



Brass & Steel: A Game of Steampunk Adventure presents





Brass & Steel: A Game of Steampunk Adventure Gaming suppliment

copyright © Pamean Games 2012



#### **BRASS & STEEL DESIGNED BY:**

Shane B. Bauer Greg Kveberg Ken Vinson

### ART DIRECTION AND DESIGN FOR PAMEAN GAMES BY:

Shawn Kavon

### EDITING:

Shawn Kavon and Timothy P. Kitzinger

### **INTERIOR ART:**

Grace Palmer and Shawn Kavon

### **SPECIAL THANKS:**

To our spouses, family and friends who have been tolerant of the time we have spent developing Brass & Steel instead of snuggling with them. We would especially like to thank Alex MacDougall who was with us from the beginning – without him Brass & Steel would be an entirely different game, and much the worse for it; and Ryan Chase, for teaching us what he knows about LARPing, which was so much more than us.

To our play testers: Angela Chase, Eric Christopher Chase, Ryan Chase, Kevin Komarek, Demetrios Piliouras, Shannon Roznoski, and Eric Vinson

And to Mark R. Pay, whose wonderful World War II tactical game shares nothing with our Brass & Steel except its name. **Check his work out at www.thespiritengine.com**.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

about Brass & Steel and Pamean Games, visit us online at: www.pameangames.com

Brass & Steel v1.5. Copyright © Pamean Games 2012. Pamean Games, Brass & Steel: A Game of Steampunk Adventure, and all associated marks, logos and artwork, characters, products and illustrations are the property of Pamean Games. All rights reserved. Except as noted, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of Pamean Games. Please do not participate in or encourage the electronic piracy of copyrighted materials.

# THE STORY

- 🎲 -

The Case of the Croquet Mallet

Houghton Hall	7
The Plot	7
Props and Atmosphere	8
Wrap Up	8
Notes	9
Clues	10
Guest Summaries	11
Full Brieflings	13
NPCs	20
One Last Complication	20
Small Character Sheets	21

# BRASS & STEEL An Overview

Introduction	26
Rules & System	27
Modifier Table	28
Fate Cards	29
Attributes	30
Skills	30
Combat, Damage & Healing	32
Lucid Dreaming	33
Arcanism	33







Brass & Steel: A Steampunk Adventure





# A VICTORIAN MURDER MYSTERY

(a LARP for 10-12 players)



You are cordially invited! Lord Rocksavage will be hosting a country house weekend at Houghton Hall, Norfolk, seat of his father George, 4th Marquess of Cholmondeley. While Mum and Dad are on an airship journey through the Orient, His Lordship and his lovely wife Sybil are having a get-together for the younger set. Then, with a "Whack!" and a "Thud!" things take a turn for the worse. Join us for this fast-paced whodunit! Steampunk finery very appropriate, but not required.

A group of wealthy guests (and a few less wealthy guests) have gathered at Houghton Hall for a weekend in the country as guests of Lord Rocksavage. The scenario is intended for twelve players and at least two game masters/storytellers. Two Game Masters plus the player of the soon-to-bedeceased, who then transitions into being a Game Master, seems to work best. If there are only ten players available Alfred and Elsie Vanderbilt are the characters most easily eliminated. Further reduction in players is possible with some minor re-writes.



Brass & Steel: A Steampunk Adventure





Like many of the people presented as player characters in this scenario, Houghton Hall is a real place. As noted below in the player handouts it is located in Norfolk, in northeast England. A bit of diligent Internet research will yield many useful details including a history, pictures of the interior and a floor plan if you are so inclined.

Houghton Hall is a large and stately English country house. Like most such structures it was built centuries ago and added to over time. The oldest, central block of the manse dates to 1722. Most of the scenario will take place on the first or state floor of the main block of the manor. This floor consists of both public and semi-private rooms used by the family for both entertaining and daily living. It is perfectly viable to simply declare to players that the main space used for the scenario is an ornate parlor where guests have retired after dinner. If you would prefer to inject more details into this dinner was in the Marble Parlor (or dining room). Thereafter guests progressed across the Stone or Entry Hall into The Saloon. This is the most luxurious of the rooms at Houghton and likely the space that guests will spend most of their time in after dinner. If a private conversation is needed or one or more players wish to slip away (perhaps Aleister will conduct a seance or Tarot readings for example) this could be done in the adjascent White Drawing Room, which is a large and beautiful room itself. Family and guest bedrooms are upstairs on the "second floor," which Americans would call the third floor floor. (What Americans would call the first floor is the ground floor. Houghton is built such that the main entrance and state floor are up a flight of exterior stairs.) This floor is reached by family and guests using the Great Staircase off of the the Stone Hall.

The other area of the mansion that will come into play include the Gun Room (which is located in the south wing of the house, accessed through a corridor down one level from the state floor). This is where the dastardly deed will take place.

There are of course many other rooms and staircases in the mansion. Whatever space that players or Game Masters desire can be found and described (ad-lib) as needed. When this scenario has been run in the past players investigated the garages and stables, the kitchen, gardens, and much else besides. Be flexible and provide as much detail as you wish to make Houghton seem very real to the players.

