask.

The vapor mask steals magic points from the sleeper, at a rate of 1D3 points every hour from midnight to 6am. If magic points reach zero, the victim is unconscious, and loses 1 point of POW in addition. The loss of Power is permanent. Magic points regenerate through the day, of course. Unconscious sleepers wake at 8am, just in time to miss breakfast.



The Vapor Mask

The investigators awake having had the same dream. A great, bloated creature, its multiple arms and legs akimbo, pursues them across a landscape of dead gray. Dark, leathery things wing overhead, with cries like the clashing of cymbals. The sky is the same leaden gray, and two strange suns strain to pierce the gloom. The creature has coarse hair on its pointed head, and is covered in raised sores. These sores bear the faces of the investigator's companions, etched in the skin of the monstrosity. The thing pursues the hapless dreamers until they fall and can run no more. The bloated thing stoops, and folds the dreamer to its scabby bosom. The investigator awakes exhausted, and with a throbbing headache—indicating that something has happened, but the investigators have no way to know they have lost so many magic points.

Breakfast With Company

Breakfast is at 7am. Again the investigators suffer a spell of dizziness as they enter the car (lose 1 magic point).

A different waiter appears, but he still bears the same disturbing resemblance to the others. The menu offers standard breakfast options. After the plates are cleared, the investigators can hear the staff in the kitchen working on the dishes. But a successful Listen roll detects an unusual noise from within the dining car—a groaning, as of someone in pain.

A man is sprawled under one of the tables. He has been there since last night, when he got too drunk and was inadvertently left by his equally intoxicated companions. He is dressed in a blue and gray uniform, with a bowl helmet of sky blue—the distinctive uniform of the French artillery in World War I.

His name is Henri Montclair, and he is a private in a French artillery battalion serving lately in the Battle of Verdun. He is aged nineteen, an old man for the Western Front. His greatcoat is torn and careworn, and his long, gallic face is stubbled. He is dark-haired, and rangy in build. His head is bandaged. He believes he is on a troop train, taking him to the Mediterranean for well-deserved leave.

The waiters exchange dark glances when Montclair scrambles up from beneath the table. One of them disappears into the kitchen.

Montclair speaks broken English. He is a happy fellow left dour and cynical by the horrors of war. He explains to the investigators that he left the battle raging. He finds it impossible to believe that, to the investigators, his battle's won and the war is over. He thinks the investiga-

tors must be railway staff, since they are out of uniform. If any are German, he becomes surly and withdrawn.

A conductor enters through the salon car door, and gruffly tells Montclair that he will escort him back to his carriage. A Spot Hidden roll or a roll of INT x3 or less on D100 leaves the investigator certain that the conductor is the same man as the waiter, and this is true. He changed his uniform. The servitor's problem, now that Montclair has missed leaving with the rest of his sitting, is how to return the soldier to the proper space-time. He beckons to the Frenchman, who agrees to follow with a shrug, and they leave the dining car, pass through the salon car and sleeping car. The conductor unlocks the star-shaped lock at the rear end of the sleeper. If the investigators follow, they see a pall of smoke drift out while the door is open, there is a glimpse of glowing cigarettes, and a murmur of French conversation. The door closes, and locks. Sanity point loss to witness this is 0/1.

Five minutes later the conductor emerges. If the investigators are waiting, they find themselves looking into their own dining car. Breakfast is over. The door closes, and is locked with the star-shaped key.

The Night Of Dark Slumber

On the second night the vapor masks finish their work. The Spectral Traveler endeavors to warn the passengers, but in the train's domain it is now much diminished. It passes fleetingly through the investigators' compartments as they prepare for sleep, little more than a rustling like that of a wandering moth, or a green shadow which passes too quickly to be fully seen. The keeper might allow an INT x3 roll or less on D100 to notice it. The Traveler points at the bed and shakes its head mournfully, then drifts through the wall to other compartments to try to alert other passengers. Loss for those who notice the return of the platform phantom is 0/1 Sanity point.

After midnight, each vapor mask flutters into life and drifts into position. From each maw pours a ghoul-green, ectoplasmic sludge, a vile gel that covers each sleeper



Pvt. Henri Montclair

British East-African Uganda Express, 1903

SALON CAR: this carriage is constructed of wood. It is similar in layout to the salon car of the 1920s. Its piano can entertain the travelers. The Victorian opulence inside contrasts sharply with the rugged countryside of Africa without. Lions can sometimes be glimpsed in the grassy plains.

PASSENGERS: There are fifteen men and women in the car and a handful of children. All are British, upper and middle class. It is especially difficult to convince them of anything otherworldly or outlandish, since it outrages their sense of decorum.

Notable in the carriage is the lovely Miss Wanda Huntington who—scandal!—is travelling alone. The young Miss Huntington is both a journalist and a suffragette, so she sees nothing wrong in this. Also present is doughty Sir Cuthbert Clark, self-styled Great White Hunter. He professes the ability to sniff out any game, but his white whiskers have yet to start twitching over the anomalies this train presents.

SLEEPING CAR: most people stay up late, drinking and playing cards in the salon car. Eventually the passengers retire to richly appointed compartments, with private bathrooms and luxurious berths to soothe the ills of travel. In each compartment is a framed portrait of King Edward VII. His regal features are set in a strange grin, the hungry leer of the vapor mask.

APPROPRIATE PROWLER: a lion in the grasslands of Africa.

and seeps into orifices. Allow each investigator a Luck roll to sense something amiss and wake up as the gelid stuff flows across them. Once inside, the substance displaces the sleeper's essence. The mask catches this essence and pumps it out like blood to pulsing arteries in the skin of the sleeping car, in turn connected to the hideous engine of the train.

The victim loses one point of POW for every round the vapor mask is at work. Death occurs when POW reaches zero. The remaining body is an empty husk, a gray skin form stretched over bundles of crumbling bones almost balloon-like. Seeing a mask's dire work costs 1/1D6 Sanity points.

Wounding a mask for 8 or more hit points prevents it from functioning. Each has 15 hit points. If the mask is destroyed, the sludge evaporates as a green-hued gas. Roll CON x5 or less on D100 for an investigator not to be overcome with nausea for 1D10 rounds, but each who is saved are otherwise unharmed.

Once the masks have devoured the souls of most passengers, the servitors cast off their human guise and rampage through the train, slaughtering and eating survivors. Then servitors collect the remnant husks and one by one tow them bobbing and bumping to the corpse car, where they consume at their leisure any droplets not pumped out. The husks finally drained, they are cast onto the unending plain outside the train.

Trans-Siberian Express, 1901

SALON CAR: this is the first-class salon car of the Trans-Siberian Express, another creation of George Nagelmackers, the father of the Orient Express. This magnificent carriage has ivory interspersed with fine woods, rich carpets, and an organ. A fierce fire burns in a potbellied stove (the chimney exits through the roof). Travelers smoke, play cards, and drink vast amounts of tea from a huge samovar.

Outside are the unending snows and forests of Siberia.

PASSENGERS: thirty men and women, all beautifully dressed in the late Victorian manner. These are wealthy folk, aristocrats under the Tsar. In the style of the time, most speak passable French as well as Russian.

Among them is the redoubtable one-eyed Tsarist spy, Count Igor Varena, recently returned from Manchuria, and eager to make his report to his monarch. The Count is nearly fifty, and has a straight-backed, military air. He speaks a little English, unlike the rest of the passengers.

SLEEPING CAR: passengers retire early—it's warmer in bed. The luxurious compartments have inlaid panelling and marble washstands. Hidden among the wooden marquetry on the walls the vapor masks scowl.

APPROPRIATE PROWLER: a Siberian tiger, or a pack of wolves.

earlier space-times might not be present in later space-times. The keeper must decide whether or not this should be true for his or her play.

Moving Along The Train

Between each car is a small enclosed section which bridges the interval over the couplings between each car. The rhythm of the train is stronger here. Small side doors at the ends of the cars allow access to the outside, as shown in the train plans. These doors also are locked (STR 20). Once such a door is open, the investigators may jump from the train, or clamber onto the roof.

Investigators may wish to uncouple the carriages by unlocking the pins between them. Though the platform can be moved aside, it exposes pulsing green sinews and arteries of great strength—there are no ordinary couplings. Successful Idea rolls suggest that such organicism might be controlled at or connected to the engine.

Dining Car —

Corpse Car Connection

The servitors have put a walk-way between the left side-door at the kitchen end of the dining car, and the left side-door at the rear of the corpse car. Since the train never goes in other than a straight line across the plain, this short-cut works fine, and saves them having to clamber over the top of the train.

If the investigators notice the walk-way, and take it rather than using the connecting passage between cars, they arrive in the corpse car, and not in some future space-time (such as the SP freight train in 1934).

Getting Off The Train

In jumping from a moving train, investigators must succeed in a Jump roll or take 2D6 damage as they tumble off and away from the train. The appearance of the terrain depends upon the car exited. Thus, if investigators leap from the Russian carriage, they land in what appears to be the snows of Siberia, in 1901.

All of these landscapes are illusionary, as might be understood from the blur of the horizon. The vastness of plains or wilderness has an oddly truncated feel. As will be seen, only a table-flat, unending plain exists.

Regardless of the direction taken, the investigators always arrive at a railway track as the train approaches in the distance. The only way out of the landscape is to board the train, or to succumb to the prowlers.

These ectoplasmic things patrol the landscapes, assuming predatory shapes inherent in the hallucinatory landscapes. Their power is limited, and there is always some hint of their true nature. If a prowler appears as some natural best, it is too large or more hideous than the

Exploring

Moving Through Space-Times

The space-time connections between the various sets of trains are signified by star-shaped locks, to which conductors carry the keys. These doors also can be opened with successful Locksmith rolls, perhaps modified for difficulty in understanding an alien lock, or forced open (STR against STR 20 on the Resistance Table) by no more than two people.

To go ahead in time from the investigator's year in the 1920s, one unlocks and passes through the door from the dining car kitchen forward toward the corpse car. One then enters some set of cars ahead in relative time—in this scenario, it would be the SP freight train in 1934.

To go back in time, one unlocks and passes through the rear door in the investigators' sleeping car. Four trains from earlier times are provided, since the investigators' progress seems much more likely there.

The servitors know how move to the train set of choice, if they use this option. Since they're not talking, the investigators would logically need to plod through each set, eventually ending at the beginning of rail travel in the 19th century, or at its cessation, in some unimaginable future. Why bring up such messy details? —let the players perceive the sequence of train sets as random.

Only twelve servitors exist on the train. It doesn't much matter, since all can serve in each of the sequential space-times. Logically, though, those servitors killed in

real thing. If it masquerades as a group of creatures (like a pack of wolves, for instance), a thin membrane joining them can be seen by those with sharp eyes.

Each sample space-time includes a note nominating an appropriate creature or creatures. Regardless of appearance, the attack is always that shown in the statistics.

Moving Atop The Train

Climbing atop the train is difficult, but not impossible. This is the quickest and least dangerous way to reach the corpse car and engine. There are ladder-like grips on the roof of each car. They are easy to hold onto, but each interval between cars requires a successful Jump roll or DEX roll to cross. Failing, the investigator loses 3D6 hit points, the effect of which the keeper could soften by various Luck or DEX rolls.

The landscape beyond looks as the investigators expect it to until moving onto the corpse car. Then they see an alien void of dead gray sky and horizons which blur into infinity. To underline their dislocation, the dim light of two suns burn through the gray haze. Seeing this void costs 0/1D3 Sanity points, since with it comes the realization that the investigators are in a different space-time. Investigators who fall off the train here will see the prowlers as they are, enormous bird-like things with multiple drooling mouths (Sanity point loss to see them 0/1D6).

The Corpse Car

This is where the servitors take their meals. It can be entered from the locked door beyond the kitchen of the dining car (at the forward end of the dining car) or by climbing across the top of the train and prying open one of the baggage car ventilation hatches (STR 25, but three investigators at a time can combine STR).

Within is charnel horror. Six servitors perch here in their true guise, scattered as the keeper chooses. These elongate humanoids are thin-limbed like ants, with scabrous skin. Clumps of hair protrude in stiff bristles. Their eyes are bright, and their jaws are wide like those of frogs, but stuffed with teeth.

The rooms of the car are stuffed with jostling, tumbling, naked human balloons, all that are left of earlier victims of the masks. Occasionally vile green liquid drips from this or that body balloon, and it is this that the servitors most crave, squatting to lick and suck seepage from the floor or raising high and tilting a whole body to

Southern Pacific, 1934

FREIGHT CAR: an empty wooden freight car, rattling through Oregon, bound for Portland. There are no doors at either end, just two big doors in the center of the car which can be rolled back. Servitors only enter this car to pick up bodies.

A page from the *Portland Journal* lies crumpled in a corner, evidence of the year. The rest of the paper (and some of the slats from the car) has been fed to a drum in the middle of the floor. This gives off an oily heat, but the heat is little comfort in the draughty car. Through cracks in the walls can be seen stands of high pines as the train heads west from Chemult toward the Oregon Cascades. Thin snow clings to the ground.

Night or day, the hobo denizens of this car sit or lie half-asleep, half-awake, ready to jump if the car is shunted into a yard, or if the railway police suddenly pounce to break a few trespassing heads.

The hobos have broken open the single crate in this car. It contains cans of stewed fruit. Seven empty tins rattle around the carriage floor. The bright labels depict a smiling boy, his eyes alive with hunger. These are the vapor masks for this carriage.

PASSENGERS: these hobos and drifters may be antagonistic to well-heeled strangers who sneak aboard so quietly that they suddenly appear like magic. If the investigators conduct themselves arrogantly and at the same time show little ability to defend themselves, they might be attacked. On the other hand, if the investigators are big and tough, or handy with jokes, or have food to pass around, they'll be welcomed. But there can be no alliances here. Every man must watch out for himself.

Frisco Jack is barely thirty, with rough cropped brown hair and a whip-thin frame. He is bright, educated, and articulate, a testament to the hardness of the times that has led him here. He used to know about stocks, he says, but now he just knows about soups.

This car from the future paints a grim picture of the years ahead. Astute and financially-minded investigators may try to get details out of Jack or the newspaper, in order to preserve their own money.

APPROPRIATE PROWLER: railroad policeman carrying club and revolver.

scour droplets from within, a maneuver at which their prehensile tongues are clever. Finished with a body, the drained bobbing envelope is chucked out an open freight door.

Twisting, pulsing green fleshy tubes run along the passageway floor toward the engine; these are the same sorts of things seen if the couplings of the cars have been inspected. Here they pulse and writhe with the insane rhythms of hearts condemned.

From the ceiling of the passageway dangles an unspeakable chandelier, composed of human parts. Each guttering candle sits in a head with a hole drilled in the top. The loss for viewing the interior of the caboose is 1/1D8 Sanity points.

Captured investigators will not last long in this car, since fresh bodies make much more interesting chandelier decorations than desiccated corpses. However, the servitors do not pursue investigators who jump off the train. There is only the train and the prowlers in this place—the servitors know that escapees must try to return or inevitably die.

The Engine

The locomotive is large, black, and belches thick, roiling greenish smoke. The smoke stench is pervasive and foul, like burning tires and burning flesh.

The tender of the locomotive is filled by more human husks as well as by imitation coal—shifting, sharp, black slippery stuff in wet slabs as sharp as obsidian. Call for DEX rolls of some appropriate multiplier. A failure costs a hit point in cuts to the hands and knees, and the smell of blood alerts the Driver-Thing.

The Driver-Thing is a massive pink and bulbous thing. Its head is a swollen lump with tiny raisin eyes. Folds of flesh flow into a pool on the floor, and from this pool rise strands of various thickness. These flaccid appendages grasp or socket the levers and switches of the train. (As if one would expect otherwise, a successful Operate Heavy Machinery roll determines that the connections and controls are not standard to an earthly locomotive.)

The Driver-Thing's attention is riveted upon the portal in the front of the cab, through which it views the unchanging grayness around it. If attacked the Driver-Thing keeps its attention upon its work, while newer and stronger flesh tentacles spring from its back to attack or ward off those who bedevil it.

The pulsing arteries and sinews that hold the train together here disappear into what would ordinarily be the firebox. Prominent above them on the fire wall are four levers, glowing with heat. All are in the up position. These levers release the train sets to return to their respective space-times. (This is a good place to have a successful Operate Heavy Machine or INT x3 roll supply the deduction, if the players miss the point.)

As its statistics make clear, the Driver-Thing is capable in defense, but is not an overwhelming fighter. It has one weapon unmentioned in the statistics, however, and the keeper must decide whether or not to use it.

The train is powered by a vision of the universe which it perpetually tries to absorb or be absorbed by. And within the firebox is the entire universe—galaxies, quasars, knots of time, strings of matter—and at the universe's center of course whirls the angry truth of the horror of Azathoth, clearly visible and flaming in this finite infinite void though vast numbers of light years distant. If the Driver-Thing opens the firebox door, each investigator who looks in must see the god and lose 1D10 /D100 Sanity points from the numbing sight.

If the investigators can kill the Driver-Thing, it dissolves into dust and ash, clearing the way for them to enter the cab.

Conclusion

Anyone touching the controls is attacked by the power of the train. There is no way to know this ahead of time, unless the keeper wants to allow a Cthulhu Mythos roll to deduce the danger. Cautious investigators might use belts

or ropes. If touching, match the POW of the investigator against POW 12. If overcome, the unfortunate investigator swells to the proportions of the old Driver-Thing, losing all vestiges of humanity and individuality in the process. Sanity loss for this condition is 1D3/1D10 points, while onlookers lose 0/1D6 points. If he or she remains sane, the train is controllable at whim.

If the investigator's POW is not overcome, knowledge of the train's operation crowds his or her mind, but is not overwhelming. The purposes of the controls are clear.

The levers thrown, the train is severed from the will and energy of the god. The cosmos in the firebox disappears. Engines and cars of all the space-times snap back to their points of departure. If all the investigators are in the locomotive, their number increases by a servitor engineer and fireman, who just as suddenly fade out of existence. Everywhere rise clouds of steam.

Return

The investigators who return find themselves feeling the thrum and clack of genuine iron rails slow beneath their feet, and look out the windows to see dawn breaking. And like a window opening, each then finds himself or herself stepping off the train in his or her space-time, at his or her starting point. Behind each last dismounting passenger, that space-time train flickers and disappears.

All the passengers, in all the space-times, have the same bewildering experience. Do they get on board the train *now* pulling in? Probably not, but it is the one they wanted to take in the first place, right on time. Not a second has elapsed since boarding the Train That Ever Was.

And somewhere nearby, everywhere and nowhere, is a figure in black with a broad hat. It breathes out the last of its vapors, exhaling a stream of smiling people who dissipate in the breeze. With the last of them, the figure collapses, leaving only a puzzling pile of old clothes—men's, women's and children's fashions from many eras. The Spectral Traveler is free.

Rewards & Recurrences

The sanity reward for returning the carriages to their respective times is 2D6+1 Sanity points if there were no vapor mask casualties aboard their set of cars. They gain 1D6+1 Sanity points for returning themselves and a few other survivors to their own space-times.

The Train That Ever Was may be no more, or perhaps it is being made up anew by another group of servitors, awaiting fresh runs through infinity. Let the investigators believe what comforts them.



Statistics

THE SPECTRAL TRAVELER, Composite Ghost

INT 9 POW 58

Skills: Deliver Cryptic Warning 90%, Gaseous Display 90%.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4.

HENRI MONTCLAIR, Age 19, Artilleryman of the Third Republic

STR 11 CON 10 SIZ 12 INT 12 POW 12
DEX 14 APP 13 EDU 12 SAN 57 HP 11

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 54%, damage 1D3

Skills: Calculate Trajectory 35%, Climb 61%, Dodge 43%, English 15%, FastTalk 48%, French 60%, Operate Heavy Machine 54%, Rifle 36%.

SAMPLE SERVITOR STATISTICS

STR 20 CON 15 SIZ 15 INT 9 POW 10
DEX 10 APP 7(0)* HP 15

* zero refers to the creature's true appearance.

Damage Bonus: +1D6.

Weapons: Fist** 65%, damage 1D3 +db

Claw 45%, damage 1D4 +db

Bite 40%, damage 1D6

** the only weapon used when in human form, though perhaps one might bite in a desperate situation.

Armor: 3 points of rugose hide.

Skills: Climb 90%, Disguise as Human 90%, Jump 55%, Listen 35%, Sneak 60%, Spot Hidden 60%.

Sanity Loss: costs 0/1D6 Sanity points to see as monster.

servitor	one	two	three	four
STR	17	18	16	20
CON	13	17	15	16
SIZ	17	15	19	20
POW	9	10	8	9
DEX	15	14	17	16
HP	15	16	17	18

servitor	five	six	seven	eight
STR	18	18	17	19
CON	18	13	16	14
SIZ	16	17	16	18
POW	11	9	7	9
DEX	16	16	18	17
HP	17	15	16	16
servitor	nine	ten	eleven	twelve
STR	19	20	18	18
CON	14	16	13	18
SIZ	14	19	15	16
POW	10	11	10	11
DEX	16	20	18	17
HP	14	18	14	17

VAPOR MASK, Infernal Device

SIZ 2 INT 13 POW 15 HP 15

Skills: Suck Soul 100%.

One vapor mask exists for each passenger.

PROWLER ON THE THRESHOLD, Amorphous Hunter

STR 30 CON 20 SIZ 50 INT 8 POW 15
DEX 12 HP 35

Damage Bonus: +4D6.

Weapon: Attack* 60%, damage 1D10 +db

* The weapon varies with Prowler's chosen form. If the thing has split up into parts, the damage results from different attacks.

Armor: 6 points of unearthly matter.

Skills: Disguise 75%, Spot Hidden 90%, Track 90%.

Sanity Loss: as monster 0/1D6 Sanity points to see.

2 identical prowlers pace the train, hoping for prey.

THE DRIVER-THING, Misshapen Engineer

STR 18 CON 20 SIZ 30 INT 2 POW 16
DEX 8 HP 25

Damage Bonus: +2D6.

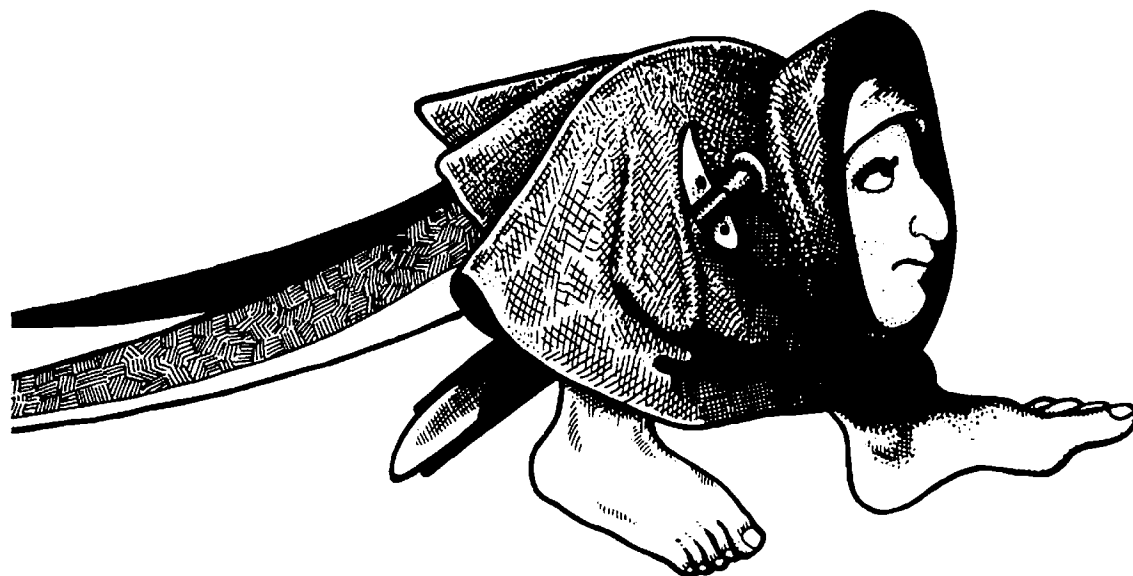
Weapons: Tentacle Strike 40%, damage 1D8 +db

Grapple* 40%, damage special

* Grappled foes are thrown from the engine cab. The victim must match STR against STR against the Driver-Thing to resist and break free.

Skills: Drive Locomotive 100%.

Sanity Loss: costs 1/1D8 Sanity points to see. ■



Furious Driving

A straight narrative with automotive flecks embedded, wherein the investigators learn that blood is thicker than oil, but no less combustible.

AUTOMOBILES are dangerous. Automobiles kill. Automobiles prowl the streets of the city, looking for people to maim. Their machine cough pollutes the air. Automobiles send puddles splashing over pedestrians. They want people to slip in the water and fall. Automobile grills gleam. Metal teeth leer and snarl. Headlights and windshields reflect the street lights after dark, so no human form can be seen within at all. A crankshaft can dash your brains out. Wheels lock. Brakes fail. Automobiles are dangerous. Automobiles kill.

Keeper's Information

Rupert Putney is a keen motorist. Speeding, he forgets, and Rupert has much he needs to forget. He has a newly dead sister, an evil father, and a hideous twin brother. He needs the investigators to find his brother. If they don't find him, Rupert Putney will go insane.

Rupert's first meeting with the investigators is not a success. As a matter of fact, he nearly kills them.

Wheels Lock, Brakes Fail

AUTOMOBILES KILL. This scenario takes place in any large American city, in the month of May. It begins with an accident. This can occur any time the investigators are out and about in their automobile. The keeper might introduce these events during the course of another investigation.

The investigators are driving along a busy street. Suddenly a Bugatti going the other way plunges across the road, directly toward them. A Spot Hidden roll notices that the driver wildly swings the steering wheel, but the Bugatti does not answer his call. A halved Drive roll result avoids the Bugatti.

If the roll fails, the two automobiles collide. The Bugatti sideswipes a fire hydrant as the force of the impact slews them both around 180 degrees. Investigators must make successful Jump or Dodge rolls to avoid 2D6 damage. Success halves the damage. The driver of the investigators' auto must also make a Luck roll to avoid their vehicle tipping over. If the auto is upended it is of no further use until after extensive repairs.

If the investigators avoid the collision, the Bugatti dives headlong into the fire hydrant. The investigators' vehicle suffers minor damage from flying debris, a broken window and some paint scraped off the near side.

The accident occurs in a heavily populated part of town, and immediately draws a lively and interested crowd and several policemen.

The Bugatti

The Bugatti is a 1926 model with a Type 30 engine, capable of rapid acceleration to its top speed of 75 mph. It is a four seater with a sports-touring body. It is painted sky blue, trimmed with royal blue, with red leather seats and wire wheels, rims also trimmed with royal blue. Smoothly rounded openings serve as doors. See the diagram on page 36 for details.

Rupert Putney, the driver of the Bugatti, is mildly injured. Nevertheless, he climbs out of the wreck and apologizes. He seems unnaturally calm. A successful Psychology roll notes that his facade covers quiet desperation. He only wants to get into another auto and keep driving, and has to push that urgent feeling away.

Rupert recognizes the name or the face of the most experienced investigator, but is unable to say from where or when. A successful Know roll indicates the investigator has previously heard of Rupert, in the newspaper society pages. The crowd certainly recognizes him, and cheers him on. The police resignedly write up the damage, knowing the matter will never reach court.

Inspection of the Bugatti finds that the brake cable has snapped. A successful Mechanical Repair roll suggests that steering and brakes were tampered with prior to the accident.

Rupert Putney

Rupert Putney is a blond dilettante. His face is deeply lined for one so young. He has a triangular scar over his scalp, the least of his legacies from war.

Rupert is charming, his open manner covering psychological problems which become apparent on any but superficial acquaintance. He has a terrible fear of heights (dating from his nervous collapse during the war), and a pathological phobia of anything small and hairy (from childhood). He is otherwise fearless, even foolhardy.

These following things are known about him wherever people gather, and tongues wag. An investigator who lives in this city may recall each rumor with a successful Know roll.

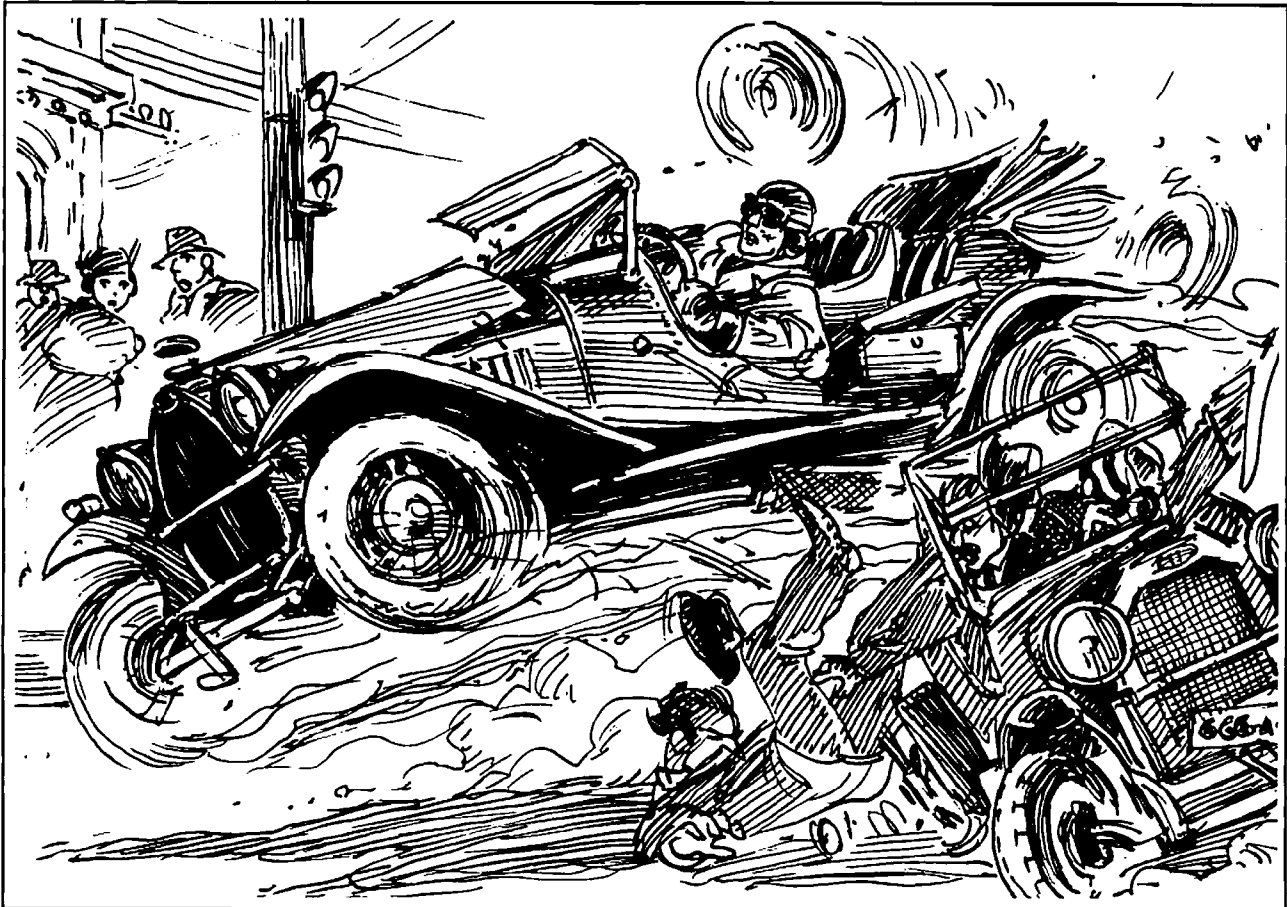


Rupert Putney

- Rupert Putney is the sole son of a well-to-do father. Rupert was a flying ace during the war, but received a medical discharge after a bad crash-landing. Now he races his father's autos instead, and drives fast and recklessly. Rupert has numerous misdemeanor citations for his driving, but none have kept him off the road.
- Unkind gossip gifts him with a drug addiction.
- Amy, his sister, died two months ago, in what was reported as peritonitis following severe appendicitis.
- Old Man Putney, now retired, was a ruthless and successful steel-maker. His money is now securely invested in American automobile manufacturers.

The Putney Estate

SOME DAYS after the accident, the investigator that Rupert recognized receives a note from him, saying that he has belatedly connected them in



Automobiles are dangerous.

with a news report of one of their exploits. He would like to offer them a job, 'with appropriate compensation.' He fixes the appointment for tomorrow afternoon. As their auto is probably in for repairs, he offers to send his car to pick them up. He apologizes again for the mishap, and closes with a hope that they have not suffered any lasting harm. It is a charming note.

The auto that arrives to collect the investigators the following day is a disappointment, a dowdy 1919 Chevrolet. However, anyone with Mechanical Repair over 50% sees immediately that it has been kept in splendid condition. The glove compartment holds a dusty pair of woman's driving gloves.

Gilbert Fleming is the Putney's chauffeur. He is a tall man, with a conservative air. He is polite, and does not speak unless spoken to.

The Putney home is not opulent, but it is large and in a wealthy neighborhood. A white graveled drive leads around the back, where a lawn has been set out around a new-built brick garage. Beyond the garage is a large orchard, untended for so long that it is now a wilderness of long grass, poison oak and twisted trees.

The Garage

As the investigators are driven in, they notice that the open garage holds an impressive amount of equipment

The Chevrolet

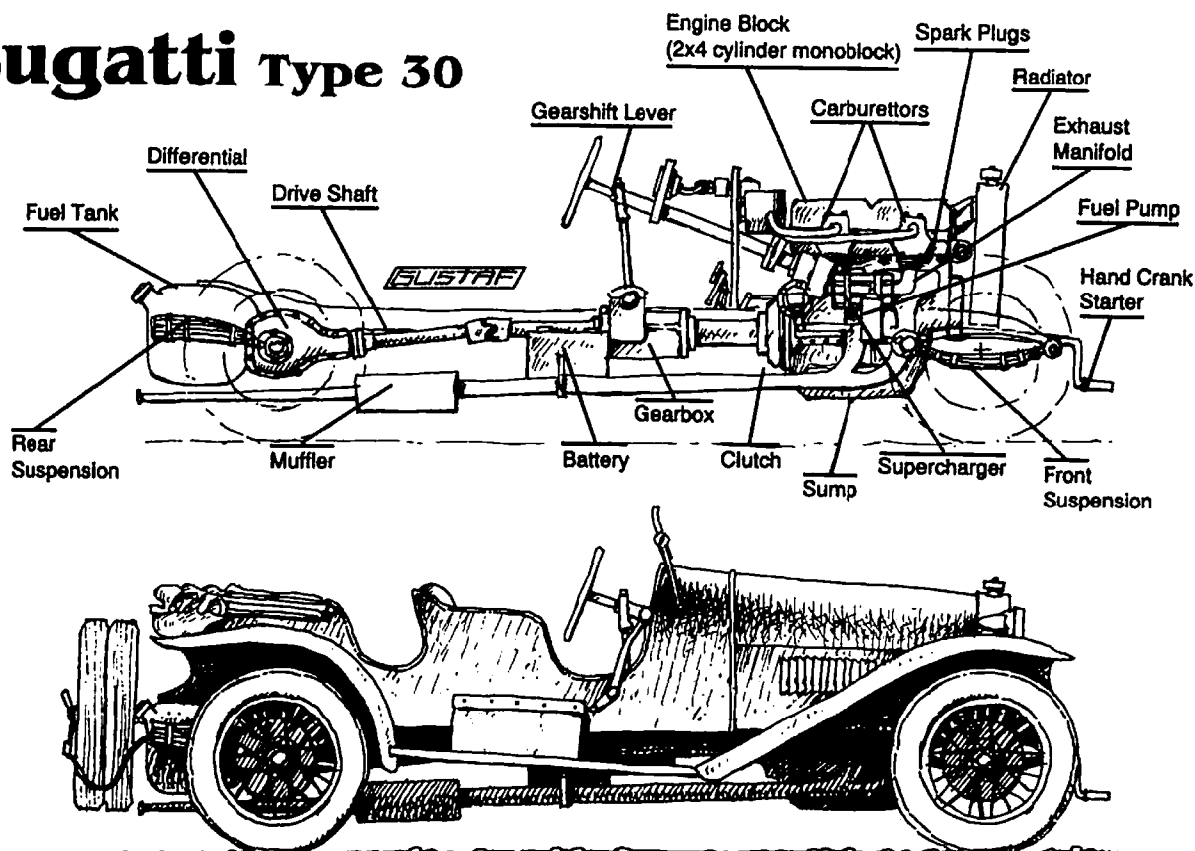
The Chevrolet is mildly less ugly than the standard Model-T. It is olive green with wood 'artillery' wheels, and has a maximum speed of 40-50mph. It has four doors and a self starter (no crank needed). Its engine is low-powered and sluggish but steady and reliable, capable of tolerating a good deal more misuse than the temperamental Bugatti. There's no diagram of it, but a picture of Rodney in the Chevy occurs later.

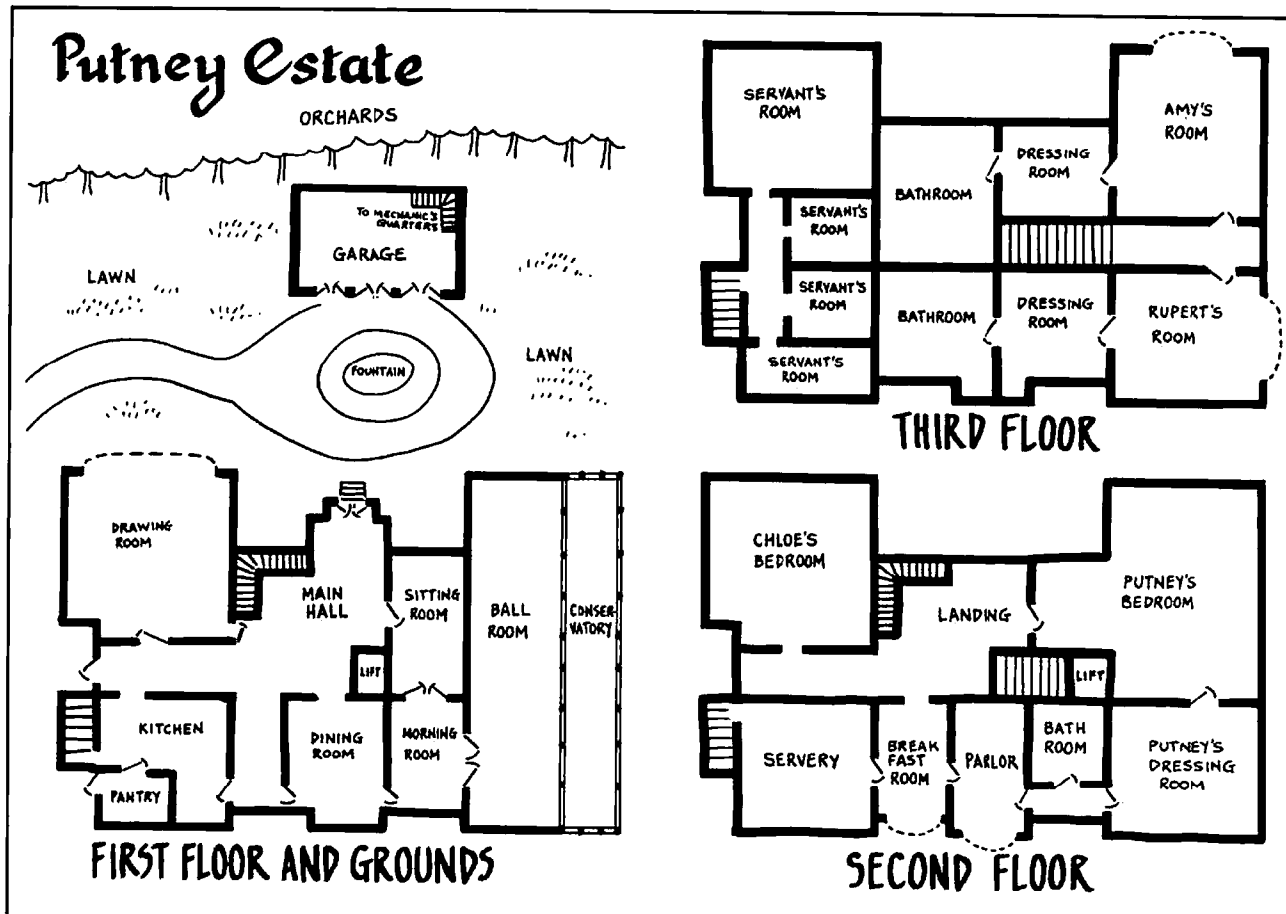
and machinery. There are two other motorcars. One is the wrecked Bugatti, being worked on by a mechanic. The other is something even better, a Bugatti racing car.

The House

Oddly enough, the grand entrance faces back, toward the garage, giving the impression that the family within has turned away from the world. A servant appears at the front door—really the back—to take their cards, coats and hats. The interior is impressive, with all the appointments and belongings expected of the moderately wealthy, but the atmosphere of the house is sullen and unfriendly. The central heating is kept oppressively high.

Bugatti Type 30





A Listen roll hears a regular squeaking sound and the murmur of voices. A woman is wheeling an old man across the landing above them, towards the manual elevator. He is wrapped in blankets. She is wearing an eye-catching assortment of evening and practical wear and sensible boots, topped with a rakish hat and a feather boa. She talks constantly, laughing at her own jokes. His head nods in time with the squeal of the wheels.

The Drawing Room

The servant ushers the investigators into the drawing room, then goes to summon Rupert. The drawing room is on the ground floor, overlooking the lawn and garage through a set of large french windows. It is a room of impressive proportions, outfitted in the fabrics of several seasons ago. A large fire burns in the ornate fireplace, regardless of the season. The lid of an unused piano holds crepe-wrapped photographs of a young and an old woman. The older woman looks beaten-down, but the younger has the same expression in her eyes that Rupert sometimes shows, a quiet, unrelenting desperation.

Rupert arrives dressed in pajamas and dressing gown. He is still convalescing from the auto accident. At some stage in the interview investigators get a glimpse of his stomach, which has an old scar running across it. A successful First Aid or Medicine roll establishes that the

massive scar is too faint to be a war wound: it must be a remnant of some childhood surgery.

Rupert does not want to talk about the accident. He brushes aside any discussion of interference with his Bugatti. "Competition," he suggests, briefly referring to the Indy 500 race at the end of the month.

If asked, he says that the photographs on the piano are of his sister Amy and his mother. His mother died some years ago, after a fall down the stairs. Amy died two months ago, from peritonitis, an infection of the abdomen. He says that they were close, though the only childhood memory of her he will ever volunteer is of the two of them playing in the orchard. The Chevrolet which transported the investigators was her car.

The Deal

Rupert wishes to hire the investigators. He wants them to find his brother Rodney, a black sheep who departed while Rupert was fighting in France. Now that his mother and sister are dead, and since his father has declined and is not much company, Rodney is now the only family Rupert has.

The young war hero has one lead to Rodney's whereabouts. There is a female relative—whom he shamefacedly implies is Rodney's mother—with whom he believes Rodney has kept in touch. She lives in Detroit.

He offers another lead, less specific. Like the rest of the family, Rodney loves motor cars. "They're in our blood," Rupert says, and he seems to mean it literally. He thinks Rodney will be working for a living somewhere connected with automobiles—in a garage, a factory, or perhaps a race track.

He describes Rodney as small and slight in frame, thin, dark-haired and with a crooked left canine tooth. On a sudden inspiration, he says that he is sure that Amy would have some photograph of him tucked away. He dashes upstairs. The investigators are welcome to follow.

Amy's rooms are on the third floor, opposite Rupert's own chambers. His bedroom door is ajar, allowing a glimpse of a glossy red cupboard within.

Amy's Rooms

Amy's rooms have been kept tidy, but are largely untouched. Rupert searches ruthlessly, and finally discovers a framed photograph. His face is transfigured as he hands the photograph over. The Putney smile, famous from a thousand sports and social pages, flashes out, reckless, confident, empowering. As the smile fades, a successful Psychology roll notices just how much is missing from his face. Rupert Putney is not particularly sane, and he is not telling the full truth.

The photograph shows the framed head and shoulders of a man in his late twenties. He has brown hair and a sallow, coarse complexion. His face is grim and stunned looking—probably the effects of the mercury flash. What is visible of his body suggests a solid frame. His mouth is closed, so whether he has a snaggle tooth cannot be determined. He looks nothing like Rupert.

The Truth About The Photograph

Rupert is desperate to find his brother, his real twin brother, a stunted, monstrous thing who lives in the attic. However, his shaky hold on sanity and his nerve fail him, and he is unable to tell the investigators to go looking for monsters. Instead he sends them off looking for Joe Flynn, his old mechanic, the one trusted person left in his life. He half-insanely believes that Flynn really is his brother, and hopes that with his return, things will somehow come right. Perhaps Amy will come alive again, and they can all play together in the orchard.

Rupert's Rooms

While Rupert is searching through Amy's room, an investigator may sneak off and search through Rupert's, though doing this would be invasive and rude, and run counter to the interests of the client.

Rupert's rooms contain things normal to a young man of his history and interests. Exotic and mysterious mementos of his flying and racing careers cover the walls.

The brightest piece of furniture in the room is a large Chinese bureau, like a French armoire but lacquered red and green. It is locked. A Locksmith roll will open it.

Failing that, it can be forced open (STR 10), but this makes a loud tearing sound.

Within is a roughly-made cube-like hutch about three feet on a side, mostly made of filthy fencing wire. The padlocked door is open. Inside the hutch are crude, child-sized things, among them an awl and something which an Idea roll identifies as a home-made wrench. Within the bureau lingers a faint reek of motor oil and feces.

Taken together these things fill the viewer with quiet horror (lose 0/1 Sanity points), for a primitive aura surrounds these child's toys, as though the maker had slipped one step back on the evolutionary ladder that mankind has labored so long and hard to climb.

Rodney Today

The inside of the bureau has been left as Rupert found it when he returned from France. Were the snooping investigator to go to the attic (not shown on the Putney estate plans but reachable via each set of third-floor stairs), he or she would find a flea-ridden nest amid the disused furniture and old clothes, one equipped with many more homemade tools, many hand-made model cars, automobile pin-ups and calendars stolen from Rupert, and a unique collection of Bugatti crankshafts.

Late at night, Rodney prowls the house at will, raiding the larder, and acquainting himself with the physical powers and paternal inheritance he believes Rupert has somehow stolen from him.

Rodney sleeps in the daytime, and plays with his toy cars or makes new ones in the evenings. He resentfully understands that his horrifying appearance must be hidden away, and that this too is somehow the fault of his family.

For their part, the elder Putney, Rupert, and Chloe all know of Rodney's existence, but each has reason to ignore the fact and to lie about it.

The Deal Concluded

Once the investigators confirm their interest in the case, Rupert is evidently much happier. He offers good rates (as the keeper can determine), and is willing to wire money as needs be. He wants regular reports.

As the interview progresses, he gets stomach cramps and starts to sweat. The time for his morphine injection approaches. A successful Medicine roll suspects these as withdrawal symptoms. Just then a Dr. Thane is announced by the servant, but Rupert keeps him waiting in the downstairs hall until the deal has been completed. Then he calls for the auto to return the investigators to their apartments.

Dr. Thane

The investigators meet Dr. Thane on the stairs. He steps back to let them pass, clutching his black bag to his chest and bestowing on them his unctuous smile. Dr. Thane is sprightly, plump and well-groomed. He so good-looking



Dr. Nigel Thane

and relentlessly plausible in his speech that he gives sensitive people the creeps.

The Ballroom

Instead of handing the investigators their hats and coats, the servant asks them to step into the ballroom to meet the master of the house. They are led through a series of sitting and morning rooms on the ground floor to a vast and humid ballroom.

The room is empty except for two marble columns flanking the glass conservatory door. The conservatory within is long since stripped of vegetation. The old man in the wheelchair and the woman companion are at the other end of the room, whispering together. They are Old Man Putney, wizened patriarch, and his nurse Chloe Bass.

Chloe Bass

Chloe is a brunette in her later thirties; a good-time girl whose looks have been ruined by gin. She has the throaty contralto of a dedicated drinker, but she is still a strong, determined person, and wants desperately to keep herself on easy street. Her business is humoring the old man's whims.

She is companion, nurse (rumor says wet-nurse), nanny, chauffeur, check writer, scandal monger and gopher for the old man, constantly in attendance, teasing and chuckling over him. She has little time for Rupert, speaking to him impatiently and loudly. Rupert in turn ignores her when he can, and is irritatingly and deliberately vague towards her when he cannot. She has no knowledge of Rodney.

She wears a combination of her own, cheap party dresses and Amy's tailored clothes, carelessly altered for her larger figure. Rupert is too far gone to care about this, and the perverse old man likes it.

Old Man Putney

Putney is an invalid. His shriveled, twisted body curls fetus-like in his bath chair, surmounted by an overly-large head. He smells of the mustard plasters that soothe his piles and pressure sores. His face is dominated by his eyes, which periodically light up with the remnants of his former self.



Chloe Bass

He is psychotic, a man whose evil was only curtailed by illness and age. He was a businessman so ruthless and so successful that people say he must have bargained with the devil. Putney requires that the heating is kept so high in the house. He likes it warm. His enemies say that this means he'll like where he's going.

His evil infected all who were close to him. His wife and marriage withered together. He tormented her until she killed herself, and his children have also thrown themselves desperately on the road to self-destruction.

Now enfeebled, crippled, Putney waits to die, and idly watches the slow ruin. He seldom speaks to Rupert except to goad him.



Old Man Putney

The Deal Ridiculed

Chloe asks the investigators about their business with Rupert. If they refuse to discuss it, her hoarse laugh rings out in genuine amusement at their gall. If they inform her, her surprise and Putney's shock are evident to everyone with successful Psychology rolls.

Putney manages to speak a few phrases. Rupert has no brother. It is a delusion he suffers from, a result of the shock that sent him home from the war. Rupert has been well for some time now, but Amy's death must have set him off again. There is no brother. His voice failing, he advises the investigators to call it off. He whispers a few phrases that only Chloe can catch, then lets the investigators go.

Chloe follows them out to the auto, and offers them money, double what they are getting from Rupert. She tells them to report to Rupert that the search is taking place but to do nothing. Rupert is very ill and will get worse, providing he doesn't kill himself in an auto accident first. Then he can be tucked into a sanatorium "until he recovers." Her face is for a moment almost sad.

If shown the photograph, Chloe says that the man in the photograph is Joe Flynn, Rupert's former mechanic. He left shortly before Amy's death, taking some potatoes (money) and rocks (jewelry) with him. "See," she says, "there ain't no brother. Rupert is a fruitcake. Save yourself time and shoe leather. Listen, the old man has all the money. Humor him."

The Chauffeur

Fleming, the chauffeur, waits with the car outside the garage. The mechanic's muffled curses can be heard from within the building.

Fleming can also identify the man in the photograph as Joe Flynn, the former mechanic. His sense of decorum prevents him from idle gossip, but if convinced by a Persuade roll that the investigators are trying to help Rupert, he cites some instances of his employer's fragile state of mind.

He says that Rupert often takes an auto out for a spin alone, and has had numerous accidents, most of them unreported. Once he took over the wheel from Fleming. He drove like a fiend until the machine ran out of gas, then looked round at Fleming "like he'd forgotten I was there."

Fleming also speaks of an incident in 1919. A monkey turned up in the garage, escaped from a circus or something. Rupert fled in terror. The entire staff had to haul out and catch the creature, which by then must have fled. Months after, they had to search the entire garage daily for stray monkeys before Rupert would enter.

When the investigators are ready, he starts the Chevrolet and drives them home.

The Mechanic

Miles Tuck is the family's new mechanic. He is oily and surly. Currently he is cursing and searching for the Bugatti's crank shaft, which is missing. This is the third one lost this month, and replacements have to be expressed from Italy.

Tuck shares the chauffeur's views on Rupert's sanity, but is less tactful. He lives in rooms above the garage. Several times he has heard the hand lathe working in the middle of the night. A couple of times he has heard one of the autos start up. No one is there when he comes down to investigate. He thinks it some dumb joke of his employer, and the family is lucky it keeps Tuck well-paid, or he would quit.

The Choice

The investigators must decide whether to persist in the case, in the face of opposition from the family and their own judgment of Rupert's sanity. Psychology rolls suggest that he is pinning a lot of faith on their search. If they do not proceed, there is a real possibility that he will go mad.

If they do nothing, Rupert deteriorates steadily over the next few weeks. He calls them one last time. He desperately wants them to come to the house. The situation there is as described further on, in the section The Show. The investigators must then act without the knowledge gained in their search, and without Joe Flynn, a useful ally.

If instead they choose not to further involve themselves, and ignore Rupert's final summons, they lose 1D3 Sanity points for their hard hearts when they read the newspaper reports of the family's strange demise.

The Search

THE SEARCH for Rodney takes the investigators out of town. They are expected to be in regular contact with their employer. He can provide clues for them if they are stumped, as well as updates on what is happening while they are away. He uses World-Wide Telegraph to wire money.

Detroit

The woman to whom Rupert has directed the investigators is the mother of his former mechanic. She lives in a white two-story frame house in Detroit, neatly fenced, with shade trees and a separate garage opening onto a mews in the back. The bustle of the booming automotive city is muted here.

Maggie Flynn

Maggie Flynn is Joe's mother. She was born in Ireland and maintains the brogue. She came to America to start anew, and to secretly bear the child of a married man. That child grew into a fine young man: Joe.

She is a cunning woman who projects a soft, frail image to put the investigators off-guard. She plies them with tea and cakes, and attempts to weasel information out of them. She believes her son faces theft charges, with good reason. A Spot Hidden about the room notices some bright china, a gleaming clock, and a new radio.

She has a photograph on the mantel, similar to the one the investigators have. She cheerfully admits that he is her son, but says that his name is Joe, not Rodney. She is no relation to the Putneys, and has never even met them.