Running The Case of the Croquet Mallet



At the beginning of the scenario hosts guests gather in the large and luxurious public rooms of an English country house owned by the Cholmondeley ("Chum-lee") family, a great noble line. Several of those present have known each other for many years and have had dealings both public and private. These connections are described later in this scenario.

At a point in the evening of the Game Masters' choosing, one of the guests, Mr. Howard "Howie" Boyce-Wingham, will meet an untimely end in the Gun Room, located in the south wing of Houghton Hall. This should not be obvious to any of the players other than Howie himself. We've found that it works best to have Howie be a "plant" of a sort, a player up to the murder and then a Game Master thereafter to help resolve the ensuing plot threads. Having Howie lay on the floor and helpfully explain what is wrong with him is quite smile-inducing, though this can be handled however you like.

Howie may be discovered by a guest or by a footman. If a footman finds the deceased he will inform the butler who will inform Lord Rocksavage. Who learns of the crime from there and how they respond make up the majority of the rest of the scenario.



So "who done it" anyway? That's rather complicated. In fact three people killed Howie, to one degree or another. Howie went to the Gun Room in response to a note from Almira Cook. Upon meeting him there she viciously stabbed him with a knife and left him for dead, running to her room to hide her bloody gloves. Howie being a proper English gentleman with a stiff upper lip did not however immediately drop. While standing there in the dark wondering whether or not it was dignified to simply fall over on the floor, Princess Ekaterina came along behind him and beamed him on the head with a croquet mallet. She then too beat a hasty retreat, unaware that he had previously been stabbed. And the third person? Lola Stepp had put poison Howie's flask earlier in the day, in a rage over what she perceived as his blackmail. So if Howie had not been killed by a knife to the stomach he would have died from a cracked skull. If neither had happened he would have been dead by morning from the poison in his drink. Poor Howie.

# Running The Case of the Croquet Mallet PROPS AND ATMOSPHERE

Game Masters are encouraged to be creative when buying or creating props for this scenario. A few plastic trays and wine or champagne flutes can create a nice "party atmosphere" at minimal expense. An "extra" Tarot deck (in addition to the one used for all players' Fate Cards) to give to the player portraying Aleister Crowley for impromptu readings is a very nice touch. If you wish to play music something soft and quiet could set a nice mood, ideally something appropriate to the period. Maybe piano concertos or something similar could be nice. If you play music the mp3 player/docking station/whatever should be hidden if possible as it will not seem very "Steampunk" and not very "1906" either. If you have the opportunity to play the scenario in an elaborately and richly decorated drawing room then all the better, but a more usual living room or hotel conference room works just fine with some arranging of furniture.



The scenario will continue to whatever point the Game Masters' feel is appropriate. After most or all of the clues have been discovered and conversations and discussions are winding down the Game Masters are encouraged to bring everyone into a group to discuss the scenario and what they think happened. One way to handle this would be to have the detective go first in attempting to describe what he think happened. When he is done the other characters can give it a go at describing what they think happened. Or Game Masters can come up with whatever means they deem appropriate for an open discussion of the case.

At Pamean Games we like to declare "best players" or to put it another way "winners" for our scenarios. If Game Masters running The Case of the Croquet Mallet choose to do this they could have a winner for the player that best accomplished their goals, one for the best role player, one for the character that most closely determined who killed Howie, or whatever other challenge made and met that they feel is appropriate.



8





To advance the plot there are various prepared notes that should be given to the players in a particular sequence. These notes are provided here for distribution as appropriate.

# GIVEN IMMEDIATELY AT THE START OF THE SCENARIO

(LOLA) Earlier today when Howie was outside of his room you snuck in to look for the films, which he said he would bring with him. You didn't find them, but you did find his flask, which you laced with Aleister's poison.

(ALEISTER) Lola asked you for a bit of poison while you were still in London. She said she wanted to leave it out for the neighbor's cat.

# GIVEN AT ANY TIME AS APPROPRIATE

(KAT) You just caught a hint that perhaps Howie isn't as wealthy as he let on. Gossip between the footmen, but still, if he has used you...

# GIVEN AS SOON AS HOWIE IS DEAD

(ALMIRA) You did it! You killed mouthy scoundrel! You'd sent him a note to meet you in the Gun Room. When he did, you snuggled up to him and stabbed him again and again. He looked at you blankly and didn't fall right away, but you saw the blood running through his shirt – he's dead! You had to change your gloves, but the whole thing took only a few moments.

(KAT) You did it! You killed the lying wretch! You shared his arm and his bed on the promise of his money, and now you know there isn't any. So when he wandered off, likely looking for a fresh bottle, you followed him until you caught up with him in the Gun Room. He was standing oddly, looking away from you. But no matter, you grabbed a croquet mallet and bashed him in the head! You heard his skull splinter and he went down hard. Clearly Howie's lying days are over.

# GIVEN AS SOON AS THE CHARACTER KNOWS THAT HOWIE IS DEAD

(LORD ROCKSAVAGE) Egad! Howie, the old sport, is dead! Of course you did not kill him.

(LADY ROCKSAVAGE) Howie has rather inconsiderately managed to get himself killed at your party, but you did not do it.

(ARTIE) Needless to say you did not kill Howie. You didn't even know Howie.

(CAROLINE) Howie is dead. Who was Howie again?.... Oh yes, that man. Well, you did not kill him.

(ALFRED) How strange that you find yourself in the best company in the world and someone goes off and gets murdered. Needless to say you did not kill Howie.

(ELSIE) Well, Howie is dead. That does shorten the list of "affair worthy" gentlemen present. You didn't kill him of course.

(THOMAS) HOWIE! DEAD! A tragedy for certain, but you didn't kill him.

(ALMIRA) That silly Howie man managed to get himself killed. How rude. Well, you didn't kill him.

(ALIESTER TWO) Great, Howie is dead. Everyone is going to look at the Mighty Practitioner of Magicks Both White and Black you suppose, but regardless you did not kill Howie. However, a seance to contact Howie's spirit could perhaps be helpful to the authorities and your reputation. Whether or not such a thing could work, or if you'd just have to make it seem believable, remains to be seen.







There are various clues that can be discovered around Houghton Hall. These will be discovered through prudent use of the appropriate skills, in most or all cases a **Wit + Investigator's Eye** test. Note that some of these clues could become un-discoverable through the actions of the players. (Something could be destroyed, washed, hidden or otherwise made unavailable.) In this case Game Masters should of course remove the clue from the game as appropriate.

# CLUES IN THE GUN ROOM on the body ....

**CRUSHED SKULL** The late MR HOWARD BOYCE-WINGHAM has suffered a terrible wound to the back of his head

### **BLOODY CUTS**

The front of MR HOWARD BOYCE-WINGHAM's clothing is cut and bloody; there are several deep cuts in his belly

A FLASK, containing inexpensive Scotch whiskey There is a foul order that comes from the liquid

**A NOTE**, that says "Meet me in the Gun Room at II PM," Written in a woman's hand

**A NOTE** (with 5 degrees of success or more), that says "Meet me in the Gun Room at II PM" Written in a woman's hand, it smells of the expensive French perfume La Rose Jacqueminot (especially popular amongst the most upper crust of Russian society)

# CLUES IN THE GUN ROOM elsewhere...

A KNIFE, with no visible blood

# A CROQUET MALLET

The head is bloody and the stick broken; there are grass stains on it

# **CLUES IN ALMIRA'S ROOM**

**A DIARY**, completed by MRS ALMIRA COOK Six months ago there are entries that seem to allude to a mysterious stranger named Howie.

A PAIR OF GLOVES, bloodstained There are blood smears on the fingers and palms

### A PERFUME BOTTLE

Contains the expensive French perfume La Rose Jacqueminot

# **CLUES IN HOWIE'S ROOM**

FILM CASES, containing NITRATE FILMS Sample negatives stacked on top show nude and seminude images of LOLA STEPP

# CLUES ON KAT

**GRASS STAINS**, on Princess Ekaterina's hands, but under her gloves unless removed Everyone washed before dinner, so they are recent.







This section contains information that all of the players should have access to from the start of the game. It is recommended that this section be copied and provided to all players.

### Lord Rocksavage and Houghton Hall

George, Earl of Rocksavage is the eldest son and heir of the 4th Marquess of Cholmondeley ("Chum-lee"), Lord Great Chamberlain of England. The Cholmondeleys are descended from Sir Robert Walpole, the first Prime Minister of Great Britain under King George I and II. Sir Robert built Houghton Hall in the first half of the eighteenth century.

Houghton is a large and stately English country house. It is located in Norfolk in the northeast of England some 100 miles north-northeast of central London. Houghton is located 6 miles east of Sandringham, a rural retreat for the British Royal Family and principal residence of both His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and HRH the Duke of York, his eldest son. The Duke of York knows Lord Rocksavage quite well and has been known to informally "pop over."

### The Weekend

Guests have arrived earlier today, Friday, May 18, 1906 and have been rested before dinner in their rooms. Dinner was served promptly at 8 PM and has now concluded. Their Lord and Ladyship and guests have retired to The Saloon and The White Drawing Room for drinks and conversation.

Tomorrow the men will go fox hunting early and will picnic with the women in a pavilion on the grounds. Tomorrow there will be another formal dinner and Sunday most of the guests will go home, though some may stay on for a week of "stalking" (which is hunting without the pomp and circumstance of fox hunting), shooting, and generally not doing much.

Many of you knew each other before today, but those that did not have had the chance to get acquainted during predinner drinks and over seven courses which included fish, game, venison, soup, bread, three kinds of wine including champagne, pastries and much else besides. Present at Houghton this weekend are:

### Lord and Lady Rocksavage, Host and Hostess

George, Earl of Rocksavage is scion of one of the highest ranking families of the English nobility. He was "to the manor born" and will one day inherit his father's lands, titles and seat in the House of Lords. Sybil, Countess of Rocksavage is a beautiful young woman descended from two great Jewish banking and mercantile houses - the Sassons and the Rothchilds. While the marriage between the lord and lady was mainly a question of economics and politics (he had the blood, she had the money), it has developed into one of mutual love and affection.

### Captain Arthur "Artie" Hughes-Remington, Airship Captain

Captain Hughes-Remington is a dashing adventurer of the air and a loyal subject of Her Majesty the Queen. Artie knows the Rocksavages from time spent together last year in Calcutta and Constantinople. He is captain and owner aboard of RMS Aethersprite, an aging but beloved airship that operates between great cities of the empire. Artie's not always had a sterling reputation, as he does what needs to be done to keep Aethersprite flying, and until recently would not have found himself in such company. He is here with Caroline de Rothschild.