She pretends she does not know where her son is. If the investigators convince her that Joe is in no trouble, and make Persuade rolls, she relents, and gives them the address of a Gasoline Alley garage in New York where he currently works.

If they offer her no such assurance, she sticks to her story. However, after the investigators leave, she waits ten minutes and then nips out to the post office to send him a telegram. The telegram cannot be read without bribing the clerk (Fast Talk roll). However, a Spot Hidden detects the impression of the written order for the telegram left on the pad. The address is that of a New York City garage, and the message is a warning summarizing whatever the investigators said to her.

Talking To Rupert From Detroit

Rupert is reasonably collected and practical. He listens to the investigators, and makes suggestions and offers clues. If they confess failure, he says "Why don't you tail the old lady or something, isn't that what private eyes do?"

Don't you read the dime shockers? What do you think I am paying you for?" He also suggests they ask her to act as intermediary in contacting her son.

New York City

If Detroit is the Motor City, sleek and busy, New York is the predator, stalking and always cash-hungry. Her citizens will do anything to turn a profit. The air is choked with money-making.

Gasoline Alley is like a scene from the moving pictures; the sky-scrapers are a back-drop and the street is filled with motors, mechanics in checked cloth caps and attractively smudged overalls, and gawking, hero-worshipping boys whose caps are too big for them.

The Garage

The front of the garage is a large, incredibly noisy shed, filled with autos in various stages of dismantlement and repair, and the equipment necessary to work on them. Two hand-powered lifts, one with an auto atop, are in the center of the shed, and lathes and work benches laden with equipment are around the walls. Oil slicks are everywhere. Block-and-tackle winches are poised over engines, and hooks hang from the roof. The place stinks of paint, grease, gasoline and hot metal.

A lot of men are in the garage. Half of them are working. The other half are unemployed idlers, relatives of the owner, looking to cadge work or cigarettes as the need arises.

The Office

There is a small office at the back of the garage. It contains a worn chair and a cheap deal desk. The top drawer holds an artfully contrived ledger. The second holds the real ledger (the difference between the two can be determined with an Accounting roll). The real ledger contains the addresses of all the employees, including that of Joe Flynn at a nearby rooming-house. The bottom drawer holds a bottle of hooch and two shot-glasses.

The Yard

Behind the garage is a six-foot-high decrepit wooden fence, separating it from a nondescript factory beyond. The only working vehicle in the yard is a motorcycle belonging to one of the mechanics.

The yard is filled with junked automobiles used for spare parts and scrap. A manual hoist sits amid the pile, hook swinging idly. A wrecked motor car is infinitely sadder than one whole, a frail mechanical reminder of our own mortality. Here rusted and smashed bodies settle heavily, their tons of mass always askew, tipped this way and that. Busted grills leer gap-toothed at the sky. The ground beneath the metal pyramid is littered with small and nameless pieces of metal, broken brackets, uphol-

stery stuffing, and glittering foot-long shards of glass. Automobiles are dangerous. Automobiles kill.

Inquiries

If the investigators ask for the owner, they are shown to his office and left there for a while, while his subordinates track him down. This is a good time for them to do some accounting.

If they ask for Flynn, call for a Luck roll. Failure means Flynn is out, and they are told not to hang around. Vantage points near the garage include the factory and a diner across from the garage. A half-hour later, Flynn returns to work.

A successful roll means that Flynn saunters out in response to the call, wiping his oily hands on an greasy rag and making them more uniformly filthy. He is suspicious, especially if his mother has already sent a warning. He makes a run for it the moment the Putney family is mentioned.

The Chase

Flynn has a head start, and he knows the layout. Only investigators with better DEXs than Flynn have chances to Grapple him initially. Once Flynn gets clear, the only way to stop him is to make a flying tackle (successful Jump and Grapple rolls).

All involved in an ensuing chase must receive success with the following rolls, or drop out of the race. This includes Flynn, which means his plan may come unstuck at the fence or before.

- ☐ Oil slicks spatter the floor of the garage. They require a Luck roll to avoid them in the heat of the chase. Failure means an ungainly tumble that ruins clothes and costs 1D3 hit points. But a successful Dodge or Jump saves damage to anything except dignity.
- ☐ Flynn's co-workers don't want to interfere, but they manage to get in the way. They wheel trolleys in front of the investigators, and spill ball-bearings and the like. A successful D100 roll of DEX x5 or less avoids these obstacles. Flynn is not at risk here.
- ☐ Flynn heads straight out the back door. A successful D100 roll of CON x5 or less is needed to keep up with him. He bounds over and through the pile of scrap. A successful Climb roll follows him safely, a failure means the investigator falls amidst the rusted vehicles for 1D3 damage.
- ☐ In getting over the pile Flynn inadvertently shifts the hoist, which tilts. The hook swings crazily, with a chance of injuring anyone in close pursuit. A Dodge must be made as the hoist swings then settles, or the investigator is lifted by the hook and thrown 1D6 yards, suffering 1D6 damage. A successful Jump halves rolled damage. Flynn is unaffected, and pauses briefly to yell "Look out!"
- ☐ Flynn scrambles over the fence, and disappears into the factory. A Jump roll gets over the fence in one bound, and one round. Climbing it is more cautious, but takes two rounds.

If Flynn gets away, the investigators have two final chances. The first is to search for him in the factory, with successful Spot Hidden rolls. They have ten minutes before a floor boss spots them. Subsequent search is hampered by determined efforts to remove the trespassers.

Once in the factory, Flynn streaks right through and out the other side, doubling back to the motor cycle in the garage yard. Investigators who linger behind the garage get one last chance to intercept Flynn, or to tail him to his quarters.

- ☐ If the investigators catch him, proceed to the sub-section headed The Missing Mechanic.
- ☐ If Flynn escapes, they must get the address of his lodgings from the garage owner.

The Owner

Milo Gasparini is the owner. He is wide but not fat, just huge, with mean-looking mustachios and an unshaven, grouchy look. He is a shrewd ex-prize fighter. He won't reveal Flynn's address unless threatened with exposure to the tax department about his illegal accounting. A generous bribe tempts him.

Flynn's Lodgings

Flynn's quarters are at a mens' hotel near the garage. He clears out as soon as he can, catching the first train. Reaching Pittsburgh he changes trains for Indianapolis.

Fast Talking his frowzy landlady allows the investigators access to his room, a bare and depressing bed-sit. For a deuce (\$2) she lets slip that she "overheard" him telling friends that he was heading for Indiana.

A search of his room finds three items of interest. The first is a clipping torn from a recent paper, concerning Rupert's withdrawal from the upcoming Indianapolis 500 race meeting. The second is a well-thumbed newspaper, folded to a report of Amy's funeral in a society column. An old letter, unposted and still in its envelope, falls from the paper. See Player Handout below.

Dear Amy,

You were always wrong headed about these things. I guess you think it's right after what your father done to you. I still can't believe that you are going to go through with it. If my ma had done that, I wouldn't be here.

I pawned the stones so I can't give them back. Sorry.

God bless,

Joe.

Player Handout: Joe's Letter

Talking To Rupert From New York

Rupert pays little attention to the investigators, and they need successful Persuade rolls even to bail them out or wire money. Rupert refers several times to a 'show,' but is vague about the details. An Idea roll suggests he is referring to the Indy 500.

Indianapolis

The Indianapolis 500 is the most important fixture on the American racing calendar, and one of the top half-dozen motor races in the world. It is also one of the fastest. The circuit is a difficult brick-paved track, rectangular in shape, including two straights over 3,000 feet long, and two of 640 feet, with curved right-angle turns. The distance is 500 miles. By the mid 1920s winners averaged 100mph.

The race attracts competitors from all over the world. It is a weekend of heat and dust, car engines and crowds roaring in unison. The rich people turn out, mostly for the after-race parties. Hotels are oversold. Roads are jammed. The racecourse touts take bets, and fortunes are lost, as are a few lives on the high-speed circuit.

Somewhere in this motorized mayhem is Joe Flynn. He has found work servicing the auto of a British driver, Arnold Chapman, who is racing in a green Bugatti. Chapman is bad-tempered and arrogant, and Flynn already regrets taking the job.

There is some gossip at the track about Rupert Putney's non-appearance. If an investigator receives a halved Luck roll or less, one of the racecourse touts can point out Putney's former mechanic. Otherwise the investigators must comb the pit-stops with Spot Hidden rolls and inhale the engine fumes. If they think to concentrate their attentions on Bugatti drivers, their Spot Hidden chances are increased by +40 percentiles.

Flynn is coping with Chapman's curt demands. He does not notice the investigators until they almost have their hands on him. For a second he considers running, but then quietly surrenders. He throws down his tools, tells Chapman exactly what he can do with his spark plugs, and goes with the investigators.

Talking To Rupert From Indianapolis

Rupert has lost it. He barely listens to the investigators. He says that his father is sick as a dog, and that Chloe won't stop drinking. They all do nothing but sit around and wait for the show. The show comes every night. The investigators should come over and see it, once they've found his brother.

The Missing Mechanic

When the investigators finally lay hands on Flynn, he gives up after a brief struggle. After initial explanations

are done, and if the investigators seem trustworthy and open-minded to his story, he is surprisingly helpful.

Joe Flynn

Flynn looks like his photograph, with more oil. His teeth are even and white, and red curly hair. He is a decent man with a strong survival instinct that stops just short of cowardice. He has a quick tongue—a lingering touch of the blarney from his ma.

He was employed by the Putneys before the war. He is puzzled by suggestions that he is Rupert's brother. If the investigators press the point, he suggests they check the Putney birth records.

Amy became his lover in 1917. He describes her with sympathy but also irritation. She persisted in playing the victim. She refused his offers to take her away from the house. She said she had to keep their father from destroying Rupert. She said that she would never leave her brother, that even death would not part them. She stayed on until it was too late. When she became pregnant, she asked Dr. Thane for an abortion. Flynn disapproved of her decision, but did not interfere. He left, and learned later that she had died. He feels terrible guilt about her death.

He accurately describes the elder Putney as a monster. He recites gossip that the man made a pact with the devil, and says that he could almost believe it. Even after a stroke that crippled him three years ago, sheer malice has kept the old man going.

He knows of a Rodney connected with Rupert, but it was not a person, but "a pet monkey or something." He knows that Rupert kept Rodney in a large shiny box in his room, but he never got close enough to see Rodney properly and the family never talked about the animal to him. One night, in the middle of the war, Amy came to him crying, and said that Rodney had escaped. Although he searched all over he never found it. He was sorry about Rupert's pet because he thinks it probably got outside and died in the cold. Monkeys like it warm, don't they?

Flynn is willing to return to the Putneys to sort things out, if assured that they will not press charges.

The Search Concluded

The investigators may not have found Rupert's brother Rodney, but they've found someone who matches the photograph. Their search is over.

Back in the city where the Putneys reside, they can settle the matter of Rupert's alleged brother by looking



Joe Flynn

up the birth records. They may also wish to speak with the shady Dr. Thane.

Birth Records

The Putney birth certificates, lodged at City Hall, indicate no other children besides Rupert and Amy. The physician attending both births was Dr. Nigel Thane.

The Family Doctor

Dr. Thane has a prosperous practice in the better part of town. He is unwilling to discuss the private health records of the Putneys. However, if bribed handsomely, or threatened with exposure for performing illegal abortions, he agrees to reveal the family's secrets.

- ☐ Rupert was born with a growth on his side. While Dr. Thane was cutting it off, the 'growth' bit back. The operation left a sickle-shaped scar on Rupert's side, and left the infant sickly. Old Man Putney made Dr. Thane keep the growth alive. Putney cherished this grotesque, sub-human Siamese twin more than his healthy son. They kept it in a hutch in Rupert's bedroom. It escaped during the war. No one knows where it got to.
- ☐ Mrs. Putney's death was probably suicide or murder, but Dr. Thane covered it up, calling her fall accidental.
- ☐ Amy's death was a genuine accident, although she might have lived if she was in a proper hospital. She was almost four months pregnant at the time, too late for a simple operation. Informed of her death, Rupert passed out for almost a day, and never fully recovered.
- ☐ Rupert has been a morphine addict since the war. Dr. Thane visits him every afternoon to administer the drug.

Dr. Thane observes that he has only ever done what he has been asked to do. The rich have special needs, and who is he to deny them?

The Show

THE INVESTIGATORS arrive at the Putney house in the late afternoon or early evening. Dr. Thane arrives at the same time, clutching his black bag like a life preserver.

Tire tracks criss-cross the lawn, around and around the soiled white gravel, and in and out of the orchard. The Chevrolet is half in and half out of the garage. There is no sign of either Fleming or Tuck.

If the investigators examine the family autos, the Chevrolet seems totally normal, although a Spot Hidden notices small scratches around the dashboard and steering wheel. The Bugatti is still not road-worthy, but a Mechanical Repair indicates that the motor looks fine. The crank shaft is missing again.

The House

Rupert answers the door. He greets them with hysterical and glassy-eyed brightness. Flynn's return does a good deal to settle him. Investigators witnessing their reunion gain 1D3 Sanity points each for seeing two old friends overcoming their differences, however peculiar the circumstances.

The front hall is a mess. Rupert takes the investigators straight to the drawing room. It is marginally more habitable than the rest of the house, as there is at least room to move amongst the furniture. Trays of half-eaten food are plentiful, as are empty bottles contributed by Chloe.

Putney sits huddled in his wheel-chair. He seems to be brooding, rather than suffering. Chloe sprawls on a divan beside him, resolutely passed out.

Rupert detains the investigators in the drawing room as dusk falls, to 'watch the show.' It is their nightly entertainment, and they always gather in the drawing room to watch. He offers no details. "Wait and see," he giggles.

Outside in the gathering dusk, his brother Rodney prepares to put on the show.

Rodney Putney

Rodney is a stunted creature with a primeval brain. He is the size of a large doll, and looks superficially monkey-like. He remains bipedal at all times—most un-monkey-like—and at close look his bestial and distorted face bears a shocking similarity to Rupert's. His naked body seems curiously unfinished, with a nut-brown lumpy, cancerous texture. His left canine is enormously enlarged, dripping from his lip almost to his chin, deforming the shape of his face.

Rodney has decided to claim his inheritance. He is the more willful of the two brothers, and will follow in his father's footsteps.

Like the rest of the Putneys, Rodney loves cars. He is responsible for stealing the crank shafts, and for sabotaging the Bugatti in an effort to kill Rupert.

Rodney needs an automobile tonight. He prefers to use the Putney cars as he is familiar with them. He loves the Bugatti, but finds the Chevrolet easier to use. If the investigators keep a watch on them, he stages a distraction in the house to lure them away. If the investigators tampered with the family autos, he collects another one—the investigators' own, or Dr. Thane's, or one from outside the house. The show must go on.



Rodney Putney

Watching The Show

Right on cue, an empty auto appears, trundling around the driveway. There is no human shape at the wheel. Sanity loss is 0/1D3.

Inside the drawing room, Dr. Thane is the one most openly affected by the sight of the driverless vehicle, especially if it is the Chevrolet. He draws back into his chair. He thinks the auto is being driven by Amy's vengeful spirit. Hearing this, Flynn crosses himself, and draws back from the windows.

Old Putney watches the maneuvers morbidly, occasionally drooling. Chloe stays drunk. If roused from her stupor by First Aid, she first ridicules the entire situation and then staggers off to find another bottle.

Rupert watches the show with keen, imbecilic enjoyment. He says that ever since he sent the investigators after Joe, the Chevrolet has been driving itself around the lawn. At first the servants were sent out to chase it, but they never found anyone. They started talking about Amy's death, and her unquiet spirit. Eventually Rupert sent them away. He doesn't care why the Chevrolet drives itself around. He just enjoys the show.

While the family is gathered, the investigators might accuse Dr. Thane of murder, the father of his own evil, or the family as a whole for the thing Rupert kept in his closet. Perhaps they just demand to know why Rupert wasted their time. If a big enough scene is caused, Putney goads Dr. Thane or Rupert into telling the truth about Rodney. Rupert loses his happy look as the story unfolds. He starts to sob, for his brother and himself.

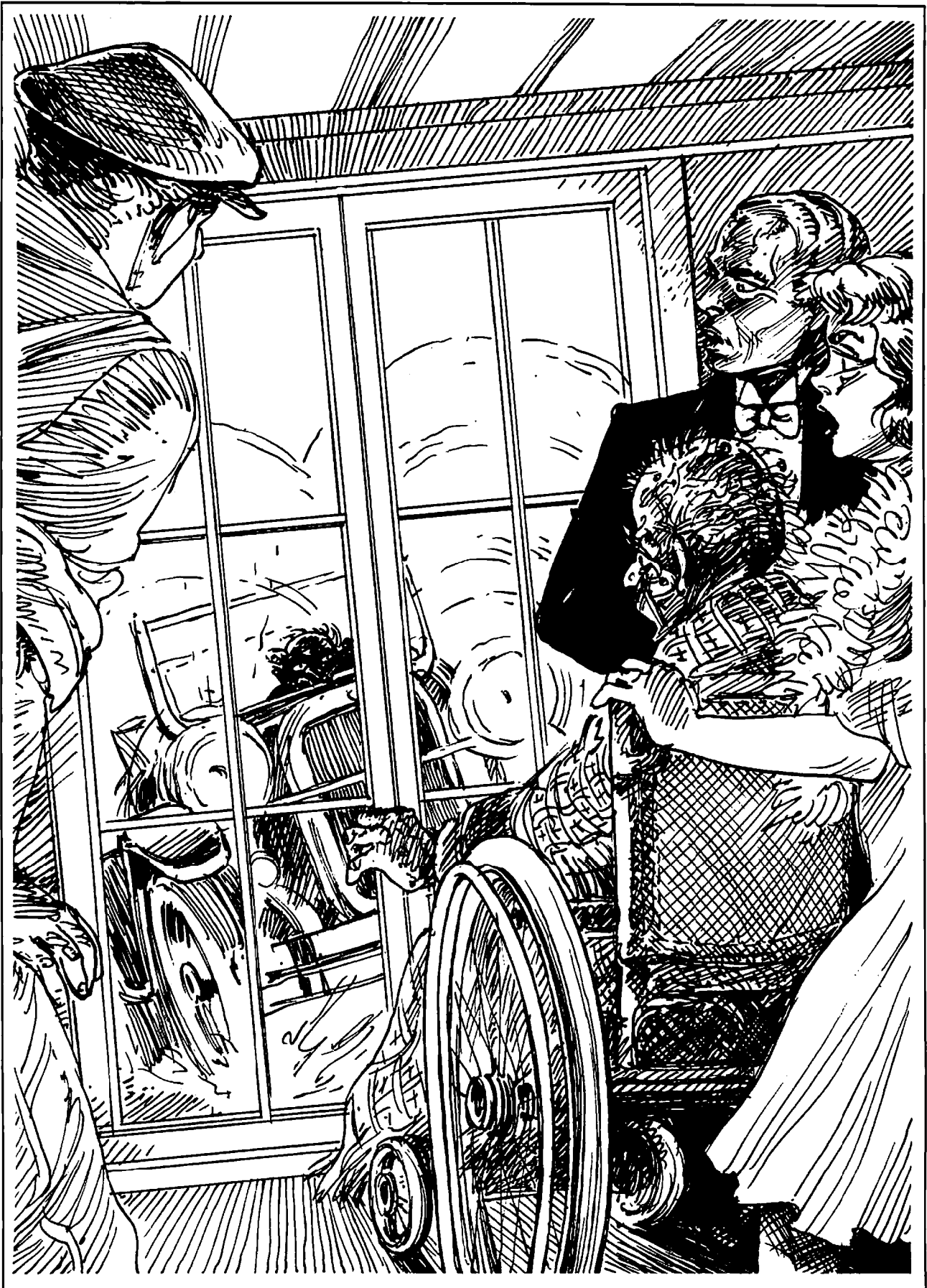
Dr. Thane panics, whether the auto is driven by Amy's ghost or Rodney. Both have cause to hate him. He lurches for the front door. Investigators who wish to restrain him need to grapple him and tie him to the furniture, or sedate him with something from the selection in his black bag (Pharmacy roll). If Thane gets outside, Rodney runs him down with the auto (0/1D4 Sanity point loss) to see him die.

The Chase

Active investigators may wish to go outside and pursue the phantom vehicle. Flynn agrees to join them. If there is no pursuit, Rodney drives around for a while, and then turns on the house—see Furious Driving, below.

The most frightening thing about the chase is that there is no-one visible behind the glare of the headlights. Only a successful halved Spot Hidden roll notices the blob of busy shadow that is Rodney.

Rodney never shifts out of first gear. He cannot, as he is too small to manipulate both the clutch and the gears. He can go up to 30 miles an hour in first gear, to the detriment of the engine and drive train. He has to hang off the steering wheel to get it to turn or to stand on the



gas pedal, so his steering is erratic, and likely to get him into difficulty.

Rodney drives to kill, aiming the auto at pursuers. By encouraging Rodney to take risks with the auto, running in front of brick walls and playing catch-as-catch-can in the orchard, persistent investigators can get him to crash. Rodney must make Drive Auto rolls, and the investigators need Dodge or Jump rolls. A CON x5 roll is necessary to run in front of the auto for any length of time and not get run down. Being hit by the auto costs 3D6 hit points. If Rodney fails a Drive roll at any stage, he crashes.

An investigator could leap onto the running board with a Jump roll, but a failure means they are automatically run over for 3D6 damage. The instant Rodney sees that he has a passenger, he steers into a tree. If the investigator makes a Spot Hidden roll, they glimpse the tiny driver. Then they had best make a Jump roll, and aim for the long grass.

The first crash stops the auto. Rodney jumps clear, and scrambles away in the dark to fetch another car, leaving the investigators to search the spluttering wreck. The first person to reach it finds it empty, but notices the rapid pooling of gasoline on the floor. The ignition is still turning over. A Mechanical Repair roll makes the motor safe. This takes 1D6 rounds, but they have only 1D10 rounds to succeed before the auto explodes in a ball of fire. Events could get a little tense.

If the auto explodes, any investigator still in it is incinerated, and dies. Surviving friends lose 1D6 Sanity points for seeing this. Any investigator close enough to touch the auto must make a Dodge roll or lose 1D6 hit points, and is on fire until put out. The explosion starts a fire in the long, rank grass of the orchard. The flames rapidly spread towards the house.

Furious Driving

Rodney returns. Another engine roar shatters the night, and a second driverless vehicle races up the driveway. It turns and picks up speed, driving straight towards the french windows. It crashes through into the drawing room, breaking the spell that Rodney has woven over the rest of his family.

Gravel flies, and the headlights shoot wildly around the walls of the room. All in the room take 1D3 damage from flying glass and splinters. Everyone but the elder Putney dives for cover, leaving him to be pressed, folded up, and flattened like a concertina by the on-coming motor. This is a just if somewhat gruesome death (lose 0/1D4 Sanity points each as the investigators are spattered with a mixture of blood and oil). Putney's last words are to sneer at Rupert, gasping that Rodney was always the better son.

Putney can be rescued if an investigator wrenches him out of the way, with a successful Resistance Table roll of his or her STR against 10, the combined SIZ of

invalid and wheelchair. If the roll fails, the rescuer is in danger, and must receive a D100 roll of Dodge or less with D100, or lose 3D6 hit points.

The drapes billow out as the car comes through them. The auto hits the sofa, and comes to an abrupt halt. Its engine shouts in the confined space. The sofa shifts convulsively with the impact, toppling wood from the fire, which ignites the drapes. The eerie glow illuminates the room. The stench of gasoline fills it.

Flynn dives for the auto and attempts to stop the ignition. He is assumed to be successful at this, however it removes him from the action for the next 1D6 rounds.

Out of the momentary silence, Rodney erupts from the shattered windscreen of the auto, heading straight for his surprised brother. Rodney wraps his arms around Rupert, and commences to burrow his way back into his brother's side. Rupert shrieks in agony, and loses 1D6 hit points per round. The cost of seeing the gory reunion is 1/1D6 Sanity points.

Gunfire at Rodney whilst he is still attached has an equal chance of hitting Rupert. Furthermore, Rupert suffers any excess damage done once Rodney's hit points are exceeded. The best method is to drag Rodney off. Because he is so small, and rapidly becomes slippery with blood, only one investigator at a time can grab for him. Grapple rolls are needed to catch hold, as Rupert is madly rolling about. The investigator's player then must then roll STR against Rodney's STR 13 on the Resistance Table. Succeeding, Rodney is hauled, though he turns on the investigator and bites him. He is too close for this attack to be Dodged.

The investigator might hurl Rodney into the fire. If so, his attempts to creep from the heart of the blaze, a slowly charring, squealing scrap of malformed flesh, costing watchers 1D3 Sanity points. Although Rodney's deeds have been hideous, it is evident that he learnt of humanity from his family. The investigators have shown him no less mercy than his father did.

The drawing room fire erupts, detonating the automobile. The mansion burns down. The remaining autos perish when the fire reaches the garage. The strange doom of the Putney family has played itself out. Survivors are watching the blaze from the lawn when the fire trucks finally arrive.

Chloe's Confession

She says that after Rodney escaped his cage during World War One, he was never again captured, and that he remained well-enough behaved that the family stopped trying after a while. The old man liked to taunt Rupert, saying that Rodney was the better man because his will was strong. Rupert felt deep guilt because of the accidental advantages of apparent normalness, yet felt that his own emotional lacks were as profoundly disfiguring as Rodney more obvious disabilities. To have captured Rodney would have meant exposing himself somehow.

Chloe learned quickly to stay out of the way and, after one night finding Rodney in her bed, always kept her room locked. The little monster horrified her to the end.

Conclusion

Investigators gain 1D6 Sanity points for defeating Rodney. If Rupert survives, he recovers his wits and health after several months in a sanatorium, and investigators gain a further 1D6 Sanity points

The charge of "Furious Driving" may be made under the British 'Offenses Against the Person Act' of 1861.

Statistics

RUPERT PUTNEY, Age 27, Speed Fiend

STR 11 CON 10 SIZ 17 INT 12 POW 8
DEX 16 APP 13 EDU 21 SAN 19 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Credit Rating 65%, Drive Auto 83%, Pilot Aircraft 53%.

OLD MAN PUTNEY, Age 67, Evil Father

STR 6 CON 7 SIZ 8 INT 14 POW 18
DEX 6 APP 4 EDU 15 SAN 13 HP 8

Damage Bonus: -1D4.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Accounting 91%, Bargain 90%, Belittle Kin 99%, Credit Rating 85%, Persuade 88%.

CHLOE BASS, Age 35, Fading Good-Time Girl

STR 13 CON 14 SIZ 12 INT 11 POW 10
DEX 9 APP 12 EDU 12 SAN 50 HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Dance 41%, Drive Auto 32%, Fast Talk 40%, First Aid 37%, Listen 33%, Push Wheelchair 60%.

DR. NIGEL THANE, Age 59, Amoral Society Physician

STR 11 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 17 POW 13
DEX 12 APP 16 EDU 24 SAN 65 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: Scalpel 62%, damage 1D3

Skills: First Aid 65%, Medicine 71%, Persuade 86%, Pharmacy 68%, Psychology 34%.

JOE FLYNN, Age 33, Nomadic Mechanic

STR 16 CON 14 SIZ 15 INT 11 POW 16
DEX 13 APP 14 EDU 11 SAN 80 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 63%, damage 1D3 +db

Grapple 47%, damage special

Skills: Climb 63%, Dodge 49%, Electrical Repair 21%, Jump 51%, Mechanical Repair 83%.

RODNEY PUTNEY, Age 27, Evil Twin

STR 13 CON 16 SIZ 5 INT 6 POW 17
DEX 18 APP 1 EDU 0 SAN 0 HP 11

Damage Bonus: +0.

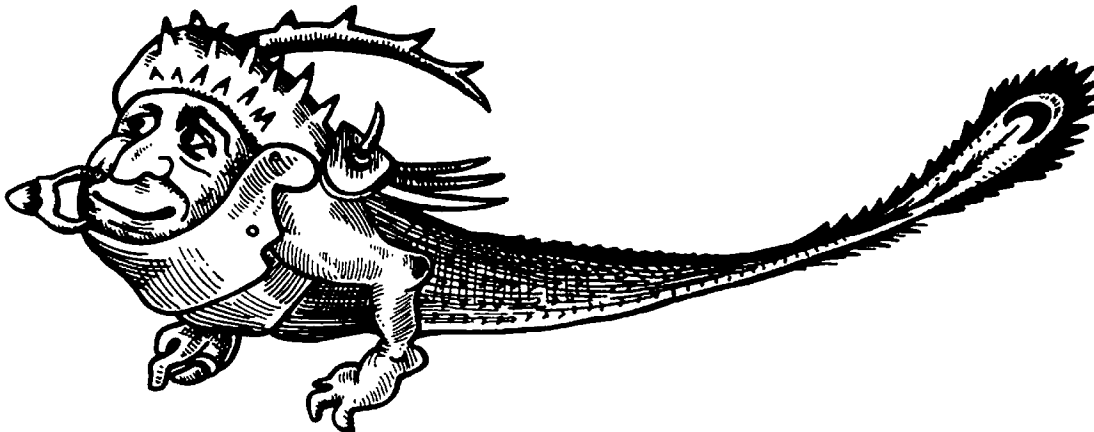
Weapons: Bite 80%, damage 1D6*

* anyone bitten must be rolled for: unless CON x3 or less, the target suffers a painful and debilitating bout of blood poisoning, which puts them out of action for 1D3 weeks, and leaves an impressive scar.

Armor: none. However, he is a small and mobile target. Gunfire at him is at a -20 percentile penalty.

Skills: Climb 81%, Dodge 86%, Drive Auto 26%, Electrical Repair 22%, Hide 99%, Jump 77%, Locksmith 49%, Mechanical Repair 43%, Sneak 98%.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4 Sanity points to see Rodney.



Rigid Air

Wherein the Investigators travel by dirigible, and encounter a passenger whose motive is far beyond getting from here to there.

FILLED WITH hydrogen—a volatile gas easy to separate from water—an airship is a floating bomb. Filled with inert helium, airships are still bedevilled by severe design limits. For instance, they are able to stay in the air because they are buoyant and literally float in balance with the density of the air. But the higher they go, the thinner the air becomes. Airship effective ceilings are lower than most mountain ranges and much lower than the tops of major storms.

Because airship maximum airspeeds are also low, and because airship cross-sections are broad, these craft have difficulty making headway against strong winds; they must exhaust fuel in the struggle, attempt a dangerous emergency landing and mooring to leave the battle, or risk being enclosed and carried far off course. In consequence, airships fly only in fair weather, or else predictably fail to keep flight schedules.

Finally, the airship is most vulnerable when landing and taking off. Mooring an airship on a gusty day is difficult and dangerous for everyone concerned. Getting one into her hangar on such a day may be impossible, and rising winds may smash her to bits at her pylon.

Nonetheless, airships rival aircraft in the 1920s, and for good reason. They have superior range, smoother rides, and offer much greater comfort and luxury. The *Hindenburg* catastrophe of 1937 and the opening of intercontinental flying-boat service in the same year doomed commercial airship travel, but throughout the decade airships remained viable alternatives. Though their problems were clear to knowledgeable engineers and scientists, their presence caught the watcher's attention, as they still do. Fundamentally, they are attractive, beautifully shaped, and elegant in concept. Their very slowness and seeming ability to land anywhere argues reassurance and reliable safety.

Airship enthusiasts and hobbyists exist in larger numbers today than at any time since the 1920s, and though passenger service seems unlikely to return at any time soon, their niches in advertising, research, and as special conveyances seem likely to continue.

About Airships

The economy of air travel in the 1920s is such that heavier-than-air flight is expensive, limited in range, and inef-

ficient in what it can carry. Although fledgling airlines are beginning to establish commercial passenger and mail services, the cost is high and the dangers real. By comparison, the lighter-than-air airship is able to traverse vast distances at respectable average speeds, and remain airborne for days. More importantly, airships can carry a much heavier payload, and provide a level of passenger comfort unavailable aboard aeroplanes.

There are three types of airship: rigid (or dirigible), semi-rigid, and non-rigid (or blimp). Each category describes a way in which the gas cells (which provide the lift) and the load of the craft itself are supported.

Non-rigid airships have an unsupported fabric envelope, and their shape is dictated by the shape of the envelope itself and by the flight characteristics desired.

Semi-rigid airships attach a framework to the envelope, extending over much of its length. The craft's payload is carried either within the frame or slung in cars beneath it.

Rigid airships use a cylindrical framework with a rounded bow and stern. The framework is covered by a skin of waterproof fabric, and subdivided within into as many as 18 bays, each containing a gas cell. The supporting framework also houses companionways, crew and passenger quarters, and cargo space. In all three designs, engines are mounted in external modules ("cars"), accessible by ladders or walkways.

One of the great advantages of the airship over the airplane is that, because buoyancy is provided by the structure of the vessel, filled with lighter-than-air gas, all its engines may be shut down in mid-flight if necessary. It is not uncommon for individual engines to be shut down for maintenance during long flights.

Larger airships contain passenger accommodations more resembling a hotel or ocean liner than an airplane. Dining rooms, saloons, dance floors, and observation decks make the airship passenger's journey a stylish event.

Although some airships are filled with inert but expensive helium, the majority in the period use highly combustible hydrogen gas. On the ground, the danger however comes not so much from exploding gas (which travels upwards rapidly) but the burning framework, fabric and fittings which then collapse in a deadly tangle.

The Terra Nova

There is an entry hatch in the starboard side of the control car. The hatch opens directly into the ward room, a spartan cabin that doubles as a small observation deck. Forward is a short passage from which the radio room and galley are reached. Further forward are the navigation room, and the control cabin with its ship-like steering controls. Flight instruments surround the rudder wheel (forward) and the elevator wheel (to the left). The pilot and bridge crew stand while steering the craft.

A stairway leads up from the observation deck to a gangway stretching along the length of the keel. Passenger quarters are distributed to either side of the gangway near the stairs. The crew quarters and small cargo area are located 60 feet aft, built into the body of the airship.

Secondary walkways lead off to the left and right, just forward of the crew quarters. These lead to the port and starboard engine cars. A ladder aft of the cargo area leads down to the central engine car.

The bulk of the airship's interior is taken up by seven enormous gas-bags; each one containing tens of thousands of cubic feet of hydrogen gas. Surrounding the bags is the complex superstructure of the craft. Ladders are fitted to most vertical supports, while minor walkways run the length of the airframe, at dizzying heights. A series of ladders leads to an observation cupola atop the airship's hull.

The Narrative

ONE OF the investigators is contacted by a Canadian solicitor, Lucas Bothnall, of Nelson, British Columbia. The investigator has been named executor of the estate of Robert Douglas. Bothnall requests that they travel to Nelson for the reading of the will, and to sort out other affairs.

Douglas' body was found at the edge of a glacial lake. It appears that he fell from a cliff or tree somewhere near the edge of the lake, and either died from his injuries or drowned.

The investigator was a close friend of Douglas at some time prior to 1920. Perhaps they attended college together. Douglas was friendly, outgoing, and interested in sports of all kinds. He married in 1919, and moved to Canada. He cut off his association with the investigator in late 1921, following his involvement in an unsuccessful attempt to reach the North Magnetic Pole by air. No reason for the abrupt silence was ever given.

Keeper Background

In 1921, a group of scientists, airmen, and explorers undertook an expedition to fly to the North Magnetic Pole by airship. The dirigible *Bellinghausen* set off with great

Some Airships Of The 1920s

R38 (Great Britain)

Dirigible
Volume: 2,724,000 cubic feet
Length: 695'
Diameter: 85.6'
Engines: 6x350 hp Cossack
Max Speed: 70.6 mph
Weight: 26,000 lb
Launched: 1921

R100 (Great Britain)

Dirigible
Volume: 5,000,000 cubic feet
Length: 709'
Diameter: 130'
Engines: 6x700 hp Rolls Royce
Max Speed: 83 mph
Weight: 210,000 lb
Launched: 1929

Norge (Italy)

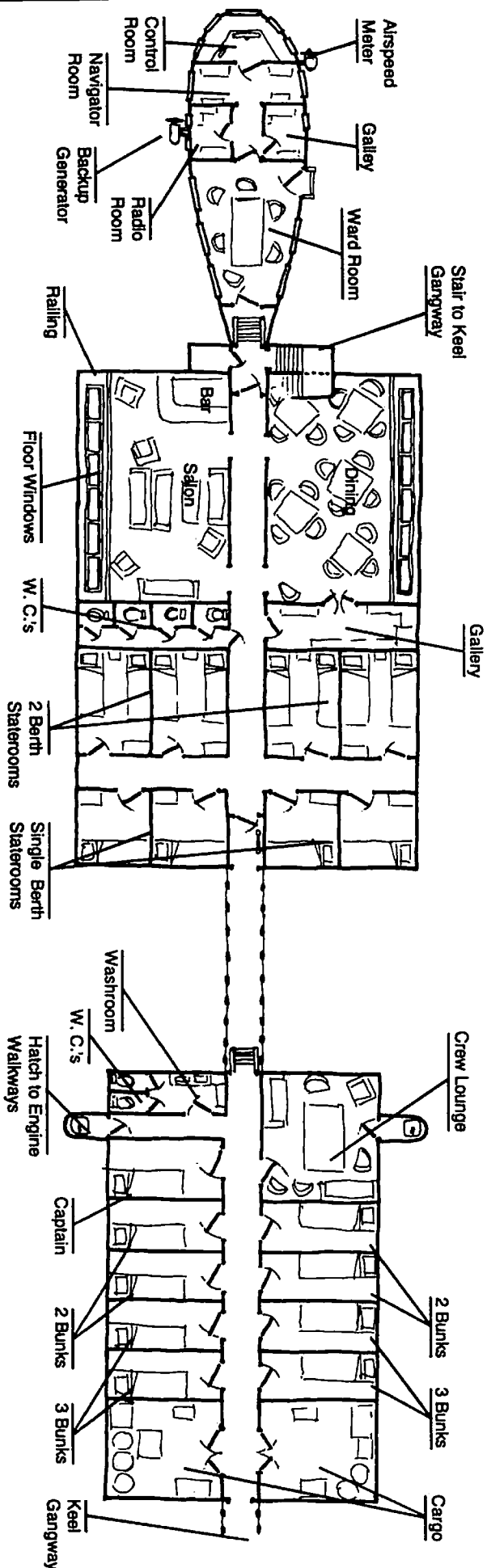
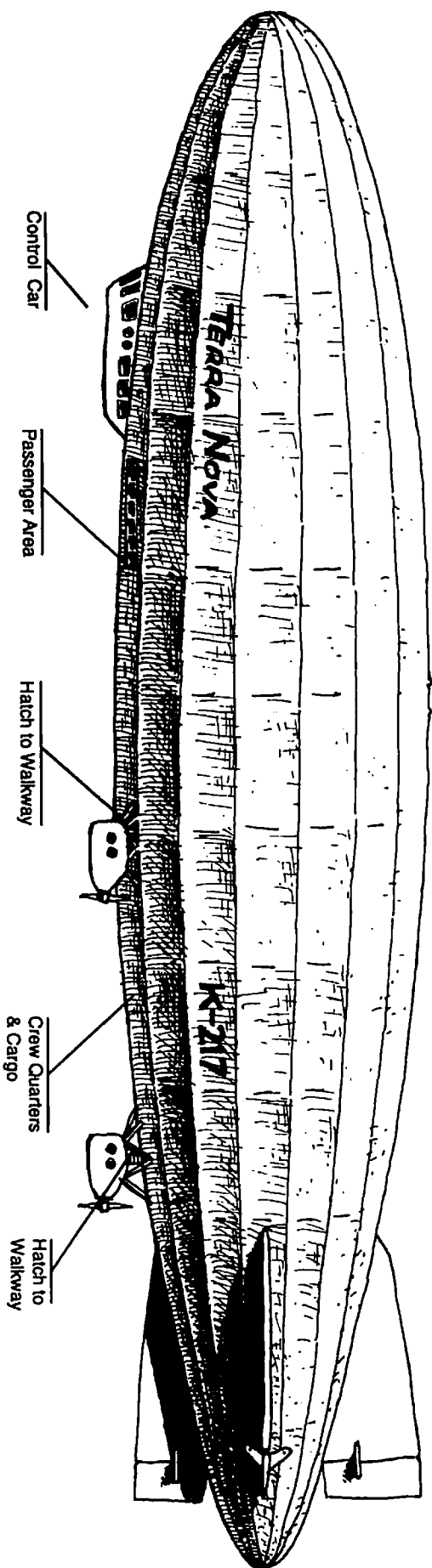
Semi-rigid
Volume: 654,000 cubic feet
Length: 347.8'
Diameter: 63.9'
Engines: 3x250 hp Maybach
Max Speed: 70.2 mph
Weight: 29,000 lb
Launched: 1924

LZ126 / Los Angeles (Germany)

Dirigible
Volume: 2,471,700 cubic feet
Length: 656.6'
Diameter: 90.5'
Engines: 5x400 hp Maybach
Max Speed: 68 mph
Weight: 120,000 lb
Launched: 1924

Terra Nova (formerly the Bellinghausen)

Dirigible
Length: 350 feet
Volume: 650,000 cubic feet
Diameter: 65 feet
Engines: 3, Maybach 250 hp
Maximum Speed: 70 miles per hour
Empty Weight: 28,600 pounds
Useful Lift: 8,240 pounds
Crew: 9 officers + 12 crew (9 slaves + 1 dho-spawn)



Control Car

Passenger Area

Crew Quarters & Cargo

TERRA NOVA (Rigid Airship)

fanfare, only to return a month later and report that the attempt had failed. In reality, the *Bellinghausen* reached the magnetic pole rather easily. It was not there to perform respectable polar research. Aided by funds and support from the recently formed Chandler Foundation, the leader of the expedition, Sheridan Moore, went there to open a dimensional gate. Only the officers knew of the plan; the hired crewmen and riggers did not.

The opening succeeded, but the Great Old Ones did not come through, nor were the expectant cultists granted enlightenment. Instead, a small crystalline object appeared. Expecting their reward to follow, they took the crystal and returned to the airship.

The *Bellinghausen* returned to the United States. The hired crewmen were paid off handsomely, in return for their secrecy. Moore and his colleagues carefully hid the crystal with the moth-balled airship in a Chandler Aviation airship hangar in Seattle.

Months passed. Chandler lost interest in the crystal, his attentions directed toward dreams of global domination. The crystal began to change and grow into a bizarre entity, the dho-spawn. It gradually extended a subtle influence over Moore, enticing him to give it to his companions in return for knowledge. Soon all of the officers were extensions of the dho-spawn's thirst for sensation.

The creature, now huge, began to hunger after the rest of the original crew. The *Bellinghausen*, renamed *Terra Nova*, provides the perfect camouflage. Hidden within one of the airship's gas bags, the creature may travel where it will, searching the Americas for those present at its birth. Now only one crewman remains to be found.

Getting There

Stage one of the trip to Nelson is by train, ship, or automobile to Vancouver, B.C., chief city and port for the western provinces of Canada. Depending on the credentials of the investigator, Canadian customs officials may seal any handgun admitted to the nation, but shotguns and hunting rifles may be declared. Hunters are welcome.

Stage two of the journey is potentially more hazardous. Nelson is a logging and mining town, approximately 350 miles east of Vancouver in the heart of the Rocky Mountains.

- The trip by road is closer to 550 miles and takes most of a week. Auto touring has begun to be done, but this particular journey would be quite difficult.
- By rail, the Great Northern line passes back and forth across the border through the Okanagan Valley. Both GN and Canadian Pacific spurs reach Nelson. This local service takes 14 hours to reach Nelson.
- Or the investigators could take the Fraser River train, switch to a spur line, take a barge down Upper Arrow Lake, another CP branch line, and a second barge down Kootenay Lake. The trip takes about 24 hours, but keeps entirely within the boundaries of Canada.

- Much faster yet is the airship trial service carrying passengers and freight between Vancouver, Nelson, and Calgary. These enterprising people charge about the same as the railroads, but get you there in four to six hours, offering views of the gorgeous North Cascades on the way.

By Airship

The airfield is just outside Vancouver. The morning is hazy and still, ideal for airship travel. An agent co-ordinates freight and passengers.

The airship has already been moved from its enormous hangar and is at moorings, ready to board. She is reasonably large, with comfortable passenger facilities. The name *Terra Nova* is clearly visible along her sides.

Aboard, the passenger area is large enough to be interesting to explore. There are eight cabins, four singles and four doubles. There is a dining area and salon, each of which has plenty of windows.

The crew are polite and courteous, and don't bother the passengers much. Psychology rolls reveal that they appear oddly distracted at times. An Idea roll marvels at the small crew needed to run such a complex vessel.

The trip is uneventful, and by late afternoon the airship puts down on a grassy lakeside field, just outside Nelson. The airship departs the following morning for Calgary, then returns to Nelson two days hence. Tickets for the return journey can be purchased locally.

A Fellow Traveler

Whatever transport or route, the investigators always meet Martin Biller, a bookkeeper and amateur astronomer. He describes manhandling a heavy telescope mounting up and down precipitous trails to find some perfect spot for an occultation near the horizon. His appearance is nondescript, and his hair is mussed. He has considerably enthusiasm for astronomy. His average mind tends to fix on surface explanations of events.

Biller is returning home to Nelson following a trip to Vancouver to pick up glass blanks for telescope mirrors. Why? Over the past few weeks the night air has been distorted—from the new burner at the mill, he figures—and he's planning to build a bigger reflector a little way out of town. The seeing just hasn't been very good lately, yet it will be many weeks before he can finish and test the new mirror. He invites the investigators to visit him while in Nelson.

Nelson

NELSON is a town of almost six thousand. Nestled in a glacial valley on the west arm of Kootenay Lake, it is surrounded on two sides by steep tree-covered mountains. In winter the town is frequently isolated by snow and ice. The rest of the year it enjoys a

pleasant and moderate climate. The heart of the town is a grid of three by four streets. The majority of buildings are timber, two or three stories high, with steep gabled roofs to guard against the snows. The slope rapidly steepens much away from the lake, and the ends of many streets cling precipitously to mountainsides.

Town and region are known for logging, mining and fruit farming. Nelson is the Kootenay divisional headquarters for the Canadian Pacific Railway. Other port-towns can be reached by a regular steamer service.

Huge stacks of logs line the shore, and the whine of mill saws is constant during daylight. The airship field is beside the lake north of town.

Accommodation can be found at several decent hotels in the town center. On side streets, cheaper boarding houses the mill-workers. On Saturday nights, loggers from lumber camps in the area come to town.

The Solicitor

Bothnall's office is in the town center. He shares a three story building with a florist (below) and a dance academy (above). The walls are tastefully panelled and boast several oil studies of the Nelson area. If asked, Bothnall shyly admits to having painted them himself.

Bothnall wants a quiet life, and he has it, and a moderately successful law practice as well. He tends to pudginess, giving him a slightly boyish appearance. He lights cigarettes often.

The reading of the will takes place as soon as the designated investigator arrives. Present are Bothnall, the investigators, and Douglas' estranged wife Ellen. The will is brief and to the point. All of his possessions are left to his wife. A package of personal effects is to be given to the executor.

The funeral has already been held. The grave is a simple unadorned site at the local cemetery on a hillside above Nelson, with a commanding view across the lake to the pine-covered mountains in the distance.

If the investigators ask directions to the gravesite, they learn that many of the locals knew of Robert Douglas, and were surprised at his death, but that few knew him well. He was a loner.

The Estranged Wife

Ellen Douglas is dressed in mourning, and a black ribbon ties her long auburn hair. She lives in Toronto, but has come to Nelson to settle her late husband's affairs. She is a strong woman who has been held back by a failed marriage. They separated in 1921, following his participation in the flight to the magnetic pole. On his return Robert was a changed man, hiding something. She encouraged him to find his own peace of mind, certain that eventually he would return to her.

She grieves his death. She cannot believe that he committed suicide. Nor does she believe that he could have fallen from a tree, as he had feared heights

since returning from the polar flight. She urges the investigators to look into the circumstances of his death, to put her mind at rest.

The Package

The sealed package was given to the solicitor less than a day before Douglas' death. It contains the following items:

- A collection of news cuttings, concerning a number of unsolved murders across North and South America. All the deaths are described as having been by decapitation, with the heads never found. In all cases, the bodies were found in high places (sites include a roof-top, a church steeple, a hill, and a cliff-top). The victims are listed below.

<i>name</i>	<i>location of death</i>
Roger Norton	Concepción, Chile
Tex Wilson	Montevideo, Uruguay
Andrew Green	Sucre, Bolivia
Simon Butterworth	Santiago, Cuba
Sam Glover	Waco, Texas
Stephen Dack	Springfield, Missouri
Fred Hocking	Rock Springs, Wyoming
Stan Krape	Akron, Ohio
Bruce Kennedy	Burlington, Vermont
Ed Smith	Cochrane, Ontario

- A group photograph of the crew of the polar airship *Bellinghausen*. There are nine officers, twelve ratings, and a civilian. The faces of all but two of the ratings have been crossed out in red ink. Of the two remaining, one is Robert Douglas, the other is unknown. The unknown man's face is circled. The officers' faces are untouched, as is that of the young man in mufti. A halved Know roll recognizes him as the philanthropist Edward Chandler.
- A letter to Douglas, postmarked Seattle about two months ago. See Rigid Air Papers #1, next page.
- A book of Shakespeare's sonnets, inscribed to a Donald Bambury. A number of passages are marked, and they are reproduced here as Rigid Air Papers #2.

The Coroner's Report

The coroner's report on Douglas' death is readily available from Bothnall or the local RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police). See Rigid Air Papers #3.

The House

The home of the late Robert Douglas is on the outskirts of Nelson, by the shore. The area is pretty and well-wooded, with few other houses close by. The house is modest, little more than a cottage, with two bedrooms, living room, kitchen, and bathroom. The second bedroom has been converted to a study.

The Letter To Douglas

Dear Bob,

I hope that this letter finds you safe and well after all these years. I am writing to you because I fear that you and I are the only men hired for the expedition who are still alive. The items I have enclosed should convince you that I am not mad. It has taken me a year or so to collect the newspaper cuttings, from papers all across the Americas. Someone is after us Robert, and I fear there is little we can do about it. As for the Shakespeare, it turned up in the mail one day. The book belonged to Donald. I do not know where he is, but the passages he circled give me great cause for fear.

I have sent you this material because you are perhaps in a safer place than I. Do not take this lightly! Either let only those you trust know where you are, or take quick steps to hide yourself.

Take care,
Chester

Rigid Air Papers #1

There is nothing of interest inside the house. A Spot Hidden directed at the roof establishes that a number of the shingles have been loosened recently, as if someone had been clambering about up there.

Coroner's Report

Numerous broken bones. Scrapings from fingernails reveal samples of clay, tree resin, and bark. Pine needles found in clothing. Massive head injuries consistent with a fall, although this type of injury is unusual in a fall death; the majority of such victims exhibit lower body trauma. It is possible, although unlikely, that the victim was deliberately attempting to dive in to the lake from the tree and misjudged the depth of the water near the shore.

Verdict: accidental fall while climbing a pine tree near a steep bank or cliff around the lake. Death by misadventure from drowning, caused by massive head injuries leading to unconsciousness before immersion.

Rigid Air Papers #3

The Marked Passages

Sonnet 18 - last two lines:

*So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*

Sonnet 44 - first four lines:

*If the dull substance of my flesh were thought,
Injurious distance should not stop my way;
For then, despite of space, I would be brought,
From limits far remote, where thou dost stay.*

Sonnet 50 - first four lines:

*Being your slave, what should I do but tend
Upon the hours and times of your desire?
I have no precious time at all to spend,
Nor services to do, till you require.*

Sonnet 61 - first four lines:

*Is it thy will thy image should keep open
My heavy eyelids to the weary night?
Dost thou desire my slumbers should be broken,
While shadows like to thee do mock my sight?*

Sonnet 66 - first line:

Tired with all these, for restful death I cry,

Sonnet 108 - first half line:

What's in the brain"

Rigid Air Papers #2

The Neighbor

Douglas' nearest neighbor is Jean Simpson, a local teacher. She is fit, wiry, well-traveled, and difficult to keep up with. She is a keen ornithologist and hiker. Her brown hair is cropped short, her green eyes are bright and intense.

While the investigators inspect Douglas' house, Simpson comes over to see what's going on. If she can be satisfied of their legitimacy (a Persuade roll, or some kind of documentary proof), she tells them of the last time she saw him.

"Mister Douglas was a quiet and well-mannered man. I spoke to him the day before they found him. He seemed distracted. He said that he hadn't slept well for a couple of nights. He said that there was a great pressure, like a dark cloud, bearing down on him.

"I was called in to identify the body after his fall. I guess I was the only one in town who knew him well enough to positively say it was him. It was awful, although it must have been a mercifully quick death. The only way I could recognize him was by his clothing, and by his wedding ring. It was white gold, and inscribed *Love Eternally-Ellen*.

"The last thing he said to me as we parted was 'Old secrets; they always come back at you in the end.'"

The Astronomer

Should the investigators contact Martin Biller while in Nelson, he invites them to dinner, and shows them his recent problems with astrophotography. The plates, taken at different times on different nights, show various parts of the sky. All the plates contain the same type of flaw. But a successful Astronomy or Photography roll notes that the area affected varies in size and relative location from plate to plate. A Physics or Astronomy roll indicates that such a well-defined but shifting presence cannot be caused by heat distortion, no matter how strong. This sort of variance will not be solved by a new mirror. Biller is bewildered. "What else could be up there?" he asks, and for a moment the table goes silent.

The Return Trip

The investigators should now suspect that the death of Robert Douglas was not accidental, and be satisfied that nothing else can be accomplished in Nelson.

As conveyed in Douglas' package, the man who signed himself 'Chester' seems to know more. He apparently lives in Seattle.