### Caroline de Rothchild, French Socialite

A young beauty born into the French branch of the mighty Rothschild banking family, Caroline is here on the arm of Captain Hughes-Remington. She is a cousin of Her Ladyship. She is here with Captain Hughes-Remington, whom a few slightly embarrassing incidents at dinner would seem to indicate she barely knows.

### Howard "Howie" Boyce-Wingham, His Lordship's School Chum from Eton

Howie is one of Lord Rocksavage's pals from his school days and while they seemingly haven't been together much in years the stories they told over dinner would make it seem that they were very close years ago. He is here with Princess Obolensky.

### Princess Ekaterina "Kat" Ivanovna Obolensky, Russian Noble

Here as Howie's date is a bonafide Russian princess, Her Illustrious Highness Ekaterina Obolensky, daughter of the Governor General of Finland. She was pretty quiet at dinner but clearly has the impeccable manners of her class.

### Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt, Very Rich American

Alfred is one of the richest men in the world. He is an acquaintance of His Lordship and has taken George up on his offer to go fox hunting, one of his favorite pass-times.

### Ellen "Elsie" French Vanderbilt, Very Rich American's Wife

Elsie has been Alfred's wife for about five years and they have a young son, who is just now with relatives in London. Elsie is was born into two prominent New York families, the Frenches and the Tucks.

### Major Thomas Cook, British Army Officer, 9th (Queens Royal) Lancers

Major Cook was Lord Rocksavage's commanding officer when they served together in the Boer War. When they are together people frequently ask them to relay the circumstances under which Major Cook saved His Lordship's life, though no one has as yet. He was until recently with his unit in India. He is married to Almira Cook.

### Almira Cook, Army Wife, Suffragist and One-time Nurse

Almira was born in India to British parents, though she has a touch of native blood. She is a beautiful, slightly aging woman of great poise. During dinner Almira did not bring up the subject of women's right to vote, but when she asked she truthfully declared herself a suffragist. Before marrying Major Cook many years ago she has been an Army nurse.

### Aleister Crowley, Occultist

Despite the distinguished company, Aleister is likely the most famous person at Houghton Hall this weekend. He is a member of an occult order known as the Golden Dawn and his presence here speaks to the Lord and Lady's "modern thinking." He is here with Lola Stepp. It goes without saying that no one has mentioned the fact that Aleister's wife is in Rangoon with their young son. (Aleister provided poison to Lola but does not know what she intended to do with it.)

### Vera "Lola" Stepp, Actress and Model

Beautiful, charming and well-spoken, Lola has appeared in some French films and is becoming quite famous. She is known as well for her singing voice. It's not clear how she knows Aleister.











This section contains information known only to the Game Masters and each respective player. These summaries should be separated and provided to each player individually as part of the materials they have from the start of the game. These briefings also contain the suggested goals that each player may attempt to accomplish as the scenario progresses. Full sharacter sheets of the following are available to download and print on our web site: www.pameangames.com.

As noted previously, many of these characters are real historical figures. In a few cases specific details have been changed to meet the needs of the story, but in any case more details about these people, their past and personalities, can be uncovered if desired. The entirely fictional characters are Artie, Caroline, Detective O'Connell, Princess Kat, Thomas, Almira, and Howie.

# Lord George Rocksavage

Male, Mid-20's, Well-Dressed, Impeccable Manners, Aristocratic Baring But Not Too Much So

Rich, famous, good looking, and for your class someone that favors some level of justice and equality for the other classes, you, the Earl of Rocksavage, are in many ways the classic noble playboy. You served in the army with the 9th (Queen's Royal) Lancers as a lieutenant up to a few years ago, including service in the Boer war. When it comes to his social views we're not talking ending the aristocracy or anything, you believe in the "centuries of breeding to build the perfect statesman" idea, but you don't like people to suffer either...rather like PETA for the under-classes. Your family is descended from Sir Robert Walpole, the first Prime Minister of Great Britain, and you will be the Marquess of Cholmondeley one day when your father passes away, and very likely the Lord Great Chamberlain of England.

# Goals:

Ensure everyone has a very nice time at father's palatial country home. Part of this may be to get Major Cook, who was your commanding officer in Africa, to talk about your experiences together in the Army. He saved your life by pistol-whipping an enemy soldier about to bayonet you, and so is your "friend" despite the obvious difference in station.

If there are controversies, try to settle people down. There will be a few people from "another class" here, and an American, so the Good Lord only knows what may happen.

# Lady Sybil Rocksavage

Female, Mid-20's, A Beautiful Jewess of Great Fortune, Witty and Well-Read in Private

Sybil, Countess of Rocksavage is, some say, the perfect complement to your husband. Beautiful and rich, you are also, in private company, a knowledgeable and skilled conversationalist with a wide range of opinions and "fresh ideas." You were well-trained by your father, a Jewish businessman and politician, to have a head for business, and by your mother, a Rothschild, to be a model of High Society. Like many such marriages you brought a great deal of money to the table when you married George, but despite the circumstances you have come to love each other very much. You also has a wild streak which especially manifested itself when she was younger. (Ad lib this is you want to fill in details.)

# Goals:

Be the consummate hostess. This beautiful palace will be yours one day, and much else besides, and you are already very comfortable with the arrangement.

If there is any trouble (there will be some people from "other classes" about, and an American!) deal with it with the grace and dignity that becomes your lofty station.









# Arthur "Artie" Hughes-Remington

Male, Late-20's, Airship Owner and Captain Aboard

You are a picture-perfect example of a modern adventurer of the skies. Your ship, the *RMS Aethersprite*, has been through good times and bad, been in a few scrapes and yet has pulled through. You met Lord Rocksavage last year when he traveled as a passenger from Calcutta to Constantinople and you hit it off well. When His Lordship learned that *Aethersprite* would be in England he extended an invitation to come and visit at Houghton Hall. This is not the society you come from or necessarily much finds yourself in, but you're counting on his rakish charm to make it all work out, and maybe meet some future customers. You have come to Houghton in the company of Caroline de Rothschild, a beautiful French socialite that recently travelled to London from Paris on *Aethersprite*.

# Goals:

Meet and impress rich and famous people. The Aethersprite always needs cargos and passengers.

Brass & Steel: A Steampunk Adventure

Most especially, impress your date Caroline de Rothschild. She's a beauty, and connected to one of the best families to know in the entire world. And if more happens, well...





# Caroline de Rothschild

Female, Early-20's, French Socialite

You are a lovely, well-mannered scion of the French branch of the great Rothschild banking family. Your family owns properties throughout France including famous and fabulous vineyards in Bordeaux, chateaus all around the country, great homes in Paris, and much more. You were born and raised surrounded by the kind of wealth and privilege found only at the very top of the social order. Despite all of this you are is high-spirited, much like her cousin Sybil (now Lady Rocksavage) in her younger days, and You have run off with Captain Artie Hughes-Remington on an adventure.

# Goals:

Get reacquainted with George (Lord Rocksavage) and your cousin Sybil (Lady Rocksavage) - it's been far too long! If you can, get her talking about her "wild and crazy" good old days.

Have fun. You ran off in an airship with a handsome scoundrel of the skies! Maybe even a pirate! (OK, you don't really think he's a pirate, but it's fun to think about...maybe a singing pirate like the ones in that oh-so-fun musical by Gilbert and Sullivan that you like so well.) Enjoy your adventure.

# **Detective Sergeant Shannon O'Connell**

Male, Mid-30's, British Policeman

You are is the very model of a modern Scotland Yard detective. You were traveling from Scotland to London on police business when your motorcar broke down far out on the Houghton estate. You walked to the main house and offered the chance to stay the night. Tomorrow you will be taken to the train station at Great Massingtham, a league south of Houghton Hall.

# Goals:

Figure out whodunit. Be courteous and considerate, but firm and in control of the situation. If others want to help with your investigation let them (you don't want them causing problems for you with the government), but you have to stay in charge.

# Princess Ekaterina "Kat" Ivanovna Obolensky

Female, Late-30's (appears early 20's), Russian Noble

Her Illustrious Highness Princess Ekaterina, that being you, is the daughter of the Governor General of Finland, descended down many generations from the ancient princely Rurik dynasty. You have attached yourself to Howard Boyce-Wingham to secure an invitation to Houghton Hall and perhaps more. In truth your father is not in favor in St. Petersburg, capital of imperial Russia (an uprising last year, messily put down), and you are starting to wonder if putting down British roots might not be a good move. However, while you has enough pocket money to travel you are completely lacking a great fortune and gaining one could have so many great benefits for you and your family.

# Goals:

Get in good with the several rich and powerful people here. If a move to England is in order you'll need them to be your fast friends.

Explore the relationship with Howie, whom you barely know, to see if he might also be someone to whom you can hitch your star. He is quite handsome and rich....isn't he rich?







# Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt

Male, Early-30's, Very Rich American

Heir to a vast fortune, New York native and former "Skull and Bones" Yalie, you are one of the richest men in the world with vast holdings including real estate, railroads and a variety of magi-technical concerns. You are in England on business but have taken Lord Rocksavage up on his offer to visit Houghton for the weekend to engage in one of your very favorite pass-times, fox hunting. You have brought your wife Elsie, though you rather wish you hadn't as you haven't been on good terms. (Deservedly so, you have a wandering eye and Elsie suspects.) Nonetheless it's good to be one of the five richest people on the planet and you love a weekend in the country.

# Goals:

Meet and greet with the best of them. Glory in your rich Americanism while staying polite and proper.

Get caught up with George; you are equals from across the pond (you think of it that way anyway; the fact that you're *nouveau-riche*, well, you are American, it's the way of things), and would like to be better acquainted.



# Ellen "Elsie" French Vanderbilt

Female, Late-20's, Very Rich American's Wife

You were born to a prominent New York banking family and have been (unhappily) married to Alfred Vanderbilt for about five years. Your son William Henry Vanderbilt III is four and staying with relatives in London for the weekend. You are very jealous of your husband's family. (You didn't know that there were people richer than the Frenches and the Tucks, your people, until you saw the unbelievable homes and holdings of the Vanderbilts, and you've never really gotten over a mild inferiority complex.) You are likewise unhappy about her husband's reported (but as yet un-proven) amorous liaisons with numerous other women. Honestly, the part that bothers you is the whispering and the carelessness he has shown, not so much the other women bit. Maybe an affair of your own would show him! Regardless of this though you are ever gracious and thrilled to be here in genuinely noble company.