The *Terra Nova* does not return when expected. Even the booking agent is surprised and, on telegraphing Calgary, discovers that the trial route has been closed unexpectedly. He refunds the investigators' money, with genuine embarrassment. The investigators must return to Vancouver by train, and the next one doesn't depart until mid-afternoon on the following day.

By the time the investigators reach the coast, the *Terra Nova* has been and gone. The company's Vancouver agent reports that it arrived three days before, stayed less than a day, then departed for Seattle to explore routes in the Northwest.

Research

Research into the *Terra Nova* and the *Bellinghausen* uncovers considerable information. One or several Library Use or communication rolls might be needed to uncover all of the following: the keeper must judge how hard the investigators should work, and whether any of this information should be withheld for failed rolls.

The Bellinghausen

- A photo of the *Bellinghausen* reveals it to of very similar design to the *Terra Nova*. [Library or newspaper archives]
- A full list of the expedition's members is found. The leader of the expedition was Commander Sheridan P. Moore, USN (Ret.). Officers were Archer, Bambury, Bentley, Krantz, Lucas, Ross, Thompson and Wills. Ratings were Butterworth, Dack, Douglas, Glover, Green, Hocking, Kennedy, Krape, Norton, Smith, Whittle and Wilson. Comparing this list with the murder list leaves the deduction that the mysterious Chester's surname is Whittle. [Library or newspaper archives]

- In the years after the *Bellinghausen's* polar flight in 1921, no reference pertains to the officers and scientists aboard. They all vanish into obscurity. [Library, newspaper archives, scholarly or aviation journals]
- The engineering specifications of the *Bellinghausen* and the *Terra Nova* are identical. Either they are sister ships or the same ship renamed. [U.S. Aviation sources or government registry]

The Terra Nova

- This airship has staged many trial passenger and cargo runs in the last two years, throughout the Americas. The longest trial lasted three months, the shortest four days. If the investigators correlate the information, they see that the *Terra Nova* was present nearby at the time of each murder which Douglas listed. [Newspaper archives]
- Terra Nova Airship, Inc., is part-owned by Chandler Aviation, in partnership with its captain, S.P. Moore. [Official records or business registrations as a commercial carrier]
- An unsigned news story mentions that the *Terra Nova* was renamed, but does not give the name.

If the investigators seem to be missing the connection between the *Terra Nova* and the *Bellinghausen*, allow an Idea roll to establish the relation.

Seattle

THE TRIP from Vancouver to Seattle takes a few hours by rail. Seattle has a population of around 350,000, and with San Francisco is the primary Pacific seaport for the United States. Seattle trades predominantly with Japan and Alaska. Seattle is also a nexus for rail services, and the north end of the Pacific Coast air-mail route.

The Survivor

The Seattle telephone directory lists a Chester Whittle. He lives in a pleasant cottage overlooking Lake Washington, not far from the University of Washington campus. Whittle is not keen to be visited, however. He does not open his door to strangers, and waits with a loaded rifle in case they try to force entry. Investigators must receive successful Persuade rolls, establishing their relationship to Robert Douglas, before Whittle lets them in.

Whittle is a sandy-haired, thick-set man in his early forties. His face shows signs of prolonged strain. Bizarrely, he wears a pair of tinted aviator's goggles, and does not remove them at any stage. He is episodically manic and withdrawn, but in a cycle which lasts only a few hours. A successful Medicine or Psychoanalysis roll can establish this as a relatively rare oscillation for a man more than forty years old. At present Whittle prowls the room: he wants to go outside, but won't allow himself to. He is filled with dread.

Designs Of The Dho-spawn

The dho-spawn has found all but one of those to whom it has an affinity. It wishes to make the taste of Chester Whittle's mind part of its own, as it has all the other crewmen alive or dead. Once it has acquired Whittle, it will return to the North Magnetic Pole, open a gate to dimensions beyond our own, and leave this world with all it has learned. An important stage in its life cycle is complete.

The airship's itinerary is as follows:

- | | |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Day 1 | Leave Calgary |
| Day 2 | Arrive Vancouver. Moore arranges re-entry into U.S. |
| Day 3 | Leave Vancouver; arrive at Seattle. |
| Day 4 | Flight south to Portland, Oregon. |
| Day 6 | Return to Seattle. Spends night hunting for Whittle. Compels Whittle to find high ground. |
| Day 7 | Whittle succumbs to compulsion. Unless investigators intervene, the dho-spawn takes him. It immediately begins flight to the North Magnetic Pole. |

Successful Psychoanalysis and Persuade rolls are needed to get Whittle to relax and to open up. If the investigators can put him at ease, he tells them as much as he knows. This statement is long enough that the keeper should photocopy it, so that the players can read it verbatim. See Rigid Air Papers #4 on page 52.

Whittle is unaware the *Bellinghausen* and *Terra Nova* are the same, and is terrified to learn that the airship is in Seattle. He begs investigators to learn what they can, and notify the authorities. He is too scared to leave his house.

Before the investigators leave, Whittle removes the goggles, revealing eyes that bloodshot and watery gray. He gives the goggles to the investigators. "These turned up in the mail one day, just like Bambury's book did. I think they're the pair that Moore had on the *Bellinghausen*. I remember once hearing Archer ask about them, and Moore said 'They make the obscure more apparent.' I have a fancy that there's something special about them. You might need them."

The lenses of the goggles are oddly tinted. A successful Spot Hidden reveals a manufacturer's mark on the rim. They're made in Germany.



Chester Whittle

The Airship

THE *TERRA NOVA* is moored at an airfield south of Seattle. During the day the crew are active, making repairs and adjustments inside and out of the craft. No one jokes, and each works intensely and without let-up, hour after hour. They politely request that strangers leave the vicinity of the airship. All are cold and distant.

If there is a fuss, Captain Moore steps out of the crew quarters to investigate. He is a tall, thin man, with dark eyes. He watches the investigators closely, to discern if they know more than they reveal. He answers any questions brusquely, and endeavors to send them away as soon as possible. If they give him cause for suspicion, he arranges for the airship to depart that evening.

An investigator wearing the tinted aviator goggles clearly sees a dark, ropy umbilicus stemming from the base of each crewman's skull (lose 2/1D6 Sanity points). This living connection winds up and away, through walls and other solid objects, into the side of the airship.

Moore is the only crewman without such an attachment, and thus is the only real human still aboard. The others are unable to venture more than 250 yards from the craft. Moore arranges bookings, supplies, and fuel, and otherwise conducts the business of running the craft. He believes that his favored position is reward for his good service to the dho-spawn, but in fact he's just more useful to it this way.

Getting Aboard At Night

For a few hours each night, the dho-spawn allows its human members to rest. During this time it is possible to sneak aboard the airship with little risk of being seen. There are three avenues of entry.

- ☐ **Control Car:** the main hatch is on the starboard side of the control car. It is locked, but a successful Locksmith roll quickly undoes the catch.
- ☐ **Engine Cars:** entry can be gained from the engine cars by clambering onto the walkways between each car and the hull. The hatchways into the hull are simple wooden doors with bolt locks. The investigators can force them open by defeating STR 20 on the Resistance Table. The engine access-ways lead directly to the cargo area and crew quarters, the area directly beneath the gas cell in which the dho-spawn floats.
- ☐ **The Hull Fabric:** The skin of the airship is, although durable, thin to save weight. The investigators may cut their way into (or out of) the vessel. The skin has an armor value of 4. At least 5 points of cutting or tearing damage must be done to properly breach it. This breach does not pierce the gas-bags, but it will be spotted quickly in the morning. Once through, Climb rolls are required to get into the superstructure and onto the catwalk that bisects the interior of the airship.

Whittle's Story

I was part of the Bellinghausen Expedition back in '21. We tried to reach the North Magnetic Pole by airship. It was a big thing at the time, in all the papers. We didn't make it. That's what we told the press anyway.

Captain Moore told us, once we were underway, that we were doing government work. It was to be kept secret, and we'd be paid well for our silence. None of us were rich men, so we agreed.

We had pretty good weather, and the flight went as planned. Everyone was real happy when we landed at the pole. Lieutenant Bambury brought out the champagne. We were famous! Then the Captain said we wouldn't be able to tell anyone we'd made it. That went down like a lead balloon.

Moore and the officers sledged away from the ship a few hours later, to make their measurements. I didn't think about it at the time, but later it occurred to me that they didn't have much equipment with them. Before they left, they were real touchy.

There was a godawful storm that night. The sky was all lit up, and we heard thunder a few miles off. No wind or snow. It was weird. They came back the next day with this rock. They said it was a meteorite, made of some rare metal. Bambury didn't look happy, but he wouldn't say why.

All the way home, that ship was a strange place to be. I swear there were times it felt like something was sitting on my back, or in my head. Anyway, we got back, and went our own ways. We might not have been famous, but they paid us well. I traveled a bit, then came to Seattle and bought this house.

Then about a year ago I saw a story about one of my old crew mates turning up headless in some town in Chile. A month later, there was another in Bolivia. Then another. We were dropping like flies. All of us who were hired by Moore were being killed off. I tried to contact Bob Douglas—he was the only one I had an address for. His wife told me he'd left her and moved to Nelson. I sent him a package of clippings, Bambury's book, and some other things.

It's Moore. I know it. He wants to silence us for good . . . I don't know why.

Rigid Air Papers #4

Donald Bambury

Donald Bambury is temporarily free of the spawn's control. His will is strong, and he frequently manages to act outside of the thing's perception, though its connection keeps him, like the rest, within a few hundred yards of the dho-pawn. He spies the investigators' surreptitious entry, follows them, then cautiously reveals himself.

"You shouldn't be here!" he whispers hoarsely, with a voice unused to conversation. "Leave now, or you will

join us in living death!" Investigators recognize Bambury from the expedition photo on an INT x3 roll. He is not the young, confident man he was then. He looks far older, his dark wavy hair is rapidly graying, and his eyes have a haunted cast to them.

If the investigators risk telling Bambury their purpose, he reveals the awful fate of the *Bellinghausen's* crew. Bambury wants desperately to be free of the dho-spawn, and does everything to help the investigators.

The Crew

Bambury is on the investigators' side, but he is still a puppet of the dho-spawn. Within a few minutes of his encounter with the investigators, the creature becomes aware of their presence. The crew are dragged from their slumber, and set against the intruders. Not many weapons are available, and they mostly use makeshift clubs or their fists. There are seven crewmen, all of them originally officers on the *Bellinghausen*.

If a crewman dies or faints from blood loss or shock, the dho-spawn continues to manipulate his nervous system. The crewman becomes a blood-spattered marionette that jerkily continues the attack (lose 0/1D6 Sanity points to witness these zombies).

Bambury takes the side of the investigators, and desperately exhorts his crew mates to resist the compulsions washing over them. "Have we forgotten what it is to be men?" He fails miserably.

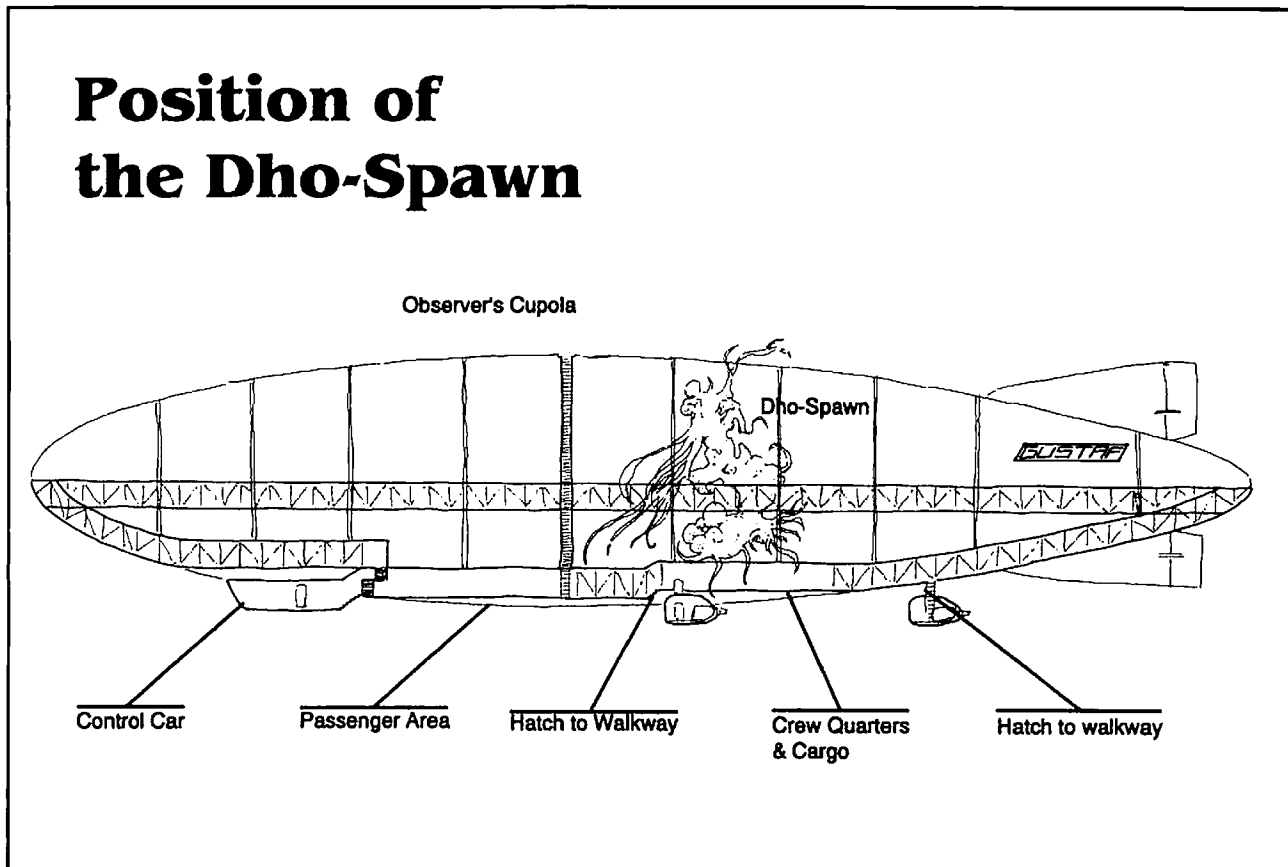
The dho-spawn punishes Bambury, tearing its umbilical from his spine, in the process taking a chunk of his head and neck. Much blood, a curdling scream, and a good man becomes ruined flesh staining the deck (lose 1/1D6 Sanity points for this).

The ensuing pursuit and fight ranges over the entire ship. The dho-spawn sends some of the crew to start the engines and lift the airship from its moorings. The engines can be heard everywhere on board. The investigators should shinny down the mooring lines (successful Climb, Jump, or DEX roll), or find themselves eight hundred feet and rising in the air, on a hostile airship.



Donald Bambury

Position of the Dho-Spawn



The Captain

Captain Moore runs from his cabin as soon as the fight breaks out. He is armed with a revolver, and is a deadly opponent. The investigators' efforts have endangered years of planning and servitude, and he will see them die for it. He shoots first at the person wearing the goggles. He takes care not to send a bullet into the gas cells above.

The Dho-Spawn

Curled within the enormous volume of gas-bag #4, the dho-spawn is invisible save for a sense of 'oiliness' in the air. Passing through space occupied by the creature imparts the impression that the air has thickened. It is this that Biller has photographed over Nelson on recent nights.

If an investigator uses the goggles, or applies magical means such as the Powder of Ibn Ghazi, the ghastly appearance of the entity is fully appreciated. The loathsome spawn is enormous, and without fixed shape as its livid pulsing body shifts and rotates through far more than three dimensions. From its median line sprout writhing forests of whip-like tendrils. Many of these tendrils pass through the fabric of the gas bag, the ship's airframe, panelling, and even bodies. The tendrils only interact with solid objects where the dhos-spawn desires, such as the base of each crewman's skull. Ten of the tendrils have knobbed ends, which emit faint, dissonant moans. Loss for seeing the dho-spawn is 1D3/1D20 Sanity points.

The dho-spawn sends stray tentacles to impale and thereby control investigators, or else coerces them to dive off the side. If it is reduced to half its hit points, or if the airship catches fire, the dho-spawn abandons ship. The crewmen scream in agony as the monster's departure tears their spines out through their skulls. The investigators are left with a cargo of twitching corpses, and the problem of how to get the airship down again.

Destroying The Airship

Airships burn easily. The investigator's easiest weapon against the *Terra Nova* is fire, by accident or design. But bullets fired at the gas cells ignite nothing, though the helium will begin to leak out. Fire might be deliberately lit in the crew quarters or engine houses, taking advantage of the plentiful and volatile aviation gasoline. Results are catastrophic. Are there parachutes? It's something for the keeper to decide. The frame and fabric slowly burn, and the great ship slowly comes apart. All aboard receive successful Luck rolls each round or lose 1D3 hit points that round from flame and smoke.

If burned in the air, wreckage of the *Terra Nova* drifts down over many acres. The twisted remains of its superstructure resembles falls across three acres, blackened beams and angles like the skeleton of some ancient leviathan. Here and there are the charred remains of the airship's crew, now truly at rest.



Slaves to the Dho-spawn

Aftermath

The investigators defeat the dho-spawn either by slaying the crew, destroying the ship, or posing a threat to the creature itself. Confronted, it escapes the *Terra Nova* and heads for the North Magnetic Pole, to depart this world. It leaves behind a final enigma, a circle on the ground of ten severed, undamaged heads, mute and staring. They are the heads of men known to be dead for as much as two years, in places as distant as Bolivia and Uruguay.

Preventing Chester Whittle's abduction earns investigators 1D6 Sanity points. Bringing about the destruction of the airship earns an additional 2D6 Sanity points.

Inquiry may free them of responsibility in the accident, or they may find it advisable to leave the state, and hope that autopsies turn up no embedded bullets. Captain Moore may have survived—if so, he disappears, continuing service to the dark gods to whom he has yoked his soul.

Statistics

LUCAS BOTHNALL, Age 41, Solicitor

STR 12 CON 10 SIZ 13 INT 15 POW 11
DEX 14 APP 10 EDU 15 SAN 55 HP 12

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Law 68%, Library Use 61%.

MARTIN BILLER, Age 27, Amateur Astronomer

STR 11 CON 12 SIZ 13 INT 10 POW 10
DEX 12 APP 11 EDU 15 SAN 50 HP 13

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Astronomy 31%, Bookkeeping 64%, Mechanical Repair 44%.

CHESTER WHITTLE, Age 41, Ex-Rigger and Fugitive

STR 14 CON 13 SIZ 14 INT 12 POW 13
DEX 15 APP 12 EDU 13 SAN 47 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Fist 60%, damage 1D3 +db

.30 Rifle 46%, damage 2D6

Skills: Dodge 45%, Pilot Airship 20%.

DONALD BAMBURY, Age 33, Pawn of Cosmic Horror

STR 13 CON 12 SIZ 13 INT 18* POW 25**
DEX 14 APP 9 EDU 14 SAN 30 HP 13***

asterisks refer to the notes for the *Terra Nova* Crewman description, below.

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Fist 50%, damage 1D3 +db

Skills: Give Rousing Speech 11%, Pilot Airship 40%, Resist Dho-Spawn 15%.

SAMPLE TERRA NOVA CREWMAN, Enslaved

STR 15 CON 16 SIZ 13 INT 14* POW 25**
DEX 14 HP 15***

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Fist 55%, damage 1D3 +db

Knife 40%, damage 1D4 +db

Tool 50%, damage 1D8 +db

Skills: Climb 70%, Pilot Airship 35%.

* the intelligence of the crewman when the dho-spawn is quiescent. Only at these times can each crewman even hope to exercise independence.

** none of the crew have their own POW. The POW of the dho-spawn should be used. Most of the time the crew are little more than conscious sensory organs of the creature.

*** when a crewman's hit points reach zero, he collapses for a round, then is animated. All his stats are the same, except INT (now zero) and DEX (now halved to 7). He must be dismembered to prevent further action.

crew	one	two	three	four
STR	16	16	17	15
CON	13	15	16	18
SIZ	10	12	13	11
POW*	25	25	25	25
DEX	11	12	10	13
HP**	12	14	15	15

crew	five	six	seven	eight
STR	14	15	13	14
CON	15	14	11	10
SIZ	15	14	13	17
POW*	25	25	25	25
DEX	12	14	14	13
HP**	15	14	12	14

SHERIDAN MOORE, Age 52, Airship Commander

STR 12 CON 17 SIZ 16 INT 18 POW 16
DEX 10 APP 9 EDU 15 SAN 0 HP 17

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Fist 57%, damage 1D3 +db

.38 Revolver 49%, damage 1D10

Skills: Climb 61%, Credit Rating 55%, Dodge 32%, Listen 46%, Physics 40%, Pilot Airship 76%, Spot Hidden 72%.

Spells: Contact Yog-Sothoth, Create Gate, Powder of Ibn Ghazi, Voorish Sign.

DHO-SPAWN, Immature Great Old One

STR 50 CON 25 SIZ 50 INT 17* POW 25
DEX 15 HP 38 Move: 8/12 flying

Damage Bonus: +5D6.

Weapons: Tentacle Implant 15%, damage special*

Mental Coercion, see below**

* The dho-spawn increases its powers of thought through absorbing the perceptions and memories of slaves. It takes control by implanting a tentacle within the brain stem of its victim. If the victim is unwilling, it also needs a successful POW against POW contest on the Resistance Table. Victims controlled by the dho-spawn are like extra limbs or senses, and the spawn may speak and act through them. Implanted, when the tentacle is removed the victim dies instantly and messily.

** The spawn may also invade the thoughts of an unattached victim. If a POW against POW roll succeeds on the Resistance Table, the human remains under its control for 1D10 rounds. Only one individual at a time may be controlled in this manner.

Armor: due to its multidimensional nature, weapons do only minimum damage to the creature.

Sanity Loss: it costs 1D3/1D20 Sanity points to see. ■

Crash Dive

Wherein the Investigators learn a useful new skill, but find more peril on dry land than in the aqueous world beneath the surface.

THIS SCENARIO introduces the investigators to the pleasures and dangers of diving. A letter from a casual friend puts them on the trail of what appears to be a Mythos artifact. Unfortunately its resting place is at the bottom of a lake in Oregon. To get to it, somebody must get wet.

No monsters lurk in this scenario, no friend is torn to pieces, and no sanity is lost. It serves as an introduction to the art of diving, as practiced in the 1920s. The skill learned, investigators are ready to tackle dives of their own choosing.

The number of investigators needed for this adventure amounts to at least four, because at least two are needed to operate the manual air compressors that keep the divers breathing and alive. Alternately, local young men of adventurous disposition will jump at the chance for a few days of such employment. Rural Oregon in the 1920s is not blessed with many such opportunities.

Diving

THESE BRIEF rules are designed to reflect the complexity of a diving operation, not to accurately simulate a real dive. Keepers with diving knowledge can, of course, provide much more convincing detail for any underwater adventure. For those of us who resolutely keep our feet on dry land, the rules and notes hereafter should suffice.

Diving, A New Skill

Diving (00%): with this skill the investigator understands diving equipment and how to use it. The diver also knows the hazards of diving and how to avoid them. In calm, routine conditions, required diving rolls may receive multipliers of 2x-4x, depending on the situation. A routine diving roll is needed for the descent, for every half hour on the bottom, and for the ascent. Failure indicates a minor problem, such as a snagged line, corrected with a second Diving roll at the same multiplier. A failure of 96-00 is a serious problem—a torn suit, leaking helmet, severed air line, or improper ascent or descent rates.

In the 1920s, the limits of normal diving are not deeper than 160-165 feet for not more than 40 minutes. Emergency dives may be made at greater depths but for shorter periods; conversely, longer dives may be made at shallower depths. Record depths by late in the decade are about 300 feet. Pearl divers routinely dive for a few moments in waters up to 120 feet deep, but plenty of experience and technique back up their nonchalant feats.

For simplicity's sake, we recommend that each atmosphere increase in water pressure (every 33 feet of water) represent a stopping stage for ascent or descent. Conventionally air lines and safety ropes would be marked off to reflect these distances, so that no mistakes could be made. This sort of arrangement is easy to remember, but the keeper may use any system convenient.

The Diving Suit

The suit takes time to put on, and requires the assistance of another person. The suit consists of three parts, the one-piece diving dress, the breastplate (or corselet), and the helmet. The dress is put on first, and is open at the neck and wrists. It is made of layers of a tight-woven twill, with an intermediate layer of pure rubber.

The breastplate then goes on. The breastplate rests on the shoulders, spreading the weight of the helmet to come. The wrists are sealed by flexible cuffs, while the neck of the suit is sandwiched (and thereby sealed) between the breastplate and the helmet. The helmet goes on last, locked to the breastplate.

To achieve negative buoyancy in the water, weights are added in the form of heavy boots (about 16 pounds each) and chest weights, of another 35-50 pounds. The chest weights are tied so that they may easily be discarded in an emergency. The heavy suit halves DEX while out of the water, and makes difficult both stopping and starting to walk under the water.

Air is supplied through valves in the helmet by a manually-operated compressor requiring two- or four-man teams. Motorized compressors are available, but are rare and felt unreliable compared to trained human crews. In either case the compressor needs to be able to supply two divers, since diving in pairs is a standard safety technique.

The divers' link with the surface is a rope attached to the helmet or breastplate: sharp tugs from either end serve as signals. The diver is also hauled up with this rope, usually attached to a winch. The surface crew must be careful in the rate at which they allow divers to descend and at the rate at which they pull the divers up, to prevent nitrogen narcosis or decompression sickness.

Diver to diver communication is either through hand signals, or by touching helmets. The latter allows sound to pass through the metal and the divers can speak freely.

Telephonic communicators exist in this period, and are standard in navies around the world. Private firms may or may not often need such communications, since most underwater operations are more dangerous than construction or salvage work ashore, but not much more complicated. There's usually nothing to say, unless the hook-up is between two divers working together: then such communication is invaluable.

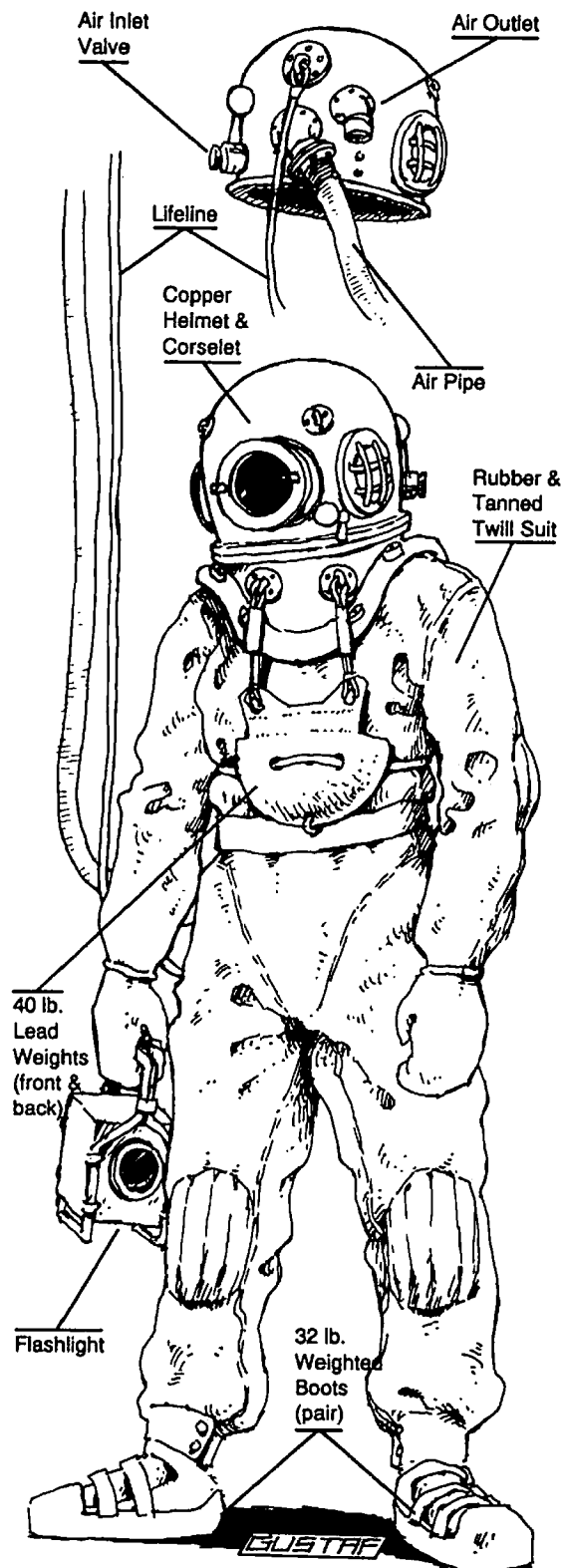
A diving dress of the sort summarized above costs in the neighborhood of \$900 new. Used suits of dubious quality may go for as little as \$150. Associated compressors, air hoses, lines, and other gear will cost another \$700 to \$1500, depending on quality and capacity.

By the late 1920s, suits with independent breathing apparatuses were being used for special jobs, but the diving suit with air line remained standard until the 1960s, when scuba tanks, wetsuits, and robotic vehicles eclipsed the old techniques of diving for good.

Using Skills Underwater

- ☐ **Climb:** reduce Climb skill by 20% if moving through rubble or a wreck, to avoid snagging the suit or one of its lines.
- ☐ **Dexterity:** for the effective score, reduce by 2 points.
- ☐ **Dodge:** underwater movement is difficult; reduce Dodge skills by half.
- ☐ **Firearms:** not usable underwater.
- ☐ **Hand-to-Hand Attacks:** reduce dagger and knife skills by 10%; reduce all other hand-to-hand skills by 20%.
- ☐ **Jump:** not possible underwater.
- ☐ **Listen:** reduce Listen skills by 20%. Sound travels very fast underwater, but it scatters quickly and is hard to pinpoint. And the compressor and exhaust valve are noisy in the diver's ears.
- ☐ **Mechanical Repair:** any hand tool works underwater, although corrosion is a problem. Use this skill at the normal percentage, but extend the time needed to complete the job by a quarter to a half as long again.
- ☐ **Photography:** reduce this skill by 30%, to compensate for unusual light conditions and the difficulty of protecting the camera and film.
- ☐ **Spot Hidden:** unaffected unless there is insufficient light. Light is absorbed by water so that the deeper a dive, the less light is available. Reds are absorbed at twenty feet followed by oranges and yellows at forty. Blues are distinguishable up to about a hundred feet. Turbidity due to algae, pollution, or disturbed sea bed can greatly reduce the circle of vision—in bad conditions perhaps to a dozen

Diving Suit



Nitrogen Narcosis

Commonly called rapture of the deep, this develops as a result of breathing air under pressure at depths greater than 100 feet (4 atmospheres). The effects are similar to intoxication, and can lead to serious disregard of job and safety. Other symptoms are hallucination, idea fixation, and impaired judgment. Combined with phobias, nitrogen narcosis can prove deadly.

Nitrogen narcosis worsens as rate of descent increases. It can be avoided by descending cautiously. At 4 atmospheres and at each atmosphere-stage beyond, a rapidly descending diver needs a successful CON x2 roll or he loses 1D3 effective INT. If effective INT reaches zero the diver falls unconscious. An Idea roll with a suitable multiplier determines if the diver completes his tasks, and avoids behaving dangerously.

A diver recognizes his own nitrogen narcosis with a successful Idea roll and a successful Diving roll. The remedy to this narcosis is to ascend until the effects have worn off, then to descend more cautiously.

feet or less—so that it is possible to become disoriented or lost. With insufficient light a diver's hands must be his eyes: halve all Spot Hidden rolls.

- ☐ **Swim:** impossible in a full diving suit. Reduce by 20% if in the diving dress only.
- ☐ **Throw:** impossible underwater.

Earlier Diving

Early diving attempts using diving bells—in effect, large inverted cups with handles and straps which could keep a pocket of air intact—took place in Classical times. Diving bells accomplished good work as early as the sixteenth century, when ships close to land were regularly salvaged all over the world. By 1616, costs had lowered enough that Jacob Johanson would specialize just in recovering anchors from shipwrecks.

The first attempt at something approaching the standard diving suit was John Lethbridge's 'Atmospheric' diving dress, a sealed wooden barrel with two canvas arms. Lethbridge claimed that he could stay submerged at a depth of 60 feet for up to twenty minutes.

In 1819, Augustus Siebe, a German, invented his 'open diving dress.' The diver wore a helmet sealed onto a jacket. Pressure forced air to vent out around the jacket. However, if the diver fell, he was liable to drown, so in 1830 Siebe perfected the closed diving suit. Effective to about 200 feet, this suit has survived virtually unchanged to this day. In the 1920s, the finest name in diving equipment is the firm Siebe-Gorman, Inc.

Underwater Dangers

Most problems associated with diving arise from increasing pressure on the human body as the diver descends. Pressure increases by one atmosphere for every 33 feet of water descended. Pressure at the surface equals one at-

mosphere, at 33 feet depth equals two atmospheres, at 66 feet equals three atmospheres, and so on.

Difficulties occur when cavities, such as the lungs or inner ear, are unable to ventilate because of illness or injury, and the trapped gas expands as the diver surfaces. Investigators should not dive unless in perfect health, as shown by a successful CON x5 roll on D100. Even a blocked-up nose can prove disastrous underwater.

Decompression Sickness

Commonly called *the bends*, and otherwise known as Caisson's disease. As a diver spends time under pressure, nitrogen is dissolved into the bloodstream until the blood becomes saturated. When the outside pressure reduces, the nitrogen forms bubbles which block arteries and veins. To prevent the bends, a diver must pause during ascent to allow his body pressure to equalize. In the 1900s, investigation into the effects of pressure by John Scott Haldane (1860-1936) resulted in the publication of diving tables, indicating depths and stopping times.

The longer a diver spends under pressure, the longer his stopping times must be upon ascent. This means that it is impossible for a diver to *quickly* ascend from the deep without suffering decompression sickness. If deep ones are in pursuit, the hapless diver can run sideways, but not up, at least not up very fast.

For gaming purposes, judge decompression sickness by the depth of the dive. At 33 feet there is no need for decompression. Below that, a diver not ascending in accordance with the tables loses 1D6 hit points for each atmosphere in excess of two, rounded up. Damage is gradual, and each 1D6 of damage is inflicted at intervals of CON x2 minutes. For long dives or for extreme pressures, double the damage. Recompressing (going back down into the water to the proper depth) prevents further damage. The stoppages in ascent actually mostly occur at depths of 50 feet or less, but we suggest a stop of 2-4 game minutes at each interval of 33 feet. Extend the time at each stop according to the greatest depth of the dive.

EXAMPLE: *Ed (Diving 43%) and Joe (Diving 38%) are exploring an undersea temple in 150 feet (6 atmospheres) of calm water. After twenty minutes, and ever mindful of potential shoggoths, Joe decides to rise. The Diving roll x2 for Joe succeeds, and he is hauled up in stages. Meanwhile Ed uncovers what he thinks is a shoggoth, and panics. He drops his weights and shoots to the surface, his suit quickly expanding. His player fails the Diving roll (under the circumstances the keeper allowed no multiplier) and poor Ed loses control, passing the helplessly-watching Joe. At the surface, Ed (CON 14) suffers 4D6 hit points in 4 doses of 1D6, at 28 game-minute intervals.*

Suit Problems

A ruptured suit, severed airline, or broken helmet might be indicated by a failed Diving roll result of 96-00. A torn suit is not necessarily a disaster, as air pressure prevents the diver from drowning. The main problem with tearing

the suit is the likely onset of hypothermia. A torn air line or broken helmet is more severe. Without assistance, the diver probably drowns.

The Narrative

OUT OF the blue one summer's day, the investigator with the highest Occult skill receives a letter from J. Peter Fletcher (see Crash Dive Papers #1 next page). He is an acquaintance from the past, a shady antiques dealer operating out of San Mateo, California, near San Francisco. His cavernous store is a block from the Southern Pacific tracks, in a seedy part of town. Local police regularly call, suspecting him (with good reason) of fencing stolen goods. His attempts to turn respectable and legitimate always end in failure, since he is a bad businessman, and because theft and deceit come so easily to him.

But he's a good fence, a rogue and a scoundrel gifted with a golden tongue and a talent for estimating the right

Hypothermia

Lowered body temperature is a major problem for divers. Woolly undergarments are usually worn as insulation beneath the suit. While in the water a diver must succeed a CON x2 roll or take 1 hit point of damage. The frequency at which the rolls need to be made depends on water temperature.

<i>effective water temp.</i>	<i>frequency of rolls</i>
60°F / 15°C	per hour of game time
50°F / 10°C	per 20 minutes of game time
40°F / 4°C	per 5 minutes of game time
30°F / -2°C	per minute of game time
<i>Wearing an intact, closed diving suit adds 20°F / 11°C to the effective water temperature.</i>	

value for whatever his eye takes a fancy to. A tip from him is valuable.

Research

A successful Cthulhu Mythos roll reveals that the *dream-plate* is a minor artifact connected to the dreamlands. It is a device for finding other dreamers in the Waking World, and may have other, greater powers, such as guiding or recreating dreams. This information is by deduction only.

The investigators can write, telephone, or visit James Doyle in Holton Field, Wash. One of the family answers, explaining courteously that Doyle died in an air accident in January. They are unaware of the location of the antique, and regret that they can be of no assistance.

A Library Use roll uncovers details of the crash. The airplane, a Junkers 13, encountered severe weather south of Portland, and it is believed that the pilot tried to land on what he thought was a snow-covered field. As the plane touched down it punched through thin ice and sank like a stone into the watery depths of Cider Lake. The pilot, co-pilot, and three passengers, Doyle among them, were lost.

A farmer witnessed the crash, and was able to sight against landmarks to fix the point of the crash. He went for help, but authorities could do nothing by then.

In March, with the ice gone, the families and local authorities arranged for the Seattle Diving Company to recover the bodies for burial. Nothing else was taken from the site. Letters, a visit, or a phone call to the Seattle Diving Company can supply the investigators with details of the wreck, its condition, and location in the lake.

If Doyle's family do not have the plate, and if Mulligan never got it, then it is probably at the bottom of Cider Lake. It is not quite there for the taking, but the family will happily take Doyle's valuation of the plate. For \$500, all the investigators need do is dive for it.

Report Of The Cider Lake Dive

**Seattle Diving Company
414 White Orca Street
Seattle, Washington**

Our Ref: 174/JG/DJK

Dear Sir,

With reference to your query I have pleasure in supplying you with the following information.

Date of Dive: 23rd March.

Dive site: The site of the dive is Cider Lake, near Winston, Oregon, not far from Stayton. The crashed airplane, a Junkers F13 carrying two crew and three passengers, sits on a soft mud bed in eighty feet of water. It has been marked with a buoy.

Condition of wreck: The fuselage is torn at the tail, and the starboard wing buckled. Entry to the interior was made through the side door. It had been jammed shut, but opened under force.

Dive equipment: A small barge was loaned by Mr. Taylor (Cider Farm, Winston). Two divers operated simultaneously, supported by a surface crew of four.

Thank you for your enquiry. I hope we can be of assistance in the future.

Sincerely,

John Gerrold

Cider Lake

CIDER LAKE is four miles long and less than a thousand yards wide. Everywhere else small fields alternate with orchards and fence-lines high with Douglas fir. The doomed pilot must have realized what he was landing on, but had no choice but to take the gamble.

Winston, Oregon, is two miles away. One man, Bill Taylor, farms land on the north side of the lake. He has lived there all his life, and clearly remembers the excitement of the plane crash earlier in the year.

Taylor is a rum-soaked country bumpkin who pretends to a great deal more knowledge than he actually has. He has no particular liking for city people, especially college kids, but the tempers of most people are improved by money, and Taylor is no exception.

Taylor and his relatives own much of the land around the lake. He spends his time fishing and drinking home-made whisky. Taylor's temper is worse when he is drunk, and the slightest offence will result in a brawl. Once a week he takes a wagon into town for supplies and gossip.

Initially, Taylor views the investigators with suspicion. They ask too many questions and have 'official' stamped all over them. A successful Psychology roll confirms his feelings of discomfort: a successful Persuade roll gains his confidence until he gets to know them.

A Letter Of Inquiry

Fletcher Antiques

207 Sons of the Golden West Boulevard

5th May

Dear ———,

I have some information possibly of interest to you.

In a minor way, I have been involved in valuing the estate of the late Charles Mulligan (yes, the incredibly rich collector of medieval miscellany). I was inspecting an authentic and valuable fifteenth-century writing desk at his Hillsborough estate when my eye happened to fall across items of his recent correspondence. (What a shame that the rich must die just when they have the most to live for! I shed a sorrowful tear upon hearing of his demise.)

Well, I thought no more of it until I returned home and that evening discovered that one letter had accidentally fallen into my pocket! O Life so strange.

Naturally I had to read the letter to learn to whom it belonged. And, as a respectable citizen, I have written to the estate's solicitors, enclosing the correspondence, and explaining my mistake. I intend to mail that as soon as I can remember to buy some stamps.

In the meantime, knowing you to be a collector of curious references as well as curiosities themselves, and presuming that the dead care little, I enclose a copy of the letter in question. I have not seen this 'dream plate' in Mulligan's collection, nor the box in which it was kept. My guess is that Mr. Doyle still has it.

If negotiations open, I have in mind several well-known gentlemen qualified to act as expert consultants.

In anticipation,

JPF, Esq.

The Copied Letter

Green Bough Farm

Holton Field

Washington State

January 12

Dear Mr. Mulligan,

I have recently inherited a medieval artifact which I believe may be of interest to you. It is a pewter plate, nine inches in diameter. The surface of the object is inscribed in a language I cannot identify. Around the circumference of the plate are three small holes. These support three separate pewter legs, and from the tripod made thereby a small silver needle is suspended by a length of thread.

Documents accompany the antique. They identify it as a 'dream plate,' and imply that the needle is supposed to point towards something. I don't know what this is, and when I set it up it didn't seem to work.

From the notes I understand that the plate itself is thirteenth century in origin. The box in which it came, as well as the legs and needle are far younger, by my estimate dating from the early 1800's.

The plate and box together have been valued at approximately \$500.00. Naturally I know of your interest in such matters. I shall be flying into San Francisco on business on the 29th of January. I shall bring the plate with me. At your convenience we can meet, and you may inspect the antique. Though the sum involved is minor, I promise you that this artifact is like nothing with which you are acquainted.

Yours faithfully,

James Doyle

Taylor has an illicit still. He is concerned that the investigators' interest in the crashed plane might only be a cover story. Even after he is satisfied that the investigators are what they claim to be, he is reticent about his supply of whisky.

A Dubious Offer

Taylor has some of the diving equipment used to retrieve the bodies and thought not worth lugging back. He offers to rent it to the investigators. Vermin have gnawed holes in the suit material and the helmet is filled with straw. Taylor pretends to be an expert, but he only knows what he learned from watching the professional divers.

With a shrewd eye on the investigators' city suits, he offers to hire out his equipment for ten dollars, and his 'expertise' for another ten dollars. He also offers room and board at one dollar per night per person, as well as the only barge on the lake for five dollars per day. If he thinks he can get away with it, he charges a 'diving toll' of five dollars, as well, fraudulently claiming Cider Lake as entirely his own.

If the investigators take Taylor up on his offers, the first diver stands an excellent chance of drowning, and almost certainly has problems with decompression, which Taylor has never even heard of. Investigators who genuinely want to recover the artifact do better to look elsewhere for help.



Bill Taylor

Equipment And Expertise

The investigators require equipment and training for the dive. The nearest diving school is Walsh Underwater Salvage in Portland, three hours distant by country road. Training is available, under the personal supervision of Jake Walsh (King of the Columbia and the Wizard of the Willamette, according to the sign in the window). The cost is twenty dollars per investigator for a full five-day course. Participants will come away from the lessons with a Diving skill at 20%.

Walsh has spent the majority of his entire life by, on, or under the sea. He grew up around trawlers and joined a merchant crew as soon as he could. There he discovered diving and has not looked back since. Walsh is a solid, no-nonsense type, and does not suffer fools gladly.

For the dive they want to make, Walsh suggests they hire an expert to supervise the dive and ensure that safe procedures are followed. He is available. His fee is thirty dollars per week, plus expenses. The investigators do not need to hire him, but would be wise to do so. He also suggests that two divers descend to the wreck, so that one can watch for danger while the other one

searches. Hire of two suits is fifteen dollars a week, and a compressor costs another ten.

Other Possibilities

Diving suits are the best means of reaching the wreck. It is too deep, and the water too cold, for free diving. The logistics of bringing a diving bell to the lake are formidable. A bathysphere is totally unsuitable.

A diving helmet, the precursor to the diving suit, is a possibility. This apparatus is similar to the helmet and breastplate of the full suit—the air pressure within keeps the water line below one's face. Should the diver fall over, however, the air rushes out, and he might drown. Despite this, the helmet is often used in shallow dives in warm waters. It allows a greater freedom of movement, as the diver need only wear a bathing suit instead of the clumsy diving suit.



Jake Walsh

On The Farm

Taylor's farmhouse offers little comfort. The floors are packed dirt, food is kept in a damp box covered with sackcloth, and there is no electricity. The furniture is either uncomfortable or broken. Taylor shares the place with an old dog and a collection of mangy cats.

Walsh and Taylor take an immediate dislike to each other. Taylor resents Walsh's superior diving knowledge while Walsh is openly contemptuous of the drunken hick farmer. Unless the investigators intervene, they come to blows, and Walsh leaves, if Taylor hasn't kicked him out already. With a friendly persuasion, and the exchange of a little more money, the pair settle down to a routine of glares and snide comments. There is peace, for now.

Trouble threatens to flare once again when Taylor insists that he pilot the barge. There is little anyone can do, he is unmovable and his barge is the only craft on the lake suitable as a platform.

On The Lake

Walsh proposes an initial dive to appraise the situation at the lake bed, and to test the equipment. Subsequent dives can take place on later days. Taylor can pinpoint the location of the crashed plane. A buoy marks its position.

The next day is clear and warm. Walsh warns the investigators against wearing the diving suits before anchoring—if someone falls in, it's difficult to swim in the diving dress. The lake is calm, but diving is dangerous enough without taking foolish risks.

For another thirty dollars, Walsh will take one suit. The investigators can decide who is to take the other. Two people must remain on the boat to operate the compressor. Perhaps on the next dive, a second investigator

can replace Walsh, once the expert has surveyed the wreckage. Or perhaps two investigators can go down together. Decide what's right for your players. The rest of the first two days' diving is written as though Walsh and one investigator make the trips. Taylor offers no help except remarks about how he would do the job better.

With two makeshift anchors cast to hold the barge against any sudden wind, Walsh and one of the investigators don the suits, then carefully lower themselves into the water. Each is suspended by a short rope while the equipment is checked again. Everything is functioning. The investigator, followed by Walsh, drops away and sinks into the depths of Cider Lake. Bubbles rise up, and the wavelets caused by the splashes gradually subside.

The First Dive

A successful Diving roll permits the investigator to descend safely, controlling his buoyancy by venting air. Failure results in 'squeezing'—too much air loss results in a greater negative buoyancy and rate of descent faster than safe. The effect feeds back on itself, causing the diver to drop ever faster towards the bottom. If the wreck were much deeper (below 100 feet) then nitrogen narcosis would be a risk. However, rate of descent is dictated by the surface crew paying out the lines, and Walsh has coached them with a watch—'squeezing' just means that the diver exerts a greater load on the rope.

The water grows darker as the two descend towards the bottom. At a depth of eighty feet, 3 atmospheres, the water is a cold 40°F. The outline of a crashed airplane can be made out in the green and blue landscape. The limit of visibility is thirty feet. Without the buoy to mark its position, the plane might have taken weeks to find.

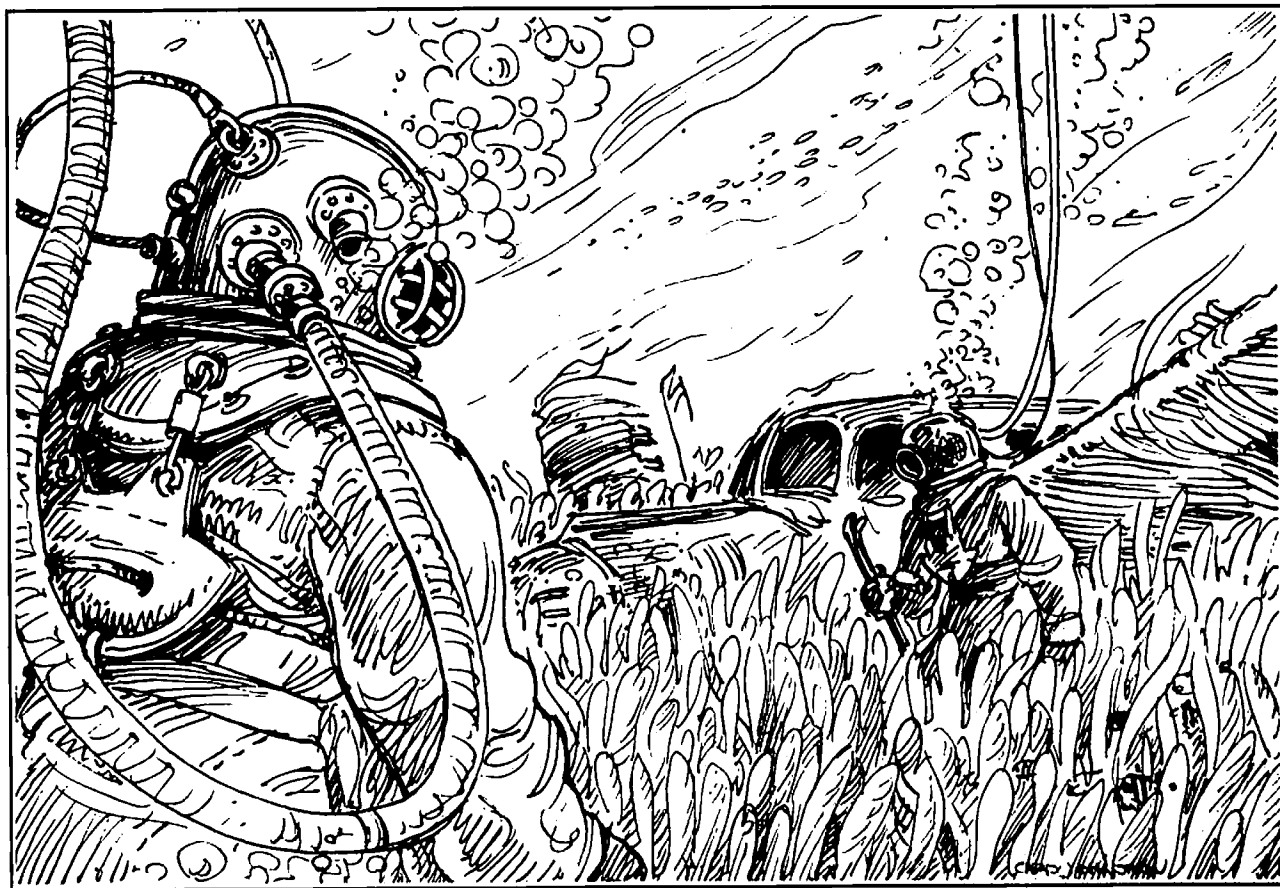
The plane sits in a carpet of algae and weed on a soft mud bed. It is largely intact, settling on the left wing. There is a gash near the tail, possibly made by landing tail-first. Debris from the dive in March surrounds it. The divers' boots stir up the soft mud anew, and the resultant turbidity reduces visibility to a minimum.

Walsh examines the wreck, leaving the investigator to watch and familiarize himself. As the investigator acclimates, it is apparent skills are affected by water.

Thirty minutes later Walsh is satisfied and he signals to ascend. The wreck looks reasonably safe, and the search can begin in earnest tomorrow. On ascent, a failed Diving roll is more serious and results in 'blowing up,' the opposite of squeezing and resulting in decompression sickness. The surface crew are powerless to prevent this.

Bottom Time

Solitude does strange things to the mind. Is that a boulder, or a shoggoth lying in wait? Is that another diver, or a pop-eyed deep one? Is that movement or a shadow? Is the air-line snagged, or is something trying to cut through



Diving the the Wreck

it? As well as the tricks played by the mind, a diver must also cope with the unexpected in a hostile environment.

Every 15 minutes each diver must receive a successful Luck roll or have an underwater encounter. Roll 1D10 and consult the boxed encounters nearby, or pick one that offers dramatic possibilities.

The Second Dive

On the second day, Walsh and the other investigator can team up with investigators two and three, respectively, for a pair of dives. Each descent will search for the dreamplate, or for the period box containing it.

Entry to the crashed plane is either through the sliding door or through the broken tail section. The bodies were retrieved through the open door.

A visual search is quickly made impossible by the swirling mud. Spot Hidden rolls are halved, one made for each diver per half hour of searching. The dreamplate is underneath the wreck at the tail, in its box. It was among the luggage, and thrown to the back of the aircraft during the crash. It is now buried by mud and rotting suitcases.

The dive goes on. The cold seeps through the suit, and blue-green light plays tricks on the eyes. Sounds are sharp and difficult to pinpoint. It is difficult to see and easy to lose track of time and distance.

Fun On The Surface

Time passes slowly for the surface crew. Pumping air to the divers is monotonous work and there is little else to do except monitor the divers' lines. Taylor lazes about, refusing to help in any of the tasks. He drinks continually.

Twenty minutes into the second dive, Taylor rather drunk, is parched. Reaching for his bottle, he finds it empty. Cursing, he moves to the ancient outboard motor jury-rigged to the back of the barge, starts it, and begins to pilot the old barge to shore, at a sedate four knots.

The three or four investigators still on the barge can no doubt overpower Taylor and shut off the engine, but can they keep the compressors working while they do? Do the anchors come free immediately, or does the engine churn without effect? Are the lines left free, or fouled? Let the investigator responses to the crisis determine what happens next.