# Goals:

Enjoy the company of so many interesting people. Get to know those around you. You have an interest in the occult, which is quite fashionable just now, and one of the most famous occultists in the world is here. That could be fun.

If the opportunity arises, subtly and discretely savage your sack-of-dung husband. You won't make a scene, but you do hate the man...







# Major Thomas Cook

Male, Mid-40's, British Army Officer, 9th (Queens Royal) Lancers

You served with Lord Rocksavage in the Boer War. You (then Captain Cook) were George's commanding officer and despite your vastly different circumstances (you are a country squire's son done well) you got along very well. This was all the more true after an event in 1902 when you saved George's life by pistol whipping an enemy soldier about to skewer the young lord. (The circumstances are a bit hazy, as is so often true in battle, but George maintains vehemently that you saved his life, and there has never been reason to argue.) You have recently returned from India, where the Lancers have been stationed since leaving Africa, and you are considering mustering out of the army and starting an import business. You could certainly use George's help in this!

# Goals:

Get George alone and see about his help with getting a business going. Honestly this whole "leaving the army, going into business" idea is mainly your wife's, but it's not a bad plan. It's just that you like the army.

Regale guests with tales of your service in Africa and India. Battles, exotic beauties, incredible locales, rubies the size of lemons...you have many tales to tell, all of which you will have to ad-lib. One tale you don't tell often is the one about "saving Lord Rocksavage's life," since your recollection isn't quite the same as his and you're not sure it happened that way.



# Almira Cook

Female, Late-40's, Housewife, Suffragist, Sometime Nurse

You were born and raised in Calcutta. The daughter of a mid-level bureaucrat in the East India Company and his halfnative wife, you lived a comfortable if not-fabulous life in India until meeting (then) Lieutenant Cook more than 20 years ago. You were a stunning beauty in your day but time in the Indian sun has taken its toll, and you are now not as pretty and quite angry about it a lot of the time. About six months ago you had an affair with a young, well-spoken British noble named Howard. Imagine your surprise that he is here!

# Goals:

Push your husband Tom to talk to Lord Rocksavage about leaving the army and going into business. At the least His Lordship can help with some contacts. Perhaps he can even partner and provide some funds. Tom did save His Lordship's life after all. This may need reminding if things don't seem to be going well.

You've rarely been in this kind of esteemed company before the Earl and Countess of Rocksavage are friends of your husband's, distant acquaintances to you. You want them to like you and your husband very much. The same goes for anyone else here who is influential, rich or otherwise worth knowing.







# Aleister Crowley

Male, Early-30's, The Great Beast, 2nd Order Initiate of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn

Though still a reasonably young man, you have already created a wide-ranging and fairly sinister reputation. Among other things you have been a serial mountain climber (where you seeks visions and knowledge from ancient spirits), an occultist of great renown, a practitioner of white and black magic, and a serial adulterer. You, the self-styled "Great Beast," have wormed (wyrmed?) your way into the most famous occult order of the day, the Golden Dawn, and while not its leader you are by far its most famous member. In truth you were born Edward Crowley some 30 years ago in Warwickshire and are an arcanist of moderate ability but mighty pretensions. Your reputation has many undesirable aspects, among them the fact that your wife Rose is currently bed-ridden and your young daughter Lilith is likewise ill and likely dying of Typhoid, in Rangoon. Despite this family drama you are here in the company of an actress, Vera "Lola" Stepp.

# Goals:

Regale them all with your powerful magicks, talents, and associations with the spirit world. Pull out your Tarot deck and do readings. (You don't have to know anything about this. Just lay some cards down and make up stories about the images.) Name drop about the places you've been, the people you've met, and the spirits and powers you're acquainted with or rule over. (It makes no difference whether or not any of this is true.)

Live up to your reputation. You won't insult your hosts by being out-and-out rude, or you will never be allowed in such company again, but something a touch scandalous - maybe a comment to a lady, or perhaps a minor incantation here and there, can help seal your reputation as a master occultist and the (self-styled) Great Beast. Your most famous quote - "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law." (It's true, no one has talked that way for hundreds of years; that's kind of the point.)







# Vera "Lola" Stepp

Female, Late-20's, Actress and Model, Beauty of Some Renown

You are a stage actress who has recently appeared in a few moving pictures filmed in France, including, scandalously, some of the very first nude and semi-nude scenes ever recorded on nitrate film, a fact that is quite embarrassing now, some few years later.. Some of the worst of these images are contained on films currently in the possession of one Howie Boyce-Wingham. You met Aleister in London just a few weeks ago and you are currently having a fling with him, mainly to get to Houghton ("The Beast's" invite was in the society pages a month or so ago) and confront Howie. Unexpectedly you received a telegram yesterday from Howie saying he heard you were coming to Houghton and that he would bring them films and perhaps hand them off at the end of the weekend. In addition to your other talents you are a Dreamer of some small ability.

# Goals:

Get to know everyone. An actress needs rich friends to reach the top. Be fabulous and fabulous things will happen to you.