If any of the investigators who took Walsh's course ask what they know that is relevant to the situation, take that as proof that they have not panicked. Remind them that there is enough air in the lines and suits to last the divers several minutes, and that non-return valves in the helmets prevent water pressure from forcing it back up the line and drowning the divers.

Consequences

Eighty feet below, an unexpected sound is the first the divers know of the impending disaster. Given a successful Idea roll, the investigator identifies the sound, but Walsh knows what it is immediately. He starts to act, but

Underwater Encounters

❶ The diver hears a strange noise. It might be a thudding and clanking from the boat or a strange underwater groaning. A deep one gurgle or a shoggoth's mewl? A successful Idea roll correctly identifies the source of the noise.

❷ The diver sees a shadow or mysterious shape. A following shadow might be a trick of the light or a shoal of fish. The threatening shape may be nothing more than a boulder. A figure may turn out to be a sunken log.

❸ An unexpected current or eddy unbalances the diver. A successful Dodge or Diving roll keeps the diver on his feet. Failure means he has fallen over. A failure of 96-00 means that he has snagged his air hose or even torn the suit. Currents in rivers and oceans are more dangerous than those in placid Cider Lake.

❹ The uneven surface causes the diver to stumble on rocks or sink in soft mud. A successful Dodge or Diving roll keeps the diver out of trouble. Mud is likely to be the main problem in Cider Lake.

❺ The diver finds himself caught in long strips of tangling weed. He is trapped and needs to cut himself free with his knife, taking 1D10 minutes.

❻ The local aquatic wildlife take an interest in the diver. In Cider Lake this might be any number of fish, or perhaps an eel. Elsewhere it might mean sea snakes, sharks or dolphins.

❼ The diver discovers a small cave. Exploring is risky due to the threat of snagging the suit or airline on cave edges, and to the possibility of an avalanche trapping the diver.

❽ Sharp objects threaten to snag and tear the suit. This might be a piece of jagged metal or sharp rock. A Spot Hidden roll identifies the danger. If not spotted, a Luck roll ensures that the suit is undamaged. Failure means a small cut in the suit material, letting in the cold lake waters and requiring an immediate rise to the surface.

❾ The suit malfunctions. A successful Luck roll means that the problem is minor—the helmet is fitted badly and is beginning to hurt, the face-plate becomes fogged, or the airline snags. Failure indicates a more serious problem—a leaking helmet seal or loose rope.

❿ A successful Spot Hidden identifies something unusual. Perhaps an odd rock formation, an old coin or piece of pottery.

is too late and as a sharp tug pulls him backward, his helmet strikes the door frame. It doesn't break, but Walsh hits his head and falls unconscious. As he is dragged out of the wreck his suit tears at the leg.

A Dodge roll is needed to avoid the same fate (and 1D6 damage) if the investigator is also inside the wreck. Otherwise he is dragged through the silt by the breast rope. The lake bed is clear of obstacles if a Luck roll succeeds. One roll must be made per six combat rounds which elapse on the surface; failing the Luck roll, a successful Diving roll is needed to avoid a boulder, sunken tree, or sudden outcropping. Failure costs 1D6 hit points, and a failure of 96-00 costs 2D6 hit points, and a broken helmet, torn suit, or a severed air line.

Obviously something is wrong with Walsh. Air streams from the hole in his suit and he is not moving. Getting to Walsh requires a successful Diving roll, but by keeping Walsh's helmet above the cut the investigator ensures that he does not drown. Hopefully the irresistible pull of the barge stops soon. If not, it is a good ten minutes back to shore.

The investigator may consider dropping weights and taking a chance with decompression sickness. At this depth, 3 atmospheres, 2D6 damage results if the investigator chooses to do so. However, Walsh is unable to make that decision for himself, and in his current state decompression sickness may well kill him.

Should the investigator decide to rise to the surface, Walsh takes another 2D6 damage, on top of the 2D6 which knocked him unconscious to begin with. The damage comes gradually, and if Taylor has been stopped it may be possible to strap on some more weights and return to the lake bottom. The nitrogen dissolves back into the bloodstream and a proper ascent may be attempted.

Since the pull of the barge is little more than a walking speed, however, the safest thing may be to ascend the safety line just enough to be clear of the surface, and hang on for the ride. But remember that the turbidity of the water makes it impossible to see to accurately judge speed. Any investigator who does not panic is courageous indeed. This is a fine time to acquire a new phobia.

The Crisis Continued

Above and aboard, Taylor fights any investigator trying to stop him. Those on the pumps find themselves torn—do they abandon the divers and tackle Taylor, or wait and hope that he stops?

Taylor must be knocked unconscious or physically restrained. That done, the barge can be stopped and the divers retrieved. Walsh, if not drowned, is badly injured and unable to dive in the near future. His suit is also unworkable, and in need of repair. The investigators are on their own in the hunt for the dreamplate.

Taylor wants the investigators off his land, and shouts and rants and raves. It is an impressive display, but mostly bluff. Mention of the words whisky and police in

the same breath shuts him up. The investigators are suddenly permitted to stay as long as they like, but he'll have nothing to do with them, on the water or on land. They are free to continue with their dive without interruption.

The Third Dive

The third dive takes place without incident, and the dreamplate is probably found, safe but wet in its sodden box. The investigators can say farewell to Walsh and Cider Lake. They have a new toy to play with.

The investigators come away from Cider Lake with more than just the dreamplate. They now have a new way to explore. Submerged wrecks have suddenly become exciting sources of knowledge and treasure. The natural beauty of a coral reef and the terrible ferocity of an attacking shark are now within reach. Deep one temples can be visited, old one sites scavenged, and shoggoths met on watery street corners.

Conclusion

If the investigators do nothing, when he is able to Walsh visits the sheriff in Winston, and charges Taylor with attempted murder. That trial will go forward, and the investigators will be key witnesses. Taylor, whom it transpires has threatened to kill half the countryside, is convicted and jailed for the next twenty years.

The investigators get no Sanity for this adventure, but they can purchase the dreamplate or return it to Doyle's heirs. Wrapped in an oilskin pouch are documents and notes from which the Find Dreamer (see next page) spell can be deduced after some months of study.

The Dreamplate

The dreamplate offers a way to find another dreamer in the Waking World, if used in conjunction with the Find Dreamer spell. The inscriptions on the plate (written in an unknown, undecipherable tongue) merely describes the general effect, and is of no consequence. But the proportions and the metal itself are important to the spell.

Find Dreamer

The caster must have met the target in person on Earth while exploring the Dreamlands, and must concentrate upon the target during the cast of the spell. A sketch of the target must then be made, and then burnt, and a magic point sacrificed, and the smoke from the flames inhaled. This costs 1 Sanity point. As the image burns, the needle turns to point towards the target. The intensity of the flames give an idea of the proximity of the target. Successive castings and accurate triangulation enable the target to be pinpointed.

Statistics

BILL TAYLOR, Age 49, Farmer and Bootlegger.

STR 14 CON 17 SIZ 14 INT 11 POW 9
DEX 7 APP 10 EDU 8 SAN 60 HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Fist 59%, damage 1D3 +db

12-Gauge Shotgun 60%, damage 4D6/2D6/1D6

Skills: Bargain 43%, Boating 30%, Distil Whisky 62%, Diving 4%, Drink Whiskey 88%, Electrical Repair 50%, Farming 65%,

Mechanical Repair 60%, Natural History 53%, Operate Heavy Machinery 45%, Swim 41%.

JAKE WALSH, Age 35, Professional Diver

STR 11 CON 15 SIZ 13 INT 13 POW 14
DEX 13 APP 10 EDU 13 SAN 75 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 55%, damage 1D3

Knife 47%, damage 1D6

Skills: Accounting 27%, Diving 92%, First Aid 62%, Listen 54%, Mechanical Repair 63%, Navigate 38%, Operate Heavy Machinery 49%, Pilot Boat 61%, Spin Entertaining Yarn 77%, Swim 70%. ■

Slow Boat

Wherein investigators float down an English canal, and into a distant future where necromancers hold sway in splendor and squalor.

CANAL BOATS have been used to shift goods along inland waterways in England since the 18th century. By the 1920s, rail and road transport pose insurmountable competition, and the boat and barge people are a dying breed. Some still choose canal travel—barging—for its leisurely pace. In this scenario investigators board the dark boat of an English occultist.

The scenario starts in England, but since many investigators are likely to be in North America, a lead-in despatches them on a liner to Southampton. If they are in continental Europe, they arrive at Dover. Air services link Croydon Aerodrome to principle European cities.

Alternately, this adventure might be placed in the eastern United States, northern Europe, or coastal China, all areas of historically well-developed canal systems.

Keepers will note that little needs changing to set this adventure in the 1890s.

Canals & Canal Boats

WATER transport is energy efficient. The ancient Egyptians recognized that shifting large stones by Nile boats was much easier than by road. Since then, boats and barges have taken heavy cargoes up and down every great river in the world, but there are

unfortunately few naturally navigable rivers, and even fewer whose depths are unvarying over the course of time. The answer lies in locks, which are essentially doorways which can open to let boats through and close to change water levels.

Many variations on the idea of the lock have been tried, including vertical boat lifts, inclined planes, and flash locks. The most common is the pound lock. This comprises a chamber the length and breadth of the boat. Lock gates at either end let ships in and out. Paddles let the water in at the top and out at the bottom.

Before opening the gates, it is necessary to equalize the water level on either side, by opening the paddles. Even an inch difference in water level means that several tons of pressure hold the gates firmly closed. In most parts of the world, paddles are raised and lowered mechanically. The general rule on English canals is that the work is done by using a detachable handle known as a windlass.

The extensive waterway network through the eastern United States differs from the English canal system in several important respects. For one thing, one may cruise American canals for many miles between locks. In England, locks often average about one a mile, and in some areas more than a lock and a half a mile! More significantly, American waterways were designed for sea-going vessels. English ones are mostly unnavigable even by fishing boat. In this latter respect continental European and Scottish canals resemble those of the U.S. more than they do the waterways of England.

Canal Boats

A typical narrow canal of the English midlands allows approximately these maximum dimensions for craft:

Length: 70 feet

Beam: 7 feet

Draft: 3 feet, 6 inches

Head Room: 7 feet

Seven feet of head room (the space between the surface of the canal and the bottoms of bridges, etc.) means that a six-foot steerer has to duck at every bridge. There are a great number of bridges. In rural areas they can average about three a mile, many built for farm tracks, rather than public roads.

These dimensions, while severely restricting the boats, make canal tunnels a practicality. These are dark, and often dripping. Frequently there is no dry ground on which to step. To reduce the cost of digging, tunnels were more often than not excavated without towpaths. Tow horses were led over the hill, while men lay atop the boat 'legging' (pushing it along with feet on the tunnel walls). Toward the end of the nineteenth century, some of the longer tunnels acquired tunnel tugs. At least one of these was electrically powered, showering the darkness with eerie blue sparks. As powered boats increasingly replaced horse drawn, the tugs fell into disuse, but some remained in the 1920s.

Inland waterway transport is inevitably slow. If one attempts to increase the thrust of the boat harder through a restricted channel, water pressure against the bow also increases. At the critical point, an increase in power actually reduces speed. On the English canals, three miles an hour, plus ten minutes per lock, is a good speed. (Thus Wormleighton Junction to Oxford is 36 miles:traveling that particular route would take about 16 hours.)

In most places, canals are narrower than the boats are long, so it is possible to turn only at junctions or at wider points known as winding holes (winding as in the *wind* that blows).

A boat has no brakes. Instead, reverse thrust is necessary to stop. Reverse, however, is of limited use in moving backwards, for the rudder is ineffective except when forward thrust is applied.

As a boat slows, the steering is increasingly sluggish, since a responsive rudder requires plenty of forward thrust. Steering also pivots a boat on its center of gravity, which is usually about twice as far from the stern as it is from the bow. This means that when pivoting the nose in one direction, the rear pivots twice as hard in the opposite way.

The steerer of an English canal boat stands at the back, which may seem less convenient than the front, but affords a much better view of how the boat is lined up. Bridges may leave the boat only six inches or less to spare, so it is essential for the operator to remain aware of the stern's alignment.

Recommended Reading

The other-world portion of this scenario has been inspired by Clark Ashton Smith's stories of Zothique. Zothique is our world far in the future, a land where necromancy is known and terrible gods hold sway.

Clark Ashton Smith was a contemporary of H.P. Lovecraft, and Lovecraft had much to admire in Smith's lush and poetic tales. He incorporated elements of Smith's stories into his own Cthulhu cycle, Smith contributing the entities Tsathoggua and Abhoth, and the *Book of Eibon*.

Smith's work is currently out of print in paperback, but an Arkham House volume exists, entitled *Rendezvous in Averroigne*, which includes ten tales set in Zothique. Connoisseurs of weird fiction are encouraged to seek it out.

The Narrative

THATHMUOR and Valchrek are necromancers in the distant future, or perhaps in an alternate future, but in any case one where the sun is slowly dying. Once they were associates, now they are consumed with hatred for one another. Their needs are served by lichens, dead humans magically reanimated. About their dwellings, mummies and skeletons hack at ashen soils to raise sickly crops, steer rotting boats along fetid canals, and dig minerals for unguessable purposes.

The two necromancers pass the time experimenting with ancient grimoires. In one such experiment, Thathmuor creates a vortex opening the way between his time and a 20th century canal tunnel.

Passage through the vortex consumes great quantities of magic points. These are stored in egg-like things: the vortex destroys the egg but extracts magic points, allowing a party to move from one epoch to another. All that is left of an egg is a stench from the oily sludge it once held.

Thathmuor sends some of his lichens through the vortex. They reach the twentieth century, but die upon arrival, and one of their number is found floating in an English canal by occultist Marcus Raven and millionaire heiress Aline McClusky, in search of an open-air trysting place on a balmy day. They also find the egg intended to power the return journey. Unwittingly they carry the egg through the vortex and are sucked into the distant future, and are captured by Thathmuor.

Watching with his scrying mirror, Thathmuor knows that his lichens died on entering the twentieth century. He'd like to try the experiment of killing twentieth century people, reanimating the corpses, and sending them back to their own time.

Thathmuor interrogates his prisoners. Raven claims to be a great magician, and issues several threats. Eventually Thathmuor agrees to let him go, but holds Aline hostage, to be exchanged for a group of Raven's acolytes. He supplies Raven with two eggs, one for departure, and one for his return.

Arriving back in twentieth century England, Raven finds himself suspected of Aline's murder. Under English law, there is no necessity to produce a corpse in a murder case. If he can rescue Aline, he can certainly disprove the charge. He needs people he can deceive, but whom? Investigating the unknown with Marcus Raven has already been too dangerous an occupation: his former associates are all in strait jackets or coffins..

Investigator Information

The investigators receive a pressing invitation to call on Harold J. McClusky, wealthy New Yorker. He is a self-made millionaire, with holdings in shipping and oil. His wife is dead, and he has one daughter, Aline. He is a broad man, with a loud voice and a penchant for expensive cigars.

McClusky has heard of the investigators as people skilled in occult and archaeological matters. He asks them some questions to see if they know what they're on about. Once satisfied on that score, he asks if they've heard of Marcus Raven. Anyone receiving a successful Occult roll knows of Raven, a psychic with a colorful reputation.

McClusky explains that his daughter Aline has recently taken up with Raven. He despises the man, and is sure he is using Aline's emotions to get at her money. Since they have been together, Aline has become involved in all sorts of crazy stuff, including the recent find of some kind of Egyptian mummy in an English canal.

Two weeks ago, Aline disappeared. The police have questioned Raven, but learned little. McClusky contracted a London detective firm to look into the matter, but he's certain that they have failed to extract the truth from Raven. He'd like people of similar background to speak with the fellow, to gain his confidence perhaps, and to get him to speak truthfully about Aline. McClusky offers an expenses-paid trip to England, plus a tempting remuneration for any information they can glean.

The detectives he hired are from Lloyd's Detective Agency of 52 Eversholt Street, London NW, opposite Euston station. There, the investigators can receive details of Raven's current whereabouts.

About Marcus Raven

The career of Marcus Raven, English master of the arcane, is a matter of public record. He is

handsome, mysterious, and flamboyant. He is a medium, a sleuth, and an expert in antiquities. He contributes a psychic advice column to the *Daily Mirror*.

His name often appears in English newspapers, connected with strange events. The two most recent reports can be uncovered with a Library Use roll. The first, dated a month ago, concerns a mummy found floating in a canal (see Slow Boat Papers #1 nearby). The second, from about two weeks ago, notes the disappearance of Aline McClusky in Warwickshire. Police are questioning Raven, and foul play is suspected.

The Detective Agency

Lloyd's Detective Agency is opposite Euston station, a journey of about two and a half miles from Waterloo station. It may be reached for a few pence either by tube train (subway), or by a red, open-topped double decker bus of the London General company. Either of these is likely to confuse someone unfamiliar with London's public transport. Taxis might be preferred, an old-fashioned-looking vehicle (owing to Scotland Yard regulations) which can take only two or three passengers at a time.

The detective agency's premises are small and dusty. A secretary types slowly, and a man in a moth-eaten suit

MUMMIFIED BODY AFLOAT IN OXFORD CANAL

Psychic Expert Makes Strange Discovery

Find of the Century!

LONDON— Police and staff of the British Museum are today jointly investigating the discovery of a mummified body in the Oxford Canal, near Fenny Compton.

The discovery was made by the occultist Mr. Marcus Raven. Mr. Raven states that he noticed the body whilst travelling to Leicester along the canal. Accompanying Mr. Raven was Miss Aline McClusky, 22, daughter of Mr. Harold J. McClusky of New York City.

Asked if he had any special theories on the body, Mr. Raven said "It would seem apparent that it is from the distant past. I, however, believe that it could equally be from the distant future."

Police have stated that the obvious age of the corpse rules out murder, but are not disregarding the possibility of a hoax. Sergeant Willcox of

Scotland Yard told this reporter "We are not currently investigating the nature of the man's death, as that is a matter for scientific experts. We are more concerned with how he came to be floating in a Warwickshire canal." Police are questioning Mr. Raven.

Mr. Eric Randolph, spokesman for the Museum, enthusiastically described the mummy as "the find of the century." He said "Our initial studies indicate that the mummy is indeed authentic. The body conforms to no known burial patterns in the British Isles, and inscriptions on the bandages are of a hitherto unknown language. A whole new chapter of British history is opening before our eyes."

The mummy, who is being referred to by Museum staff as 'Fenny Compton Man', has been transferred to Oxford University for further tests.

Arriving in England

All liners from America dock at Southampton, and there the passengers must pass through customs. Great Britain has strict gun control laws, and it is illegal to bring firearms into the country. Customs officials may or may not discover hidden guns.

A special train connects with the arrival of the liner, and runs non-stop to Waterloo station in London (this is known as the boat train). Tickets are sixteen shillings and five pence first class, or nine shillings and ten pence third class (the second class vanished from British railways with the final upgrading of the third class during the last quarter of the nineteenth century). The journey to Waterloo takes an hour and twenty minutes.

In 1923 Britain's many railway companies were amalgamated into four larger ones, a process known as grouping. Before grouping, the line from Southampton to Waterloo was part of the London and South Western Railway, subsequently the Southern Railway. For several years after 1923 however, the old name persists on signs, tickets, crockery, even carriages. Things were repainted or reprinted as required, not systematically.

Most long-distance British railway carriages are 'corridor coaches' in which a succession of sitting compartments are entered from a flanking passageway. However, there was a second type of coach commonly used on shorter journeys, divided into separate compartments with no communication between them.

The stock from Southampton to Waterloo is likely to be of this type. The L&SWR operated very few corridor coaches. There is a chain above each door called a *communication cord* which, if pulled, stops the train. This is intended for emergencies only. There is a five pound penalty for improper use. A few compartments are marked for ladies only.

sits with his feet on the desk reading about horse races. He jumps to his feet at the sight of potential clients, and shakes hands all round. His name is Edmund Able, and he is insufferable.

Able asks to see identification before revealing any information about the McClusky case. Once satisfied, he reports coldly that Raven is aboard the converted narrow boat *Omphale*, currently heading north on the Grand Junction Canal (in 1929, canal amalgamations make it the Grand Union Canal). He has just received a telephone report from a detective tailing him. Evidently the *Omphale* is to moor for the night outside the New Inn, near Long Buckby, Northamptonshire.

This is about as much help that Able is willing to give. He is still hoping that the agency can crack the case, and resents the presence of outsiders. He makes sneering comments about "foolish Americans," ostensibly referring to Aline McClusky, but his meaning is broader.

Long Buckby

Trains to Long Buckby go from Euston station. They are run by the London and North Western Railway, or, after the 1923 grouping, by the London Midland and Scottish Railway. The tickets are about the same price as the Southampton to Waterloo train, and the journey takes an hour and three quarters. The railway coach is comprised of separate compartments running the width of the train.

A horse-drawn station cab can be hired at Long Buckby, and the journey to the New Inn is about three miles. The narrow lane passes between small fields, divided by hawthorn hedges. Gentle green hills rise in the distance.

The New Inn is situated beside a lock on the Grand Junction Canal. It is a pleasant two-storied building of white stone, with a green roof. It was possibly new some time in the 19th century, but is no longer.

There are plenty of moored boats along the canal's edge. Most are working craft, each with a tarpaulin-covered hold forward and a ten-foot-long boatman's cabin in the stern. All are about seventy feet long, with seven-foot beams. A name is painted on each side, and include *Bar-rondale*, *Vulcan*, *Buffalo* and *Gadfly*. A Spot Hidden discerns the *Omphale*, Raven's boat. It differs from the other craft, as the cargo hold has been roofed over to provide additional living accommodation. Its solid black paint gives it a slightly sinister air.

The New Inn

The New Inn is a comfortable pub, serving home-cooked food and traditional ale. Shepherd's pie and steak-and-kidney pudding are featured on the menu. The public bar is warmed with an open fire, and men sit about drinking and engaging in gruff gossip. Many are working boatmen, who willingly spin canal ghost stories for the price of a pint of mild. Florrie Clarke is the bar maid, full of local gossip, and able to point out the mysterious Marcus Raven to interested parties.

Marcus Raven

Raven is sitting in a corner, nursing his drink and looking morose. He seems worried, and well he might be. He is an investigator. His incursions into the outré are not fueled by desire to protect against evil, nor for personal power. He craves the curious and the bizarre, nourishing his pride by everywhere seeking to be the first to experience something. He has long earned a modest living by telling about it. He is a Romantic trapped in four-square Georgian times, a tireless self-publicist, and one pathetically easy to flatter or to bore.

His investigations sometimes turn dangerous. When they do, Raven is content to let companions take the consequences, then lie to his own advantage. In tight situations he begs and whines contemptibly, but so far he has saved his skin.

However, he believes that he loves Aline, and the image of himself returning in triumph to that horrible place is so appealing that he cannot give it up. For a while, at least, he wants to do anything to get her back.

He declines to comment about Miss McClusky, politely observing that he has told the police all he knows. If they talk about the occult or about matters of the Cthulhu Mythos, he brightens and becomes very friendly, thinking that these fellows might even convince Thathmuor that they are acolytes—he had resigned himself to trying to palm off a collection of cowherds in exchange for Aline.

He chats amiably, and seems genuinely interested in the investigators' own achievements. But Raven's tone is dictatorial, and his language florid: he is accustomed to an audience, not to conversation among equals. After a decent interval, he offers the investigators places on the *Omphale*. He has room for all, and says he could use some help working the locks. His destination is Banbury, for a refit at Tooley's boatyard. On board they will be able to talk in private, he says, with a significant glance at the other end of the bar.



Marcus Raven

Two On The Tail

Two men in the pub are watching Raven, and he knows it. The first is Detective Sergeant Willcox, a beefy man from Scotland Yard. If asked about anything except the time or the weather, he gives a non-committal reply.

The other is Richard Coates, a detective from Lloyd's agency. He has blonde hair and bad teeth. If questioned, he claims to be a commercial traveler, selling fertilizer to farmers. "I travel in manure" is his way of putting it. Coates has been briefed by Able about the investigators, and eyes them with disdain.

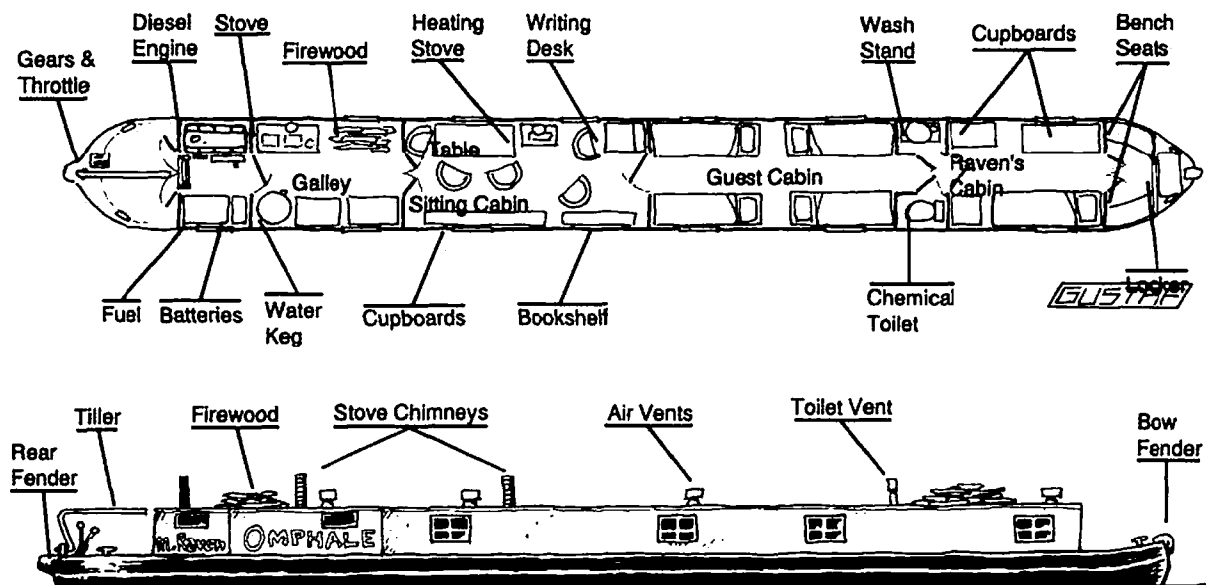
The Omphale

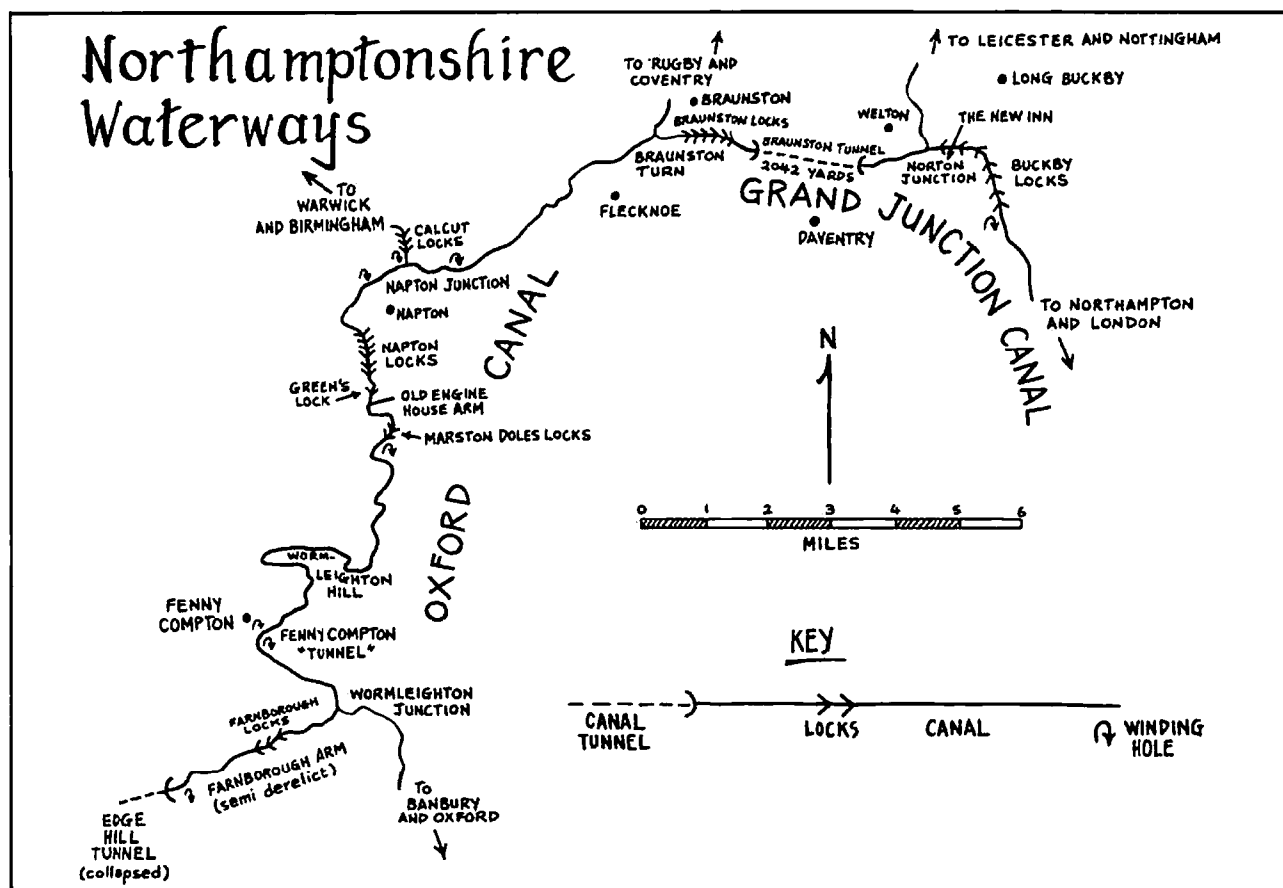
The *Omphale* is reasonably comfortable, but is dark and cluttered. By normal canal-boat standards, it has an extravagant amount of room. Its decor reflects the strange pursuits of its owner.

STERN: the diesel engine has simple controls. Raven can teach any interested investigator the basics of a canal boat in a few days, and thereafter each possesses Pilot Canal Boat at 20%. Investigators who already have some Pilot Boat skill may add 1D10 more points after the same amount of time. Raven generously allows everyone to join in the work.

GALLEY: the occultist is so concerned with big questions that he is able to do little more than open cans or

The Omphale (canal boat)





look helpless. He takes meals ashore. If an investigator knows how to cook, though, Raven will be happy to eat, praise the cook, and wheedle more. (He is also smugly helpless about doing laundry.)

SITTING CABIN: a low, cramped room decorated with mementoes of Raven's career. African masks stare down Indian idols, and a large oil study of Aleister Crowley gazes darkly across at a small watercolor by Miles Shipley (a young London painter of the weird) on the opposite wall. An exquisite *ouija* board, for a practice popular since the turn of the century, is inlaid in the small table. The ceiling is blackened by candle smoke.

A shelf of books offers interesting selections, including some of Aline's novels. Books by Jane Austen and the Brontë sisters rub shoulders with Madame Blavatsky, and the Golden Goblin edition of *Nameless Cults* is squeezed in beside *Bradshaw's Guide to the Canals and Navigable Rivers of England and Wales*, by Rudolph de Salis.

GUEST CABIN: here are four bunks without linens. A box tucked well under one contains a dozen sticks of dynamite, along with match fuses and blasting caps.

RAVEN'S CABIN: the window-glass in Raven's cabin is painted black out, and everything inside is black - linen, walls, floor, ceiling. Without a light a successful Spot Hidden is required to discern anything in the gloom.

The wardrobe contains Raven's clothes, predominantly black, as well as numerous garments for a woman (much too small for Raven, these were Aline's). An iridescent object the size and shape of a hen's egg is in a box on an upper shelf. Although it looks fragile, the thin shell will defeat a sledge hammer.

Another box contains a selection of amulets, phylacteries, a small stone inscribed with the Elder Sign, and the like. Also in the box is a mummified hand. Its black skin is shrivelled and drawn tight across its claw-like fingers. The nails are cracked and blue. An Occult roll reminds the investigator of the Hand of Glory, and its necromantic uses.

In a cupboard at the foot of the bed is an untitled and incomplete manuscript in Raven's hand. It sets down some of his experiences, and includes descriptions of seances, haunted houses, and exorcisms. Many assistants are mentioned in connection with these exploits, but without exception all drop out of sight or 'become ill' not long after involving themselves with Raven. One name is recognized on a Law roll as the victim of a spectacular and unsolved murder. A study of the manuscript yields 2% Cthulhu Mythos knowledge and costs 1D4 Sanity points.

The latter pages describe Aline, who Raven met at a society seance in London. The words suggest a genuine attraction, with only discreet references to her fabulous wealth. She joined him for a cruise aboard the *Omphale*.

The second-to-last page describes finding the mummy floating near Edge Hill Tunnel. There are two details that were not supplied to scientists or reporters. The mummy had a third hand, somebody else's, tangled in the bandages around its neck. Furthermore, the cadaver was not their only discovery. Also in the water was a peculiar egg-like sphere of unknown origin.

BOW: the bow has some hard bench seats. Raven stations an investigator here when navigating through tunnels. The bow-locker contains six windlasses, for opening canal locks. Two of these are marked with blobs of red paint, and do not fit any lock spindle along the canal.

Canal Journey

Raven aims to moor at Fenny Compton the following night. A distance of 21 miles and 15 locks, it should take nine and a half hours, with efficient working. Raven makes an early start and continues all day without stopping for meals. The investigators have the opportunity to search the *Omphale* while Raven is at the tiller.

The investigators can also question Raven, and vice versa. He has little to add about the floating mummy, save to observe that they could travel to Oxford to see it if they would like to. See *Slow Boat Papers #2* nearby.

Braunston Tunnel

The tunnel takes about 20 minutes to navigate. It was difficult to excavate. Among other problems, the workmen encountered quicksand. It's best not to fall overboard here. There is a kink, so that one can seldom see both ends. Water cascades from the roof in several places, especially below the two ventilation shafts. Immediately beneath each is a circle of illuminated water, gray against the black. Looking up from the bottom is like gazing up a very deep well shaft. There are several deep, dark niches in the walls, but no towpath. There is just enough room for two seven-foot-wide boats to pass.

Braunston Locks

The locks are wide, capable of taking two boats side by side. Engage the windlass on the spindle and turn. The pawl rattles on the ratchet. It's hard, slow-going work.

Braunston Turn

A busy intersection, with many moored boats. Raven stops at a toll house, as the *Omphale* leaves the Grand Junction Canal for the Oxford Canal.

Napton

The *Omphale* leaves the busy main line from London to Birmingham, entering the quiet reaches of the southern Oxford Canal. The windmill of Napton-on-the-hill dominates the landscape. The nine locks from Napton to Marston Doles are narrow, only seven feet wide. The *Omphale* fits snugly.

South Of Marston Doles

The old (completed in 1790) unimproved line demonstrates what is meant by a 'contour canal' as it twists around the natural shape of the land. Tall, overgrowing vegetation crowds both banks, and no human habitation is in sight. The *Omphale* seems to have passed into an unreal and uninhabited realm.

Wormleighton Hill

The canal makes an almost complete circuit of an unimpressive piece of higher ground. The twisting course of the canal is disorientating.

Fenny Compton

Raven moors for the night at Fenny Compton wharf, outside the George and Dragon inn. The investigators can sleep on the boat, or take rooms at the inn. Among the pub's customers are Willcox and Coates, who try to weasel information out of the investigators about their traveling companion.

Raven sleeps soundly until mid-morning. By midday they are underway again.

Fenny Compton 'tunnel'

Originally dug as a 1138-yard tunnel, the canal company purchased the land in 1838 and opened it up. Now it is a

Raven's Statement About Aline McClusky

Following our discovery of the cadaver, we spent some time combing the canal for further evidence. In pursuit of this we entered the Edge Hill Tunnel. As we learned, the tunnel is collapsed and closed. It was with some effort I reversed our vessel. However, when the boat cleared the entrance, I realized that Aline was no longer on board.

I plunged back into the tunnel's lightless maw, but could find no clues as to her passing. I notified the constabulary, and they have duly dived, plumbed, and trawled every inch of the infernal passage, without results. Predictably, their inane suspicions have fallen upon me, who bears the blame for exposing her to danger. I have no motive in removing from this world such a delightful creature, and desire nothing greater than her safe return.

Would you care to see the tunnel? I would be much obliged. Perhaps your keen and experienced eyes can observe clues too subtle for our oafish rural police.

long, deep cut, gloomy and unsettling despite being open to the sky.

Wormleighton Junction

At this junction Raven asks if the investigators would prefer to see the Edge Hill Tunnel, continue to Banbury as planned, or travel on to Oxford to view the cadaver. If they choose the tunnel, as he hopes, he turns down the Farnborough Arm.

A Detour To Oxford

If the investigators choose to inspect the mummy, Raven takes them downstream to the famous university town. Once there, Archaeology rolls to establish credentials, or powerful persuasion from Marcus Raven, whose fame the investigators begin to understand mainly comes from manipulating people and taking credit for their ideas or accomplishments. A success bypasses the academic authorities and allows them to inspect the jealously-guarded Fenny Compton Man. Oxford men stand by to see that nothing is disturbed.

The mummy is incredibly ancient, and it seems Egyptian. However, the bandages are inscribed in a strange script unknown along the Nile, or anywhere else on earth. The body is well-preserved, and all internal organs are still in place. The bandages about the corpse's neck are in disarray, as if some small animal had been worrying at its neck. A Spot Hidden roll finds the damaged area to equal the span of a human hand.

Astonishingly, all of the mummy's joints are flexible, and fresh abrasions on each joint imply that the mummy has been recently manipulated. This observation has led some Cambridge scientists to archly impute that the body may be a hoax. Investigators who come to suspect that the mummy was recently walking around lose 0/1 Sanity point.

To The Banbury Yards

If the investigators choose to go on as agreed to the yards in Banbury, they will have fulfilled their obligation to the elder McClusky, and in fact resolved for him Raven's motives, as the grieving father desired. But they do not thereby learn what truly happened to Aline.

A few days later, two more liche corpses are found afloat in the Farnborough Arm as the experiments continue, and, amid the general consternation that these new finds provoke, this time it is Raven who seeks out the investigators and bares his soul to them, telling all he knows, as per the succeeding section, *The Other World*.

Now the investigators can go with him as full partners, and having made every preparation for the battle to come. Undeceived, they have a good chance to make short work of Thathmuor, as ensuing play may show.



The fair fields of old England.

Alas, prepared or not, Aline is still dead, and still achieves the same doom.

Edge Hill Tunnel

However, if they go with Raven up Farnborough Arm, the cad still tries to have it both ways, and willingly risks their lives and souls to keep his high opinion of himself intact.

The Farnborough arm is semi-derelict, and leads to the collapsed and disused Edge Hill Tunnel. Progress is slow. The boat runs aground repeatedly and must be poled off. Headway averages no more than a mile an hour. The three Farnborough locks are very stiff, and their gates rotten. Operating each takes about half an hour. The four miles and three locks consume at least five and a half hours.

Edge Hill Tunnel is dark and narrow, and the black opening smells of mud and rot. The roof has collapsed about a hundred yards into the tunnel. Raven switches on the head lamp, and pilots the boat in. He travels slowly, inviting the investigators to inspect the tunnel walls. Spot Hidden rolls detect no clues.



The foul fields of an older land

Thirty yards before the tunnel ends in rubble, the temporal vortex yawns, invisible and limitless. At the moment of passage, the investigators feel sick and dizzy, and then even more sick as a noxious stench reaches them (from the shattered egg).

Miraculously, meanwhile, the blockage ahead seems to have cleared. Dim light can be seen. Raven steers the boat forwards.

Another World

The land into which they went lay drear and leprous and ashen below the huge, ember-coloured sun. — Clark Ashton Smith.

EMERGING from the tunnel, the *Omphale* is in a deep cut heading south. Overhead, stars glow brightly, much brighter than the investigators have ever seen before, in spite of the fact that it was broad daylight when the boat entered Edge Hill Tunnel. This

juxtaposition costs each investigator 0/1D4 Sanity points.

A successful Astronomy roll recognizes no familiar constellation or formation—all the brilliant thousands of stars are different and unknown. Nor can Venus, Mars, Jupiter, or Saturn be seen. Were they to stay and wait the hours for the moon to rise, it rises nacreous and swollen, a dim bulk twice as large as before, and as bone white as vertebrae. See the *Otherworld Waterways* map on page 80.

The *Omphale* continues south, past a junction to the east: this second deep cut leads to a second tunnel. Here Raven halts for a moment, to aim a flashlight up the branch canal. He says he thought he saw something, if asked.

Resuming their way, ahead are two locks of bizarre design. The metal is rusted and barbed. The windlasses marked with red paint are needed to turn them, and the gears squeal with age.

At the second lock, rising over the edge of the cut, the sun is visible for the first time, low in the east. It is larger here, and of a duller embering orange, a dim color only dimly illuminating. The presumption that this is our dying sun costs 1/1D6 Sanity points.

Thorn bushes line the banks. The large, stiletto-like thorns are loose and, if touched, they embed themselves in flesh.

A boat cruises slowly north along the stagnant canal, loaded with ore. The hull is visibly rotting. The craft is drawn by an unidentifiable skeletal creature. A Natural History identifies it as a composite formed from a mixture of bones. The steersman is a liche. It does not acknowledge the *Omphale's* presence, drifting silently past.

Flat fields stretch away to either side of the canal, and more liches till the soil. The crops are gray and look scarcely more wholesome than the liches. Surveying Thathmuor's boat, and the tillers of his soil costs 0/1D4 Sanity points.

Raven admits that they've passed into the distant future. He explains all that he knows of the vortex and the

Stowaways

If the keeper wishes, that morning Willcox and Coates have joined forces and crept aboard to try to learn what they can. They have hidden themselves in the rudder locker at the stern of the *Omphale*. They quickly decide that this was a mistake, and spend a succession of miserable hours before the investigators and Raven go ashore at Thathmuor's tower. Whether they reveal themselves then depends on the keeper's needs, as does what they eventually report to their bosses.

eggs. He apologizes for misinforming the investigators, but is desperate for their help in rescuing Aline from a sorcerer of this diseased land. Lacking another egg, they cannot return, and are thus forced to help him, though it will be understandable if they resolve to throw him overboard once their way home is clear.

Thathmuor's Tower

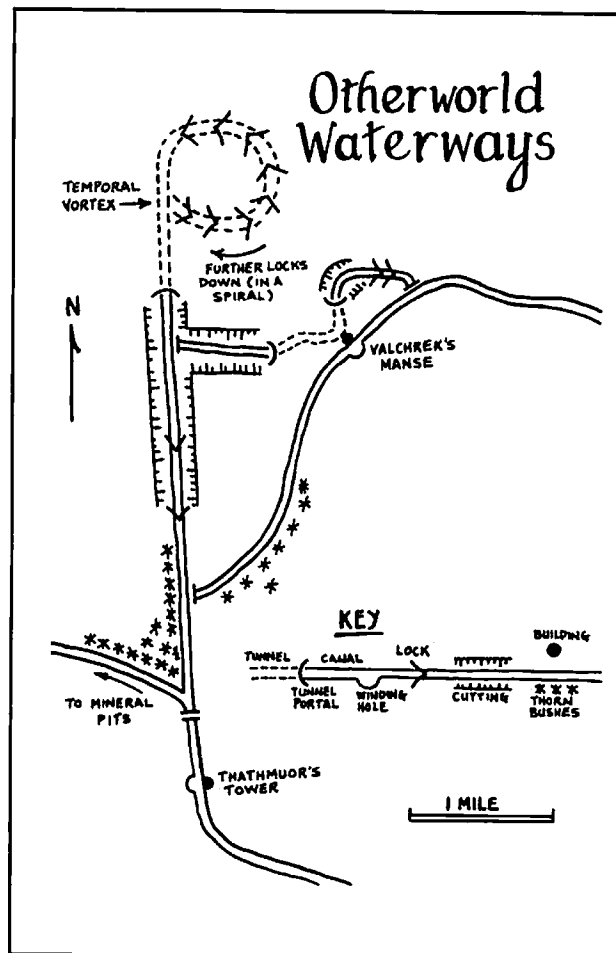
Set back from the canal, a bloated tower looms above the moribund fields. Raven points to this. There Aline is being held. He issues the investigators with amulets from his box, for protection against the walking dead. Raven carries the box when they disembark.

The dwelling is a tumor in stone, an obscene structure of basalt and granite. Windows are rare and narrow, allowing minimum light to seep into the stagnant darkness within. There is one door, a crooked portal that bulges slightly outward. It is locked, and no amount of Locksmithing or force can shift it. Strange magics hold it in place. The party must knock for entrance.

A servant liche swings the door open, and wordlessly bids the visitors to follow. The ground floor of the tower consists of perfumed chambers laden with the treasures of a thousand tombs. Guttering flames flicker in tall silver braziers, illuminating blackened piles of gold, antique statuary, and urns filled with ornate grave jewelry. Apart from liches, the tower has three occupants.

Thathmuor

The richly-clothed necromancer looks scarcely less shrivelled than the mummies. He gives the impression of



unnaturally great age. His skin is like parchment, cracked and brittle. His voice rasps like the wind blowing sand across the tomb. His eyes are yellow, and seething with infernal knowledge.

Tsai

A squat creature, about four feet high and almost as broad. At first glance, Tsai seems to be a hairless anthropoid ape. The mottled skin, however, is reminiscent of snake hide, and there is also something batrachian about the creature's movement and attitude. Tsai serves primarily as Thathmuor's cook.

Capture

Thathmuor has observed the approach of the Omphale, and has laid an ambush. Amid the wealth and shadows lurk a dozen liches. More shuffle around in full view, seemingly engaged in domestic tasks. In the center of his web Thathmuor sits, mounted on a dark throne of jade and yellowed ivory, with Tsai at his side.

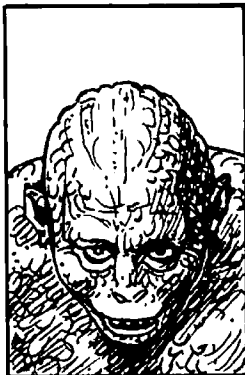


Thathmuor

Reanimated Liches

These differ from other zombies in at least three important respects:

- They retain half of their POW at the time of their death. This leaves them with vague memories of life, and neglectful necromancers can sometimes be subject to a liche's revolt. If they revolt, they first seek revenge upon the necromancer and then return to their tombs to sleep undisturbed. Reanimated liches are capable of feeling emotions, albeit only dimly.
- They do not, necessarily, have flesh on their bones. Some have been dead a long time, and are either skeletal or mummies.
- Even if torn to pieces, the separate parts continue in a reanimated state. Heads bounce, hands walk on their fingers, and arms and legs wriggle like snakes. Fire or high explosives are best for destroying reanimated liches. Gunfire merely blows them into several pieces, all imbued with unnatural life. Witnessing this process costs 0/1D4 SAN.



"Are these your acolytes?" he asks Raven. "Yes," the Englishman replies, "As agreed. I have come for Aline." "Then you shall have her," Thathmuor says with a smile, and the woman Aline steps forward in the gloom. Eyes naturally turn to see her. On this signal, the liches swarm forward to seize the investigators.

With many liches at his command, and the Subdue Person spell, Thathmuor should have little trouble capturing un-

prepared enemies. Of Raven's magical amulets, only the mummified hand has an effect. It comes to life, and scuttles into a crack in the wall.

If Thathmuor is actually killed, the liches cease their attack, and shamble away in search of their longed-for graves. The investigators can search the tower for the vortex egg necessary to secure their return, and depart safely. If instead they are captured, proceed as below.

The Seven Cellars

Escorted by liches, the captives are taken downstairs. Below ground level, the floor size continues to increase for the first three cellars. These are Thathmuor's laboratories. The first is for magical research, and contains books, sigils, and crumbling maps.

The second is for works alchemical, and contains tables laden with glass vials and stoppered bottles, all containing dubious ingredients or noxious ointments.

The third is for necromancy, and contains frightful abominations, moaning half-alive things cobbled together from dissected cadavers. Disembodied jaws jabber and flap, pinwheels of legs and feet wobble slowly in circles, and swarms of fingers wriggle like piles of maggots. Sanity loss for this cellar is 0/1D4 Sanity points. One corner contains a fetid slag-heap of semi-dissolved liches, and in a hanging brazier a Spot Hidden can discern three of the temporal vortex eggs. If the investigators don't notice them, perhaps Raven can, and use them as an investigatorial bribe with which to return to the 20th century.

The fourth cellar is empty, and smaller in size, as are cellars five and six. The seventh is little more than a black lightless vault, and here the captives are imprisoned behind an iron door. Thathmuor taunts them as it clangs shut. "Sit in the dark, fools, while I plan how best to use your raised cadavers to destroy Valchrek, my enemy. Perhaps I shall send your concubine with a light, so that you may admire her." His footsteps echo away.

In the dark, accusations no doubt ring. Raven tells the investigators the full story. Would they have done otherwise? All answer affirmatively. But Raven boasts that he has made special arrangements.

Distant Magic

Though the investigators may come to conclude that they are in the far future of earth, that conclusion is not necessary, nor perhaps true. The other world of wizards may be in another continuum altogether, and the keeper need not feel that this other place is to be rationalized, justified, or ever returned to.

In consequence, magic in this place can work as the keeper wishes. Perhaps Mythos spells do not work, or perhaps they work only after a successful activation roll each time, or perhaps they are unaffected.

Conversely, the new spells of Thathmuor should not be explained, except to say that the investigators have never encountered their like. Those spells are included next to Thathmuor's statistics. If that worthy drops out of the picture, then Valchrek can use them.

Some time later Aline brings the prisoners a flaming lamp and extra lamp oil. She moves slowly, without life or color. As she draws near, all gasp. Aline has been murdered and then reanimated magically. The atoms of her body are wasting away. She is visibly deteriorating, but is still recognizable. Her clothes are rotting.

Seeing her costs Raven 1/1D6 Sanity points, but charge the investigators less or none at all—they've already seen liches, after all, and have little reason to like Raven.



The Late Aline

Her speech is recognizable but unnervingly distorted, and she begs for genuine death. Thathmuor's control over Aline is imperfect, but sufficient to prevent her killing herself. She pours the oil over herself, and looks imploringly at Raven.

A brave man for once, Raven at last touches the lamp to her, granting her request. But witnessing her screaming, writhing death undoes him. "Nevermore," he says, inane to the last, and slumps to the floor.

Unless the keeper needs him, he takes no further action on his own or on anyone else's behalf, and must be carried from the building. The cellar room is now illuminated by brightly-burning Aline. She has left the cellar door open wide.

Escape

The investigators can creep upstairs and secure a vortex egg or two from the necromantic cellar. Then, in the first cellar, a successful Listen roll hears scuffling in the chambers above.

New Spells

Sanity point losses for following are not given, since only the two wizards know them.

Reanimate Liche

This spell restores the semblance of life to the remains of any dead creature. The cost is 1 magic point.

Indent Liche

This spell compels the reanimated liche to obey the necromancer's commands. For each point of POW above 10 the liche possessed in life, there is a 1% cumulative chance that the spell is not completely successful. This cost is 1 magic point.

Liquefy Liche Essence

This spell distills the magical essence of a reanimated liche into a magical egg. The liche is dispelled in the process, and returns to death, never to be raised again. Each egg can store up to 999 magic points in this fashion.

Temporal Vortex

This long and complicated ritual creates a time gate by which the necromancer can pass through to another period of history. Thousands of magic points and hundreds of POW must be invested in the process.

Petrify Nether Limbs

This requires a living subject, and the necromancer must overcome the victim's magic points on the resistance table. The effect is to turn the victim's legs into immobile stone. The remainder of the victim's body continues in its normal condition. Cost is 1 POW and 1D10 magic points. Sanity loss to the victim is 1/1D8.

Human Shrub

This requires a living subject, and the necromancer must overcome the victim's magic points on the resistance table. The victim is transformed into a plant/human hybrid. While retaining consciousness, the subject literally takes root. Cost is 1 POW and 1D10 magic points. Sanity loss to the victim is 1/1D8.

Ineffable Comprehension

This enchantment allows speech to be understood without benefit of a common language. This costs 1 magic point per hour of conversation.

Scrying Mirror

This enchantment transforms a silver mirror into a magical window. 2 points of POW must be invested in creating the mirror, plus 1 magic point for each minute of use. The entranced necromancer, staring into the mirror, is able to see events distant in either time or space.

Subdue Person

The necromancer makes a circular motion with his hand, and expends a magic point. The target person, whatever his or her former intention, is compelled to sit down and be quiet for 1D10 rounds. Within the necromancer's own demesne the spell is always successful. Elsewhere, the necromancer must overcome the target's magic points with his own on the resistance table.

On the ground floor, the severed hand has, as prearranged by Raven, scuttled up the door frame like a spider and turned the key in the lock. A moment later, a silent horde of Valchrek's liches enter, under compulsion to seize Thathmuor. Liche battles liche, ripping each other to pieces. A grim, silent battle has begun, a silence broken only by Thathmuor's cackles, as fortunes seem to favor or betray him. A ghastly scene ensues, as the pieces continue fighting. The floor is alive with writhing body parts.

Reaching the door involves elbowing a way through the fighting liches, who ignore investigators in their efforts to destroy each other. Thathmuor screeches with rage to see that the prisoners are loose, but is too busy acting against Valchrek's assault to do much about them.

Outside, the Omphale is undisturbed. An investigator must be steersman now, as Raven is unfit for the task. The boat must be turned around, as the rudder won't work when going astern, but even a raft made from its remains will carry them back to the vortex.