It's hard to imagine how it could come up, but if it can somehow talk to Howie about the movies and perhaps getting them back.

# Howard "Howie" Boyce-Wingham (aka Mr. Body)

As noted above, Howie is best played by a GM or a planted close associate of one. Whoever plays Howie should be aware that he will be violently struck down at some point in the evening. Transitioning from player to GM at that point can help with needed storytelling once the plot begins to thicken. Male, Mid-20's, Down-On-His-Luck Well-Born Bachelor

# DO NOT REVEAL THAT YOU ARE TO BE THE VICTIM OF A HEINOUS CRIME, UNTIL SUCH A TIME AS YOUR CORPSE MAKES THAT RATHER OBVIOUS

You are an old school chum of Lord Rocksavage from your Eton days. In the 8 or so years since then you have really been something of a disappointment to your family, a minor noble line from Nottinghamshire. It's not your fault really, as you have little money, but what little you did have is pretty well gone and you haven't necessarily helped the situation. As a result you have become increasingly desperate, though you are always careful not to make that obvious. You have come to Houghton in part to see about getting George alone and to discuss whether he can help to secure a position for you, either an appointment to the army officer corps (which otherwise you cannot afford) or perhaps the diplomatic service. You returned to England months ago after an un-auspicious round of "business travel" through the near east. You know George has connections in Constantinople and would perhaps like to end up there, or maybe Cairo. You have no idea how you had the good fortune to meet and arrive here with a bonafide Russian princess, but she is undoubtedly rich and so yet another possible road out of your current mess. About six months ago in Cairo you had a weekend affair with an older married woman, Almira Cook, and she's here! Oh, and the other day you telegrammed Lola Stepp, the actress. You have some compromising films showing her in very inappropriate repose. How you got these films is a bit odd (make up a story if you want or need to) and you aren't really the blackmailing type. You telegrammed her yesterday to say you would bring them. As a last resort (if you were not about to die, which you are) maybe you would ask for some assistance from Lola in return for giving back the films, or if that was unneeded, simply turn them over at the end of the weekend.

# Goals:

Talk to George about a respectable position. Mention to anyone else here too if you think it will help.

There are, oddly, numerous people here you know, including some you ought not to know. Keep this all on-thedown-low, but be nice. Causing problems at Houghton won't help your plans at all.







All of these NPC's can be played as needed by the Game Masters telling the story. The butler and the footmen are the only servants likely to be allowed in the home's public rooms while guests are present. They can be used in a wide variety of ways to create situations (good or bad) and move the plot along.

- Mr. Stevens, the Butler (in charge of all servants)
- Mr. Benjamin Spoke, His Lordship's Valet (responsible for dressing Lord Rocksavage)
- Thomas, James, Edward, Freddie, the Footmen (handsome young men that can provide service at the table and in the public rooms)
- Ms. Mortimer, the Housekeeper (in charge of all of the female servants)
- Miss Klara Fuchs, Lady's Maid (responsible for dressing Lady Rocksavage)
- Alice, Jayne, Shaundra, the Housemaids (the cleaning crew, obviously)

There are also groomsmen, the groundskeeper and several gardeners, gamekeepers, the cook, several kitchen maids and three or so scullery maids at Houghton, but the likelihood of their mattering is exceedingly small. In addition there are tenant farmers that grow crops and tend to various animals in return for rent and payment in kind that they provide to the Cholmondeleys. Altogether there are likely 150 or more people on the estate this evening.



If needed to keep things interesting an untimely visitor could appear at Houghton Hall, played by a Game Master. As noted previously, the Prince of Wales's private country estate, Sandringham, is only 2 leagues west of Houghton Hall. The Duke of York lives there with his family much of the time. He could stop by for an impromptu visit. Guests could get some amusement out of the absurdity of trying to keep news of Howie's demise from the prince, or perhaps the prince could help solve the case. Anything is possible.

# His Royal Highness the Duke of York

Male, Early-40's, British Royal Family

George, Duke of York (the Prince of Wale's eldest son and second-in-line to the throne, the future King George V) lives most of the time at York Cottage on the Sandringham estate with his wife HRH Mary, Duchess of York and their family (II year old Prince Edward - "David," future Edward VIII; 10 year old Prince George, "Bertie," future George VI, others). Should the Duke of York show up everyone will call him Your Royal Highness or "sir," except for Lord and Lady Rocksavage who may hazard a "George" as they are very familiar with each other.



20



### George, Earl of Rocksavage

### Archetype: English Aristocrat

Age: 24 · Height: 6' 0" · Weight: 13 Stone

Attributes		Skills:			
Might	6	Beast Wrangling (Horses)	5	Olympian Spirit	7
Vitality	5	Bash and Stab (Sabre)	6	Heroic Vigor	4
Agility	7	Up Close & Personal	2	Skulduggery (Cards)	6
Reason	5	Duck & Cover	6	Natural Philosophy	
Willpower	5	Barking Irons (Rifles)	5	(Chemistry, Astronomy)	2
Wit	7	Sergeant's Eye	5	Liberal Arts	6
Fate	8	False Promises	6	Investigator's Eye	7
	1	Huckster's Eye	7	Law (English, French)	2
		Leadership/Intimidate	7		