The Return Journey

The branch canal to the mineral pits is crowded with boat-loads of liche miners returning to defend Thathmuor's tower. The upper branch to Valchrek's manse brings new boat-loads of attacking liches. Each side attacks only the other, however, and ignore the investigators. The two locks are empty of traffic.

But the branch canal to Valchrek's manse holds a boat of liches awaiting the investigators. Valchrek would see no reason not to double-cross Raven and continue Thathmuor's experiments. There are a dozen walking dead on board, and they are tireless in their pursuit, but Valchrek will not have anticipated fighters as keen as the investigators. The dynamite under the Omphale's bunk could be useful, and the Omphale is the faster craft.

The liches' orders are to take any living person alive. Valchrek desires subjects for his experiments. Captured investigators are removed to Valchrek's manse, where he gleefully turns them into sentient stone or living trees.

The Tunnel

The investigators' survival is entirely dependent on whether they remember to take a temporal vortex egg from Thathmuor's tower. Without one, they are doomed.

Fearful Passage

Entering the tunnel without an egg brings the investigators to a spiral of thirty-seven descending locks. Locks 1-12 take them past liches digging minerals from the tunnel walls. After lock 12 there is a winding hole. Locks 13-24 reveal no liches, but here are flopping and splashing monstrosities, spawn of Abthoth. There is a second winding hole after lock 24. Locks 25-36 are infested by more of the spawn. At lock 36, Abthoth itself is encountered. This time, there is no winding hole—only Abthoth to one side, and lock 37 ahead.

Lock 37 leads to an underground river traveling so swiftly that the *Omphale's* motor is helpless. The current draws the boat on for three miles before sending it down a mile-deep waterfall, forever out of the ken of humans.

Safe Passage

If they have an egg, the investigators pass through the temporal vortex, feeling sick and dizzy, as before. There is the same stench. The *Omphale* emerges from Edge Hill Tunnel, back in England once more. The investigators regain 1D6 sanity points each for returning to their time, and a further 1D3 for peace of mind if they blow up the tunnel, sealing the temporal vortex forever.

The case is closed, but Aline is still missing. What do the investigators tell the police, the detectives, and Harold J. McClusky? Surely not the truth. There are institutions for people who babble about temporal vortexes, necromancers and reanimated corpses.

Marcus Raven is bound for such an institution. His eyes are large and dark, and *Nevermore*—or *Aline*, if the keeper prefers, is the only word he speaks. The investigators may accuse him of Aline's death while he is helpless to defend the charge, thus satisfying the minions of justice. Once confined to an asylum, his fate is in the hands of the keeper. Does he recover? Does he die there? Or perhaps he vanishes one thunder-filled night, to reappear in later scenarios, to plague the investigators anew.

Statistics

DETECTIVE SERGEANT WILLCOX, Age 36, Scotland Yard Man

STR 16 CON 16 SIZ 14 INT 11 POW 10
DEX 12 APP 10 EDU 14 SAN 50 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Truncheon 51%, damage 1D6 +db

Skills: Drive Automobile 49%, Law 83%, Listen 47%, Psychology 70%, Spot Hidden 56%, Track 62%.

RICHARD COATES, Age 26, Private Detective

STR 15 CON 17 SIZ 13 INT 12 POW 11
DEX 14 APP 9 EDU 10 SAN 55 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 56%, damage 1D3 +db

Skills: Climb 61%, Camouflage 38%, Drive Automobile 60%, Hide 55%, Listen 72%, Locksmith 44%, Photography 40%, Sneak 33%, Spot Hidden 35%.

MARCUS RAVEN, Age 32, Cthulhu Investigator

STR 12 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 17 POW 18
DEX 16 APP 17 EDU 15 SAN 21 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Anthropology 71%, Archaeology 65%, Astronomy 63%, Pilot Boat 73%, Climb 63%, Cthulhu Mythos 34%, Dodge 48%,

Dreaming 67%, Dream Lore 58%, Hide 59%, Jump 50%, Latin 70%, Library Use 71%, Occult 94%, Sneak 65%.

Spells: Elder Sign, Shrivelling, Voorish Sign.

THE REANIMATED HAND

STR 14 CON 17 SIZ 1 POW 4
DEX 13 HP 9

Weapons: Claw 60%, damage 1D4

THATHMUOR, Age ancient, Necromancer

STR 11 CON 23 SIZ 13 INT 18 POW 26
DEX 14 APP 7 EDU 50 SAN 0 HP 18

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Alchemy 63%, Listen 69%, Necromancy 98%, Occult 99%, Spot Hidden 73%.

Spells: Indent Liche, Ineffable Comprehension, Liquefy Liche Essence, Reanimate Liche, Scrying Mirror, Subdue Person, Temporal Vortex.

TSAL, Age unguessable, Thathmuor's home help

STR 36 CON 30 SIZ 20 INT 9 POW 8
DEX 12 APP 4 EDU 0 SAN 10 HP 25

Damage Bonus: +2D6

Weapons: Knife 85%, damage 1D6 +db

Skills: Bake vegetable sludge and canal snail pie 95%, Shuffle Aimlessly 46%, Spot Hidden 26%.

ALINE MCCLUSKY, Age 21, Reanimated Liche

STR 10 CON 4 SIZ 10 INT 8 POW 16
DEX 14 APP 6 EDU 13 SAN 0 HP 7

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: Claw 20%, damage 1D4

Skills: Obey Necromancer 90%, Remember Life 40%.

VALCHREK, Age ancient, Necromancer

STR 13 CON 24 SIZ 12 INT 17 POW 26
DEX 15 APP 8 EDU 48 SAN 0 HP 18

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Hide 76%, Necromancy 99%, Occult 91%, Persuade 84%.

Spells: Human Shrub, Indent Liche, Ineffable Comprehension, Petrify Nether Limbs, Reanimate Liche, Scrying Mirror, Subdue Person.

REANIMATED LICHES, A Silent Dozen

	one	two	three	four
STR	12	11	12	12
CON	18	15	17	16
SIZ	14	15	13	16
POW	6	8	7	9
DEX	10	9	11	8
HP*	16	15	15	16
	five	six	seven	eight
STR	11	13	12	13
CON	16	15	14	18
SIZ	14	15	16	12
POW	7	6	5	8
DEX	12	9	10	10
HP*	15	15	15	15

statistics continued next page

REANIMATED LICHES, continued

	nine	ten	eleven	twelve
STR	14	12	15	13
CON	16	16	14	13
SIZ	14	16	13	14
POW	7	7	5	6
DEX	11	8	10	11
HP*	15	16	14	14

* If reduced to zero hit points, a liche is reduced to separate re-animated body parts. See below.

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Bone Club 70%, damage 1D6 +db

Claw 60%, damage 1D4 +db

Skills: Dream of Life 1%, Long for Death 50%, Obey Necromancer 99%.

SAMPLE PARTS

HAND

STR 10 CON 12 SIZ 1 DEX 13 HP 7

Weapon: Claw 35%, damage 1D4

ARM

STR 10 CON 12 SIZ 2 DEX 10 HP 7

Weapon: Strangle 30%, damage 1D4 per round

LEG

STR 12 CON 12 SIZ 3 DEX 9 HP 8

Weapon: Kick 35%, damage 1D6

TORSO

STR 4 CON 12 SIZ 6 DEX 3 HP 9

Weapon: Bump 25%, damage DEX x5 or fall

HEAD

STR 5 CON 12 SIZ 2 DEX 5 HP 7

Weapon: Bite 45%, damage 1D3

Armored Angels

*The Investigators bounce across the Cradle of Civilization, to rescue
valiant colleagues by wielding the latest in military arms.*

EVERY investigator prays for safety from the terrible onslaught of slaving monsters. What could be more comforting than riding in an armored car? With a turret-mounted Vickers machine gun, a powerful Rolls-Royce engine, and sheets of protective steel all around—surely any hideous assault can be survived.

Every player blessed with an ingenious keeper perceives that the margin between victory and defeat is nar-

row and perilous. The deduction that a few more guns or better armor could make their task easier and more certain is an irresistible one, understandable even if absolutely vain.

If chosen as an initial scenario for beginning players, "Armored Angels" may give an inaccurate impression of the intent of *Call of Cthulhu*, but it is also an unusually accessible adventure, dividing crisply between some modest investigation, and the deployment of vehicles and guns. The keeper must gauge his or her preferences against that prospect.

This scenario provides experienced players with an opportunity to do something some investigators have dreamt about: going crazy with a machine-gun and letting the 'Outer Ones' have a raw taste of the 20th century. The experience probably cures the survivors of gung-ho bravado once and for all.

The most historically accurate year for this scenario is 1925. No one will notice the changes in minor details needed to present it in any year during the 1920s.

Later on, a number of tables and rules relating to the use and damage of the armored cars is offered, a sort of game module created for this adventure. Such rules have no necessary application to the *Cthulhu* rules nor to any other scenario, or rules therein. If you like such material, use it, or modify it to your taste.

The Letter

Dear Sirs,

I understand from innominate sources that you are veteran savants concerning a certain Obscure Mythos, with special reference to the 'Old Ones' and 'Outer Gods'. I, and indeed all of mankind, urgently require your expertise and assistance on an archaeological matter of great importance in Iraq.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. Lawrence Powell

The Narrative

WE BEGIN with a knock at the door. It is an unexpected visitor, an officer of the RAF (Royal Air Force). He is resplendent in pressed uniform and spit-polished shoes. He produces a letter from a dispatch case locked to his wrist. It is addressed to the investigators. See Armored Angels Paper #1 nearby.

If the investigators can be presumed to be in Britain, the officer, Flight Lieutenant Gilbert Kingsley, asks the investigators if they could please be ready in an hour as a transport version of the Vickers Vimy bomber is waiting at the nearest local airfield. Kingsley adds that the British government will reward their services handsomely.

If the investigators are in the United States, he also presents first-class tickets aboard the Mauretania, which sets sail for England as soon as the investigators reach her in New York. If in Europe, then the transport plane awaits them at some local airport—and so on, around the world: wherever the investigators start from, the keeper conveys to the players that His Majesty's government believes that getting them to Iraq is of great consequence.

Primary Archaeological Digs In Iraq, 1920s

<i>modern (ancient) name of site</i>	<i>date of excavations</i>	<i>nationality of archaeologists</i>
Jemdet Nasr (Kid Nun)	1925-1926, 1928	British, U.S.
Niffer (Nippur)	1923-1933	British, U.S.
Tell Obeld (Tell Obeld)	1919-1924	British
Tell Maqajir (Ur)	1922-1934	British, U.S.
Jorgan Tepe (Nuzu)	1927-1931	British

Getting There From Britain

The most direct and desirable way of traveling to Iraq is by taking the RAF transport plane. The fighting version of this twin-engine biplane was designed to reach Berlin with a load of bombs and return, so its one-way range is some 1800 miles. Its airspeed is about a hundred miles an hour—long-distance flights are long indeed.

Keepers need only to work out where the plane lands to refuel. One likely progression, considering politics in the 1920s, is London—Marseille—Malta—Alexandria—Haifa—Kirkuk, putting most legs of the flight at conservative intervals. The journey ends at the RAF aerodrome at Kirkuk, Iraq.

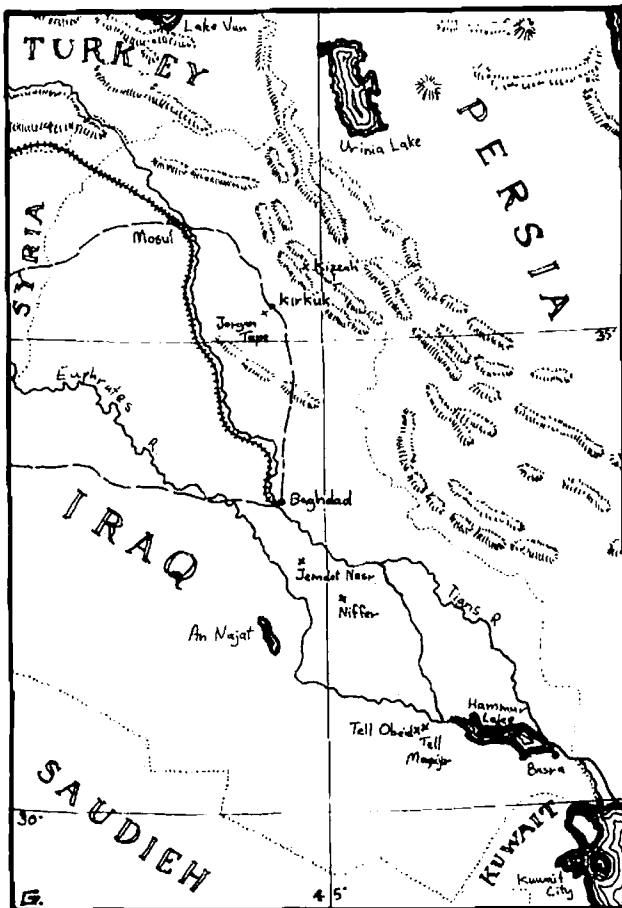
Alternately, investigators might take the Simplon-Orient Express across Europe to Istanbul, the Baghdad railway to Mosul, and then car or truck on from Mosul. For direct ocean passage, one would disembark at Haifa, from where one would either fly or take passage by train to Mosul, or disembark at Basra or Kuwait in the south, and enplane north to Kirkuk.

Iraq In The 1920s

In November 1914, British troops invaded the south-eastern portion of the Ottoman Empire around what is today Kuwait, and by the end of the Great War controlled most of the land that later became Iraq. At the Treaty of San Remo (25 April 1920), the state of Iraq was created from the provinces of Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul, and the League of Nations awarded Britain the mandate for this newly-created territory.

The British placed King Faysal (son of Sharif Husayn of Mecca) as their puppet ruler of a hypothetically democratic government. In practice, British representatives told Faysal's government what to do, and ultimate authority rested with the British high commissioner and the theater commander of the RAF.

From 1922 to 1929, the 30th RAF Squadron and the K1 Stores Depot was situated in the flat land a few miles north of Kirkuk, Iraq. The squadron's planes consist of SE5a fighters, DH9a bombers, and R.E.8 reconnaissance aircraft.



Even in the 1920s the main interest in Iraq was oil. In 1925 the concession was given to an Anglo-Franco-American consortium (the Iraq Petroleum Company) to exploit the country's oil fields.

During this period of British domination, many archaeological sites were discovered, surveyed, and excavated by Englishmen. A summary of the sites studied appears nearby.

Today hundreds of important sites remain no more than notes on maps, and at least one important capital in the north has yet even to be found. The crossroads of the Middle East, Iraq has been marched over, fought for, ravaged, and rebuilt for at least 5000 years.



Sqn. Cmdr. A. G. Cabell

Kirkuk

IT IS AFTERNOON when the Vickers Vimy starts its landing approach at Kirkuk, Iraq. Through small port-hole-like windows the investigators observe the dusty airstrip. Around it is a collection of khaki sheds, huts, and tents, liberally seeded with sandbags, piles of stores, and barbed wire. The plane bumps and touches down. A small group of air force personnel stroll out to greet it.

The desert air may be a relief after the cramped and chilly flight. At least the investigators can stretch.

They make introductions as best as their tired minds allow. Squadron Leader A.G. Cabell greets them curtly, and leads them to the officers' mess. If asked about Professor Powell at this stage, Cabell simply states "He is not here at present."

Introductions

When all are comfortably seated in Cabell's lounge with drinks in hand (Americans will be dismayed at the lack of ice), the commander makes small talk, asking investigators about their flight, their comfort, the recent news from their place of origin, and so on.

When the investigators again bring up Powell and his letter, Cabell has not much to say, except that Powell's party was due to return from the dig site several days ago, and have not appeared. Cabell has dispatched a plane to survey their route, a distance of about a hundred miles, and to circle the camp. Until it returns, he requests that the investigators remain at Kirkuk. Certainly they'll want

to bathe, freshen up, and enjoy a good meal. The plane will be back before sundown.

If prodded, Cabell will summarize the missing group. It includes Professor Powell, Dr. Kenneth Chesterton, Edith Rose Alexander, Sergeant Potts and a rifle squad, and ten Iraqi foremen.

Cabell does not say so, but he fears that guerillas may have slaughtered everyone, a headline-making disaster and a problem of magnitude for occupation forces.

Reconnaissance Report

Later that afternoon, a plane lands. Half an hour later, Cabell summons the investigators to conduct their own interview of the pilots. Two young airmen are shown into the room and introduced to the investigators. Both look shaken. They have this information to report:

The flight was cloudless, and the visibility excellent. As instructed, they followed an ancient track northwest into the mountains, looking for the Powell party, or evidence of them, such as burned vehicles. They kept a relative height of about a thousand feet, dipping down occasionally to inspect something. Nothing unusual was seen. As an aside, one pilot comments on how treeless the terrain is—"Makes it easy to spot the Wogs, you know." Approaching the digging site, they descended to about 500 feet, and knew at once that something was wrong. A peculiar foul odor, rich and dank, assailed their nostrils.

Above the noise of the R.E.8's engine could be heard some strange noises, like loose canvas flapping in the wind. There was also a buzzing hum which the airmen first mistook for a distant aircraft engine.

As they flew over the digging site, they saw a seething mass of plant-like matter growing from the ruins.

They were equipped with an aerial camera, but before they could photograph the site they were rammed by an object, "like a gigantic fly," moving slowly in the opposite direction. The thing seemed to recover as the pilot banked the plane away. The observer fired a burst from the rear machine gun, but no effect could be discerned.

Almost immediately after they lost sight of the flying thing, tracer fire was seen coming up from points close to the site, so they climbed to 3000 feet. From that height, they took four reconnaissance photos, then headed home.

Cabell notes that the plates are being developed. He allows the investigators to ask whatever questions they wish. If they conduct the interviews soberly and intelligently, Cabell decides to give them his support. If the investigators act foolishly, then he waits for instructions from Baghdad. Since those instructions will be to cooperate fully, only a day of time at most separates the reconnaissance report from the next actions.

Evidence & Opinion

Once Sqn. Cmdr. Cabell has given them his support, matters proceed quickly. If he delays to wait for Baghdad, the investigators may gather information in the meantime.

Cabell notifies his commander of the situation, and begins to assemble an armed patrol strong enough to reach Kizzah and return.

What Cabell Knows

Powell is brilliant and eccentric, a tall, energetic man capable of great enthusiasm and great despondency. He and Cabell were not friendly, but they got along.

Powell arrived late in 1923 after an ancient site was noticed in the mountains northeast of Kirkuk. He had been working at Tel Obeid and Niffer since 1920.

Powell convinced the authorities that his archaeological research at this site was of "immense importance to Britain and mankind," that it would "change the very way man thinks," and "blow open the boundaries of scientific knowledge as we know it." The archaeologist had excellent connections in London, and bemused authorities in Iraq found themselves locating and flying in oddballs (Cabell does not put his opinion so baldly, since the investigators are also such people) from distant lands, at Powell's request. Whatever Powell has discovered, it has obviously impressed the government, or at least certain people in it.

Powell is moody, often introverted, and an obsessive worker. He never joined the officers for a drink in the mess but could be heard in his billet at Kirkuk, drunkenly singing in strange monotonous languages.

He made many odd requests. First it was herbs, incense, and live animals to be sent to Kizzah, then half-a-dozen largish trees, complete with root systems ("That was a job, I can tell you"). Most recently Powell imported rare ancient artifacts from the British Museum ("Quite frankly, everybody had expected the relics to be travelling in the opposite direction!").

Cabell has no idea why Powell arranged for the investigators to come here. Perhaps there is evidence in Powell's hut which will explain things, Cabell offers.

Powell's Hut

If the investigators take him up on it, Cabell grants the investigators unofficial permission to inspect Powell's room. The hut is set away from the airfield, amongst the officers barracks at the K1 Stores Depot. It is a single-room cabin of flimsy construction. The door is locked, but Cabell has a spare key. Nothing can be seen through the small window in the east wall, as the curtain is tightly drawn.

Inside, the hut is unkempt. Powell forbade orderlies or servants to enter or to straighten up. The bed is unmade, and there are piles of dirty clothes on the floor. A cluttered desk fills most of the available space. There is a trunk under the bed containing a few personal items, including soap, moustache wax, and Powell's passport and photo. Ink and pens, blotting paper, sheaves of notes and calculations, and half-a-dozen well-used books compete for space on the desk top.

The Books

The following volumes are scattered among the library.

- *The History of Architecture: Vol. I, Earliest Times-2000 BC.* vol. 1 of the series. Edited by Dr. Hatherley. A general reference.
- *Geology*, by Archibald Geikie. A standard university textbook.
- *Stela of the Vultures, and Other Historical Documents of Sumer*, edited by G. Ruberto. A rather dry translation and interpretation of mundane and heroic events in ancient Sumer.
- *Divine Myths of Mesopotamia*, edited by H. Warnecke. Portrays the lives and events of the gods and priesthood of Mesopotamia. These include Enlil, Anu, Enki, Utu the Sun-God, Nanna the Goddess of the Moon, Innin (Istar) the Goddess of Love, Ningirsu, Tammuz the God of the Underworld, and other more mysterious dark cults.
- *Dynasty I of Lagash, a Concise History*, by Geoffrey Morten. Details the struggle for power between the autocracy and priesthood, 2500-2360 BC. The period covers the reigns of Urnanshe, his son Eannatum, and grandson Entemena, the priest-king Ugalanda, Urukagina the Usurper, and ends with Lugalzaggisi of Umma. A marginal note in Powell's hand reads *c.f. Beschluss von Verehrung Gemass Lugalzaggisi*.

The Notes

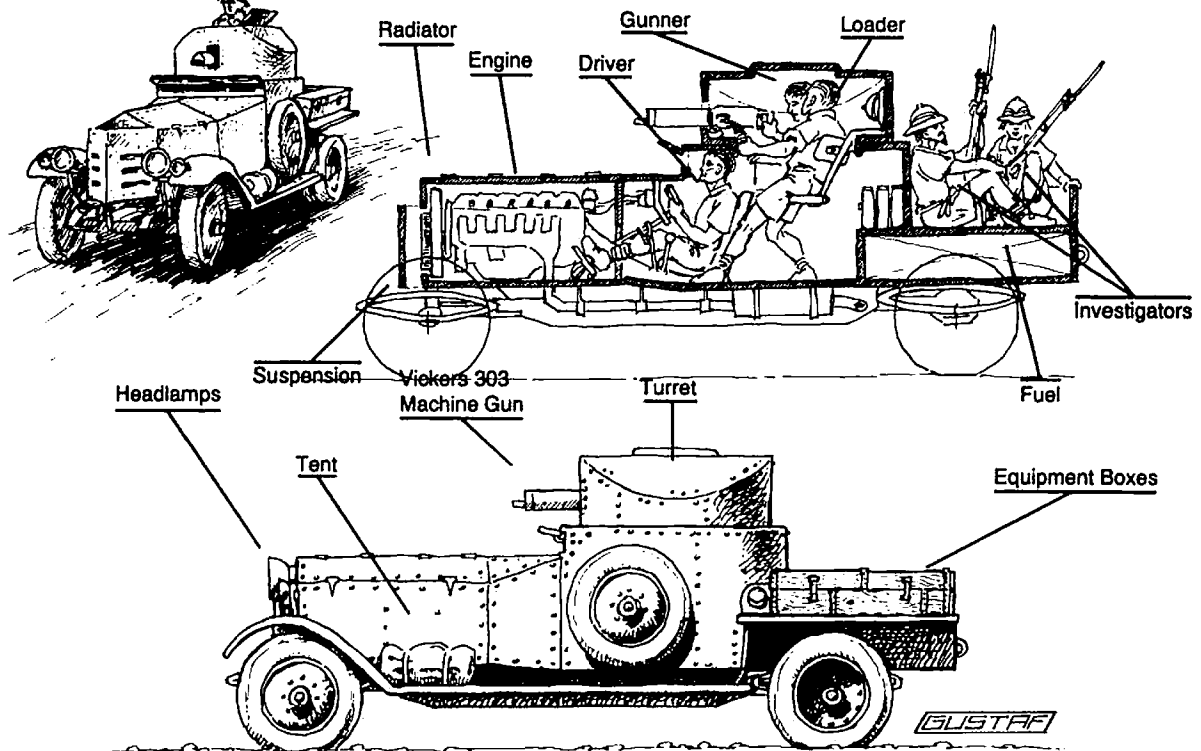
Investigators browsing through the notes and calculations learn the framework of Powell's research. See Armored Angels Papers #2 for an excerpt.

Excerpt From Powell's Notes

If, as Krumme suggests, the priests of Kizzah were obsessed with that calculation, one must conclude that the conductors be set to oscillate as the equation implies. Using the Kizzah equation to calculate the condensing of 'spacetime' in the stellar tunnel gives an answer between zero and six meters! My guess is the distance will be much closer to zero. Thus it is possible to see the reality of instantaneous interstellar movement, creating literally a door to cosmic destinations.

... A sister conductor must be used to 'tie down' the other end of the interstellar tunnel, preventing travelers becoming stuck or frozen in the ethereal plane. What then of the location whereon the other conductor lies? Who or what is at the other end? Why did they require a road to this Earth? I know nought, save that their grasp of scientific knowledge far surpasses our own. A journey where no man has gone before will open up vast knowledge to mankind.

Rolls Royce Armored Car



Armored Car, Rolls-Royce Type A (1920)

Weight: 3.8 tons **Length:** 16'7"
Max. Speed: 45 mph **Width:** 6'3"
Height: 7'7" **Engine:** Rolls-Royce 50 hp
Range: 180 miles **Armament:** 1 Vickers Mark 1 MG
Ammunition: 1,500 rounds of .303 caliber, in 250-round belts
Turret rotation: 360 degrees

The cars can accelerate by 5mph per combat round, and decelerate by up to 15mph per round. A car decelerates by 10mph if no accelerator or brakes are applied.

Visibility from inside the armored cars is appalling. Drivers and gunners squint through small slots in the armor. Spot Hidden rolls are required even for obvious hazards or targets. It is common practice for the gunner or loader to expose head and torso from the turret roof in order to gain a superior field of view. A person thus positioned is a comparatively easy target, against whom enemy rifle fire concentrates.

While moving, communication between the armored cars is sporadic. There are no radios, flags, or any standard form of signals, and engine noise drowns out yelling. Investigators may invent some basic, easily seen, visual signs for use during the mission.

For each attack directed at a car, 18 points of damage are subtracted. Any remaining points puncture the armor, and hit

points are then subtracted from the vehicle's internal components. Many weapons simply cannot harm the armored cars because they can't inflict enough damage to break through.

The armor is never shot away, counting for each and every new attack against the car. Once an attack has penetrated the armor, determine what effect the remaining damage points have on the vehicle and its occupants.

Roll 1D100 and consult the Hit Location Table, subtracting the remaining damage from the component's hit points. When the component's hit points reach zero it is destroyed, which in turn affects the vehicle's performance in some way. The effect is outlined in the last column on the table.

Vehicle Crash Table

Roll D100 Reroll each round until vehicle has stopped.

01-10	Swerve hard left; 50% chance of vehicle overturning.
11-25	Swerve left.
26-75	Continue straight.
76-90	Swerve right.
91-00	Swerve hard right; 50% chance of vehicle overturning.

The Vickers Mark 1

One of the more remarkable machine guns of the twentieth century, this water-cooled model was in standard service with British infantry from 1912 to 1968.

The precision machining and craftsman-like construction made a weapon which was expensive to buy, but also one which was exceptionally reliable. It is reported that one Mark 1, with many changes of barrel and unlimited water, fired more than a million rounds in one day at the battle of the Somme in 1916, and it continued to perform well after that.

Unless the investigator who is loading actually is well-versed in the gun, however, minor—almost idiosyncratic—stoppages will occur. Here the gunner should handle matters, while the investigator takes out a Lee-Enfield and blazes away.

Collisions

If a collision occurs, damage to the vehicle and other objects is calculated by the speed of the car and the solidity of the object

collided with. The Hit Location Chart is not used to allocate damage to the vehicle.

The keeper decides the order in which vehicular components are damaged depending on the circumstances of the collision. For example, a car crashing straight into a wall would damage its tires first, then its suspension, headlamps, armor, radiator, engine, driver, etc.

Collision Table

<i>speed in mph</i>	<i>damage to car:</i>		<i>damage to</i>
	<i>solid object</i>	<i>soft object</i>	<i>object hit</i>
0-5 mph	none	none	none
6-15 mph	1D4	none	1D4
16-25 mph	1D4+1D6	1D4	1D6+1D4
26-35 mph	1D4+2D6	1D4	2D6+1D4
36-45 mph	1D4+3D6	1D4	3D6+1D4

*'Solid objects' are made of stone or metal;
'soft objects' are made of flesh.*

Armored Car Hit Location Table

<i>1D100</i>	<i>component</i>	<i>AP</i>	<i>HPs</i>	<i>effect if destroyed</i>
01-02	Headlamps	0	2	Driving in darkness, subtract 10% from Drive Auto rolls.
03-04	Suspension	0	15	Top speed reduced by 8D6 mph.
05-07	Vickers mg.	18	10	Vehicle cannot fire.
08-12	Driver	18	occupant	Roll on Vehicle Crash Table.
13-17	Fuel Tank	18	5	Roll 1D100: 01-05 Explosion, 3D6 dam. to each occupant, vehicle destroyed. 06-30 Vehicle catches fire. 31-00 Fuel runs out in 4D10+10 turns.
18-27	Radiator	18	10	Engine overheats in 4D6+4 turns.
28-54	Engine	18	30	Roll 1D100: 01-15 Vehicle catches fire. 16-00 Vehicle rolls to a stop.
55-74	Tires	0	40	Drive Auto roll: If failed, roll on Vehicle Crash Table. If passed, top speed is reduced by 8D6 mph.
75-84	Equipment	0	5	Lose tools, tent, water, first aid kit, and spare tires.
85-89	Loader	18	occupant	Gunner must fire Vickers mg. alone, increasing malfunction number to 91-00.
90-94	Gunner	18	occupant	May not fire Vickers unless loader takes over. Gun malfunctions on 91-00.
95-96	Turret Mech	18	10	Turret may not turn. Fire arc reduced to 45 degrees. Subtract 10% from machine gun skill.
97-98	Brakes	18	6	No brakes. Vehicle must decelerate to stop.
99-00	Steering	18	10	Roll on Vehicle Crash Chart.

In 2400 BC, a dark cult formed at Kizzah, in ancient Sumeria. Their belief was that Kizzah had been the dwelling-place of the gods, and that by worshiping and performing sacrifice there they could gain the god's blessings and power. A small ziggurat-style temple was raised on the site.

Some years later the great struggle for power started between the traditional warrior-leaders of Sumer and the priesthood. The dark priests of Kizzah were among many supporters of Lugalzaggisi, a man of great ambition who anticipated the power that religion could gain. With the support of the dark cult, Lugalzaggisi became King of Sumer. In return for the cult's assistance, he tried (unsuccessfully) to incorporate the dark practices of Kizzah into the popular religion of the day.

In 2350 BC, Sargon I of Akkad conquered Mesopotamia. The cult at Kizzah was put to the sword, its priests slain, and its valuables carried off. The temple, left unoccupied, was forgotten.

In 1923 an RAF flyer noticed the interesting shape, and the pilot later returned to photograph the site. Powell was working on a site at Niffer when he saw the photos. Gaining permission from the British authorities, he gathered a digging team together and headed at once to Kirkuk to make a survey of Kizzah.

Among the notes are shipping invoices and other paperwork concerning the requisition of artifacts from the British Museum. These documents are signed and authorized by the high commissioner of Iraq.

The Files

The desk drawer is locked, but the key is on the floor in the pocket of a pair of dirty trousers. The drawer contains a number of carefully-labeled files. A few bear individual names: Dr. Kenneth Chesterton, Walter Smead, Prof. Hank Maxwell, Dr. Hugo Hertz, Father John Smith, and five others, including one each for the investigators.

Each file notes information for the individual, including appearance, education, occupation, residence, personality and habits, skills and capabilities, and Powell's assessment of suitability to assist him in exploring new worlds.

- ☐ Dr. Kenneth Chesterton, British archaeologist, *suitable*.
- ☐ Marcus Raven, British occultist and explorer, *unsuitable*: Powell notes that 24 deaths and disappearances are associated with Raven's misadventures.
- ☐ Prof. Hank Maxwell, American archaeologist, *unsuitable*. Powell notes that he was recently burnt to death by friends who caught him in wolf form.
- ☐ Dr. Hugo Hertz, Austrian occultist, *suitable*. Powell angrily records that the coward refused involvement.
- ☐ Father John Smith, American priest, *unsuitable*. Father John's current address has been revised to read Our Lady of Mercy Sanatorium, Providence, Rhode Island.
- ☐ All the investigators are listed: *suitable*.

Cabell's Opinion

When the investigators have finished inspecting Powell's belongings, Cabell asks what they have learned. He is trying to learn if his armed patrol will be facing a particular sort of danger, and that danger's strength. He also wants to decide whether the investigators should accompany the patrol. If their answers are moderate and intelligent-sounding, he urges them to go on the patrol. The keeper should go on to The Briefing sub-section.

If the investigators sound insane, panicked, or incompetent, his first patrol goes out, and is massacred. Then the second patrol can form, the investigators presumably volunteering now, and being accepted after Powell has heard from the survivors of the first attempt.

The Briefing

It's still early in the morning. Sun-up is not for hours yet. In the briefing room, infantry officers and flight leaders sit yawning, wondering why they've been summoned in the middle of the night. The investigators are scrutinized with interest when they walk in. Before long, Cabell strides in and addresses all. The gist of the briefing and Cabell's plan follow.

Something has happened at the Kizzah excavations. Apparently guerillas have taken control of the site. They are armed and hostile. Cabell expects that they have already fled, after the reconnaissance plane flew over.

But in any case he wants to find out what the devil is going on, bring the site back under British control, and aid any survivors.

He intends to send three armored cars and two trucks (the latter to carry back survivors from the dig) to seize the objective quickly. Meanwhile preparations can go forward in massing a larger force to deal with the irregulars in the area. Naturally the resources of 30th Squadron will support from above. Cabell takes care to mention the brilliant successes that British aircraft have obtained in fighting Iraqi irregulars, something known with pride by all the ranks at Kirkuk.

Lieutenant Lofting, breveted Captain for the operation, will lead on the ground. The most experienced or knowledgeable investigator is appointed his advisor and will act as second-in-command. Cabell commends the investigators' expertise in extraordinary situations.

Cabell lists the military hardware known sent to Kizzah: ten .303 Lee Enfield rifles, two .303 Lewis machine guns, one 2" mortar, one .32 revolver, ten bayonets, an unknown number of grenades. "Frankly, though," he says, "we've not the faintest idea if any force is there now. That's what you're going to learn."

He has four aerial photos to show. One is of the mountain track leading to the site: it shows no hint of men, pack animals, or defensive works. The other three show overlapping views of the site itself, its hard edges now well-excavated and definite. One print shows tracer

What Happened At The Digging Site

As Powell uncovered the temple, he began to comprehend the structures' dark purpose. The gods of the ancient priests were real, and the temple contained a locked pathway to their astral realms. Blinded by the seeming chance to explore other worlds, he flirted with powers that consumed him.

Powell was able to re-open the Gate by tracking down the inscriptions looted from Kizzah in 2350 BC. These he eventually found in the British Museum. The professor then cast the ancient spells, and opened the path to Yuggoth. The fecund guardian returned in all its fetid glory, preventing human access to the Gate, as it did eons ago. Powell was foiled. He did not, however, have much time to regret his mistake.

Mi-go soon noticed the open way, and came through. They quickly overcame the already-dismayed humans, then set about tasks of their own.

One mi-go, Brazzuk-Khzzul, took the opportunity to extract the brains of the Kizzah digging team, linking them like servo mechanisms to human artifacts (mainly the guns). In effect animating these items, Brazzuk-Khzzul has created an experimental network which the impending British assault will test.

Armored Cars In Play

Sketch out or reproduce the dig site. Keep track of each armored car's status. Record details such as the speed each car is traveling, the damage it has sustained, and the ammunition it has remaining. It is also suggested markers or miniatures be used so that the position of vehicles is clear to keeper and players. It is quite important to know what is around the cars when they go out of control or explode.

fire from what looks like a sand-bagged position west of the temple. All three show trees bizarrely fresh-planted in the courtyard center of the site. "Those are the damned trees that were so hard to truck up," Cabell concludes.

If any investigator receives a successful Spot Hidden, though, he or she recognizes that seven trees can be seen, not six. Something like a leafless baobab tree stands directly in the center of the courtyard.

Hand-picked drivers and gunners complete the crews. Investigators can serve as loaders for the machine guns, and others can ride in the rear compartments of the cars, or in the trucks.

Cabell wants the patrol to move out as soon as possible, not later than sunrise. They should be at Kizzah in three to four hours after that.

At that point the mechanics of the patrol are taken care of, map-grid references checked, watches synchro-

nized, and orders written in long-hand to release ammunition and supplies.

Armed And Dangerous

The investigators may if they wish each sign for a canteen, a helmet, a .303 Lee-Enfield rifle, a bayonet, a Webley .38 revolver, a signal pistol, requisite ammunition, pouches, rucksacks, and so on. If they want to lug along an extra Vickers machine gun, no one will say no, even if all their starting Machine Gun skills are at 15%. The Vickers, with coolant and tripod, weighs 43 pounds, and each boxed 250-round belt of ammunition weighs about another twelve pounds.

Keepers, if the investigators do take a machine gun, it will be the only one which can be consistently elevated to fire at mi-gos high in the sky.



Capt. (brev) William Lofting

The Journey

The cars speed off into the chilly night. Headlamps create tiny pockets of light in the vastness of the surrounding darkness. Following a vague track, the patrol traverses flat terrain at first, then climbs into desolate and forbidding mountains. Only the roaring engines dare

disturb their primal silence.

During the journey, investigators may attempt to learn how to use some of their newly acquired weapons, and the cars' Vickers machine guns. After a successful Idea roll, let each player add +5 percentiles to his or her investigator's Machine Gun skill, raising the total up to to at least 20%. Investigators also learn how to traverse the turret, how to load the machine gun, how to fix a jam, and so on.

Occasionally a flight of SE5a biplane fighters can be seen wandering through the peaks. Every half hour or so, an R.E.8 reconnaissance plane swoops down low over the column and drops a message to Lofting. It is always the same: *No force sighted. Good luck, chaps.*

Binoculars at the ready, Lofting perches in the turret of the lead car. He is a young officer, handsome and ambitious. He openly resented Cabell's decision to send non-military personnel (the investigators) on this mission. Fortunately, only one or two investigators ride with him and have to bear his scorn.

A Survivor

As the track rises, the way is steeper and narrower, and the pace of the patrol lessens. Nonetheless, they are fewer than five miles from Kizzah when Lofting spies a staggering man in the distance.

He is a British soldier, an ordinary private dazed by hunger and thirst. He falls directly in the path of the first vehicle. He is emaciated and hollow-eyed. He stares emptily at his rescuers, whispers a cracked "Thank God," and collapses from exhaustion.

Lofting tries First Aid, without result. If an investigator succeeds either with First Aid or with Medicine, the soldier is comforted, and rouses to consciousness enough to whisper, "Too many . . . still there . . ." before he faints and collapses again.

Lofting thinks better of the investigators after this success. They put the soldier on a truck and continue, alertly spaced out, wary of ambushes.

So as not to warn their objective, the planes fall back, a single reconnaissance plane watching for Lofting's heliograph signal. The lurking fighters and de Havilland bombers will be called in only if the signal is given to attack the area.

The Battle

LEAVING the trucks in the rear, the armored cars must approach the site from the west, so the patrol waits until the sun is fairly high. Except for Lofting's vehicle, let investigators actually drive the vehicles and command the guns to fire. Perhaps the regular drivers are early casualties. As game elements, the idea is to let the soldiers in the armored cars disappear, except for the effects of their skills.

Another investigator can set up and fire the Vickers in the truck. If the investigators didn't bring it, then Lofting did. If personnel needs redistributing, let the stops be made without loss. Very early in the battle, all the investigators should be participating actively. Lofting's signals or shouts can be the keeper's way to cue the action.

The noise of the engines alerts the extra-terrestrials, sending six mi-go into the sky to discover the reason for such a disturbance (lose a full 6 Sanity points to behold this unholy squadron). The noise also stirs the solitary dark young into action: its mass of black tentacles rises up out of the ruined ziggurat, as if testing the air (1/1D6 Sanity point loss to understand that the waving things are alive).

The mi-go, flying slowly towards the armored cars, soon find they are out-gunned. In just a few combat rounds some are likely to be killed unless they stay above the cars, where the turreted machine guns cannot track. If the investigators brought their Vickers, it comes in handy. In any case, the shaken Lofting can wink a mirror signal toward the R.E.8, circling well down the valley. When the fighters roar in, machine guns blazing, the remainder of the six flee through the Gate. They return with reinforcements in one hour if the Gate has not been closed.

The dark young continues to wave its tentacles harmlessly in the air until it takes damage. As soon as it is wounded, it bleats and retreats down below the lip of the ziggurat, out of harm's way.

Sandbagged Machine Gun Post (north)

Behind a line of sandbags is a Lewis machine gun. It is unmanned, yet when the armored cars hove into view it begins to fire, apparently of its own accord. Next to it a Lee-Enfield rifle blazes away.

Embue, a new spell

Allows a being's life-energy or soul be used to possess material objects. Mi-go are experts at keeping brains 'alive'. It is only a small step for mi-go surgeons to snip away unwanted parts of the brain, leaving a submissive brain-slave. Embue magic harnesses and manipulates the life-energy of the brain-slave, subjecting it to the caster's instructions.

The spell then may be cast in five rounds, costing the caster 3 magic points and 1D4 Sanity points per brain. Each brain is set to a single task.

The affected brain is semi-conscious, having a certain capacity to

think, but is unable to achieve more than its instructions allow. Such a brain can interpret the instructions, however, and so react to various circumstances.

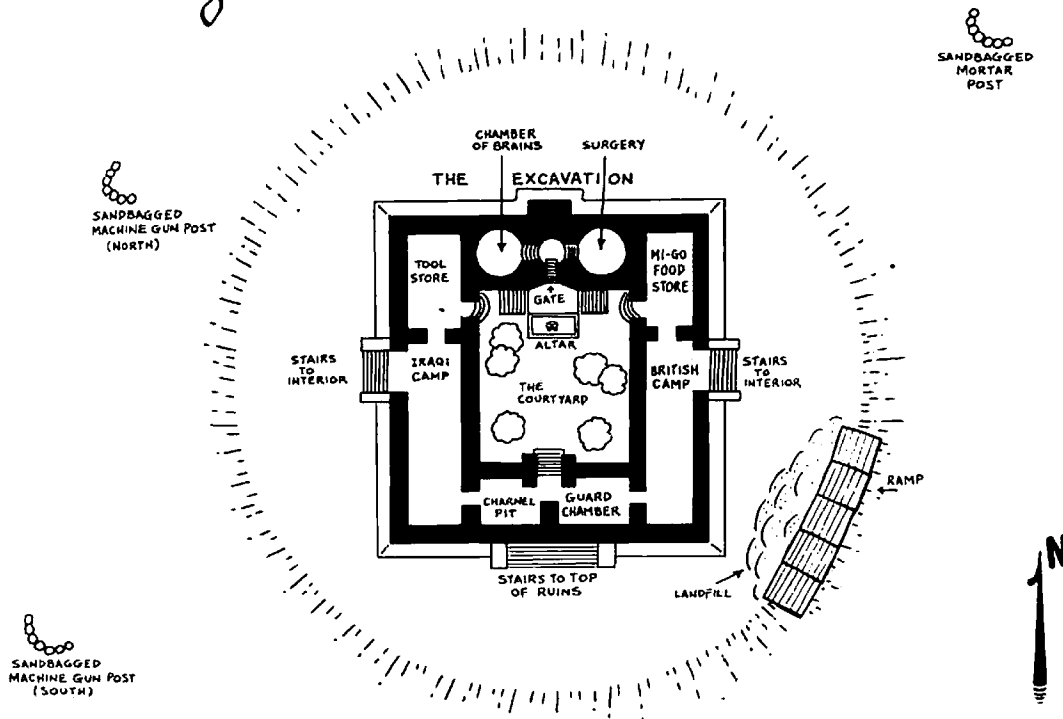
Each time the spell is cast, instructions may only be given to the brain (or brains) during the casting process. After the ritual is completed no further orders may be given, unless the spell is recast. A brain remains bound to an object if the caster of the spell is dead, and continues to act upon its instructions.

The life-energy of the brain has a physical force equal to its POW. This force manifests itself as a push. The energy is unable to

grasp, encompass, or hold objects: it acts more like a person holding a broom and manipulating objects with the end of the handle.

The brains cannot hear, smell, taste, feel, or even see in the normal sense, but they can project their force up to a mile away from their actual resting place. They feel and see in much the same way as their Mi-Go masters, picking up all energy patterns within a 50 foot radius of their force to create an 'image' of the scene. Thus, they are able to 'see' through fog, darkness, walls, etc, but not to much consequence.

Kizzah Dig Site



The weapons are psychically linked to the disembodied brains of Private One and Laborer One, which reside in the Chamber of Brains in the temple. The brains have instructions to fire upon humans, whether in vehicles or not. Sanity loss for noticing that nobody is manning the weapons is 0/1D3 Sanity points. The guns can be destroyed by a direct hit with a mortar shell or a grenade, or by ramming them with an armored car, but strafing achieves nothing. Alternately, once their magazines or belts are empty, they have no way to reload.

Sandbagged Machine Gun Post (south)

A Lewis machine gun linked to the brain of Private Two, and a Lee-Enfield rifle linked to Laborer Two. Considerations are as in the north machine gun post. Sanity loss to notice that the guns are firing themselves is 0/1D3 Sanity points.

Sandbagged Mortar Post

A 2" mortar is linked to the brain of the Corporal, with assistance from Laborers Three, Four, and Five. A simple contraption has been constructed so that 12 mortar rounds can be fired in succession, all sighted in at the dirt ramp at the temple. Two Lee-Enfield .303 rifles offer supporting fire. Considerations are as in the north machine gun post. Sanity loss to notice that the guns are firing themselves is 0/1D3 Sanity points.

On The Firing Line

In order to close the Gate and defeat the alien entities who are using it, the investigators must leave the protection of their armored cars at some stage. This situation presents Brazzuk-Khzzul with a good opportunity to strike. The mi-go sorcerer has six human brains wired up, waiting to be linked to new mechanical devices.

It takes Brazzuk five combat rounds to cast his Embue spell, and costs him 18 magic points. He first picks on the car with the fewest occupants, assigning three brains to the takeover bid. The brains attempt to wrest control of the wheel, accelerator, and machine gun.

Assign one brain to each task. To successfully wrest control of that particular car function, compare the brain's POW against the resisting character's STR on the Resistance Table. If a brain is successful, it controls that car function for that round. For example, if it had gained control of the steering wheel, it could turn the vehicle towards the gaping pit of the excavation, or aim the vehicle so as to run down a hapless investigator. An object that takes on a life of its own is scary stuff, and costs 1/1D6 Sanity points to witness. Crew failing their sanity rolls abandon their vehicles, but probably not in all cases. In the following combat round, any remaining occupant of the car could try to reclaim control, matching his STR against the brain's POW.

While in control of vehicle functions, the brains first intend to try to kill investigators and soldiers outside the vehicles, and then anyone remaining by destroying the armored cars themselves. But keepers should remember that these objectives are not coordinated: the steering wheel may try to go left, while the turret gun has chosen some other target entirely.

Unexpected Help

Portions of Powell's unusual frontal lobes went misidentified, and were not cut away. His brain therefore has the potential to dimly argue with the logic of the mi-go commands and elude their intent.

Powell's brain is instructed to take control of the steering wheel of the first car. During any round Powell has control of the wheel, roll 1D100, and if this is under Powell's POW x2, the diminished genius has a fit of inspired perception, concluding "I think, therefore I am Professor Lawrence Gilbert Powell, and I owe a debt to humanity for my idiocy!"

He relinquishes control of the wheel, and flicks the switch to the headlamps, in three short bursts, then three long, and three short again: *S-O-S*. Then he flashes in Morse Code *L-P*, for 'Lawrence Powell,' before lapsing back into servitude.

The Dig Site

An area approximately 100 feet in diameter and 20 feet deep has been excavated, the circular area shown on the map of the site. The ruined ziggurat is just under 20 ft tall. The temple is essentially a double-walled roofed structure with an open center court. An investigator may slide down into the excavation without taking damage, but scrambling out again is not so easy. Dirt from the excavation has been piled in great heaps hundreds of yards to the northeast.

The dark young can lean over from the courtyard and attack targets in the excavated area, bashing with its tentacles but unable to drain its victim's strength. This exposes its tentacles to gunfire, and it retreats when reduced to half of its original hit points, a feat not difficult to achieve if multiple machine guns can be brought to bear. (The dark young also has spells. Some suggested spells are included with the entity's stats.)

The following entries describe the Kizzah temple.

The Ramp

Original access to the excavation was by a ramp cut into the earth. However, when Powell first tried to open the Gate, a tremor caused the ramp to partially collapse. Wooden boards were laid over the gap. Much dirt has fallen and been trodden into the makeshift bridge, making it difficult to see (Spot Hidden roll), and impossible to iden-

tify from inside an armored car. Should one of the heavy vehicles drive across, preferably Lofting's, the bridge splinters noisily, plunging the car into the landfill below. Occupants take 1D6 damage each, and the car is bogged and exposed to the dark young's attacks. Lofting is knocked unconscious. The investigators are in command.

British Camp

Scattered though this room are folding cots, blankets, cooking utensils, and personal effects. A flashlight lying on the floor flicks on and off, spinning crazily of its own volition, half-blinding those present. Sanity loss for seeing the possessed instrument is 0/1 Sanity points. It is the result of Brazzuk's first experiment, and is linked to the brain of Laborer Six.

An Archaeology roll pinpoints the singularly astonishing fact that the expedition took up residence within the site, rather than making camp nearby. Such an action reveals an almost total disregard for the archaeological significance of the ziggurat, and confirms that Powell must have had other motives in his explorations.

The Last Page of Powell's Diary

...and with that I had completed the ancient magicks. A sudden wind erupted from nowhere, and with it a cacophony like a thousand monkeys chittering. Then silence flowed down from that dreaded door and drove the noise before it, suffocating every vestige of sound. I smelt the power of chaos—uncontrolled, thriving, filled with raw hatred.

The doorway above the altar filled with shimmering phosphorescence. The gateway to distant Yuggoth, closed for more than 4,000 years, was open to me. The excitement of hitherto unexplored worlds, creatures, cultures, and technologies beckoned. I had not time to take one step forward, however, when horror unfolded.

From whence it came I dare not contemplate; what it is I dare not guess; what it looked like I dare not recall. It came like a giant diseased spider crawling from some sepulchral millennial cavern where it had out-waited the ages, its rancor a fetid wave that overwhelmed us and undid all my dreams..

Hot on this monstrosity's heels there came a horde of demons, borne on bestial leathery wings. They act with intelligence, taking prisoner those of us who survived. I think Haley escaped into the mountains, but any help he brings will be too late for us. We are being kept in the long east chamber. One by one they lead my colleagues away. Occasionally I hear a friend's agonized scream.

An electric torch has started moving about by itself. The voices of the dead whisper to me. Hell and nightmare await. Soon they will come for me.

Powell's Note

A Summary of Kizzah Gate Mechanics

TO OPEN

- (a) set incense burning, array herbs, etc.
- (b) intone ritual magic (page 229, paras 4 & 6)
- (c) sacrifice animals
- (d) intone ritual magic (page 235, para 7)
- (e) depress the model ziggurat's frontal stairs in the following sequence: 1, 9, 2, 6, 3, 5, 7, 9, 9, 1, 6. Lowest step = 0, continuing to top step = 9.

TO CLOSE

- (f) intone ritual magic (page 251, paras 2-9)
- (g) intone ritual magic (page 304, paras 3-6)
- (h) deactivate using sequence: 9, 0, 1, 9, 4, 2, 0, 1
- (i) intone ritual magic (page 238, para 2)

Armored Angel Papers #4

A brief search uncovers a hefty leather-bound book, Powell's diary. It is nearly full, and covers the last two years of his life. Right now the last page is of most interest. The writing has been scrawled with ever-increasing hurry, in the end becomes almost illegible. See Armored Angels Papers #3 below.

Mi-go Food Store

This chamber contains a neat stack of shimmering silver spheres, each six inches in diameter. They are containers constructed of web-like material, and hold disgusting non-terrene fungoid food.

Guard Chamber

One mi-go lurks here until the intruders enter the ruined ziggurat. It uses the confined space of the temple to attack from close quarters. In such conditions gunfire has an equal chance to hit a friend as it does the fungi. The sudden attack prompts no Sanity point loss unless an investigator has not yet seen a mi-go.

Charnel Pit

The stench of death warns the entrant. Eighteen bloody human corpses choke this small room. Fifteen of them have been surgically shortened at the eyebrows: tops of skulls removed, brains and brain stems withdrawn.

Most show signs of other body wounds. The heads of three uniformed men have been pulverized. By appearance and clothing, one is an archaeologist in safari shorts, six are British soldiers, and ten are Iraqis. The corpse in the safari shorts is recognizable as Powell from identification he carries. The scene costs 1/1D6 Sanity points.

Disturbing the bodies sends a swarm of flies buzzing up. The bloated cadavers are writhing with maggots. Searching the corpses is a truly nauseating task (0/1D3 Sanity point loss), but not without reward. Along with Powell's identification, the investigators find a folded sheet of paper in Powell's breast pocket. See Armored Angels Papers #4.

With reference to Powell's instructions, a successful Cthulhu Mythos roll suggests that depressing anything in order to activate a Gate is possible, but not likely. Like the animal sacrifices, the cultists were used to doing such things, but they were not necessary.

Iraqi Camp

In this chamber are straw pallets, blankets, and personal effects for about a dozen men.

Tool Store

In neat array here are sieves, picks, shovels, two wheelbarrows, kerosene lanterns, six loaded Lee-Enfield rifles, jerry cans of water, a few tins of food, and other equipment. Picks and shovels make effective melee weapons.

The Courtyard

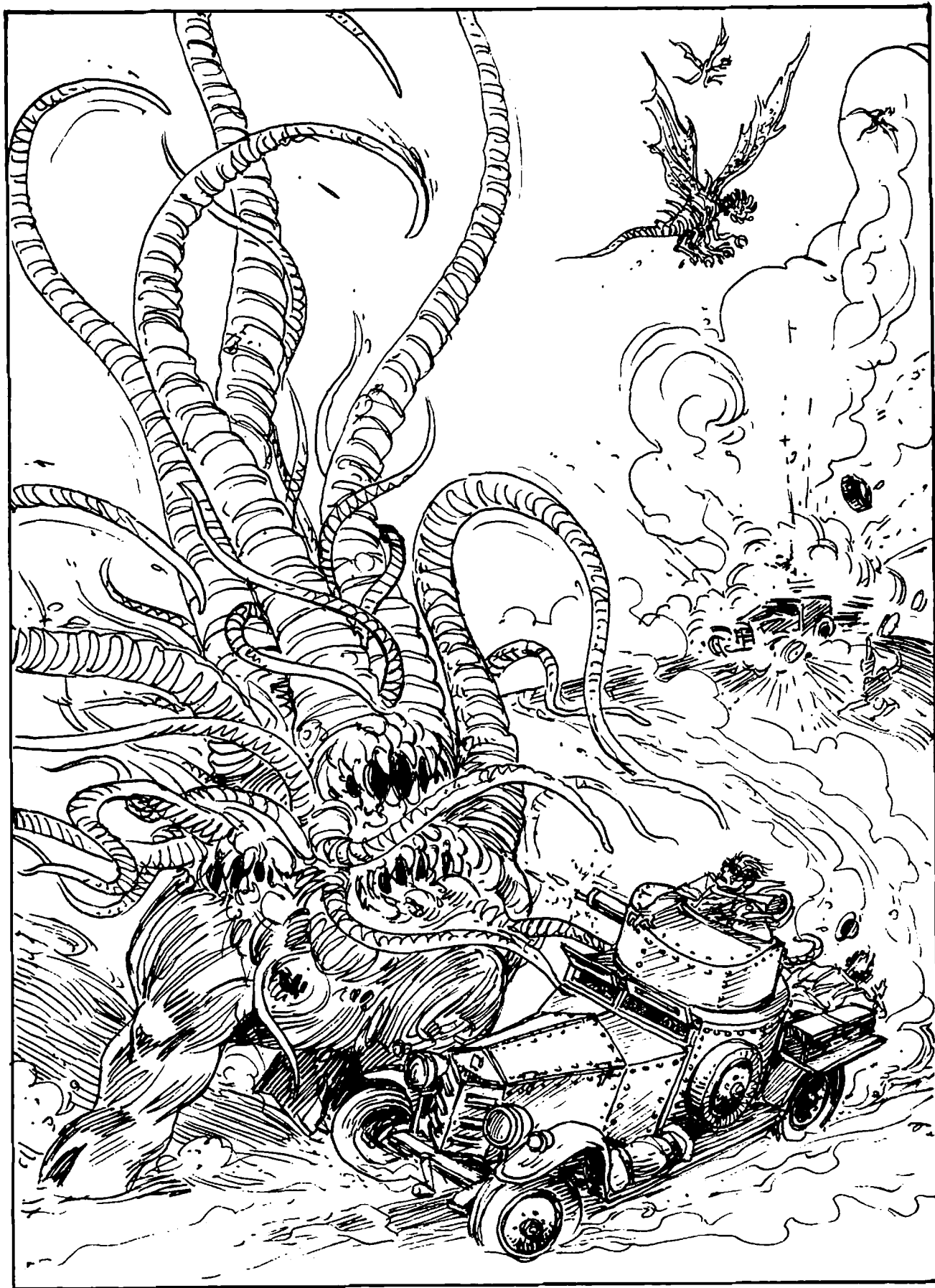
Although open to the brightening morning sky, the courtyard boasts numerous pools of shadow caused by half-a-dozen largish trees, their roots covered in sacking, and by the imposing bulk of the dark young. The creature shambles forward on gigantic black hooves, its puckered maws expectorating green mucus. An overpowering reek of steaming putrefaction envelops the area. The cost to see it is 1D3/1D20 Sanity points, minus any already lost because of it.

Set into the north wall of the courtyard is an ornate doorway. A swirling, darkly hued curtain of viscous light fills it. This is the Gate to Yuggoth. Steps lead up to the door from both sides and in front is a large stone altar. Atop the altar is a grotesque gold statue of a bloated, multi-tentacled mass, squatting obscenely on a ziggurat.

One of Powell's books lies discarded next to the altar, untouched since he used it to open the Gate. It is slightly scorched by dark-young slime, but still legible. It is *Beschluss von Verehrung Gemass Lugalzaggisi*, translated by Wilhelm Krumm from an ancient text written by King Lugalzaggisi, 2360 B.C., detailing his theological ideas. A thorough study of the book imparts +4% Cthulhu Mythos, spell multiplier x3, at the cost of 2D4 Sanity points. Lugalzaggisi details foul rituals which include the spells Create Gate (to Yuggoth), Summon Dark Young, Bind Dark Young, and Contact Fungi From Yuggoth.

Closing the Gate

The investigators can deal with this situation in a variety of ways.



At war against the Mythos

- Kill the dark young and shut down the Gate at their leisure, using Powell's "Summary of Kizzah Gate Mechanics" and the book *Beschluss von Verehrung Gemass Lugalzaggisi*. It's not easy to kill a dark young who knows you're coming, though repeated attacks may cause it to retreat back through the Gate.
- Close the Gate permanently using the summary and the Lugalzaggisi book while distracting or fighting the dark young. Not for the faint-hearted, and riskier, since the confrontation must be face-to-face.
- Shoot at, destroy, or otherwise tamper with the inscriptions which keep the Gate open.
- Place an Elder Sign on the Gate, rendering it inoperable.

Without closing the Gate, the investigators cannot pass to the chambers beyond where Brazzuk-Khzzul hides.

Brazzuk-Khzzul's Lair

These two chambers can only be entered after defeating the dark young and destroying the cosmic portal. Once the dust settles, a dark, narrow passage is exposed, leading down from the dreaded door above the altar.

An Archaeology roll determines that this part of the ruins is older than the ziggurat built around it.

The Chamber Of Brains

Installed in this spherical chamber is a tangle of alien technological paraphernalia, shrouded in a delicate web of wires and tubes. Central to this miscellany are fifteen metallic cylinders, each containing the brain of a member of Powell's digging team. Discovering the brains in their unworldly predicament costs 0/1 Sanity points. Destroying the brains or their support system releases the 'possessed' armored cars and other artifacts from Brazzuk's Embue control.



Brazzuk-Khzzul

Brazzuk's Surgery

In this small spherical room is Brazzuk-Khzzul (0/1D6 Sanity loss to see if no mi-go-related Sanity losses have occurred this morning. The mi-go experimenter is preparing to take the slow road back to Yuggoth, flying on bestial leathery wings. Two human bodies and a few 'bags' made of thick spider web-like matter lie at the bottom. The containers hold alien surgical instruments, metallic cylinders, wires, and tubes.

The bodies are Dr. Kenneth Chesterton and Edith Rose Alexander. Both are alive. Chesterton is in a chemically-induced coma. Alexander is still alive, but her scalp has been removed, preparatory to removing the upper skull and the brain (Sanity loss 0/1D2 to see her condition). She can be conscious and screaming if the keeper likes.

Her scalp has been off long enough that it is dead. If not dying immediately, she will be deformed for life. Both humans can be hostages to aid in the mi-go's escape: whether the circling pilots are so generous is for the keeper to decide. Alternately Brazzuk may have made his own Gate, and simply steps through and disappears.

Conclusion

The cost of failure in this scenario is death or de-braining. Unlike most investigations, here it is too late for subtle schemes. The investigators are confronted by the Mythos in the raw, and if anybody is to survive, all must put thoughts of personal preservation aside. The investigators' best defense is to confront each new adversary with unmitigated and extreme aggression.

Available Weapons

weapon [skill]	base chance, or starting skill points	damage done with attack	base range of attack	attacks per round	bullets in gun	HPs resisting attack	mal
.303 Lee-Enfield* [Rifle]	25	2D6+4	110 yards	1/2	10	12	98
Lee-Enfield Bayonet* [Bayonet]	15	1D6+1+db	touch	1	—	15	—
Vickers .303* [Machine Gun].*	15	2D6+3	150 yards	burst	250	12	99
Lewis .303* [Machine Gun].*	15	2D6+3	150 yards	1/2 or burst	47	12	96
Webley .38 Revolver* [Handgun]	20	1D10	15 yards	2	6	8	00
Signal Pistol** [Shotgun]	25	4D8+2/1D8	5 ft/10 ft	1/2	1	11	00
Mills Grenade [Grenade]	Throw%	3D6 / 3 yards	thrown	1/2	1 only	5	99
2" Mortar*** [Mortar]	00	4D6 / 3 yards	60/300 yards	1/2	separate	15	00
Pick* [Pick]	25	1D6+1+db	touch	1	—	15	—
Shovel [Shovel]	25	1D6+db	touch	1	—	12	—

* — can impale.

** — using shotgun cartridge.

*** — an impale indicates a direct hit. High trajectory weapon. Minimum range is 60 yards, maximum is 300.

Machine Guns — fire in bursts of 1d8+2 rounds. Vickers machine guns without loaders malfunction on 91-00.

Investigators earn 1D10 points of sanity for closing the gate, and an additional 1D4 points for killing Brazzuk-Khzzul. Destroying the brains is cold comfort, but earns one sanity point nevertheless. If Chesterton and Alexander are saved, grant an additional 1D4 points.

Upon the investigators' return to Kirkuk, the British military is keen to keep this episode a secret, using threats or money to buy silence. Discreet letters of commendation arrive from the Highest Authority. And the RAF flies them to any destination of their choice.

Statistics

SQUADRON LEADER A.G.CABELL, Age 40

STR 10 CON 9 SIZ 14 INT 15 POW 17
DEX 13 APP 14 EDU 14 SAN 65 HP 12

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: Webley .38 revolver 65%, damage 1D10

Skills: Accounting 40%, Anthropology 12%, Credit Rating 55%, French 38%, German 24%, Navigate 30%, Persuade 66%, Pilot Aircraft 92%, Psychology 43%, Spot Hidden 60%.

LT. WILLIAM LOFTING, Age 28, Patrol Leader

STR 13 CON 14 SIZ 16 INT 12 POW 13
DEX 8 APP 7 EDU 12 SAN 45 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Vickers .303 machine gun 45%, damage 2D6+3

Webley .38 revolver 60%, damage 1D10

Skills: Bargain 21%, Climb 63%, Conceal 45%, Drive Automobile 54%, Follow Instruction 61%, Listen 46%, Navigate 32%, Mechanical Repair 44%, Spot Hidden 65%, Throw 47%.

PATROL ENLISTED MEN

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Vickers .303 machine gun 35%, damage 2D6+3

Webley .38 revolver 45%, damage 1D10

Skills: Drive Armored Car 80%, Spot Hidden 65%.

	McMillan	Paltock	Reid	Rosten
STR	13	15	13	14
CON	13	13	11	11
SIZ	13	12	13	12
DEX	13	15	17	11
POW	10	10	11	13
SAN	50	50	55	65
HP	13	13	12	12
	Sullivan	White	Wilkins	Yarnock
STR	12	15	17	13
CON	14	13	11	13
SIZ	16	15	13	13
DEX	12	14	13	15
POW	11	12	11	15
SAN	55	60	55	75
HP	15	14	12	13

DARK YOUNG OF SHUB-NIGGURATH

STR 41 CON 20 SIZ 50 INT 4 POW 19
DEX 20 HP 35 Move 8

Weapons: Tentacles (4 per round) 80%, damage 4D6 +STR drain.

Trample 80%, damage 6D6

Spells: Contact Shub-Niggurath, Deflect Harm—or as the keeper desires.

Armor: None, but firearms do no more than 1 point of damage. If the weapon impales, it does 2 points damage. Shotguns are an exception, and do minimum possible damage. Weapons such as clubs, mattocks, or fire do normal damage.

Sanity Loss: 1D3/1D20 Sanity points.

BRAZZUK-KHZZUL, Mi-Go Experimenter

STR 12 CON 14 SIZ 17 INT 15 POW 23
DEX 17 HP 16 Move 7/9 flying

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: Nippers 30%, damage 1D6 + grapple.

Armor: None, but all impaling weapons do minimum damage.

Skills: Alien Science 99%, Astronomy 99%, Biology 99%, Chemistry 99%, Cthulhu Mythos 50%, English 55%, Pharmacy 99%, Physics 99%, Surgery 99%.

Spells: Contact Nyarlathotep, Create Gate, Embue, Summon/Bind Dark Young.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points.

SEVEN FUNGI FROM YUGGOTH

Damage Bonus: +0.

Move: 7/9 flying

Weapons: Nippers 30%, damage 1D6 + grapple.

Armor: None, but all impaling weapons do minimum damage.

	one	two	three	four
STR	13	11	14	14
CON	11	13	18	16
SIZ	11	8	10	9
DEX	15	14	18	14
POW	12	12	11	14
HP	11	11	14	13
	five	six	seven	
STR	12	7	13	
CON	13	9	18	
SIZ	12	12	11	
DEX	19	18	16	
POW	18	16	11	
HP	13	11	15	

THE BRAINS, Enslaved Life Force

Prof. Powell: POW 15, Cthulhu Mythos 33%, Drive Auto 55%.

Cpl. Potts: POW 13, 2" Mortar 20%.

Six Privates: POW 11, Drive Auto 25%, Machine Gun 25%.

Eight Iraqis: POW 11, Drive Auto 10%, Rifle 25%.

DR. KENNETH CHESTERTON, Age 44, Archaeologist

STR 12 CON 16 SIZ 14 INT 16 POW 15
DEX 13 APP 11 EDU 16 SAN 56 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Anthropology 15%, Arabic 40%, Archaeology 77%, Credit Rating 41%, Cthulhu Mythos 19%, Cuneiform 65%, Geology 55%, History 68%, Natural History 24%, Occult 33%, Photography 40%, Read Hieroglyph 56%, Spot Hidden 54%.

EDITH ROSE ALEXANDER, Age 26, Scalped Student

STR 10 CON 12 SIZ 10 INT 15 POW 10
DEX 8 APP 12 EDU 14 SAN 41 HP (11) 2

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Accounting 23%, Archaeology 36%, Cuneiform 30%, Greek 25%, First Aid 56%, History 37%, Italian 30%, Library Use 48%, Persuade 21%.

Along The Indus

Wherein the investigators encounter unusual creatures in an unusual fashion, and learn the Indian sub-continent is truly the land of religions.

THE CITY of Bahktapur is part of India, a land of ancient learning. Invading armies have scoured it many times in the past. Each time this happens, the new conquerors eclipse and replace the previous truths. And each time that happens, something new is gained, and something lost.

In all that time, elephants have been captured and used by men. The great creatures are unmatched among animals in strength, stamina, and reliability. To those who do not grow up with them, they are impossibly exotic, wildness epitomized in one improbable creature.

There is no child on the planet who does not love elephants. This adventure gives the investigators a chance to learn about these wonderful creatures first hand—very first hand.

About Elephants

Elephants were domesticated in India as early as 2000 B.C. In all that time, elephants have never bred well in captivity, so throughout Asia their young are captured from herds to be tamed and trained as workers. They are commonly used in the timber industry where their ability to manipulate logs is unequaled by modern machinery.

Not only the trunk is prehensile: the Asian elephant has a small triangular projection from the tip of the trunk, itself suited for gripping small objects, in the manner of a human thumb. (The African elephant has two such projections, promoting even more dexterity.)

Using its head as a battering ram, aided by its mass, an adult elephant can knock down a tropical tree standing more than 50 feet tall and up to three feet in diameter.

Despite its apparent thickness, elephant skin is susceptible to insect bites and chaps readily under the sun. They compensate by bathing frequently, not always possible in captivity. Drivers therefore grease their skins.

Elephants reputedly never forget, but it takes nearly twenty years to completely train an elephant to handle complex tasks. Elephant drivers are known as mahouts, and often a mahout works with a single elephant for most of his life. Young boys are usually assigned to spend lots of time with the young elephants, bathing them, playing with them, and thereby acquainting them with humans.

The saddle which is loaded upon an elephant's back is known as a *charjámá* and the wooden carriage which sits on top of the saddle is the *howda*.

The brains of elephants are very large, although not over-proportioned compared to their huge bodies. Elephants appear to experience an emotional life which is more complex than that of most animals. Almost universally, elephants exhibit distinct personalities and very specific individual behavior traits. Despite their size, elephants on the whole are gentle, sensitive animals which respond very well to human contact.

Their vision is not especially acute, but elephants possess very sharp olfactory systems.

A fully grown Indian elephant weighs approximately six tons. They stand between six and nine feet tall. An adult eats approximately 500 pounds of grasses and plants per day, and drinks 20-40 gallons of water. When burdened or working, an elephant walks at a speed of about four miles per hour. In the wild, a herd may travel at ten miles per hour. It is not unusual for a herd to travel as far as 100 miles in a single day. But when angered or frightened an elephant can charge at a speed of 25 miles per hour.

Elephants are fond of the water and Indian elephants are adept swimmers. Despite their mass, elephants maintain neutral buoyancy by inhaling large amounts of air.

The Indian or Asian elephant is a different species than the African elephant, the species more commonly known in the United States. The Indian elephant, *Elephas maximus*, is somewhat smaller, and the ears of Indian elephants are proportionately much smaller, covering the side of the head but not extending back to the shoulder. Although bull Indian elephants have tusks like their African counterparts, female Indian elephants do not.

The Indian elephant also can be distinguished by a spine that arches upward for the entire length of the animal; the African elephant's back dips slightly. The Indian elephant has four toes with nails on its front feet and five toes with nails on its back feet.

Although their natural habitat was not acutely threatened in the 1920s, perhaps this adventure will add respect for elephants to the minds of players, who live in an age where mankind's destruction of their natural habitat threatens the future of these animals.

The Narrative

THIS SCENARIO requires that the investigators be present in India as visitors or residents of some populous area. For a resourceful keeper there could be a myriad of ways for the investigators to arrive there: most simply, we assume that the investigators are in transit to some other destination.

A formal request takes the investigators to a remote part of British India where they travel by elephant looking for the mysterious Black Man, whose sudden appearances and disappearances have spooked the local population, upsetting peasants, workers, and the province's rulers. No explanation for the apparition is ever provided: the idea here is to give the players a taste of a mystery which cannot be resolved. Just as with a religion, each investigator can choose the explanation which he or she deems best—as can the keeper.

The Letter

Commandant,
Royal Indian Rifles
Bahktapur, Sind

Dear Sirs:

On behalf of area residents and my own humble command, welcome to India. I trust that your visit has been a pleasant one. Please pardon this intrusion. Were not the need great, I would not have written.

I was informed by a friend, Thomas Wilcox of the Immigration Bureau, of your arrival, and I earnestly long to consult with you. A situation has arisen for which I require assistance of a sort. I should approach you myself, but matters make it impossible.

This inquiry, a matter about which I cannot write more clearly, is one which your collective reputation indicates is likely to be of interest to you.

Will you come to Bahktapur? There you may view the mighty Indus, and enjoy all the hospitality that our outpost can offer. Several local landowners have indicated their willingness to compensate your expenses, and what else you might require. Please come to our assistance. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Major David Singeon, Commandant

Post Scriptum: this poor message must also serve to introduce my faithful and resourceful young servant, Bahmoud, whom I have sent with full confidence to find you and to accompany you to Bahktapur. Be assured that he will do your bidding in all matters.

The Messenger

While the investigators are taking afternoon tea in their hotel, a message arrives for them. The messenger is a fourteen-year-old boy, a servant in the employ of an official of the British Government. He wears an ill-fitting old sailor's cap, discarded from His Majesty's Navy some twenty years ago. After confirming the identities of the investigators, the youth hands them an envelope. It contains a short letter. See The Indus Papers #1.

A wire to Bahktapur confirms all that has been written. Young Bahmoud announces it is his great honor to conduct the great investigators to Bahktapur. Although he does not know the contents of the letter, he swears that it concerns a terribly important matter. He urges



Bahmoud

them to pack their bags that night and meet him at the train station at 6am tomorrow. From the dispatch case which held the letter, he proffers first-class round-trip rail tickets for them all to Bahktapur. If the investigators are not convinced, he badgers, implores, cajoles, pesters, and otherwise annoys them until they agree to come, then disappears for the evening.

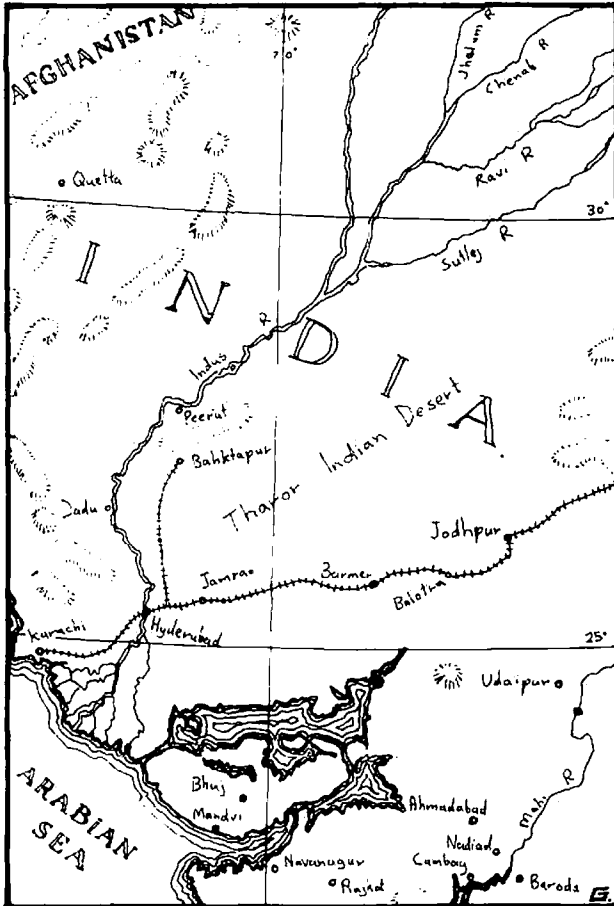
The young man seems quite competent and his intentions and abilities easily pass the scrutiny of a Psychology roll. Nonetheless, some investigators will be disconcerted by his devoutness and promptness in dropping everything to attend to the frequent prayers made by devout Muslims.

Bahktapur

Even early in the morning, the third-class area of the train station is crowded. People mill about, nudging and pushing to get to the cars—families, belongings, and produce begin to pile atop the roofs of the train. As often as the officials clear the tops of those cars, as often they begin to fill again.

The investigators' tickets are first-class, and in first class movement is sedate and unhurried, and the cars themselves are mostly empty.

Bahmoud waits beside the first-class gate, eagerly looking for his charges. If their luggage is not attended to, he makes sure that porters attend to it. Bahmoud apologizes that he cannot remain to make pleasant conversation with the great investiga-



tors, but he will join them at Hyderabad for the transfer to Bahktapur. He rides third class. For him to stay with the investigators, he would need a first-class ticket and a suit of clothes.

The express journey takes most of the day. Despite the heat, it is pleasant enough. At Hyderabad, Bahmoud hovers over their luggage until the train arrives for Bahktapur.

The train reaches Bahktapur in the late afternoon. As the investigators disembark, the faithful Bahmoud is already supervising the unloading of their baggage. He quickly locates the two cars and soldier-drivers sent to greet the investigators. Their baggage loaded, and the investigators seated, Bahmoud runs along behind the few hundred yards to the garrison's compound.

Like all towns in the region, Bahktapur is walled. Most buildings are of mud brick, three stories high at most. The streets are narrow, pitted with holes and ruts. Bony cattle wander at random, making occasional clots of pedestrians and carts all the more arbitrary. A mysterious pungent odor wafts through the community. Bahmoud chatters about every feature of interest, such as the new mosque, the shop of Sentar the bread maker, the shrine to the goddess Kali, the earthen hovel which an uncle owns, and so on. He is bustling with energy and

enthusiasm to be returned to this place which, to the investigators, presents a sorry sight.

The garrison is just outside the walls, its defensive fields of fire clear and ready for action, though never tested. The camp is tidy. The buildings and parade ground are larger than the present under-strength regiment needs. The commander's white-walled office is small and plain, dominated at one end by an old lithograph of Queen Victoria, and at the other end by a new lithograph of King George. A large wooden desk stands between, and behind it is a third lithograph, of the current Viceroy. An enormous old Baktiari rug covers much of the floor.



Captain David Singeon

Major Singeon is in his mid-forties. His hair is red, creeping toward gray, and his freckled face is sunburnt. He removes his spectacles and looks at the investigators with puzzlement which turns to delight. The investigators are seated, refreshed, and small talk made, he satisfies their curiosity concerning his mysterious request.

Most of the sightings prove to have been north of Bahktapur, in the vicinity of Peerut, a village 45 miles away.

Only one Englishman claims to have seen him—Lieutenant Bixby, temporarily commanding the company of artillery attached to Singeon's regiment. Bixby is currently recovering from a leg injury.

Singeon adds that no one has reported this person actually doing anything wrong, but everyone finds him to be disturbing. A successful Psychology roll notes that Maj. Singeon also fears this Black Man, a fact which he tries to conceal. In truth, he himself does not know why he finds this enigmatic entity so frightening.

As transportation to Peerut, the roads are bad enough that the Major offers three elephants instead of cars, enough beasts to accommodate six investigators. Three elephant drivers will take care of the animals. Camp boys, pitching tents and preparing food, will come along on foot.

If convenient, Singeon has arranged for the investigators to depart the day after tomorrow, after resting tonight and tomorrow to recover from their lengthy rail journey.

The quarters are indifferent, but the servants are prompt and eager. Bahmoud in particular has taken a shine to the investigators, and can usually be found in close proximity, lingering outside their rooms, or following close behind, volunteering for every menial chore.

Bixby

Lt. Bixby receives the investigators on a day bed. His left leg is wrapped in bandages. There is a bad smell in the

room, and flies hover speculatively. On the table next to his bed is a bottle of Pimms, which he has apparently been using to keep himself distracted from the pain. A successful Medicine roll guesses the presence of an unusual infection in Bixby's leg. A second roll decides that if the infection does not improve quickly, he stands a good chance of losing the limb. If the slightly inebriated Bixby is asked about his leg, he unwraps the terrible wound and tells them how it happened.

Bixby was traveling north to Dadu via elephant, transporting artillery shells. Just south of Peerut, he spied something odd about someone in the river at the place where the elephants traditionally bathe. Bixby ordered the driver to stop and took out his spyglass to get a look.

He saw that it was the Black Man. Bixby describes him as having unnaturally black, shiny skin, like rubber or stone, and long, straight black hair. Bixby says that he ordered the mahout to take the beast towards the figure, but when the driver got a good look at who they were heading for, "the bloke started screaming and shaking

with fear, and struck the elephant wildly." The animal panicked, and Bixby was pitched off. His leg was punctured by a sharp tree branch, his knee badly twisted, and his tibia fractured. He had to crawl up the path until the driver came back to get him.

A successful Psychology roll indicates that Bixby is not telling the whole truth. If the investigators opt to befriend Bixby, sitting with him and helping him finish off his bottle of Pimms, ask for a Fast Talk roll. If successful, Bixby spills the real story.



Lieutenant Roger Bixby

The Real Story

When he saw the Black Man by the river's edge, the figure motioned for Bixby to come forward. Despite the driver's protests, Bixby ordered him to take the elephant closer. The Black Man held up a hand. But Bixby had decided to rid the world of this dark-skinned menace, and he grabbed his rifle and sighted it on the Black Man. Pulling the trigger is the last thing he remembers.

Since then Bixby has been plagued by horrible dreams. If an investigator succeeds in a Psychoanalysis roll, or if they can win his confidence, Bixby reveals the contents of his dream.

Bixby's Dream

In his dream, Bixby sees himself at a lavish Indian feast. He reclines upon pillows and enjoys a sumptuous meal laid out for him by his host, the Black Man. The feast is very pleasurable and, after it is over, the Black Man presents Bixby with a gift, a small golden mirror, resplendent with antique workmanship and in an odd shape made with three gems upon it.

Bixby then sits back to enjoy the entertainment. A beautiful dancing girl performs the Elephant Dance, an intense series of lewd undulations. Bixby anticipates more intimate delights.

She comes to him and parts her lips to kiss him. From between her lips an enormous bloody tongue springs forth, splashing him with warm blood and lacerating his face with its sharp edges. He tries to escape, but his leg has gone numb. He then wakes up screaming, with the inexplicable feeling that he is inside the mirror,

Major Singeon's Statement

Our problem here is an unusual one. In the past six weeks, at least nine sightings have been made of a most unusual human figure. Now the force of the sun in this area is so intense that everyone, myself included, gets infernally dark, but this chap is reported as being absolutely as black as coal, as shiny as obsidian, and with eyes that glitter like diamonds—or like head lamps, according to who is telling it! That is, human-shaped, but thoroughly inhuman in appearance. Stark naked to boot.

His repeated appearances have been taken as signs of impending disaster by Muslim and Hindu alike, because each time he appears, someone seems to be coincidentally maimed or killed. The people are absolutely spooked, and most work in the whole region has stopped. People are afraid to leave their homes. They would rather risk starvation than face a demon.

If this chap is a charlatan and up to something, we need him exposed. If it is indeed a demon, gentlemen, who better than yourselves would be able to deal with it?

The landowners and shopkeepers are in a dither, because tax time is nearly here, and their ability to pay is being degraded by what amounts to a general strike, though the Indian Nationalists don't seem to be behind this.

Our own searches have been completely fruitless. I rather think that many of the men have been less than eager to find this chap, whoever or whatever he is.

My message indicated that the responsible classes would help underwrite your efforts, and I can assure you that they are desperate enough to be sincerely and more than adequately grateful.

The garrison can provide you with guides, interpreters, and transportation; the rate-payers will underwrite your search. Will you help us?

and will be forever more. No skill roll explains this dream.

If Bixby does not reveal his secrets, he continues to lose 1D3 sanity points each night, and will very likely be both insane and in need of amputation by the time the investigators return to Bahktapur.

Research

Major Singeon supplies the names of two reputable men in town with high reputations for learning. They are Dr. Divinda and Muomar The Wise. They may be able to add information he does not have. Bahmoud can guide, and translate if needed, though both men are fluent in several languages. If the investigators ask, he also identifies the Bahktapur Mail, a four-page daily, as the only newspaper this side of Hyderabad. Finally, he offers to open his own files to them.

Dr. Divinda

He is no medical man or academician. His title is simply how he is known, awarded for the meditative way the old man moves, and for the comical way he peers up and over his gold-rimmed spectacles. Even though the investigators refer to Major Singeon, Divinda is unimpressed. A successful Credit Rating or Persuade roll is necessary for the interview to begin.

"Yes, ah yes, the Black Man! I have not seen him, of course, but some who have say he is no man." He smiles to himself. "We are always so certain—who can truly know? You know that the people of the countryside say also that he is no man at all. If there is such a Black Man, and if he does the things they say, then I think they must be right. But men love to make their minds march together, so that they can be truly alike and not need to worry. Things must be *this* way, they say, or only *that* way. Maybe these stories the peasants tell are like that. Just stories."

Dr. Divinda passes for a skeptic in god-ridden India. But he remembers an apt passage in a Sanskrit commentary, and scurries off to fetch it from an ancient untitled manuscript which has become known as the *Dream Of Vishnu*. He recites the sentence in Sanskrit, then translates.

In the time of gold, there came a thing of darkness, both more and less than what it seemed, a jewel of emptiness.

He spreads open his arms, then brings his hands together beneath his chin and bows slightly. He has no more to offer. Still smiling, still shyly looking up over his spectacles, Dr. Divinda escorts his visitors to the door. "What you need to learn, gentlemen, I wish I could impart. Alas, only *you* can learn it."

Muomar The Wise

His eyes are bright and hawk-like with the fierceness of his faith, and his great beard, a symbol of his piety, spreads like armor across his chest.

If the investigators expect to interview him, he is much more interested in interviewing them, and wants to learn what sort of people they, whether mere curiosity-seekers, closed-minded bureaucrats, scientists with preconceptions, or people of more subtle interests. If any investigators are Muslim, or of any intense religious faith, he will be more disposed to be open with them. Still, a successful Credit Rating roll may be needed before he accepts them. When he is convinced that they are worthy, he will speak of what they wish to know. They sip coffee and watch the dance of insects across the sunlit pool in his garden.

"Yes, this demon is known to me. Worthy men of Peerut have three times spoken to me of it, and the bazaar and coffee houses are full of talk of the Black Man.

"I believe that centuries ago, when the Great Khan rode to victory and saved this great land from the filthy obsessions that had left it weak, that this same demon manifested, and warred greatly with the Faithful. It was put down, I know not how, but it could not be destroyed."

Like Dr. Divinda, Muomar The Wise removes himself, this time to return with a beautifully-calligraphed Arabic text. It is al-Hajjāj's *Sahlh*, an important collection of Islamic traditions made before the turn of the first millennium. It is not to the pious words of the original that Muomar attends, however, but to later-written marginalia which he finds after many minutes of squinting and sighing. At last he brightens and reads.

With our bright faith we fought the Djinn of Peerut. Our losses were great, and we despised no aid from any man.

"This sentence is by way of an example. The commentator disputes the notion of another annotator, who insists that (since the days of the Prophet) Allah guides the Faithful in such manner that the man of purest piety need consort only with those who follow the Way of the Prophet.

Muomar The Wise begins to point out how this notion conflicts with the believer's duty to spread the Word of God, then checks himself, and returns to his original topic. "Thus you see that the villagers are right to fear this demon. It has killed before, long ago as men count time, but perhaps many times before *that*. I wish that I could offer you a magic shield, or a magic sword with which to arm yourselves, but such things are stories for women and weaklings. You must arm yourselves with your faith and do battle as men do, and be content, when you die, that your God will bear up the righteous among you."

The Bahktapur Mail

The tiny newspaper has only two rooms, an editorial office and composition / press room where an ancient flat-bed press rumbles and sighs, rumbles and sighs. Though the *Bahktapur Mail* is printed in English, the linotype is German, and occasionally letter forms and umlauts

strange-looking to English readers creep into the text, and lend a curious tone to the columns.

Editor Madnipravat welcomes the investigators, and happily discusses the Black Man, whose appearances have incidentally driven up circulation to several times normal.

Except for a chronology of appearances, which began about three weeks previously, and the dates of which one glance shows to be completely random, the news files contain no information. Everyone is certain that the Black Man has been seen, and that he is connected with accidental falls, hunting deaths, and disappearances, but no one ever seems to see him where something bad has happened, nor does anyone know anything except that the appearances of the Black Man and the injuries and deaths associated with him seem to roughly coincide.

Except in Lt. Bixby's case, even the names of those reporting sightings have been ignored, or were never learned, or in some cases probably never existed. "Oh, no, no, no, gentlemen," Madnipravat admonishes, "your big papers, your New Delhi government newspaper, your London *Times*, why they can afford to send out reporters who stir things around and ask questions. But here there is only *me*. If I am out reporting, who will write the paper, and make sure the spellings are right?"

Madnipravat must watch his health, too. When he is sick, the pressman simply prints the correspondence—usually then there is no news at all.

The good editor/publisher gets news by letter from correspondents, by episodic messenger from the countryside, by proclamation from the local government, and by an evening stroll around Bahktapur. Though he can tell them lots of town gossip and rumors, he actually knows nothing about the Black Man.

"Perhaps when you return, we might meet so that I can record your expedition?" It is likely that the investigators do not bother, whether or not they succeed in their mission.

The Major's Files

Major Singeon keeps a log of his activities and meetings which he obligingly allows the investigators to browse through. He also opens his letter files, but selectively, since some correspondence is privileged or of a personal nature, or is such that parts might provide commercial advantage.

Nonetheless, though they cannot see much of what he might offer, the investigators come away understanding why Singeon asked their help. The letters and telegrams from shopkeepers, planters, drayers, warehousemen, the Hyderabad Lines railroad, and a score of greater and lesser politicians make it plain that the lives and economy of the region are being severely affected, and often halted by the fears and rumors paralyzing the people.

Though the reports are specific about the interruptions and losses of livelihood, none of them contain first-

hand observations of the Black Man. He is always reported by someone else to a foreman or to a village head man, who in turn reports to someone else up an increasingly white-skinned chain of command.

Remarkably and frustratingly, in all of Bahktapur there is scarcely a shred of evidence or information. If the investigators want to learn the reality of the Black Man, they need to go elsewhere. Other investigations here come to the same sorts of conclusions, but let the investigators decide when they actually want to head north.

To Peerut

ON SOME morning, then, Bahmoud awakens the investigators before sunrise with tea and an enormous breakfast. In the town square are three elephants and their drivers. Tents and food have already been loaded upon the pack elephant. Bahmoud proudly introduces the elephants as Nogtha, Padam, and Howra. Bahmoud introduces the three *mahouts* or drivers as Kimba (for Nogtha), Karikal (for Padam), and Ritsar (for Howra the pack elephant). The nominal leader of the party is Al'heesk, a quiet middle-aged man who coordinates matters so smoothly that no one notices him in the wake of Bahmoud's jokes and exuberance. But since Bahmoud is Singeon's favorite, the other servants give Bahmoud wide latitude as long as Englishmen—or the investigators—are around.

Bahmoud climbs up Howra's ears and stands on top of the luggage already piled in Howra's saddle. Ritsar takes any bags and puts them in front of Howra and then shouts in Hindi at Howra. The elephant picks up the bags with her trunk and lifts them up to Bahmoud, who secures them to the saddle.

The investigators can board in a dignified fashion via a ladder, if the keeper wishes, or for comic relief also be lifted by the elephant's trunk in order to get on top. Each must receive a successful Sanity roll to keep calm and refrain from squirming out of the elephant's grasp. Shouts of encouragement from onlookers do not help the composure of the investigators, and those who have been previously grabbed by tentacles may need to mount from some nearby balcony, accompanied by general mirth which thereafter halves Credit Rating in Bahktapur.

Elephants have a strong, distinctive odor. Nowhere is this more apparent than atop one. Those accustomed to riding horses or camels immediately realize that this is a very different experience. The 'saddle' is a wooden platform, five feet long and three feet wide, covered with light padding and a few worn blankets. Around the edge of the platform is a one-foot high railing, to keep riders from falling off. Although the platform is only between 8 and 10 feet off the ground, it seems a long way down, a

distance one would be hesitant to jump. The keeper should keep in mind that investigators attempting difficult physical tasks under stress must receive DEX x5 rolls to keep from falling off. In such circumstances, landing on the ground places the investigator very near the feet of a potentially panicky animal.

The mahout rides on the neck of the elephant with one leg draped over each side of the creature's neck. The mahout has two means of communication with his elephant, his voice and his hammer. One mahout barks out loud, distinct commands to his elephant while the next leans down and speaks into the animal's ear.

To insure that the elephant follows his commands, each mahout carries a large blunt hammer, tied to his waist with a leather thong. He uses the hammer to bonk the elephant on the head, instructing the elephant what to do. A rap on a human skull with one of these hammers would probably cause death or unconsciousness, but an elephant's skull is thick enough to safely absorb the blows.



Kimba

A watching investigator quickly picks up the system. Bonk the right side of the head for a right turn, the left to go left, two quick strikes in the middle to stop, and three fast strikes and a vocal command to begin movement.

Kimba And Nogtha

Kimba is an older mahout, and has a very gentle way with Nogtha. He seldom uses his hammer. To give instructions he grabs hold of Nogtha's ear and leans far down under

Nogtha's ear to speak his commands. Any investigator making a Listen roll realizes that Kimba is talking to himself nearly non-stop. A successful Hindi roll understands that he is telling childish riddles to Nogtha. Kimba ceases his chatter when other Indians are within earshot.

Nogtha is the oldest of the three elephants and is very large. Due to his age, he has extremely poor vision. Nogtha is the best-behaved of the elephants.

Karikal And Padam

Karikal feels bad-tempered. He uses a little more force with his hammer than is probably necessary, and if the elephant is not doing exactly what he wants, he berates it with curses. A successful Hindu roll establishes that Karikal is a foul-mouthed person. He is grouchy and sulen if disturbed in any way.



Karikal

Even if the investigators tell Bahmoud that they need to stop to relieve themselves, or if they wish to examine something, Karikal glares petulantly at them.

Padam is an exceptionally strong bull elephant. When Karikal is in a good mood, he sometimes boasts of Padam's amazing strength.



Ritsar

Ritsar And Howra

Ritsar is often distracted. A successful Anthropology roll reveals that as a devout Hindu, his thoughts are absorbed often in meditation and prayer rather than directed to his work. From time to time Bahmoud yells at him in Hindi, telling him to watch what he's doing. Bahmoud swears, declaring Ritsar the most backward man on earth.

To defend himself in the eyes of the investigators, Ritsar replies in exceedingly broken English, saying that he is not backward, but that he believes the old ways are the best ways. Bahmoud spits at this but does not extend the argument.

Ritsar's elephant is Howra. She is in her early twenties and is perky, but shy and submissive. She is the pack elephant, and comes last in the line of three. She must merely follow Howra, which gives Ritsar's mind plenty of time to wander

On The Road

At first the investigators may find themselves holding on to the railings of the saddles, but the gait of an elephant is very rhythmic, and passengers soon learn to anticipate and enjoy the steady rocking to left and right. Unlike camels or horses, there is very little up-and-down movement. Any investigator failing a CON x5 roll experiences nausea and motion sickness for the first 2D6 hours of the journey. Bahmoud shouts out encouraging and entirely unhelpful remarks from his perch on Howra.

The ride leads out of town toward Jodphur. The way is wide enough to allow carts to pass the elephants. Small farms line both sides of the road. After nearly an hour, the mahouts turn the elephants onto a narrower track which leads into wooded hills to the north. Bahmoud explains that the road goes up through the hills for many miles before it drops down to the Indus, and then follows the river up to Peerut.

The trail crosses flat grasslands, then the vegetation becomes increasingly dense as the caravan moves into the forest. Dense tropical forests have a great volume of plant life. Bahmoud tells the investigators that in this region there are still many wild animals such as tigers and dholes. (If asked, he explains that dholes are wild dogs which hunt the forest in packs.) This is another

advantage of the elephants, he explains, as neither the dholes nor the tigers bother elephants or those associated with them.

As the journey continues through the forested hills, Bahmoud takes the opportunity to ask every kind of question he can come up with about the investigators' homeland. He takes a great interest in things British, though he is unsure just where Britain is. Still, he hopes to go there someday. His constant questions are alternately irritating and charming.

The course of the day takes them over several small lines of hills, and as the day draws to a close the group works their way to the top of a low pass. Far away, the mighty Indus twists across the lowlands beyond.

The Camp

Dusk falls as the party comes to a large clearing, one long-used as a campsite by travelers on this road. The servants make camp with astonishing efficiency, while the mahouts take their charges to sport in a nearby stream. Returning, they hobble the elephants' front feet together with lengths of heavy chain. This way they can move about to eat, but cannot travel far.

A large tent has been set up for the investigators; the servants will sleep where they can. Dinner is curried rice with bits of chicken and scalding-strength peppers, washed down by aromatic Indian beer. Dessert is fresh fruit. All fall asleep contentedly.

During the night, distant howling awakens anyone receiving a successful Listen roll. "Dholes," someone whispers. They sound far off, but they are the oddest dog howls the investigators have ever heard.

The night is nearly over when a piercing scream shatters everyone's sleep. Bleary eyes turn to Al'heesk, and the word comes back via Bahmoud: "Tiger! Far away. Never mind, go back to sleep." But the investigators may be pardoned if they do not do so.

The River

The next morning is chilly, but warms rapidly. After four hours of steady movement through dense jungle, the trail emerges onto the flood-plain of the river. The Indus flows a mere few hundred yards west from the party. Bahmoud says that the group will take a short break soon at a spot where the river widens. In this place, he says, it is traditional to allow the elephants to bathe in the river and drink.

In about fifteen minutes the group comes to the shore. The river is most of a mile across here, slow-moving, and impressively muddy. The rock and sand of these shallows offers excellent footing and support to the heavy elephants. Anyone with the Geology skill notices almost unconsciously the characteristic simultaneous build-up of the banks and the comparative shallowness of the breadth of the river. The Indus, like all rivers, changes her course because the silt she carries over time raises her

banks much higher than the surrounding countryside. When she breaks through, as she always does, great inundations occur. The last great change was in the late eighteenth century, when the entire course of the river shifted many miles west from Sukkur.

Bahmoud asks everyone to dismount and the mahouts pitch in together to remove the saddles. The animals seem happy about being allowed to bathe, and as each one is freed, it hurries into the water. Soon the elephants are wading in the water and spraying each other with their trunks.

Bahmoud leaps in, swimming and splashing with the elephants. He encourages the investigators to join in the fun. The mahouts sit at the water's edge and amuse themselves watching the aquatic festivities. Peerut is not far beyond.

Peerut

THE VILLAGE proves to be four or five dozen mud huts spaced among broad-branched trees not far from the river. A crowd quickly gathers as the elephants appear. Life in Peerut is basic—talk, birth, work, marriage, and death. Sometimes the whole village trudges together to some nearby festival, but entertainments are few. Strangers riding elephants is plenty of reason to leave the fields for a while, come and stare, and gossip with neighbors while looking on. Bahmoud strides about self-importantly, announcing the presence of his very important charges. But Al'heesk has already found the village spokesman, and leads the elderly man forward. Bahmoud translates.

Old Patil is happy to answer whatever questions the investigators pose. Indeed, the Black Man was seen by his fourth son, Young Patil, a youth in this village and here today. Yes, many more have seen the Black Man, but they are in other villages, or were travelers bound to other places.

Possible Answers

Young Patil waits diffidently at some distance from the great men who have come. He approaches reluctantly when his father gestures. He will tell his story in the next sub-section. If the investigators ask anything else of Old Patil in the meantime, Old Patil will answer, and can go on to answer three basic questions if asked.

- It is well-known here that the Black Man appears to signal great changes. He is an avatar of great Vishnu. His presence reaffirms to the wise that ways of life which bring earthly success are of no account on the Wheel of Existence. This time we think the Black Man appears at the end of an age of rule. Thus the British will soon leave. It is simple.



Elephants along the Indus

- The Black Man's coming inspires awe, because his appearance confirms that a time of trouble and upset approaches. Because of that, and because his appearance is unusual, those who see him are inspired with fear. Sometimes they panic, and run and stumble, and hurt themselves. That is the source of these stories of the Black Man's evilness. People are foolish: those who see the Black Man are only facing an aspect of the inevitable, and that all of us do daily.
- The Black Man appears near Peerut, because Peerut is the center of the world. Those who live here have always said it to have been the place first made. Surely everyone knows *that*.

The Young Patil's Encounter

Young Patil is shy and diffident. He is in awe of the visitors almost as much as he was of the Black Man, and he stands in his father's shadow always. Failing a successful Psychology roll to draw him out, he tells merely a version of what his father has already said. However, with a successful Idea roll, his questioners guess that he might have more to say in private, or at another time, and can seek him out again.

With a successful Psychology roll, Young Patil tells quite a different story, even with his father present. He was on his way to fish in a quiet eddy of the Indus when

he noticed a silvery gleam near the riverbank. There is a moral tale often-repeated hereabouts in which Krishna loses a dagger or amulet, searches for it fruitlessly, only to find that he has lost nothing when he stops regretting his loss. With the thought of treasure half in mind, Young Patil went to see what shone so.

As he leaned over the bank, he sensed a cool darkness behind him. But before he could turn, he found that he had slipped noiselessly into the water, and was looking up, toward a strangely black man as polished and still as a statue.

Young Patil tried to climb out of the water, but his limbs refused to function well, and he could not get hold of the bank. Panicked and gasping, he tried to move away, but felt a strange compulsion to return when the Black Man suddenly threw a hideous white snake into the water, swimming close to him. Young Patil tried to scream, and suddenly found himself again on the riverbank, dry and unharmed. Not far away, the Black Man strode noiselessly through the tall grasses, then disappeared from view.

"I was trembling and horrified. The Black Man had tried to drive me mad. No wonder so many people have been injured by him, or vanished! I turned and ran as hard and as fast as I could to reach home."

The Black Man

THE KEEPER should now allow what further questions the investigators wish. The sole detail remaining that must be conveyed is the general agreement that the banks of the Indus are the place most frequented by the Black Man. The keeper might also be alert for chances to point out that the investigators must still attempt to fulfill their original commission.

To the riverbank, then, they finally come. Philosophies deal with the watersheds and riverbanks of life, so this setting is an appropriate one, and the riverbank is also a place favored by the elephant, that creature in Hindu terms who is the archetype of wisdom.

Young Patil will point out the approximate location of his encounter, but will not actually go to the place. His gestures are good enough. The investigators even find (with a successful Track roll) what seem to be Young Patil's imprints walking to the shore, and then running away. But there is no second set of footprints as he described.

But there is something else. Across the river, outlined by the high, golden grass, a dark figure moves with purpose, shining, winking jewel-like in the high sun. If anyone has binoculars or a telescope, he or she sees clearly that the figure is someone very like the Black Man who has been described.

The Meeting

Presumably the hunt is on. The elephants can safely swim the river, and even carry their passengers if they do not mind being awash in the water as the beasts go. This leaves the camp servants on the other side, left out of the pursuit, and just as happy about it.

The rest of the day can be summarized or played out. Catching up to the Black Man is impossible. The day is hot and draining. The elephants must be watered frequently. There are thickets, groves, and ravines where elephant travel is hard work or impossible, and the Black Man continues to be glimpsed but never reached, mirage-like. The investigators begin to suspect that the Black Man is indeed supernatural, so elusive is he that he might never be caught up with. Certainly shouting has no effect. At some point the mahouts decide there is not enough light left to re-cross the river, and all of them spend a chilly, hungry, irresolute evening.

By the morning, the mahouts have consulted among themselves, and beseech the investigators to hunt no more. They feel endangered, and feel that their families are threatened with extinction by this inhuman adversary. Surely the great English soldier Major Singeon did not intend this. They are only simple mahouts. They will wait

in Peerut forever for the great investigators, who may meanwhile hunt the Black Man to their full satisfaction.

Whether or not the investigators agree to lose the mobility that the elephants provide, they probably will want to re-cross the river to have breakfast. As the party nears the bank, ask for Spot Hidden rolls. A success notices something flashing in the water.

Not long after history began to be written down, Alexander the Great reached the Indus, bringing with him a whisper from that most Indian of Greek philosophers, Heraclitus. In the thousands of years since, the Indus has rolled to the sea uninterrupted—the same river, and yet always different rivers, and beside the single Indus millions of human lives lived and ended, and yet in sum were a single stream of life, ultimately related. Today that stream of life makes a minute diversion.

The Exchange

As the investigators come to the bank and consider diving to inspect whatever is twinkling in the water, they certainly remember Young Patil's experience, and some keep watch for the Black Man along the shore. The shining thing is hard to find in the water, easy to see from shore. Abruptly it winks out, and as quickly the Black Man stands beside them.

He is jet black, glittering with water and sun like obsidian, human-shaped in all respect, fluid in movement, but dead-eyed as a zombie. He is not human.

The investigators do not have time to consider the matter. He makes the slightest of hand movements, and everyone's perspective ripples and changes.

Each investigator undergoes a different shift of consciousness. One becomes a vulture, flying high in the air, looking for carrion. Another (like the bewildered Young Patil to whom the Black Man threw a worm) becomes a fish, seeking a quiet pool to sleep in. A third becomes a butterfly flitting along the bank, trying to find the right leaf to lay eggs beneath. A fourth is a tiny lizard, dreaming of a lizard queen with whom to mate. A fifth is an ant, searching industriously for food for the hive, and so on. But only one, the investigator with the lowest Sanity or else an investigator with good ability to roleplay, finds himself looking out huge eyes past an enormous nose—he or she has become Padam the elephant.

Briefly explain the new role to each player, giving enough information and motive that it is possible for each player to make a general statement of action and intention. Each new consciousness is sharp and bright, of a narrowness of purpose (yet also armed with superb physical senses) which endows each investigator-creature with full confidence in his or her new form.

At the same time, glimmerings of human consciousness hold on. Their names still have significance to themselves, and when they look up or down on their flopping, wobbling bodies—bodies in turn endowed with the exchanged mentalities of fish or ants or vultures—they feel

mild regret and concern, as well as the amused lust of things which will soon feed.

And, if the keeper wishes, the mahouts other than Ritsar are also seized, as is Bahmoud.

But even as they swim or soar, each feels his or her human feelings fading away, like music dropping out of all reckoning.

The Keeper's Decision

Now the keeper must choose between a soft conclusion and one potentially violent and deadly. He or she can narrate the investigators back into their bodies, or can call for Sanity rolls. If a Sanity roll fails, then the investigator is locked into the animal or insect body, at least until Ritsar's prayers take effect, and perhaps forever if the investigator goes insane while in this other form.

If the investigator-Padam goes insane, unloose the berserk bull elephant to attack the helpless, flopping human forms. Investigator consciousness should come back into each body quickly, to allow them to Dodge and otherwise defend against the horrible charge, and the defenders all should perceive that they are being attacked by something that used to be one of them. Such understanding may carry a nominal Sanity cost.

Recovery

When the attack is concluded, and the fate of all involved has been decided, the expedition again sees the entity with jet black skin, quietly naked. It gestures stiffly and inexplicably, but as though as to say, "Enough." As quickly as it appeared, it slips into the tall grass which grows thickly near the river. There are footprints in the soft dirt at the place where the Black Man stood. They turn into the tall grass and become difficult to discern. A Track roll follows the path through the grass for a distance, then the trail emerges again near the Indus. At this point the bank is of eroded silt which drops about twenty feet straight down to the river. The tracks lead up to the river and then stop. In the shallows beyond is a familiar shining, which fades and then vanishes too. The Black Man is gone.

The mahouts and Bahmoud stagger to their feet, each exclaiming their confusion and fear except for Ritsar, whose wide eyes are thankful at the return from madness of his fellows. "You became madmen!" he exclaims. "You frightened the elephants! I prayed hard for you!"

As long as the investigators consider the incident, only Ritsar's testimony offers any reason for their recovery. Perhaps some recover, and others stay mad. All should have come back to human form when the Black Man indicated enough.

Though they cannot help remembering what the wise men of Bahktapur said, the truth and the non-truth of this incident begins to blend indissolubly. At last they are only thankful for their return to their original shapes.

Padam Possessed

Padam rears up wildly and trumpets, as the investigator struggles to learn how to manipulate a fleshy body of this sort.

In the confusion, Nogtha lurches backward and tries to run, throwing the ant-brained Kimba-form to the ground. Howra backs away and cowers in the grass. Ritsar cries out in alarm, but his words cannot be understood. Padam continues to thrash about. Perhaps the elephant suddenly turns and begins running through the shallow water upstream, then just as quickly begins to fear the water and charges back through the expedition. Inspect the elephant's statistics for possibilities, and always keep in mind that an investigator-Padam who stays sane will behave much differently than one insane, whose snapped mind can think only of itself.

The attack, if any, should be over relatively quickly.

If the attack persists, then the investigators should be given a few moments in which to form a plan of some sort. They probably carry rifles, though not elephant guns. Perhaps they swim the river. Perhaps Padam fears fire, or perhaps the investigator-Padam regains his Sanity.

Conclusion

The investigators have fulfilled their mission: they have encountered the Black Man, and after that he does not reappear. This gives them great cachet with landowners and merchants in the area, and with British and Indian officials, but not with the peasants, who knew that the fearfulness would pass no matter what anyone did.

Upon hearing the tale, Muomar The Wise seeks out Ritsar, and befriends the valiant man of faith—a good course for India, but toleration is a path which that great land would lose sight of for a time.

Accepting responsibility for eliminating the Black Man brings each a Credit Rating increase of 1D10 points.

If the investigators had to kill one of their fellows in order to escape, each loses 1D6 Sanity points.

If young Bahmoud survives, the investigators earn his undying friendship, something not to be despised as he later makes his way up the rungs of the Congress Party.

But ghosts walk for their own purposes. Old Patil, who has grown up with all the legends as near their originals as possible, believes that the Black Man is unknowable. The players know that the British peacefully departed India after the Second World War, when the echoes of empire mocked their sympathetic perceptions of the idea of civilization, just as the investigators perceptions of consciousness may have been challenged by their riverbank experiences. The investigators may come to understandings as enlightening as those thrust upon the last foreign rulers of the sub-continent. Those investiga-

Who Was That Black Man?

For the purposes of the scenario, which is mostly concerned with exoticism and perception, it doesn't matter. Maybe the truth of the Black Man should wait till a later time, when all can be revealed.

If the apparition has to be Mythos-based, then by all means he is an avatar of Nyarlathotep—some sort of emissary who seeks that something be accomplished or that some way be opened and maintained. He is certainly connected with the shiny object in the water. Research could indicate that everyone must see the shiny object before seeing the Black Man: perhaps the object is something as prosaic as a Gate Box, or perhaps something much more interesting.

However, in this wide world not everything needs connect to the Mythos. The keeper's scope here is absolute.

tors who now succeed in a final Sanity roll may add 1D6+1 Sanity points to indicate the peace gained within their souls, no matter how else the adventure concludes.

And the Black Man is not seen near Peerut until memories of this incident are very dim.

Statistics

BAHMOUD, Age 14, Friend and Guide

STR 8 CON 11 SIZ 9 INT 11 POW 11
DEX 17 APP 10 EDU 5 SAN 55 HP 10

Damage Bonus: 0.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Brew Good Tea 69%, Dodge 64%, English 45%, Hindi 76%, Shine Objects for Change 73%, Tell Jokes 26%, Urdu 55%.

Maj. DAVID SINGEON, Age 44, Commandant, Bahktapur (Sind) Garrison

STR 12 CON 13 SIZ 9 INT 12 POW 7
DEX 6 APP 13 EDU 11 SAN 35 HP 11

Damage Bonus: 0.

Weapons: .38 Webley Revolver 41%, damage 1D10

Skills: Military Administration 54%, Persuade 62%.

Lt. ROGER BIXBY, Age 36, Second Bangalore Artillery (Det.)

STR 9 CON 14 SIZ 11 INT 8 POW 12
DEX 7 APP 12 EDU 8 SAN 21 HP (13)7

Damage Bonus: 0.

Weapons: .38 Webley Revolver 49%, damage 1D10

Lee-Enfield Rifle 33%, damage 2D6+3

Skills: Consume Pimms 89%, Cthulhu Mythos 3%, Operate Field Artillery 68%.

KARIKAL, Age 22, Cranky and Violent Mahout

STR 11 CON 13 SIZ 16 INT 12 POW 10
DEX 11 APP 14 EDU 8 SAN 50 HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Hammer 57%, damage 1D6+2 +db

Fist 73%, damage 1D3 +db

Skills: Abuse Innocent Animals 50%, Camp Cooking 73%, Fast Talk 64%, Ride Elephant 67%.

PADAM, Strong Bull Elephant

STR 62 CON 34 SIZ 59 POW 17
DEX 11 HP 47 Move 11

Damage Bonus: +6D6.

Weapons: Trunk 50%, damage Grapple

Rear & Plunge 25%, damage 8D6 +db

Trample 25%, damage 4D6 +db to downed foe

Tusk Gore 25%, damage 6D6 +db

Hurl Huge Object 40%, damage 1D10 +6D3

Can attack once per melee round. If the trunk grapples a victim, the victim may escape by successfully matching his strength against half the elephant's strength. The trunk does no damage itself, but each round following the initial grapple the victim can be automatically hit by any of the elephant's attacks.

Armor: 8-point skin.

Skills: Listen 75%, Scent 90%.

KIMBA, Age 38, Kind and Gentle Mahout

STR 14 CON 10 SIZ 13 INT 14 POW 7
DEX 8 APP 11 EDU 5 SAN 35 HP 10

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Hammer 31%, damage 1D6+2 +db

Skills: Ride Elephant 79%, Tell Riddle 93%, Tell Funny Riddle 8%.

NOGTHA, Old Elephant with Poor Eyesight

STR 48 CON 30 SIZ 62 POW 12
DEX 10 HP 46 Move 9

Damage Bonus: +6D6.

Weapons: Trunk 40%, damage Grapple

Trample 40%, damage 4D6 +db

Armor: 8-point skin.

Skills: Listen 80%, Scent 95%.

RITSAR, Age 43, Serious and Devout Mahout

STR 13 CON 9 SIZ 7 INT 15 POW 12
DEX 17 APP 16 EDU 2 SAN 58 HP 9

Damage Bonus: 0.

Weapons: Hammer 10%, damage 1D6+2

Skills: Pray Earnestly 93%, Pitch Tent 71%, Ride Elephant 57%.

HOWRA, Young Feisty Elephant

STR 50 CON 26 SIZ 58 POW 14
DEX 6 HP 42 Move 10

Damage Bonus: +6D6.

Weapons: Trunk 50%, damage Grapple

Trample 50%, damage 4D6 +db

Armor: 8-point skin.

Skills: Listen 65%, Scent 80%.

THE BLACK MAN

STR 11 CON 13 SIZ 12 INT 22 POW 22
DEX 22 HP 13

Damage Bonus: 0.

Weapons: none.

Armor: none, but not touchable by magic or physical means.

Spells: none.

Sanity Loss: It costs 0/1D3 Sanity points to see him.

Sleigh Ride

In this lengthy adventure the investigators journey across Siberia in search of a lost race, and find human hearts colder even than the frozen wastes.

HORSES have been supplanted in most parts of the world by the new and shiny automobile. Yet many places remain where Ford or Peugeot are only rumors. Siberia is one such place. Horse sledges have raced along the frozen rivers for centuries, and in the 1920s they remain the most practical way to transport men and goods in winter across one of the world's most infamous and desolate stretches.

An ancient anthropological riddle leads the investigators to Siberia. They travel by freighter, train, horse sledge, and reindeer. The perils of winter and the suspicions of Soviet secret police make the trip perhaps the most fearful passage in this book, and a worthy interlude in any globe-trotting campaign. After this expedition, investigators may choose to stay home by the fire for a while.

This scenario is set in the middle of the year. The year is nominally 1926, although it can be set at any time after the various expeditionary forces have withdrawn from Siberia—or before, if the keeper wants to research who was occupying what, and when.

This is by far the longest scenario in this book, and if each episode is played out, it will need at least two sessions to complete.

The Situation

In the wilderness of central Siberia certain local tribes speak of winter gods who rule the forbidding snow-clad forests. These gods help the tribes through the worst storms, but these gods demand special tribute in return.

Below the surface, in great caverns within the ancient Angara Shield, a community of large, hairy humanoids ekes out wintertime by taking food from surface human tribes. While the tribes view these extortions by their fickle hirsute gods to be practical contracts, the truth is more ominous. Deep within their cavern home, these giant creatures in turn must make their own peace with a dark and truly vengeful god from under the earth. Their god will be content only with regular sacrifices of living flesh, humans taken from the Yakut tribes.

In the months to come, the investigators accompany Dr. Chance to this perilous center, and there face the terror that has haunted the humanoids for millennia.

The Narrative

DR. BROEPHYLE E. CHANCE is the cause and catalyst of this scenario. One or more of the investigators should know him as a childhood friend, a classmate, or a professor from their university days.

The investigators run into Dr. Chance at a college reunion, scientific lecture, or an occult conference. It has been years since they last saw him, yet Chance greets them as if it were only yesterday. He has changed considerably. The furious intensity in the eyes remains, as does the lumbering gait. He is like a locomotive.

Of the intervening years, Chance speaks vaguely of a long hunt, rapidly nearing completion. "And you? What have you done?" He is fiercely interested in their doings, and seems to appraise them as they talk.

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Chance leaves abruptly. "I must go! I shall call you soon. There is something that might interest you!"

Dr. Broephyle E. Chance

Chance never uses his first name, and only the nosy know it. He is an abrupt, excitable man, standing 6'2" with a broad girth, lumbering gait, muscular arms, and a black beard as large and unruly as its owner. He is a dilettante as much as a professor. He rarely teaches, relying on his sizeable personal wealth. His gadfly enthusiasms and preference for logic and supposition (rather than for evidence) have made him a pariah in academia since he began to publish. No reputable journal will now even review his papers, and so he publishes his monographs himself, in little paper-bound pamphlets.

Chance is, however, more than an enthusiast. He has become a man on a quest which drives his every thought. He intends to prove the continuing existence of *Dryopithecus giganteus*, whom some would call the abominable snowman. In truth, his quest only partly has to do with



Dr. Broephyle E.
Chance

Passports And Visas

The investigators need passports if they are going to travel outside of their home country. It is not possible to get visas to travel inside the USSR, except by completing the proper forms at the point of entry. There is often a wait of a few days while the visa application is processed. Visa applications must be accompanied by a detailed description of the destination and reason for travel. Travel within USSR is tightly controlled.

Any investigator who has smuggling or counter-revolutionary contacts can learn that it is possible to get into the USSR by claiming to be associated with a foreign company operating in Siberia. Contacts capable of providing forged Canadian, British or United States passports could also procure the necessary papers to identify the investigators as surveyors for Standard Oil or General Electric.

If they ask, the investigators learn that they may find it difficult to re-enter the United States after their passports have been stamped in the Soviet Union. There is a chance that their passports will be revoked. A vigilant State Department is still keeping a firm lid on the Red Menace. Though the United States respects the idea of free travel, the policy of restricting the international movement of its citizens began during World War One, and has continued (with a succession of forbidden countries) into the 1990s, a rarity among the so-called Atlantic community.

giganteus. Chance wants to convince his small-minded academic foes that he is right, and that his is the side of honor and of true scholarly endeavor.

Chance Meeting

Weeks after their fleeting encounter, the investigators receive a note from Chance. He is outfitting an expedition and he needs companions he can trust. Can they meet to discuss it? He names a bohemian coffee house as the rendezvous.

Chance greets the investigators warmly and loudly, and wastes no time launching into his story. He says that he has made an important discovery, and is now certain that his life's culmination is about to be realized. He only has to get there before anyone else.

"We have been misled by freak sightings, turned our eyes toward the Himalayas, where systematic search is impossible, where the attention of so many showmen, shysters, and treasure hunters has made our quarry impossibly wary.

"Yes, of course I speak of the *yeti*, the abominable snowman, the bigfoot, the sasquatch—names given by those who know him best. Evidence abounds! Hard, solid evidence!"

He draws a large object out of his tweed coat pocket and holds it up reverently, as though it was the Hope Diamond. The object is like a human molar, only it is nine times larger.

"*Dryopithecus giganteus*," Chance intones. "We have found teeth and limbs going back six million years. This elder race has been watching us since our infancy, and only now have we begun to discern them, for they are still alive! I can prove it at last! We are about to bring our race out of blindness—the world will never forget us!"

The molar came from a Chinese apothecary. Luck was with Chance—had he been a day later, the fellow would have ground it up and put the dust in some philter! Chance passes the molar around: successful Archaeology, Biology, or Medicine rolls agree: the tooth looks genuine, and seems to be amazingly fresh. It proves to Chance that the *giganteus* represented by old fossil remains did not die out, but has instead grown in stature, perhaps benefiting from brutal competition with each other and with the rapidly breeding humans. He is sure that some of the species survive in the wastes of Siberia. "We'll shoot a specimen and bring it back!"

Chance demands total secrecy. "Swear to me you will tell no one!" He assures nervous investigators that he has everything arranged so there will be no problems getting into the USSR. "I have some important friends in Russia who have managed to set everything up." Chance hopes to get the expedition off within the month. "We must utilize winter, as only then is *giganteus* forced out of the hills in search of food." (He does not mention problems

re-entering the United States: charitably, he may not know. See the conclusion for more information.)

Chance wants the investigators to join him in the search. "Our sudden meeting was no accident, gentleman. It was fated. We are destined to find gigantes together! Say you will come." If the investigators accept, Chance beams, shakes hands warmly, and makes his exit, spilling coffee and taking someone else's hat by mistake. "I'll call soon. Get your passports ready. Farewell!"

If the investigators decline, or defer, Chance's disappointment is great. "Please give it serious thought. I know I can find no finer companions." He keeps up the appeals.

Research

Research reveals more about Dr. Chance and the international hunt for the abominable snowman, as the Asian *giganteus* is frequently known. Chance has been trying to track down the fabled creatures for the last ten years. He has not met with success. The scholarly journals ignore his theories as newspaper twaddle. While Chance is not the only person who has been doing research in this field, none of the others appear to have anything concrete either. No leads point to Siberia or to the Yakuts. The search is much further south.

Abominable Snowmen

Dryopithecus giganteus is an ape-like creature named by a Dr. Pilgrim in 1910, from a molar discovered in the Siwalik Range of India. More of the unnaturally huge teeth have been discovered there, as well as potentially-related limb bones of a smaller stature than Chance describes. Scientific literature makes no connection between such fossils and the living myth of the *yeti*.

Asian Explorers

Among Asian explorers and travelers is Jonas Stadling, a scientist who traveled in Siberia in the 1900s. Despite some hints in the text, nothing can be found that relates to gigantes. Such references can only be found in Stadling's unedited accounts, of which few copies remain.

Departure

In a couple of weeks, Chance calls. Everything is ready. The train for San Francisco leaves on Friday, and he meets the investigators at the station with the tickets.

In San Francisco they board a freighter bound for Yokohama, Japan. The voyage is boring and uneventful.

Chance spends a large portion of each day in his room poring over the notes he has made. He is enthusiastic and confident. He goes to great lengths to explain the importance of the molar. He shares the Stadling notes with the investigators, encouraging them to study the sketchy diagrams so that they will be able recognize the signs of the creatures he is sure they will find. He also encourages

'Notes on Siberia'

This manuscript was written in 1900, by Jonas Stadling. It eventually became *Through Siberia*, a travel book published in England.

Notes on Siberia comprises the unedited, typewritten notes which Stadling compiled upon his return from Russia. Only a few carbons were made before the daughter book was published. There are detailed maps, sketches, and rambling accounts of many indigenous groups, focusing on language, technology, and myth cycles. Stadling's attitude is condescending, a fault common to his age, but he was a keen observer.

Stadling devotes several chapters to the Yakuts, a people indigenous to Siberia for several millennia. The inhabitants of one village worshipped Tabba, a demigod protector against the winter's evils. Stadling chose not to stay through Siberia's winter, and thus did not witness the tribute ceremonies to Tabba at first-hand. However, he sketched several of the artifacts associated with the tribute, including a seven-pointed cloak embroidered with the image of the demigod. Tabba is depicted as a giant, hairy humanoid, and as such resembles a specimen of the extinct species *Dryopithecus giganteus*.

them to attempt to learn the basics of the Yakut dialect as Stadling outlines it. Every investigator who spends a few hours a day during the trip learns to speak Yakut at a starting percentage of INT x1.

Chance's Cabin

Chance keeps his cabin locked. Inside, he keeps secret items in his large, black trunk. Opening the trunk requires only a successful Locksmith roll, with a 20 percentile bonus due to the simplicity of the lock.

- ☐ Research books include a Russian dictionary, an unedited copy of Stadling's diary, and Stadling's Notes on Siberia.
- ☐ A sealed envelope containing letters on the stationery of Standard Oil identifying the investigators as engineers bound for Siberia to do survey work. With the letters is a passport for a Mr. Douglas Smith, whose photo is that of Dr. Chance. Chance's own passport is also present.
- ☐ Voluminous notes on his decade-long hunt. These reveal the depths of Chance's obsession with abominable snowmen, and their historical antecedents.
- ☐ A small map of the Trans-Siberian railway, and a much larger one with the route to Stadling's village pencilled in.
- ☐ Brief notes estimate the stature of gigantes. Added numeric scribbles can be deciphered with a halved Know roll as the dimensions for a coffin to hold such a creature.
- ☐ Vague notes concern medication. A Pharmacy roll reveals that it is some form of very powerful tranquilizer. Chance's notations on dosage appear to be extreme.
- ☐ The rest of the trunk is devoted to sundry expedition equipment, including binoculars, tripod, camera, com-

passes, and assorted trinket gifts for the Yakuts, and cold-weather gear.

- Three canteens full of a clear, odorless liquid. Each contains one quart of tranquillizer. If taken internally by investigators, it can cause serious harm. If the investigator makes a CON x4 roll he feels dizzy for a while, otherwise he falls into a dangerous near-coma state for 2D6 hours.
- At the bottom of the trunk, poorly hidden amid the clothes, is a disassembled hunting rifle. A Rifle skill roll indicates that it has been specially made for shooting darts. A metal box with the gun contains several hideously large darts and hypodermic syringes.
- Hidden in the toes of Chance's heavy snow boots is four thousand dollars in gold.

USSR

CHANGING ships at Yokohama, Chance explains how they are to enter the USSR. Dimitri Zhurkov, an old friend in his debt, has procured a set of papers which identify the group as engineers for Standard Oil of California—or Indiana, or New Jersey, as appro-

The USSR In 1926

Communism is the light of world, and Lenin is gospel. Stalin is consolidating power, but his implacable police state has not yet arrived.

By the mid-1920s, every major country in the world had recognized the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, except the United States. This makes the usual entrance procedures (two questionnaires with photos, one in duplicate, one in triplicate) even more complex. Foreigners come to the fledgling nation for many reasons, some simply as sight-seers, some as employees of international companies permitted to operate in the less developed regions, and some to witness the rise of the new world order.

All of these, and indeed the Soviet citizens themselves fall under the watchful eye of the OGPU, the United State Political Department, or simply referred to as "Lubianka" after its dreaded headquarters in Moscow. The job of the OGPU is to protect communism from counter-revolutionary plots, and to this aim it infiltrates every organization and enterprise in the republics. The OGPU's hold is probably weakest in the east, where the Soviet republics have been back under Moscow's thumb only since 1922. There the resistance still lingers, and the red-striped OGPU officers are often baffled by the open wilderness.

The exchange rate is about 1.94 rubles to the United States dollar. It is sometimes possible to get more than that rate, but the black market is not well established.

priate. If any investigator has a better Geology skill than Chance's 10%, then that investigator should speak for the party during any interviews with Soviet officials.

Dr. Chance was involved in getting Zhurkov's brother and his family out of the country in 1918, so Moscow probably has a file on him. Consequently he is traveling under the name of Douglas Smith and has the passport to prove it. He is confident that he will have no problems, as his appearance has changed significantly since he was last in the country. He regrets that the risk of visiting Zhurkov while in Russia is too great.

A cold and uncomfortable boat ride ends in Vladivostok. The boat cannot actually get into the port, since the harbor is frozen over, so horse-drawn sledges carry passengers and freight from the boat.

The customs officers are strict and humorless. They are dressed in dull olive uniforms that match the walls of the rooms in which they sit. The uniforms of officers have distinctive red stripes.

The officials accept the investigators' cover as mining engineers without blinking, but the officials need some time to secure an interpreter. Once accepted, the party must then wait several hours more to be processed through customs. This time is spent sitting in comfortless chairs in a stark, cold room in the company of the few other foreigners attempting to get into the country.

When their turn arrives the officials ask a few questions about their names, their destination, and the contents of their luggage. After the questions their luggage is searched thoroughly. Chance has removed the dart rifle from his trunk, and carries it in pieces on his person, a risky procedure, but body searches are rare. The investigators are questioned about books, large amounts of cash, and weapons. Everything that cannot be adequately justified is confiscated. Chance spends most of this time with his face in the shadow of his hat. He volunteers little.

Eventually the group is granted entry. Their passports are stamped. They are given visas and permits for Vladivostok. Should they travel to another area, they are told, they must contact the new district office to get new area permits when they arrive.

As is done routinely with travelers worth noticing, a low-priority OGPU tail is arranged, to discover if they later make counter-revolutionary contacts.

OGPU Operatives

Some are skimmed from the military, others from police academies and universities. The fear which they use to control others works in turn upon them, and their politics and their conduct must be above suspicion. All are party members and fervently so, on the surface at least. They are spread thin in Siberia, but use their consummate interrogation and intimidation skills to gather informers.

OGPU operatives work plainclothes, wearing nothing more suspicious than an overcoat. In large operations, such as border control, they have entire divisions of Red

Army soldiers under their command, distinguishable by red facing on their tunics, and red cap bands.

Vladivostok

In the Bay of the Golden Horn, Vladivostok is the last port in the Soviet Far East to freeze over, hence the most important commercially and strategically. It is the regional capital, population topping 100,000. Places of interest include the Administrative Department, the OGPU office, several banks, theaters, a university, and a Chinese commercial section. Hotels include the Versailles (three-star), the Zolotoi Rog (two stars), and the Central (one-star). All hotels check permits and passports. By and large, Vladivostok is rough and unfriendly. The streets and buildings are decrepit. There is little kindness in the faces of the people.

Chance's plan is to take the Trans-Siberian Railway to Chita (190 hours), and then horse-drawn sledges up the Vitim River to the Yakut village. To this end he purchases a set of tickets for the next train. The genuine visas and permits allows easy purchase of the tickets. Still, the investigators should always experience a moment's nervousness when displaying their papers. They are in the country under false pretenses.

The Trans-Siberian Railway

The eight-day ride to Chita passes pleasantly, especially with the aid of one Grigory Borisovich Ablamov, a Russian theater agent on business to Irkutsk. His friendship and passable English smoothes problems such as understanding the tickets, finding the right compartments, dealing with soldiers and officials, and how to handle matters of custom perplexing to foreigners.

Ablamov is their OGPU tail, and questions them gently and individually if possible. He keeps his true identity a secret, but a Sneak roll might allow someone to follow him at some stop, where he talks earnestly with two soldiers wearing red-striped uniforms. If confronted, he claims that they only wanted to know about his theater business: these OGPU fellows do a necessary job, but they are suspicious, he adds.

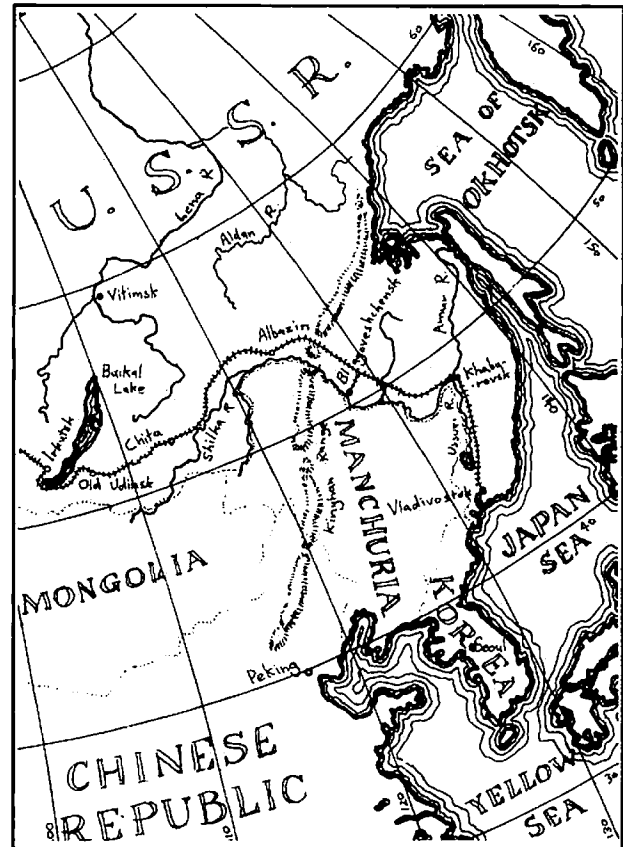
Captain Grigory Borisovich

Ablamov is lightly-bearded, well-dressed, soft-spoken, and inherently suspicious. His job is to discover whether the investigators are whom they claim to be, and if they make counter-revolutionary contacts are in the USSR. He is a patient stalker, and the trip is like a vacation.

Grigory Borisovich's bags are not locked, but well-watched. They contain, among



Grigory Borisovich
Ablamov



Siberia

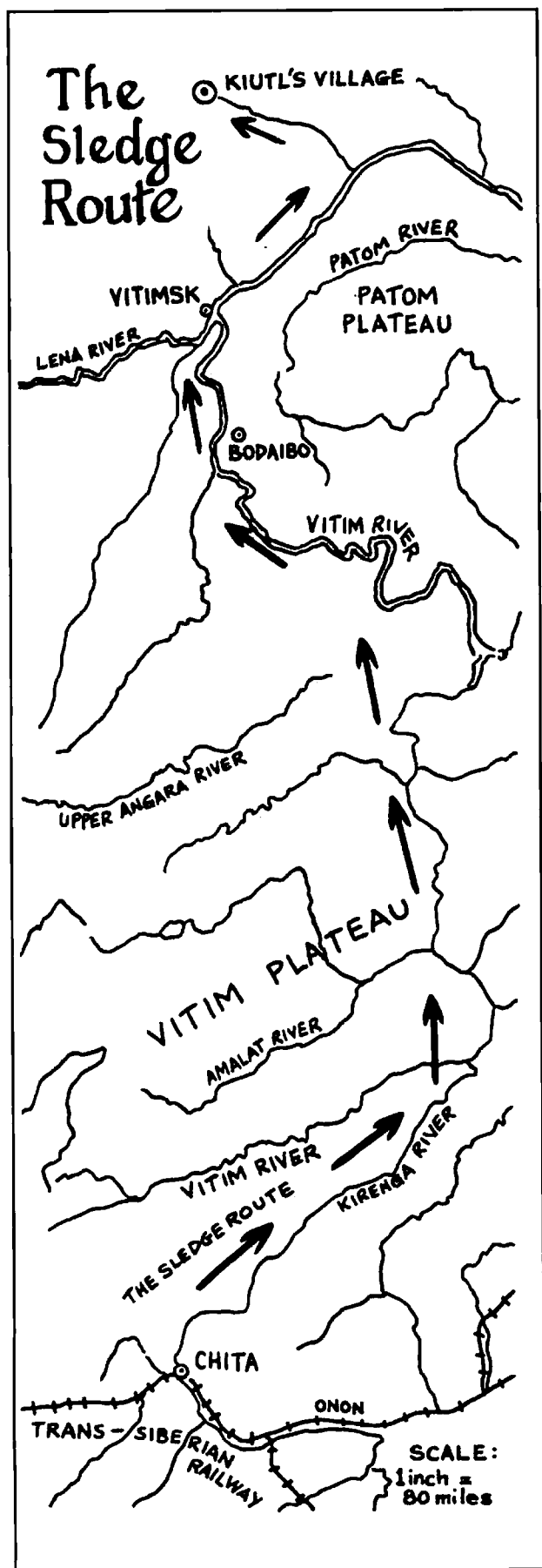
other things, a Tokarev revolver, a small stiletto, OGPU documents (he carries his personal identification), arsenic powder, a biography of Chapaev, and a diary written in code from which he compiles his official reports.

Siberia

WHEN THE train finally pulls into Chita the following week, the investigators are glad to be free of the monotonous food, drafty compartments, omnipresent samovars, and rampant alcoholism. In another week, however, they will remember their train travel as high luxury.

Chita

The center through which Russia's internal exiles were distributed for more than a century, Chita is a city bleak beyond recussitation. The population hovers around 57,000. Places of interest include the district Administrative Department (where the party gets new permits), a few banks, a theater, and a regional museum. The principal industries in Chita are the lumber trade, mining, and the supply and administration of the forced-labor camps



surrounding the city, a tiny part of what would later be termed the 'gulag archipelago.'

Though its citizens are as dour as their city, Chance is oblivious to dreary Chita. He overflows with excitement as he purchases rations, supplies, and trade goods. To contain the supplies he has made a large coffin-like crate, not coincidentally exactly the dimensions he has noted as necessary to hold the gigantes he hopes to find.

The expedition now begins its journey by sledge. After tedious translation) about the sledge system and the sledges themselves. The traveler customarily provides his own sledge, so the expedition has to purchase them. Each sledge costs about 280 rubles. Only two passengers can fit comfortably in a post sledge, so the number of sledges depends on the number of investigators. It is a simple matter to then find drivers who know the way.

Sledging North

THE FIRST leg of the journey, along the Upper Shilka and Kirenga Rivers, is 300 miles and will take three long days. The lead driver cracks the horses to a gallop, sideswipes a telegraph pole, flies across the road, down the embankment, and onto the glassy surface of the Shilka River. The way is well-traveled, and there are frequent distance markers.

The Old Menshevik

By the end of the second day of travel the investigators are exhausted and sore. To their relief, the station-master at the small hut they are to spend their second night can speak educated English.

Piotr Bootin is an exile in this wasteland. Old, salty, alcoholic, educated, and lonely, Bootin looks upon the investigators as a thirsty man does drink. He engages them in intelligent conversation for hours if they are willing. He is desperate for news from anywhere, for summaries of new books, current political events, or even for second-hand gossip. Whole months go by in which he has no conversation above the level of what pigs might say.

Although he resists discussing his past, a successful Persuade roll gets him talking. He is passionately against the bolsheviks, and once convinced to speak he attempts to gain the investigators' support. A second Persuade roll from an investigator who agrees with him leads Bootin to hint at a local counter-revolutionary resistance. Bootin would like to



Piotr Bootin

The Siberian Sledging System

Despite the completion of the Trans-Siberian Railway, sledging remains the primary mode of winter transport for most Siberians, even along the railroad's route. In almost every respect, the system resembles the stage coaches of the American West, from the goods and people transported to problems with bandits and a hostile environment.

Horses are usually changed at each station (20-30 miles), allowing an average of 100 miles per day to be covered. Drivers change less frequently. A minor delay might be caused by a lame horse. A major delay might be provoked by weak ice, or by an epic blizzard.

The roads plied are the frozen rivers wherever practical, making a smooth and pleasant ride, and one in marked contrast to the mosquito-ridden steamships that roam the rivers after they thaw.

Passengers can stop to eat or rest at any station, as the crude accommodations and abysmal food are included in the fare. The stations are frequently lone outposts, consisting of stables and a well-heated shack quartering not only resting passengers but also the snoring station-master and his squabbling family. When fresh horses are plentiful, travelers can ride through the night, but the severe cold (-40°F at night, and around 15°F during the day) makes sleeping in the sledge difficult and sometimes dangerous.

Passage can be purchased to the next station, or through to a given destination. The price averages twelve kopeks per mile per passenger, or about twelve rubles for a full day's travel for one person. Papers are checked at every stop, though most station-masters are more impressed by a high Credit Rating. Naturally some are on the OGPU payroll, and make notes on the passengers.

The Post Sledge

Russian sledges come in all sizes, but the post sledge is the most common for moving passengers and mail. Pulled by a *troika* of three shaggy draft horses (complete with bells) hitched side-by-side, the post sledge is rather like a hansom cab, with two passengers sitting legs-out on their own baggage in a canvas cab, and the driver perched on a bench in front of them.

Good sledges can travel across the continent, and withstand all manners of road repairs and abuse. Only the runners are metal, and even those can be repaired at any village.

Driving a post sledge is hard work. Just setting up a sledge can be difficult, and a Know roll is required to get all of the straps in the right places. Investigators who have studied a driver's technique for a day can apply their Drive Carriage skills directly, or apply half of their Ride skill toward controlling the horses. Special knowledge of ice, snow, river, weather, route, etc., is not included.

Packing a sledge is as much an art as driving one, since a loosely-packed or top-heavy sledge is likely to capsize. Post sledges make good speed on the ice, and frequently are equipped with outriggers to prevent flipping. Passenger sledges often transport valuables such as payrolls and gold. Most of the time the passengers

are unaware that such things have been added to the load—the goods are surreptitiously put on and taken off by station-masters along the way.

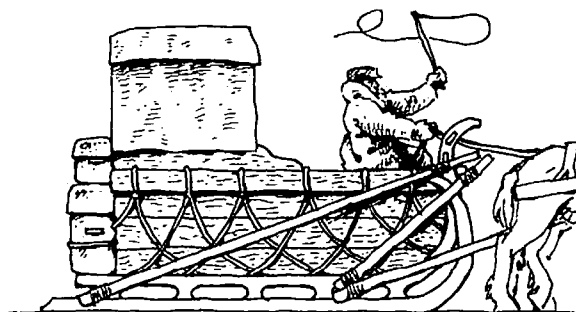
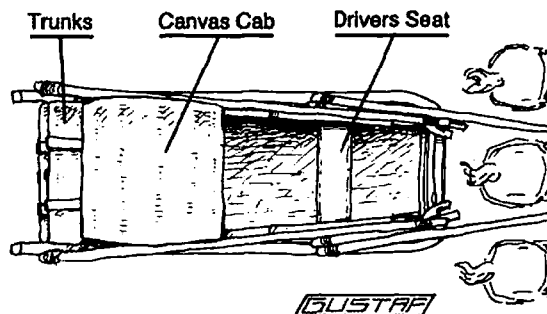
The Sledge Drivers

Most of the drivers are Buriats, a people of mixed Russian and Mongolian blood who have long inhabited southern Siberia, and who are most of the working class in the region. Nearly all speak Russian, though they worry about losing their own heritage and language. Most drivers speak only their own dialect and enough words in Russian and in other Buriat dialects to haggle over the tip.

Drivers often travel for a number of stations, changing at villages where they can spend the night and take another sledge back the other way. They concern themselves little with their passengers' business, except in the matter of the customary gratuity, *na cha*, "for tea." Vodka is the more common drink, and cards a popular pastime. Many of the drivers drink heavily, and the best incentive for a rapid journey is a bottle of vodka (typically four rubles).

When driving, they bundle themselves in furs, to the point of immobility on the safer routes. Some are old and weather-beaten, while others have only just reached manhood. One can tell the experience of a driver by the number of frostbite scars on his face.

Povska (Russian Post Sledge)



*Sledging Through the Snow*

emigrate from the USSR, but he is old and feels trapped.

By the end of the evening he is despairingly drunk. If the investigators have been supportive, he wishes them well in the morning, after making sure that they have good horses and extra food for the trip. He asks that the expedition stop to talk with him again on the way back.

Piotr Bootin

Bootin never reveals that he was once a dilettante, the heir of a great, landed family. To have fallen in station so far burns at him day and night, despite the amount of vodka he drinks. Though old, Bootin is hardy. If the investigators travel with him, he proves to be a gritty adventurer, one suicidally loyal. His clothes and furniture are those of a commoner's. Only a hidden cupboard of old books provides material support to his story.

Accident And Escape

The Kirenga River opens up to the broad Vitim late on the third day. The second leg of the journey begins here, continuing for more than a week—a full 720 miles along the Vitim River. Now and then the investigators make out large, low buildings a little way from a bank of the frozen river. These are more labor camps. The drivers say nothing about them.

Later the next day, a driver both drunken and reckless flips over the second sledge while trying to beat the first sledge up the river bank to the station. The sledge ploughs into an icy snow bank and the horses scream in terror as wood splinters. Each investigator in the second sledge must successfully Jump or lose 1D6 hit points.

Nothing seems seriously damaged. The station-master comes down to investigate and, after a shouting match with Chance, heads off to get assistance from a small village beyond the station compound. Soon a dozen ragged men of varying ages are led out by uniformed armed guards. Idea rolls indicate that what seemed to be a small village is yet another labor camp.

The prisoners dig out the sledge, despite their haggard condition and insufficient clothing. Any investigators who make a move to help with the work are motioned back by the station-master and the guards.

If the keeper wishes to make the situation emphatically clear, one prisoners bolts from the work party and makes for the horses to attempt a break for freedom. Unless stopped, the guards irritably shoot dead both horse and prisoner in the first hundred yards. Although the station-master gets some paperwork to replace the horse, no-one expresses pity for the prisoner.

Alternately, if the investigators interfere, they are interrogated fiercely until sundown. The guards still man-

age to kill the escaping prisoner with a lucky shot, but this time the horse survives unscathed.

The sledge freed, the expedition can be on its way.

Purga!

As the Vitim River widens, its icy cover becomes a mine field of thin ice, some patches of which have been clearly broken through already, as old sledge paths attest.

Early on the fifth day from Chita, the wind whips the brooding sky into a suddenly dark morass. "Purga!" the driver declares at last, and draws the horses to a lone, deserted shack. There does not seem to be a simple English translation for *purga*, but Chance continues to argue with the lead driver: "He's drunk—he says the snow will eat us before the next station! Some sort of blizzard I guess." The drivers stoically shelter the horses in the lee of the shack, and order everyone to fetch wood, lots of wood.

A purga is a Siberian blizzard, and it rages white oblivion for three days. The broken stone fireplace consumes wood greedily but sends most of the heat up the chimney. The shack shakes and twists under the wind. The drivers sleep most of the time. When more than one of them is awake, they drink and play cards together.

At the height of the storm, they bring in some of the horses, and the temperature indoors rises just a bit.

After the first 36 hours, time slows phenomenally. The incessant wind pipes oddly coherent tunes: fragments of Mozart, ragtime, Wagner, nursery rhymes, screams, and impassioned sighs. Familiar voices call and alien whispers wake listless sleepers. Phobias are magnified, and evil memories relived. Sanity rolls are required, and those who fail lose 1 point due to isolation in the white void.

A trip outside is made on a rope leash, and limited to sanitation, supplies, feeding the huddled horses, or bringing more firewood. Each such trip is into another world. White, roaring wind hurls stinging snow at suffocating velocity.

As cabin fever sets in on the inside, so do hallucinations come to life outside. Seen just within the whiteness are blank-eyed exiles digging in the snow, Piotr Bootin's haggard face, horses, hills, recent acquaintances, ancient memories, fields of dandelions, street signs, unearthly abominations, shrouded skeletons, wispy hands—all white, the color of death! The friendly things beckon and plead for the walker to untie the safety line and join them. A Sanity roll (0/1D3 Sanity points) is required to recognize the apparitions for what they are. With a failure, a successful Idea roll is needed to keep from untying the rope and wandering off.

Survival in the heart of the purga is unlikely. Investigators who have no guide rope back to the cabin can make CON number of attempts to roll under POW x1 to find the cabin before collapsing.

Players of collapsed investigators must attempt a CON x2 roll every 10 game minutes they lie in the snow. Each failure causes the loss of a hit point to hypothermia and a point of CON to frostbite.

In the unlikely event that a collapsed investigator is located in the snow before dying, a point of CON can be restored for each week of treatment for frostbite, if a CON x5 roll is made. If the roll is missed the point of CON is lost permanently, and the investigator also loses 1D3-1 APP.

The purga clears after three days. The blanketing snow has indeed eaten everything, including the wide Vitim. The lead driver nevertheless starts the convoy and carves a winding path down the river.

Ancient Medicine

After the purga, have the players attempt CON x3 or less on D100 for each investigator. Failures contract serious influenza, a virulent strain of which the investigators recall has recently killed millions of people around the world. Any investigator riding with someone who is infected must receive a CON x3 or less roll each day to resist infection. An infected investigator spends 18-CON days in the heat of a fever, and loses 1D6 hit points.

Once the sickness comes to the attention of the lead driver, he diverts the group to a small mound-shaped hut about half an hour from the next station. He tries to explain, in his dialect, that the woman who lives within is a healer.

The healer is an ancient woman called Ina. She follows the way of her ancestors. The driver knows her to have subtle powers and ageless wisdom, but all he can convey is that she is good, good.

She welcomes all into her home, and insists upon taking the sick into the warmth of her healing room. There she tends to them through the days of fever and delirium. She speaks only an archaic dialect of Buriat, yet the maternal tone of her voice and gentle care relaxes even the most skeptical patients.

Ina The Wise-Woman

Almost all Buriats are Christians, but most also pay homage in the old ways to the Buddha and to a variety of folk spirits.

Ina is the greatest of all Buriat healers because, she maintains, she does not contaminate her home or her thoughts with any of the new ways or beliefs. Whether Ina is wise in this too is for the keeper to decide.

She is a potent pharmacist, drawing from thousands of years of plant lore. Her methods are very different



Ina

from the Yakut. She treats all that come to her, but many fear her as a witch.

Ina looks her age, but moves with a determined ease. Her wispy white hair hides nothing of her glossy scalp. Her garb is a single long tunic, comfortable because of the summer heat which she maintains in her airtight hovel. With the exception of the antechamber, her mound-shaped home comprises only one room, dimly lit by candles emitting a strong, unidentifiable scent.

Ina's Gift

Ina accepts only food as payment, and sends the investigators on their way when they are better. She presents a gift to the investigator with the highest POW. It is a rough fist-shaped pendant made of clay mixed with small shards of bone and silvers of ivory. It has a leather thong, and can be worn around the neck.

The only way to examine the contents of the talisman is to break the fist open, destroying its power. Inside the talisman is a thick paste made of bear fat, marrow from a reindeer's bones, some ground leaves and a special mixture she always has bubbling quietly on the fire in the corner.

A driver can make enough sense of what she says to explain that the talisman will protect the investigator from "great evils." Indeed, whomever wears the talisman for at least an hour is healed of any sickness which they encounter in Siberia.

Through The Ice

Not long after setting out the next day, the lead reins pass to a younger driver, less knowledgeable of the river. Shortly into this stage, Chance's sledge pitches suddenly forward and through the ice. A DEX x5 roll is required to jump from the sinking sledge to solid ice. Those who end up in the water have up to their CON in rounds before shock immobilizes them. Successful Swim and Climb rolls are required to get out of the water. Once out of the water an investigator must be stripped of sodden clothes and kept warm.

An affected investigator needs to receive a CON x3 or less roll on D100 or suffer lose 1D4 hit points to hypothermia and frostbite, and gain a picturesque scar as well. Ina's talisman prevents sickness, but has no power over frostbite or hypothermia.

Quick rope work, plus a lot of pulling hands and shouting can draw the sledge to safety. Those who help must make STR x5 rolls to keep from being pulled into the frigid waters. A STR against STR roll against a SIZ of 42 is required to save the sledge.

The supplies from the sledge are soaked and soon freeze solid, ruining some. Chance has made sure to have his rifle with him, and has some of the tranquillizer on another sledge.

If the sledge is lost, a new one and fresh supplies can be purchased at the next village, a delay of a few days.

Bodaibo

After two days more, telegraph poles appear again, and at the end of the third day the sledges pull up amid the clapboard buildings of Bodaibo. Boom town and district center, Bodaibo moves and processes timber, copper, gold, and other minerals. Here also the investigators must procure new district permits. After nearly two weeks without baths or mattresses, the investigators find the one decrepit hotel to be paradise.

Here are many sledges, and supplies are readily available, if high-priced.

Thievery is endemic. All of the sledges must be watched, or items disappear. Signs announce bounties for highwaymen brought in alive. The signature at the bottom of each poster is of one Colonel Ivan Ratzul, apparently the commander of the district garrison.

Delays

A day and a half out of Bodaibo, the expedition comes to a complete halt. The fresh horses at the station are reserved. The investigators' expedition has to wait a full day before reusing their own horses. It is illegal to rent private horses, and expensive. That night, an officer with six heavily-armed soldiers lodges with them.



Colonel Ivan Ratzul

Colonel Ivan Ratzul (OGPU uniform) is a congenial man. He inquires about the expedition's safe passage. If any of the investigators have been sick, he knows, and asks their health. He fancies himself a social philosopher, and expects at least one of the educated foreigners to stay up all night drinking and agreeing with him, in Russian.

He also demands to know the reason they are here, but is not suspicious of any but the most ridiculous of stories, clearly thinking that these foreigners stand out so clearly in this country that a child could learn all about them.

His main task is to hunt down the highwaymen who prey on travelers around Bodaibo and Vitimsk, the small supply town now just a half-day north. It is good for a man to get out in the field once in a while, he says.

If indulged or flattered, Ratzul writes out gun permits for everyone. "Buy rifles in Vitimsk, good ones. But watch yourself in these little villages. Some of these Yakuts will clean out your sledge in one minute!" He snaps his fingers to indicate just how quickly, and laughs as the investigators' big round foreign eyes bulge.

Colonel Ivan Ratzul

Unlike Borisovich, Ratzul is OGPU by appointment, not ambition. An officer before the Revolution, his immedi-

ate alignment with the Bolsheviks earned him rapid promotion, and after the civil war and occupation ended, he volunteered to help pacify the great wasteland where he believes the future of socialism rests. This he has since done with a ruthlessness and intentness born of deep ideological conviction.

Ratzul considers himself an intellectual, and is a tireless disputant, but his arguments are restricted to stock Marxist/Leninist formulae, stubbornly adhered to. Foreigners pose not threats to the Revolution, but opportunities to spread its truth.

He has been regular army for 30-odd years, and worries a lot less about other people's business than his red OGPU stripes suggests.

A Connected Mystery

The next morning Ratzul and his squad are gone, the reserved horses with them. Another, much lighter sledge has arrived, and three of the investigators' fresh horses have been allocated to the newcomer, forcing another day's wait. No amount of haranguing or bribery changes the situation, nor reveals the newcomer's identity or whereabouts.

Midday finds the station-master apologetic and hitching the disputed horses to the expedition's sledges. He gives no explanation, and there is no sign of the light sledge's owner. It is Grigory Borisovich, who has unintentionally caught up with them.

If the investigators are curious, a halved Spot Hidden or Listen roll allows them to glimpse him, or to hear his name mentioned. It is impossible to verify what his pres-

ence means, though, as Ablamov is too careful. Soon the investigators are on the frozen river once again.

Vitimsk

Though frozen solid, the confluence of the Vitim River with the mighty Lena River raises gargantuan walls and spikes of ice in mid-river. On the bank opposite the confluence is the small town of Vitimsk, for centuries an important supply point on the Lena.

Those with gun permits signed by Ratzul can purchase bolt-action rifles and double-barreled shotguns here. Ammunition is expensive, though, and of uncertain quality, so add +3 to the malfunction number if firing ammunition purchased here. Choose anything appropriate from the *Call of Cthulhu* rules. All prices are double those given. A bottle or two of vodka may bring down the price appreciably.

Bandits On The Lena River

From Vitimsk, the next leg of the journey goes 120 miles down the Lena. As the principal highway, passage on this great river is fast, especially with the reckless competition among drivers heading out from Vitimsk. The sledges jerk back and forth, as the drivers furiously slalom around the deadly juts of ice.

Toward evening a less fortunate sledge is come upon, smashed runners glinting in the sunset. A lone man waves down the lead sledge. A Spot Hidden roll made toward the survivor reveals that he looks surprisingly able-bodied. A successful Spot Hidden or INT x3 roll made while looking around the area calls attention to a glint of sunlight off a raised rifle barrel in snowdrifts well beyond the wreck.

The lead driver resists stopping. Unless the investigators have spotted the bandits in the snow, however, the sledges are still in the open when the ambush is sprung and the initial volley drops a horse on Chance's sledge and renders the others uncontrollable.

There are two men behind the downed sledge, each with a .30-06 rifle. There are another three men in the snow nearby. One of the bandits by the wreck has a .45 revolver, as does the bandit who was hailing the expedition's sledges.

The investigators' drivers each have an unloaded shotgun and a bag of shells under their seats. The highwaymen shoot only enough horses to stop the sledges. They also shoot at anyone with a gun. If the investigators surrender, the highwaymen execute the lead driver and interrogate the others. They are looking for gold, payrolls, horses, and whatever valuables that the passengers have. They take the expedition prisoners, and send ransom requests via the drivers to the officials in Vitimsk. The bandits have two horses on the far bank, plenty of ammo, and some gold.

Should the investigators be captured, Ratzul and his soldiers rescue them after two days in the cold with the

The Bandits

There is no way of life in Siberia that is not harsh, yet the highwaymen of the winter rivers probably live the harshest. Under pressure from the Red Army, their tiny camps are constantly on the move, and forays into town are increasingly dangerous because of the growing efficacy of the OGPU. Because prosperity is moderately increasing, however, business has never been better, especially around Vitim.

The continued development of Siberia has meant more post sledges carrying payrolls, supplies, and gold from the nearby mines. The growth of the city has brought richer passengers and more places to turn their trinkets into cash.

Siberian highwaymen are a desperate lot, killing without hesitation. Robbery has already privileged them to be shot on sight, or tortured to death for information, so murder is no bound. Some are escaped prisoners, exiles, or former resistance fighters, others are outlaw Yakuts, or Buriats looking for easy money. Life is quick and opportunistic. In hijacking the winter-time sledges, clothes and good food will be of as much interest as horses and gold.

bandits. Charging down upon the bandit camp, Ratzul seems a figure from legend, a saber in one hand and an enormous Mauser pistol in the other.

He hails his acquaintances again, and brings them back to Vitimsk to recover and re-outfit.

The Guide

Eventually the group makes its way to a small station at the mouth of a minor tributary to the Lena. The Yakut village that Stadling wrote about lies another 150 miles up near the source of the small river, beyond the Lena's broad valley. No regular service reaches into the area. To get there the expedition must wait for two days until a high-priced Yakut guide known to the station-master arrives, with reindeer and Yakut drivers willing to take the expedition north. The guide's name is Taksa.

Taksa

Taksa is only half Yakut, and finds himself in the classic situation of earning mistrust from his split heritage. He lives alone, working as a translator, guide, and tracker for the Russians, and as a sledge driver when necessary. His reputation has spread throughout the Lena and Vitim river systems, and rightly so, for he is trustworthy and merits his high fees.

But he also knows his mortality. He would rather betray than die, and he is smart enough to betray for a price. When things get messy for the investigators he quietly takes off into the night.

Taksa's aid in hunting highwaymen has earned him a gun permit. He is always armed.



Taksa

The Yakuts

PROGRESS is slow, even with Taksa's help. The river path is through virgin snows, unworn by sledges, and the reindeer have much less stamina and power than the Russian draft horses.

With Taksa translating Russian into Yakut, the location of Stadling's Yakut village is easily learned. The villages are referred to by their shamans' names, and though the old shaman who befriended Stadling has passed away, both he and Stadling are well-remembered. The new shaman there is a young man named Kiutl, who was but a child when Stadling passed through.

After another two days, the sledges come to a halt in the middle of a tiny Yakut village just off the river.

Chance gestures at the semicircle of a dozen roofs barely three feet above the snow, the large corral of reindeer, and the gathering of men and dogs staring at the sledges, and announces "This is it."

Kiutl's Village

Half of the small huts are for storage. Kiutl and his family live in the largest hut, which doubles as a meeting hall. The other huts are of about equal size, one family to each. The children move out when they are old enough to start their own family, and build their own hut. The villagers range in age from unborn to ancient. The eldest are three women who administrate the traditions of the village.

The daily winter routine is slow. Time is spent feeding the reindeer, playing with the dogs, gathering wood, smoking pipes, talking, listening, being together, and just relaxing from the autumn's work. It is a peaceful routine.

Though Kiutl's village is remote, Moscow's long arm reaches even here. Rubles are the currency, and there are no guns other than the investigators'. Taksa warns that selling or giving guns to the Yakuts is an offense punishable by death.

The Yakut are a small-statured, industrious people, similar to Aleuts or other natives of the far North. They hunt and gather across the steppes and forests of northern and central Siberia, but reindeer are the Yakuts' lifeblood for milk, meat, clothing, and shelter. Deforestation and Russian/Buriat expansion has pushed them to the margins of their former domains.



Kiutl

Kiutl

Kiutl is the young successor of the shaman whom Jonas Stadling befriended and wrote about. Kiutl's responsibility is the spiritual and physical well-being of the entire village. It is his village: the people's continued survival rests upon Kiutl's correct propitiation of Tabba and other seasonal spirits. The responsibility has made him a shrewd negotiator, mediating between tribute to Tabba and the needs of the village, between his authority and the women who weigh tradition, and between the needs of the village and of the encroaching Russians.

The investigators are valuable to him, as their presence, power, and favor seems to lessen the power of other outsiders. Thus he is accessible to the party and helps them in every way possible, even mitigating the skepticism of Yakuts. His village, however, must come first.

Kiutl's winter clothes of tight caribou skins are the same as the other Yakuts, except for an emblem sown in black on the front of his coat. It is a cross with pointed arms, symbolizing the seasons and the cosmos.

Warm Welcomes

Chance's glowing smile, his introduction as a close friend of Stadling's, and the multitude of gifts springing from the sledges bring the expedition warm welcomes. The Yakut behavior is in stark contrast to the sullen suspicions of many Russians in the region. All nineteen inhabitants come out to see the huge sledges.

The diminutive villagers chatter amicably in Yakut, commenting on the weather, asking about their clothes, offering advice on setting up camp, examining everything, and even flirting shyly with the younger members of the expedition. With the help of many hands and some extra canvass, the sledges are made into a makeshift hut by nightfall, and the reindeer corralled.

The Yakut huts are dug into the ground, made of many skins stretched over limber, wood frames. In the largest, the villagers all gather to meet the strangers, packing in the entire expedition and their drivers. The hut is filled not only with people, but also with the intense smells of reindeer, humanity, and pipe smoke. The shaman, Kiutl, takes charge of proceedings, although three old women seem to be as much in power as he is.

Introductions are formally made, and the expedition is welcomed into the village with gifts of food. The reception is unhesitatingly warm, the foreigners seeming far more welcome than the Yakut drivers and the guide, who are from other far-off villages. At the meeting, stories are swapped, and Chance describes their journey. It becomes part of the wintertime lore of Kiutl's people.

Late into the night the elders recount the entire myth cycle of the little village—exciting for Chance, and others who share his interests, but tedious for the drivers and maybe for the investigators. Ask Listen rolls for those who decide to head outside. A success detects the far-away call of some wild beast. A successful Natural History roll likens the sound to that made by some kind of ape. The cry rings out briefly; a short time later it is answered. No more sounds are heard except the wind, which at times seems very similar.

The Winter God

The drivers return to their own villages the next day, taking a few of the reindeer. Enough are left to pull the party's sledges. Taksa stays with the expedition as translator and guide.

Chance spends most of the day talking to Kiutl and the three old women about the lore of the area. Although he is most interested in the winter god, Tabba, the elders insist upon explaining the sun and the moon and many other simpler things before progressing to Tabba.

Tabba is the Protector, the son of the Stars who drives off the Three Winds and Dark Sky, who fights the evils in the Whiteness, who cures the snow-blind, who guides the lost home, and who returns the dead hunter. Tabba's character is complex. He is a protector, but not a friend.

Investigators present while the god is explained to Chance may notice the attitude of the women as Kiutl speaks. A successful Idea or Spot Hidden roll, followed by a Psychology roll, reveals that they are frightened of the winter god and concerned that Kiutl may say too much.

The tribute ceremonies to Tabba are held a day before the full moon, still a week away. Kiutl invites the expedition to attend the ceremony, which occurs at the village. After the ceremony, the tribute is taken some distance from the village and left at the base of a sacred tree.

Footprints In The Snow

Chance begs to see the sacred tree where the tribute is left, and eventually Kiutl agrees to take them there. Chance hopes to find conclusive evidence of the gigantic beasts they are searching for, and asks all of the investigators to come along.

Reindeer are the only way to travel, other than walking. Any investigator over SIZ 15 is too big to ride one, Chance included. They must make their way on simple snow-shoes. The tree is over a mile uphill from the village. The hallowed place is simply a stout tree in the open, wind-blown forest.

Kiutl is adamant that no one may approach closer than ten paces, except on the tribute night. Other than that, the investigators are free to look around. A successful Spot Hidden roll on the tree reveals scratches in its thick bark, while a successful Biology or Natural History roll indicates that they could be made by large ape-like claws.

Near the tree are a few scattered low mounds of snow. Kiutl explains that those are the remains of the last tribute. Small trinkets and bones can be seen where the snow has fallen away. Much of the tribute has been broken.

Chance requests that everyone help in a careful search around the perimeter of the sacred area, to look for signs of giganteus. The search takes an hour to do properly. Investigators who receive both successful Luck and a successful Track or Spot Hidden roll find tracks in the snow. The tracks are almost entirely covered over by recent snow falls, but it is immediately obvious that they were not made by human feet, or any of the boots that the villagers wear. A Biology or Natural History roll indicates that the tracks have been made by a bipedal creature of considerable size, with ape-like feet.

Obscured by snow and wind, none of the tracks can be followed very far. An Idea roll can reveal that they all eventually head directly away from the village, into the same low hills.

The party returns to the village only as the sun begins to set. Chance is excited by the day's findings (whatever they are) and spends much of the evening lost in conversation with Kiutl and Taksa. Chance recommends strongly against disturbing the ceremonial site at night, should any investigators suggest that course of action.

More Footprints

Three nights before tribute night, the dogs wake the entire village with a cacophony of barking. Anyone quick out of the sledges and into the biting cold of the night gets a Spot Hidden roll to see two men on foot retreating from the clearing. If chase is given, they mount horses not far off and ride away. A glint of metal and very un-Yakut clothing is all that can be seen. From inside the huts nothing is heard but the dogs' barking, and the villagers are too slow to see the two men.

Morning and a Track roll finds the prints of a pair of boots, like those worn in the Red Army. Five successful Track rolls in succession can follow the trail all the way back to Grigory Borisovich's camp, two hours downriver. Should the investigators manage to find him, give them a Spot Hidden roll to see Ablamov before he sees them. His aide openly carries an automatic pistol, a .30-06 rifle, and a mean expression.

The dogs spend the day before the tribute dying of arsenic poisoning, as a Medicine roll reveals. It is clear they ate poisoned meat, but impossible to guess where they found it on their early morning wanders. It is Borisovich's work, with the object of making the village easier to spy on.

If the keeper wishes, nothing can save the dogs, but successful Natural History or Medicine rolls minimize the pain and earn the appreciation of tearful Yakuts. Alternately, the weaker dogs are only sick, and recover, since the stronger dogs hogged the meat.

Some villagers blame Chance and the investigators. It is a bad omen for something so terrible to happen a day before the tribute ceremony. One asks the expedition to

leave, and others show open hostility. Finally Kiutl calls a meeting, everyone invited. Taksa is clearly nervous. To him the villagers are backwards and dangerous, and they don't like him either.

At the meeting every option is suggested, from simply increasing the tribute to offering the strangers as part of it. The latter idea, though, is quickly hushed. Persuade rolls are needed to keep Chance from boiling over and the villagers from chasing the expedition out at spear point. In the end Kiutl offers a compromise. The investigators and Dr. Chance may stay for the ceremony, but only as full participants offering generous tribute themselves. Taksa, however, as neither a villager nor an honored guest, must leave. He is only too happy to comply, and departs that morning.

Tribute To The Winter God

In the afternoon, the villagers assemble in Kiutl's hut for the winter ceremony. They form themselves into a semi-circle around a huge sheet of leather cut into a seven-pointed star. On the leather is placed a cornucopia of stored foods and trinkets, including every gift from the expedition. The ceremony is long, taking until the sun touches the horizon. The leather is drawn up into a great sack, revealing innumerable symbols embroidered on its outside. Several images of Tabbā are included, depicted as a giant biped, nearly eight times the size of the human figures.

A pair of reindeer is yoked to carry the sack between them, and two young men lead the animals out into the dusk and toward the offering tree.

Chance is convinced that a gigantes will come to take the offering, so, outfitted to capture the creature, the investigators and Chance head out to the sacred tree as night begins to fall. The moon is bright. In the gentle wind the shadows of the trees seem to shift more than the trees. Chance has the tranquillizing rifle, loaded, and is carrying extra darts. His plan is to keep the beast drugged and iced in the largest of their trunks, and if possible bring it back alive.

The wait at the tree is a cold and interminable two hours, during which time banished memories of the purga flood back.

Snowmen By Moonlight

A giant, white figure approaches the tree, pulling a crude sled or travois. It takes no notice of the investigators, even if they are badly hidden. While their attention is riveted, another gigantes creeps up behind them silently, weaving with the shadows. Before Chance has an opportunity to fire upon the first creature, the second one rises up behind him—a living mound of snow. Its blood-curdling roar shatters the air as it attacks. It is nine feet tall, with monstrous



White is the color of death.

jaws, bloody white canines, and gaping arms. The moon dances wildly in its eyes. Sanity loss for the sight is 0/1D8.

Chance, terrified, drops the rifle into the snow. He stands frozen just long enough for the creature to reach out gigantic hands and wrench Chance's head with a sickening crack. The dead man is cast aside like a doll as the beast turns to the investigators.

A quick-thinking investigator may be able to grab the tranquilizer gun before the creature moves. A successful DEX x5 roll completes the task. Any giganteus hit with a dart fights for 2D4 rounds of combat pass before dropping, although its skills fall by 5 percentiles each round.

The first giganteus leaves its sled and charges across the snow, loosing a terrifying howl. Once wounded, both creatures break off the attack and melt into the camouflage afforded them by snow, trees and night.

The Death Of Chance

How the investigators react to Chance's death depends entirely on their current relations with him. Do they feel sad, lost, sorrowful, horrified, or relieved? How much Sanity they stand to lose depends how they perceived him. Do they intend to carry on his work, or is their first thought to loot the body and flee the country?

Once the giganteus are either defeated or scared away, the cold forces the investigators back to the village for shelter. If they have a drugged or dead giganteus, a successful roll of their combined STR against its SIZ on the Resistance Table roll is required to drag it back.

Presumably they bring back Chance's body to attempt decent burial. Any bodies they do not bring back now are gone the next morning, whether human or snow creature.

If the investigators openly bring a giganteus body back with them, the villagers are horrified, and they respond with vengeful hostility. The investigators must flee, abandoning their possessions, or else slaughter all of the villagers, for they fight to the last child.

Arrest At Gunpoint

Grigory Borisovich and his aide are just outside the village, waiting for the investigators to return. They already grabbed Taksa as he headed home, and extracted what he knew.

Borisovich arrests the investigators at gun point, relying upon surprise to take them. He shoots any who reach for weapons, or otherwise resist arrest. Everyone is chained. The charges are numerous: perhaps failing to register at the district headquarters in Bodaibo, entering the country under false pretenses, conspiring to defraud the working classes, consorting with criminals, instigating rebellion, counter-revolutionary conspiracy, evading arrest, and so on. When Ablamov finds Chance's body, the charges escalate to include murder.

After 3000 miles and a week waiting in the snow, Borisovich wants answers now. He takes over Kiutl's hut and goes to work. He goes through all their belongings,

Transporting A Giganteus

A dead creature is no problem to transport if it is kept well-iced. A live one is not impossible if the investigators keep an eye on it.

Chance brought enough tranquilizer (2 quarts, or 2000cc) to keep a giganteus out for months, but the canteens are unlabelled. It requires a Pharmacy roll to estimate the correct dosage, although in his notes Chance states that 10cc every 8 hours should be sufficient for one on ice. The ice slows circulation, and a warm giganteus needs twice as much. Ice also slows bleeding if the creature is wounded. Each of Chance's hypodermic syringes have a capacity of 50cc.

Dosages that are too heavy lead to coma, brain-damage, and eventually death. Too little means the giganteus shifts about, beginning 12 hours after the last full dose, and may crawl away or go berserk.

Muscle atrophy reduces the creature's STR and hit points by one point for every other day spent drugged, to a minimum of one quarter the original values. This occurs twice as fast if the creature is not iced.

interrogates them individually, beats prisoners, and threatens to shoot all the others unless the plot and co-conspirators are revealed. The violence and trauma of his tortures merits a loss of 1/1D4 Sanity points, and a loss of 1D3 hit points. A failing Sanity roll indicates that the investigator has told Grigory Borisovich whatever he wants to hear. Borisovich already has a signed confession concerning the party's counter-revolutionary activities from Taksa, and intends to get a similar document from each investigator.

As soon as he has adequate information to make his case, Grigory Borisovich prepares to take the investigators and all their belongings downriver to Bodaibo for further interrogation and incarceration. If the investigators have taken a giganteus, Ablamov looks at it contemptuously, and says that the investigators must forfeit their trophy, somehow mistaking the white hairy mass for a small polar bear.

Reprisal

But that night eight giganteus track them down, whether the investigators are downriver on their way to the Lena or are still in Kiutl's village. The club-wielding creatures come stealthily in the dead of night, taking as many humans alive as possible, knocking them out if necessary. Human weapons are broken and thrown away, though any weapons on the sledges are untouched.

If there, Ablamov and his aide dully miss the reality of the huge hairy figures, and die in the fight.

The investigators' own sledges (full, and with any draft animals) are used to haul the captives away into the night. Attempts to run are futile. Only long giganteus legs

can move quickly through the deep snow. Giganteus bodies or parts thereof are recovered and borne in honor.

The hideous journey, filled with the smell and rasping speech of giganteus, takes the investigators a half day across-country from Kiutl's village. The humans are guarded at night, but left to feed themselves on whatever stores are in the sledges. The enormous creatures communicate in some form of simple grunted speech. Eventually they turn away from the river, into a section of virgin forest.

Caverns Of Angara

ABOUT AN hour from the river, a mere slit in a rock face turns into a cave. From pristine whiteness and numbing cold the investigators enter a windless place of black echoes.

Giganteus guards are just inside, and they rush to help their fallen brothers, or gnash their gruesome teeth at the captives. The sledges and animals are left at the cavern entrance, while the humans are carried, dragged, and pushed ahead. The cavern slopes gently down, and soon the natural temperature of the earth (always 52°F) warms the captives. Natural tunnels leading here and there are noted by fires kept smoldering at the intersections.

The investigators are now within the Angara Shield, one of the oldest pieces of continent on earth. It was on

the Angara Shield that the great meteorite explosion of 1908 took place.

The prison is makeshift. Captives are literally thrown into a dead-end cavern with two guards at its entrance, armed with bone-tipped spears. If the investigators were not in Kiutl's village when captured, most of the villagers are already cowering in the prison (including Kiutl), some unconscious, some badly beaten, most praying and weeping. Even if the villagers are not there, there are other Yakuts whom the investigators do not recognize.

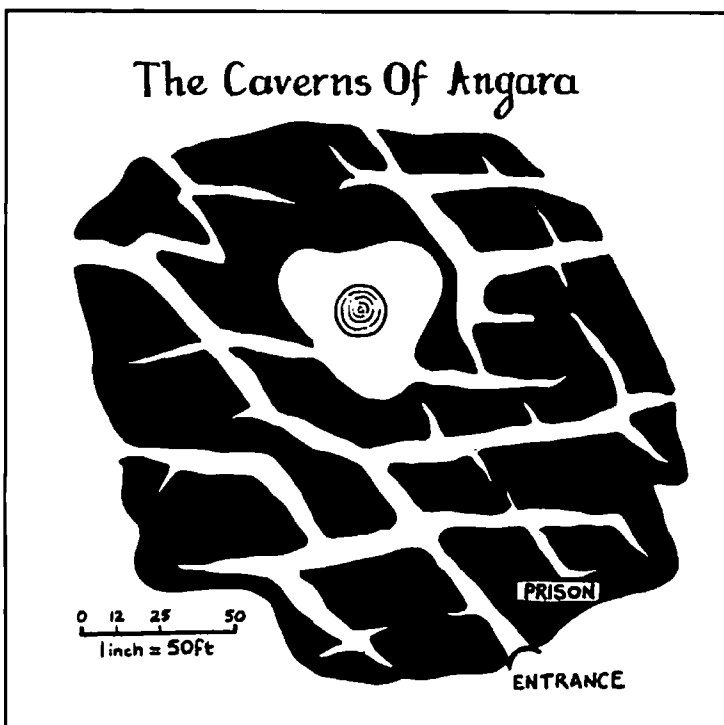
With only the flickering firelight outside, the prison is hard to explore. At the far end the cavern narrows to a crevice. A Listen roll detects soft moans from the end, caused by the movement of the air through the tight passages. Attempted escape is rewarded with battering. If the escapees make it past the prison guards, they meet at least one other giganteus on their way out, as well as the two entrance guards.

God Of The Gods

After eight hours in the cavern, a dull, undulating roar permeates the darkness. A Listen roll is required to hear it at first, but as it slowly becomes louder everyone hears it clearly. A torch approaches, raspy words are spoken, and a female giganteus wearing a blood red mantle marches in imperiously. She thrusts the torch in the face of each prisoner and stares silently in the captive's eyes. Her hair is perfectly clean, the pure white of death. Her long nails are trimmed to razor points, and her breath holds the stench of unholiness. She appraises each prisoner, and returns to the oldest in the group (one of the old Yakut women). With a ghastly smile, she motions to one of the guards to take the fainting unfortunate.

Shortly after the priestess leaves, the undulating roar grows louder, but still remains impossible to identify. Then, as it seems about to reach a malevolent crescendo, six giganteus with spears herd all the prisoners out. Anyone who steps out of the group is batted in the head, to oblivion if necessary. They are marched further down into the caverns, toward the unending roar and a deep red glow. Shortly they step into a broad, high chamber.

The chamber is filled with a thick, red smoke spewing from the fires in its seven corners. As they enter, an inhuman yet human-like scream rings out. The scream comes from the old Yakut woman who is currently the center of a giganteus ceremony. Kneeling in a congestive circle are more than forty giganteus, their jaws ecstatically open to create the deafening, rhythmic roar. Standing near the center is the priestess, her hair spattered with blood, her arms stretched forward. In front of her, covered in blood, are all the giganteus who fell to Chance's expedition,



the wounded kneeling, while the dead or near-dead are on wooden biers. Any dismembered dead have been re-assembled as much as possible. A successful Occult roll confirms this is a ceremony of healing and vengeance.

At the center of the room a vortex of stone reaches into the floor. Its sides are covered in a mixture of thick mucous, blood, and bits of flesh. An attendant arranges the captives single-file, in descending order of apparent age, and ushers them through the circle of worshipers toward the priestess.

The next old woman is pulled forward, and lifted up toward the vortex by the priestess. The roar reverberates insanely. Although struggling moments before, the old woman stiffens, her eyes fixed upon the heart of the vortex. A thick tentacle shoots out from the vortex and plunges through her torso, showering the priestess and those nearby with blood and viscera. Other tentacles reach out from below, and begin audibly sucking the carcass' remaining fluids, as the head of a large adult chthonian bursts up into the chamber, costing 1D3/1D20 Sanity points to see.

The guards herd the humans, preventing anyone from bolting for the exits, as the creature reaches toward them. The wild-eyed priestess raises her rough voice in a shattering crescendo, gesturing frantically at the human sacrifices she offers.

The Healer's Gift

As the chthonian maw opens, allow a POW x5 or less for the investigator who has Ina's talisman. If successful, the investigator notices that the talisman is warm to the touch, and pulsating slightly. An INT x5 roll leads the desperate investigator to the conclusion that it might offer protection from the beast.

If the talisman is presented to the chthonian with a successful POW x5 roll, or if the investigator wearing it is consumed, the talisman explodes in a searing flash of silver light. The reaction is instantaneous. The chthonian slams its body against the chamber's far wall as it tries to escape, then flails madly back and forth against sides of the vortex. The whole chamber begins to shake from these mighty blows.

As it flails wildly, human and giganteus flee. Random slabs of granite ricochet across the vault. A DEX x4 or less roll is needed to get out of the chamber without being struck by a falling shard, doing 1D8 points of damage.

The nearly full moon hangs in the cavern entrance like a lantern, guiding the investigators out. The sledges are still intact and the reindeer tied nearby, although one has been butchered.

One giganteus decides to pursue the humans.

Getting Out Of Angara

The investigators have their sledges, some supplies, reindeer, and an enraged giganteus to deal with. If they defeat

or kill him, they have time to get away, rest, take stock, and decide what to do.

The tracks made eight hours earlier when the investigators were brought here have not yet been wiped away by the wind. The sledges, if not too laden with passengers, can be pulled slowly by the remaining reindeer. With luck or a Yakut guide, the investigators can find a village little more than a day's journey south. Kiutl's village was closer, but is now demolished and without reindeer. Thereafter, any river leads them to the Lena within three days, longer if they do not have an experienced driver.

The three days to the Lena are mercifully quiet. The loss of their god left the giganteus in emotional disarray. The investigators don't know that, of course, and at night observe peculiar shadows, tall tree stumps, and rasping tones in the wind. For those asleep, the experience in the caverns of Angara merits one or two realistic nightmares. During the day the tracks in the snow of a running arctic hare do look a lot like giganteus footprints.

The Return Journey

THE TREMENDOUS breadth of the Lena River and the well-worn sledge tracks on its ice are breathtaking after more than a week in the back-country of Siberia. The station-master where the investigators first met Taksa seems a bit surprised at their return. There are drivers and fresh horses waiting, and Vitimsk is only a day away.

The sledge journey from here to Chita is eleven days, barring delays. Regardless of how the investigators plan to get out of Siberia, their best road from here is the sledging route back to Chita. If they wish to avoid Chita, following the Lena for two weeks takes them to Irkutsk, 'the Paris of Siberia.' There they face the same choices as in Chita.

The investigators might also remember Piotr Bootin, the station-master. An Idea roll might prompt them. He proves to have contacts who can smuggle out the whole party out. Their chances with the stern OGPU officers at Vladivostok emigration customs are severely limited after Borisovich's reports.

Back On The Vitim

Passage is simple and fast until Bodaibo, where the station-master is an OGPU informant. He looks suspicious and asks many questions. He does not make a report, however, unless the investigators lose their cool.

Two days out of Bodaibo, after traffic has thinned down, the lead driver suddenly turns away from the river

at a point between staging posts. The other drivers follow, offering no coherent explanation except smiles. When the horses are drawn up 50 yards from the river, all of the drivers produce .45 revolvers. They plan to strand the investigators, and drive away with all their gear. A bitterly cold three hours passes before the next sledge happens along near nightfall. Check for frostbite and hypothermia. Hunting down the thieves is possible, but may be time-consuming.

The gray stagnation of the labor camps replaces the frontier roughness of Bodaibo. Piotr Bootin is ecstatic to see the investigators, immediately bringing out his

vodka. Once convinced the investigators can truly sneak him past Chita, he plots their escape determinedly. The old sledge route still runs all the way to the east coast and is hardly watched by the OGPU.

Sledging out takes nearly a month, but the train is crawling with state agents, and papers are inspected meticulously. If the investigators can reach the coast, Bootin knows some smugglers who are probably still making runs to Yokohama.

Chita and Choices

The Shilka River flows right through Chita. There is no way to sledge around the city without causing enough suspicion to be arrested. Bootin must be hidden in one of the sledges, with a successful Conceal roll. If the roll is failed, a deadly chase may ensue. He is a former criminal, not allowed in Chita or other points on the railway. The OGPU has a thick file on him. Chance's vigorous passport photo requires severe doctoring to look at all like the haggard exile.

Chita is ominous and quiet. Two men were just hanged for stealing from freight cars. Their bodies, stiff as boards, swing in the icy wind just behind the police station. A demented man bumps into the investigators, searching their faces and sputtering, "Get out. Get out while you can."

From Chita the investigators can follow the sledge route to Vladivostok (28 days) or take the Trans-Siberian Railway (8 days, 142 rubles first class, 97 rubles second class). The train also goes to China, but the guards at Manchuria Station are tough on both sides of the border. Heading west is even worse, since closer to Moscow the hornets' nest of security and red tape only gets thicker.

Taking the train is dealt with in a nearby box. Sledging is slower but safer, and Bootin strongly advocates it.

Sledging To Vladivostok

Though the great convoys of freight and post sledges that once plied this route have been replaced by the Trans-Siberian Railway, the train remains too expensive for most Siberians, leaving a dying passenger service still running on the icy highway. Delays on the road are frequent, but private horses are widely available and interest in state regulations rare. No longer the frontier, the centuries-old route is lined with numerous telegraph poles and frequent villages.

The Shilka River takes the investigators six days down to the Amur, the boundary separating the USSR and China. The narrow sledge path jogs around the towering ice at the confluence of the Shilka and Amur, but the lead driver takes a well-worn divergent path toward the near river bank. His destination is a small, well-tended stone shrine surrounded by tree branches stuck in the snow.

As the drivers dust the whiteness off the venerable stone carvings and make their supplications, the investi-

Taking the Trans-Siberian Railway

Passengers in first class include a talkative Jewish mining engineer with his family, a Russian supply supervisor and secretary, three OGPU agents undercover and a Red Army officer occupied with his mistress.

In second class are a couple of German businessmen, five Chinese students, and the officer's company of soldiers - rude, crude, and loud passengers — playing cards, and surreptitiously trying to buy vodka. Pickpockets and card cheats find the soldiers easy prey.

The events of the first part of the trip depend entirely on how well the investigators keep their cool under the OGPU agents' casual questions, and the soldiers' sporadic harassment. There is a stop for coupling repairs, but little else.

In the twilight of the third day, the train comes to a dragging, snowbound halt amid a raging blizzard. It is the purga again, returned to haunt the living. The entire company of soldiers is lost outside, searching for comrades who mysteriously disappeared while clearing the tracks. The wind smashes in windows, the snow coats and kills many passengers, and the ghostly figures of exiles wander the corridors snuffing out lights. Barricades and fire fend off the snow, but nothing can stop the whispering calls of the exiles. At sunrise the wind-blown tracks are clear, and the surviving engineers drive the train toward the edge of the plateau and out of Siberia.

Damaged carriages are not removed until the train reaches Khabarovsk, on the sixth day. Khabarovsk is the major military center of the Soviet Far East. The train crew is replaced, and among the new passengers are several OGPU operatives investigating the purga incident.

Vassili Vassilievich, a particularly abrasive novice, attaches himself to the investigators, finally drawing a gun 5 hours from Vladivostok and demanding to search their luggage. Vassilievich plans to bring them into headquarters upon arrival, but the countryside rolling by is desolate enough to dispose of him. If he disappears, the investigators have two days thereafter before connections are made and soldiers come after them.

gators can see a small alcove at the center, now empty. "For our protection" is the drivers' explanation. A successful Anthropology roll identifies the ceremony as one from folk religion, with some Buddhist elements, dating from the 7th century A.D.

The people living along the forbidding black cliffs of the Amur are distinctly Mongolian, speaking almost no Russian. Pulling in after the first day on the Amur, the sledges are mobbed by emaciated villagers trying to beg and barter their belongings for food. The station-master, a Russian, chases the villagers away with a pistol. He explains sharply, "Of course they have no food. They shouldn't be here. This village has been relocated to the rail-line."

Unwatched sledges are cleaned out in the night, but generosity, whether intentional or not, earns the investigators elaborate blessings, including signs marked on the sledges, and fine Mongolian handicrafts. Cold-hearted investigators earn different signs marked on their sledges, and a curse of retribution which follows them to the edge of Siberia.

After two days on the Amur, accommodations deteriorate drastically. Rough stone floors and whistling wind replace the wooden benches and snug heat of prior stations. Known as "the Seven Cardinal Sins," these stations are encountered coincidentally with a heavy snowfall.

The drivers become nervous. A Psychology roll reveals they are afraid of the falling snow itself. Just as the Kinghan Range, the edge of the great plateau on which Siberia lies, comes into view, the snow whips into a purga and an early twilight.

The Exile Ghosts

As the drivers race the horses on through the blinding snow, oddly human shapes appear in the gray distance, all around the sledges. One driver nods at them and shouts back with fear in his eyes, "The Watchers!"

The shapes are quite real—wispy, visible to everyone through the blowing snow. They line the path, closing in until haggard, hollow-eyed faces are clear. They whisper on the wind of hatred, revenge, and frozen death. They are the exiles of Siberia, their souls accumulated here for centuries under czars and commissars alike. They are the minions of the Siberian winter, and of the snow that envelops everything in its ghastly fingers.

If investigators carry the blessings of the starving village they passed, the windblown snow seems to flow around the sledges and the ghostly exiles keep distant.

Without those blessings, the hateful whispers reach a terrifying crescendo, and the supernaturally viscous snow coats passengers and drivers alike, fighting its way into closed cabs and freezing to skin and clothes. The whispers demand that the living join them in the whiteness, costing 0/1D3 Sanity points.

All drivers and passengers must receive rolls of CON x2 on D100, or lose one hit point to hypothermia and a

point of CON to frostbite. CON lost in this way can be restored after a week of treatment with a successful D100 roll of CON x5 or less. If that roll fails, the frostbite victim loses the CON permanently, as well as 1D3-1 points of APP.

By the time the beleaguered sledges follow the half-buried telegraph poles to the next station, it is dark and the purga is raging. The drivers are half-dead. No food or station-master are to be found in the one-room shack, but the dying fire makes it heaven in face of the terror outside. Morning brings an astonished station-master. It is less than a day's ride to escape Siberia.

No Snow

In immediate contrast to Siberia, the descent from the Kinghan Range down to the city of Blagoveschensk reveals a moonscape of snowless, dead earth. Worse, from here the Amur runs too wide and strong to make it a viable road. For a higher price, the sledges are put in wagons and driven across rugged roads for three bumpy days before there is again enough snow for the sled runners.

Khabarovsk

A week more overland brings the investigators to Khabarovsk, a small city next to the principal camp of the Red Army's eastern garrison. Passing through requires great discretion, as there are always soldiers looking for promotions. The road to Vladivostok turns south up the Ussuri River, smooth and peaceful.

Leaving the USSR

Late on the fifth day out of Khabarovsk, Bootin directs the investigators off the main route onto a small eastern tributary of the Ussuri. After three days sledging up into the mountains, the expedition reaches a small settlement where Bootin grimly announces, "No more stations."

They spend the day there haggling over horses and drivers to take them through a pass and down to the

Emigration Customs In Vladivostok

Sheer luck and lots of smooth talk are required here, but not even those can get Bootin or a complete gigantes body through. It's the keeper's choice whether Grigory Borisovich's reports made it to the investigators' files, and just how penetrating the questions are about the disappearances of Grigory Borisovich Abramov and "Douglas Smith." In any case, they are put through the wringer. If they blow it, they can start plotting their escape from a haunted concentration camp someplace off the Kirenga River. If they talk their way through, reward them with a skeptical glare, a wave of the hand, and "Thank you for visiting the Soviet Union."



Pacific. The going is overland now, and the wind blows fierce from the ocean. When the top of the pass is reached, the ocean beyond stretches black under the gray sky, its cold wind burning the investigators' faces.

They camp far down-slope, under makeshift shelters amid low trees and scrub. That night is haunted with echoes. Every tree creaks, and every bush rasps. A pungent odor rises, reminiscent of the Angara caverns. Animals leap through snow beyond the camp like striding giants.

The next day takes them to a coastal town called Olga Bay, where Bootin suddenly leaves them with no more explanation than "just wait." He returns two hours later, just as tersely offering, "we move tonight."

That night Bootin leads them on a round-about path to where suspicious smugglers wait near the docks. A half-hour's sledging over the ice brings the investigators to the edge of coastal ice. There a cold and lightless freighter waits, bound for Yokohama within the hour.

Returning Home

A ship from Yokohama to San Francisco is easy to find, but it takes some talking to get access to the freezer section, if the investigators have an intact giganteus they need to store safely. Once they set foot on American soil their adventure is over.

Award each survivor 1D6 sanity points for a safe return. If Bootin was rescued, each gains an additional 1D3 for granting the old man a new life.

If the investigators manage to bring back a whole giganteus (alive or dead), gratification is instantaneous. Upon arrival, U.S. customs takes over, bringing in specialists of all kinds and attempting to keep the investigators and the news contained. A leak, however, is instantaneous: reporters, microphones, flash bulbs popping, several news conferences, book contracts, and radio talk shows ensue. If the keeper is concerned about historical integrity, the giganteus is stolen after the initial publicity winds down. The legitimate press soon shies away, but the investigators still get plenty of attention from others, and if they investigate for money, their business booms for a long time to come.

If just a head or other part is brought back, or detailed photographs, the investigators can bring it through U.S. customs. The newspapers show the same interest as in a full body, but controversy ("mutant gorilla," "no evidence for bipedalism") soon chases away the more legitimate press. Nevertheless, as above, the investigators get more than enough attention, and business booms.

If the investigators simply get out of the USSR alive, any Soviet stamps in their passports brings them scrutiny and interrogations. What was the real reason they went to the USSR? Are they now or have they ever been members of the Communist Party? Did they bring back books or propaganda of any type? Do they believe in the violent overthrow of the United States government? And so on.

They might still try take their story to the papers, but editors still shy away from reputed communists.

With good White Russian connections, Bootin is able to emigrate to the United States. Ironically, it is his testimony that gets the investigators readmitted.

And eventually a man will arrive with a few questions about the disappearance of one Dr. Broephyle E. Chance, whose remains were consumed by gigantes.

Statistics

DR. BROEPHYLE E. CHANCE, Age 48, Professor

STR 16 CON 12 SIZ 15 INT 17 POW 11
DEX 11 APP 13 EDU 19 SAN 52 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Rifle 20%, damage 1D3 + POT 25 tranquilizer.

Skills: Anthropology 73%, Archaeology 31%, French 40%, German 30%, Geology 24%, Library Use 82%, Navigate 70%, Persuade 29%, Russian 45%, Yakut 17%.

Capt. GRIGORY BORISOVICH ABLAMOV, Age 39, OGPU

STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 12 INT 14 POW 10
DEX 13 APP 15 EDU 13 SAN 50 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 70%, damage 1D3 +db

Knife 35%, damage 1D4 +db
.45 Revolver 65%, damage 1D10+2

Skills: Camouflage 62%, Dodge 66%, English 40%, French 35%, Hide 83%, Listen 55%, Mandarin 10%, Persuade 61%, Psychology 33%, Sneak 77%, Spot Hidden 74%, Track 48%.

PIOTR BOOTIN, Age 67, Russian exile.

STR 11 CON 13 SIZ 10 INT 14 POW 8
DEX 8 APP 9 EDU 16 SAN 31 HP 12

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: Rapier 24%, damage 1D6+1

.30-06 Rifle 12%, damage 2D6+3

Skills: Accounting 32%, Bargain 47%, Persuade 54%, Drive Automobile 29%, English 50%, Fast Talk 38%, French 50%, Hide 41%, Sneak 24%.

INA, Age 104, Buriat Healer

STR 8 CON 16 SIZ 7 INT 11 POW 19
DEX 10 APP 9 EDU 6 SAN 95 HP 12

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Chemistry 71%, Cthulhu Mythos 3%, First Aid 97%, Geology 33%, Medicine 88%, Natural History 84%, Occult 44%, Pharmacy 72%, Sing 23%.

COLONEL IVAN RATZUL, Age 54, Red Army and OGPU

STR 14 CON 16 SIZ 11 INT 13 POW 16
DEX 13 APP 12 EDU 12 SAN 80 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 75%, damage 1D3 +db

Sabre 60%, damage 1D8+1 +db

.45 Revolver 55%, damage 1D10+2

.30-06 Rifle 80%, damage 2D6+3

Skills: Anthropology 16%, First Aid 54%, Persuade 39%, Ride 64%, Track 52%.

TAKSA, Age 41, Yakut guide.

STR 13 CON 14 SIZ 10 INT 12 POW 13
DEX 10 APP 14 EDU 9 SAN 65 HP 12

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: Knife 53%, damage 1D4+2

.30-06 Rifle 60%, damage 2D6+3

Skills: Bargain 63%, Buriat 80%, Drive Sledge 77%, First Aid 54%, Ride 56%, Russian 60%, Throw 62%, Track 55%, Yakut 80%.

KIUTL, Age 27, Yakut shaman.

STR 12 CON 13 SIZ 9 INT 12 POW 17
DEX 14 APP 14 EDU 9 SAN 85 HP 11

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Astronomy 31%, Bargain 47%, First Aid 73%, Medicine 38%, Natural History 66%, Occult 24%, Persuade 42%, Pharmacy (Siberian) 69%, Ride 80%, Sing 32%, Track 36%.

BURIAT SLEDGE DRIVERS

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 65%, damage 1D3 +db

Knife 40%, damage 1D4 +db

Whip 35%, damage 1D4 +db

12-gauge Shotgun 40%, damage 4D6

Skills: Bargain 20%, Drive Sledge 60%, Fast Talk 30%, First Aid 40%, Listen 50%, Ride 40%, Russian 50%, Throw 40%, Track 20%.

	one	two	three	four	five	six	seven	eight
STR	15	12	15	14	13	14	13	14
CON	16	16	15	12	13	14	13	14
SIZ	10	13	10	16	12	11	12	11
INT	11	10	12	10	9	11	10	10
POW	10	10	16	12	11	5	9	10
DEX	11	8	11	13	12	11	12	11
HP	13	15	13	14	13	13	13	13

SIBERIAN BANDITS

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 70%, damage 1D3

Head Butt 30%, damage 1D4

Knife 50%, damage 1D6

.45 Revolver 25%, damage 1D10+2

.30-06 Rifle 35%, damage 2D6+3

Skills: Camouflage 40%, Hide 25%, Jump 40%, Ride 80%, Sneak 25%, Throw 35%, Track 25%.

	one	two	three	four	five	six	seven	eight
STR	11	11	13	9	12	11	12	11
CON	14	13	10	14	12	12	12	12
SIZ	13	10	8	15	9	8	9	8
INT	11	11	11	9	8	10	10	11
POW	10	10	16	12	10	8	12	13
DEX	10	13	8	11	14	12	11	12
HP	14	12	9	15	11	10	11	10

YAKUTS**Damage Bonus:** +0.**Weapons:** MEN: Knife 30%, damage 1D4

Bow 70%, damage 1D6+1

WOMEN: Knife 30%, damage 1D4.

Skills: WOMEN: Camouflage 40%, First Aid 60%, Hide 30%, Natural History 25%, Persuade 20%, Ride 50%, Sneak 30%, Spot Hidden 40%. MEN: First Aid 50%, Hide 50%, Listen 40%, Natural History 25%, Persuade 20%, Ride 60%, Sneak 40%, Spot Hidden 40%, Throw 60%.

	one	two	three	four	five	six	seven	eight
STR	13	11	9	12	10	11	10	11
CON	12	13	11	13	12	11	12	11
SIZ	10	9	9	8	9	7	9	7
INT	10	8	9	7	10	11	10	11
POW	12	9	11	10	12	14	12	15
DEX	9	10	12	10	11	12	11	12
HP	11	11	10	11	11	9	11	9

OGPU AGENTS**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.**Weapons:** Fist/Punch 70%, damage 1D3 +db

Grapple 40%, damage special

9mm Revolver 50%, damage 1D10

.30-06 Rifle 40%, damage 2D6+3

Skills: English/French/German 40%, Hide 30%, Listen 50%, Persuade 30%, Spot Hidden 50%, Track 25%.

	one	two	three	four
STR	13	15	14	13
CON	12	13	14	12
SIZ	12	11	13	12
INT	12	13	14	12
POW	14	8	16	14
DEX	12	11	12	12
HP	12	12	14	12

DRYOPITHECUS GIGANTEUS. Giganteus is similar to human in form, though with tremendous jaws and long, thick, coarse hair from head to toe which changes from dark brown to dirty white with the advent of winter. The species varies considerably in size. Those of China and Siberia are among the largest, averaging 9 feet in height and 650 pounds. They are known as *Gigantopithecus giganteus* and *Gigantopithecus blacki*.

Human science estimates their collective age at 6,000,000 years. Giganteus teeth suggest an herbivorous diet, though undoubtedly they have turned more and more to meat as their farming and foraging lands shrink before human expansion. Desecration of their graves by human scientists and Chinese pharmacists (giganteus fossils are prized for longevity potions) has further caused the species to withdraw.

Dryopithecus giganteus is a distant descendant of the Voormis, an intelligent race that walked the earth long before man. The Voormis built great cities on the continent we now call Greenland. As their civilization declined, human society flourished. Isolated pockets in remote areas remain, slowly degenerating until they more closely resemble animals than the once-proud race they are descended from.

DRYOPITHECUS GIGANTEUS

characteristics	rolls	averages
STR	4D6+12	26
CON	4D6	14
SIZ	4D6+12	26
INT	2D6	7
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	2D6+4	11
Move 9		HP 20

Av. Damage Bonus: +2D6**Weapons:** Club 50%, damage 1D6 +db

Head Butt 20%, damage 1D4 +db

Grapple 60%, damage special

Bite 40%, damage 1D8

Armor: 3-point thick skin and hair.

Skills: Camouflage 60%, Hide 80%, Listen 80%, Persuade 40%, Sneak 60%, Spot Hidden 40%, Throw 70%.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D8 to see one.**FOUR GIGANTEUS****Damage Bonus:** +2D6.**Weapons:** Club 50%, damage 1D6 +db

Head Butt 20%, damage 1D4 +db

Grapple 60%, damage special

Bite 40%, damage 1D8

Armor: 3-point thick skin and hair.

Skills: Camouflage 60%, Hide 80%, Listen 80%, Persuade 40%, Sneak 60%, Spot Hidden 40%, Throw 70%.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D8 to see one.

	one	two	three	four
STR	24	23	29	30
CON	15	20	12	8
SIZ	25	28	22	25
INT	7	6	8	5
POW	10	12	9	11
DEX	9	11	7	13
HP	20	24	17	17

REINDEER, Rangifer tarandus. Reindeer average five feet at the shoulder, but are powerful for their size. Though good-tempered, they spook more easily than horses, and have never been trained offensively. They are notoriously difficult to ride, but the Yakuts manage them bareback easily.

REINDEER

characteristics	rolls	averages
STR	2D6+12	19
CON	2D6+6	13
SIZ	2D6+12	19
POW	3D6	11
DEX	3D6+6	17
Move 12		HP 16

Av. Damage Bonus: +1D6..**Weapons:** Bite 05%, damage 1D6

Kick 15%, damage 1D6 +db

Charge 50%, damage 2D6 +db

Rear/Plunge 05%, damage 1D8 +db

Armor: 1-point skin.

Automobile Chases

Are roaring metal mechanisms antithetical to the game?

So say some, and yet such diversion pleases others.

DEVISED for roleplaying, these rules provide gamable ways to conduct car chases and associated combat. A simpler way is to match Drive Auto rolls on the Resistance Table between the pursuer and the pursued. Neither way is better. Do as you enjoy.

Though more complex than a Resistance Table roll, these rules are not intended to be a game in themselves, nor do they adeptly coordinate more than two vehicles. As needed, change or augment them. Explosions, automobiles going over cliffs, and other special effects are the province of keepers and those who love automobiles.

Procedure

In a combat round, a driver performs one of three actions. If accelerating into the *risky* speed column for the vehicle, or it attempting a maneuver, make a Drive Auto roll. In determining success, include any Drive Auto modifiers for maneuvers or from the Trouble Table.

1920s Sample Vehicles

SPEED IN MOVES

safe: risky: make

vehicle	no Drv roll	Drv roll	A/D	Handling	HP	drv + pass.
Norton motorcycle	0-20	21-50	30/19	+30	14	1 (+1)
Hispano-Suiza H8	0-30	31-40	15/20	+10	30	4+RBs*
M-Benz SSK	0-35	36-55	25/27	+20	20	2+RBs
Ford Model-A	0-20	21-25	10/15	+5	25	5+RBs
Ford Model-T	0-15	15-20	7/8	0	21	5+RBs
Packard Straight 6	0-23	24-35	12/17	-10	40	6+RBs
6-Ton Truck	0-12	13-20	5/8	-20	70	3 in cab
Armored Car	0-15	16-25	7/9	-15	110	up to 4
Horse-wagon	0-4	5-10	2/2	-25	25	2 on seat

1990s Sample Vehicles

M-Benz sedan	0-40	41-65	30/24	15	45	5
Masseratti	0-20	21-90	45/30	30	15	2
mini-van	0-40	40-50	28/26	+17	35	6
GMC pickup	0-37	38-55	30/25	+15	40	3 in cab
Geo	0-38	39-50	27/25	+20	30	4
18-wheeler	0-30	31-45	10/17	-20	60	3 in cab
stretched limo	0-35	36-45	25/15	0	25	10
Humvee	0-30	31-40	25/20	+5	60	7
M1A1 Abrams	0-20	21-30	10/13	-15	75+50ap	4

* RBs - a 1920s vehicle has two running boards. An extra passenger or two could perch on each. 1990s vehicles mostly have no running boards.

Safe: no Drv roll — anyone with the Drive Automobile skill can operate the vehicle at the Moves indicated.

Risky: make Drv roll — the first round traveling at such speed requires a successful Drive Auto roll. Additional Drive rolls may be called for, for other reasons.

A/D — accelerate/decelerate: a vehicle has a maximum number of Moves per round at which it can increase or decrease its velocity, as shown. One can change more slowly, but not more quickly.

Handling — percentiles by which driving a particular vehicle enhances or diminishes the driver's Drive Auto chance. A motorcycle is very responsive, while a large truck is difficult to handle.

HP — the hit points of the vehicle.

Drv + pass. — how many people sit in the vehicle.

Vehicle play integrates into the combat round. A vehicle action is announced at the driver's DEX, but resolve results of vehicle actions at the end of the combat round, after all DEX ranks and gunshots. If more than one vehicle is in play and precedence is important, roll the Drive skill again: the lowest result goes first.

Driver Actions

A character driving a vehicle must choose one of the following actions in a combat round:

- 1 Increase, decrease, or do not change Move; no Drive Auto roll needed—or,
- 2 Discharge a firearm or make a throw and decrease speed by Move 10; no Drive Auto roll needed—or,
- 3 Perform one of the following maneuvers with a successful Drive Auto roll. Failing, roll on the Trouble Table.
 - **Bootlegger Reverse:** the auto skids and reverses direction, now going forward at Move 10. Drive Auto needed. Not possible for trucks.
 - **Crash:** hitting a stationary target, the vehicle takes 1D3 damage for every 10 siz or fraction of the stationary target, and does damage equal to half of the vehicle's hit points to the target, plus 1D3 hit points per Move 10 at which the vehicle travels. Make similar rolls for each passenger. Drive Auto roll needed.
 - **Emergency Stop:** slows the vehicle by an additional Move 10 per round. Drive Auto roll needed.
 - **High-Speed Turn:** with a successful Drive Auto roll, the vehicle negotiates a turn without slowing down.
 - **Ordinary Turn:** the auto decelerates by Move 10 in that combat round. If so-decelerating, the turn requires no Drive Auto roll to achieve success.
 - **Ram Head-On or T-Bone Collision:** two autos hit nose-to-nose or nose to mid-section and both take damage—half of the hit points of the other vehicle, plus 1D3 hit points for each Move 5 or fraction thereof speed at which the colliding vehicle traveled. Make similar rolls for each passenger. Drive Auto needed.
 - **Sideswipe, Rear-End, Force Off Road:** each vehicle takes one-tenth of the other car's hit points in damage, plus 1D3 hit points per Move 10 of the difference between the vehicles. Make the same rolls for each passenger.
 - **Swerve:** with a successful Drive Auto roll, the driver evades one Ram, Sideswipe, Throw, Climb, Jump, or firearms attack per round. If the roll fails, the attack proceeds.

Automobile Damage

All vehicles have hit points. The amount lost varies with the result of the driver action. When a vehicle reaches half its hit points in damage, halve its *risky*-column speed. At zero hit points, a vehicle ceases to function.

— continued next page

Auto Chase Range Track — Use a coin or marker to indicate current range

1	2	3	4	5	6
POINT-BLANK	BASE CHANCE	EXTENDED RANGE	IN SIGHT	OUT OF SIGHT	ESCAPE

Intervening Distance

Since the actual distance between vehicles varies second by second, express the distance between vehicles in firearms terms. There are six ranges:

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. point-blank, | 4. in sight |
| 2. base chance | 5. out of sight |
| 3. extended range | 6. escape |

For every Move 10 faster than an opponent, a vehicle can move away or close by 1 range per round. Fractions of Move 10s can be accumulated, but the idea is to give drivers chances to maneuver. See the Auto Chase Range Track above.

In a chase, the lead car can lose the pursuer by reaching escape and maintaining that interval for the next combat round. Perhaps the escaping vehicle continues to gain on the pursuer, or takes a turn-off which the pursuer is too far behind to detect.

Affected or Effective Skills

CLIMB: a non-driving character can Climb around on the outside of a vehicle or Jump to another vehicle. Unless the keeper specially wishes more complex calculations, halve the chances for such skills. A failed skill roll indicates the character fell from the vehicle, taking 1D6 damage for every Move 10 of speed.

CONCEAL: useful for scooting a vehicle behind roadside bushes, disguising a turn-off, blacking-out tail lights, or altering license plates.

Keeper Notes

The keeper must show the road as well as act out one of the vehicles. Do not make a map of the road, unless the investigators are supposed to be familiar with it. A verbal setting of the scene will be plenty, so long as the chances for successful action are described fairly.

In the 1920s, city and town streets are two lanes, one in each direction. Back streets are unpaved, single car-width tracks. Police often direct traffic at important intersections. Signal lights are virtually unknown. A few parking meters have appeared, but they are not widespread until after WWII. Main country roads are narrow two-lane roads, with frequent curves. Motorcycle police speed-traps are likely on main roads in the afternoon and evening. Shoulders are uncleared and unmarked. Turn-outs are infrequent, and other drivers on the road may be inattentive. Back roads are much worse—narrow, torturous, and overgrown. If bridges exist, they are one vehicle wide. Crossroads are often unmarked, without stop-signs or indication of rights-of-way. Directional signs are rare. Farm animals and horse-drawn vehicles are sure to be encountered.

In the 1990s, the automobile has ruled the United States for decades. Society now is reshaping the automobile rather than being reshaped by it. The keeper must decide whether society is as clean as a suburban mall, or as recognizably worn, cracked, and ambiguous as any city, or as rubble-filled and leather-clad as Saturday-morning cartoons would have it. What the keeper decides indicates the sorts of vehicles driven, and the relative perfection or impoverishment of the road net.

DRIVE AUTO SKILL MODIFIERS

All Drive Automobile roll modifiers are cumulative.

hazard, etc.	percentile change	hazard, etc.	percentile change
slideswipe, etc	-15	bootlegger reverse	-15
heavy rain	-10	oily, icy surface	-10
snow	-10	high-speed turn	-10
limbs, rocks	-5	downhill grade	-5
fog	-5	gravel road	-5
high-speed turn	-5	night	-5
rain	-5	wind	-5
dirt road	-5	gravel road	-5
back street	-5	handling	per vehicle
		each Move 5 or fraction above Move 20	-5
		each Move 5 or fraction below Move 16	+5

JUMP: for a non-driving character to Jump to another vehicle, the vehicles must be at point-blank range and be traveling at the same Move. Failing the jump, lose 1D3 hit points per Move 10 of speed.

FIREARM and THROW SKILLS: except by special circumstance, only Handgun, Shotgun, Submachine Gun, and Throw can be used from a moving vehicle. Skills at slower speeds are unaffected, though range is treated normally. If traveling at a Move in the *risky* column, halve firearm and Throw skill values.

MECHANICAL REPAIR: succeeding, it fixes the vehicle or adds 1D6+4 hit points per game hour to a vehicle, keeper's choice. The keeper may rule some problems solved only by Electrical Repair.

Trouble Table

Choose one result (or roll 1D10) for every 20 percentiles or fraction thereof by which the Drive roll was missed. *Example: the character has 46% Drive. The actual Drive roll result is 76, 30 percentiles of difference. The investigator's player rolls D10x2 on this table, ignoring extra percentiles. If a result greater than 10 is rolled, use result number 10. If a condition persists into the next turn, it precludes maneuvers other than Ordinary Turn.*

- 1 FLAT TIRE** — slow to Move 8 or stop until changed.
- 2 ENGINE DAMAGE** — car slows by Move 10 a round until successful Drive roll or stopped. Stopped, engine won't start without a successful Mechanical Repair roll.
- 3 GAS TANK PUNCTURE** — no effect until second puncture. Then all the gasoline leaks onto the road, and the auto slows by Move 10 per round until halting.
- 4-6 SKID** — deduct 5 percentiles from Drive skill for next round. A successful Drive Auto roll regains control.
- 7 FISHTAIL** — deduct 10 percentiles from Drive skill in next round. A successful Drive Auto roll regains control.
- 8 HEART-IN-MOUTH FISHTAIL** — deduct 15 percentiles from Drive skill in next round only, roll on Trouble table again, and add 2 to die result.
- 9 STOMACH-CHURNING FISHTAIL** — deduct 15 percentiles from Drive skill in next round only, roll on Trouble table again, and add 4 to die result.
- 10 ROLL OFF ROAD** — rolls over once per Move 10 vehicle was traveling. Each roll does 2D3 damage to the car, and 1D3 damage to each occupant. In films, after the final roll, the vehicle bursts into flames.



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"All was well with the plane, and we clumsily hauled on our heavy flying furs. Danforth got the engine started without trouble, and we made a very smooth takeoff over the nightmare city....

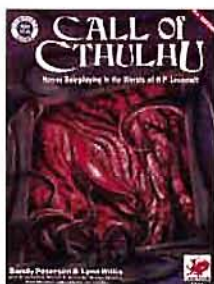
As we drew close to the jutting peaks the wind's strange piping became manifest, and I could see Danforth's hands trembling at the controls. Rank amateur though I was, I thought at the moment that I might be a better navigator than he in effecting the dangerous crossing between pinnacles, and when I made motions to change seats and take over his duties he did not protest...."

—H.P. Lovecraft

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