Advantages: Noble Title (+3 to Social Tests), Fame, Not Born Yesterday (+3 to resist bluffs, cons)



### Captain Arthur "Artie" Hughes-Remington

Archetype: Airship Captain Age: 28 · Height: 6' I" · Weight: 13 Stone

Attributes	:	Skills:			
Might	6	Hell Bent for Leather		Among Strangers	4
Vitality	7	(Airship)	5	Leadership/Intimidate	: 7
Agility	7	Bash & Stab (Sabre)	4	Olympian Spirit	5
_ 0 ,	<i>/</i>	Up Close & Personal	4	Stealth & Camouflage	4
Reason	6	Duck & Cover	6	Devious Devices	2
Willpower	6	Barking Irons (Pistols)	7	Heroic Vigor	2
Wit	7	False Promises	6	Artifice (Hotaether propulsion)	3
Fate	5	Huckster's Eye	6	Investigator's Eye	5
	5	Buy Low/Sell High	4	Airship Crewman	6

Advantages: Add Steam (possesses an Aetherspark Pistol), Fame (+2 to Social tests, airship captain of some renown) Disadvantages: Obsession (seeking revenge on nemesis, an airship pirate captain)



### **Detective Sergeant Shannon O'Connell**

Archetype: British Policeman

Age: 30 · Height: 6' I" · Weight: 13 Stone

Attributes	:	Skills:			
Might	7	Up Close & Personal		Olympian Spirit	4
Vitality	6	(Boxing)	5	Stealth	3
Agility	6	Duck & Cover	6	Devious Devices	2
_ 0 ,	_	Barking Irons (Pistols)	5	Heroic Vigor	4
Reason	7	Sergeant's Eye	8	Skulduggery	2
Willpower	6	False Promises	5	Investigator's Eye	8
Wit	7	Huckster's Eye	7	Law (English)	3
Fate	5	Among Strangers	3	Policing	6
	0	Leadership/Intimidate	e 5	-	

Advantages: Adrenaline Surge (+3 to Might and Agility when in danger), Smarter than their Player (go ahead and ask the GM ... ), Observant (+2 to noticing things)

### Lady Sybil Rocksavage

Archetype: English Aristocrat Age: 20 · Height: 5' 4" · Weight: 8 Stone

Attributes	:	Skills:			
Might	4	Hell Bent for Leather		Huckster's Eye	6
Vitality	5	(Motorcars)	5	Among Strangers	5
Agility	5	Beast Wrangling (Horses)	7	Leadership/Intimidate	4
Reason	7	Up Close & Personal	4	Olympian Spirit (Croquet)	3
Willpower	8	Duck & Cover	6	Heroic Vigor	-
Wit	7	Barking Irons (Pistols)	3	(Corset wearing)	2
Fate	6	False Promises	7	Liberal Arts	
		Buy Low/Sell High		(Classical Poetry)	5
		(Banking)	4	Investigator's Eye	7

Advantages: Noble Title (+3 to Social Tests), Fame, Foreign Language (passable in Hindi and French)





### Caroline de Rothschild

Archetype: French Socialite Age: 20 · Height: 5' 0" · Weight: 7 Stone

Attributes	:	Skills:			
Might	3	Hell Bent for Leather		False Promises	7
Vitality	6	(Motorcars)	4	Huckster's Eye	6
Agility	Ę	Beast Wrangling		Among Strangers	5
rightty	5	(Horses)	5	Leadership/Intimidat	e 4
Reason	7	Up Close & Personal	3	Olympian Spirit (Croque	et)3
Willpower	8	Duck & Cover	4	Heroic Vigor (corsets)	2
Wit	7	Barking Irons (Pistols)	3	Natural Philosophy	5
	/	Buy Low/Sell High		Liberal Arts	
Fate	6	(Banking)	4	(Romance Literature)	5
	1	5	-	Investigator's Eye	5

Advantages: Not Born Yesterday (+3 to resist bluffs, cons), Party Animal (+2 to social tests at parties), Foreign Language (fluent in English and French)





#### Princess Ekaterina "Kat" Ivanova Obolensky

Archetype: Russian Noble Age: 37 · Height: 5' 7" · Weight: 8 Stone

:	Skills:
4	Beast Wrangling (H
5	Up Close & Person
6	Duck & Cover
	Barking Irons (Spor
,	Sergeant's Eye
7	False Promises
7	Huckster's Eye
8	Among Strangers
	5 6 7 7 7



Advantages: Noble Title (Minor) Disadvantages: Lonely Heart





21

Permission granted to reproduce for non-commercial use.



### Lady Sybil Rocksavage

**Goals:** Be the consummate hostess. This beautiful palace will be yours one day, and much else besides, and you are already very comfortable with the arrangement.

If there is any trouble (there will be some people from "other classes" about, and an American!) deal with it with the grace and dignity that befits your lofty station.



### Caroline de Rothschild

**Goals:** Get reacquainted with George (Lord Rocksavage) and your cousin Sybil (Lady Rocksavage) - it's been far too long! If you can, get her talking about her "wild and crazy" good old days.

Have fun. You ran off in an airship with a handsome scoundrel of the skies! Maybe even a pirate! (OK, you don't really think he's a pirate, but it's fun to think about...maybe a singing pirate like the ones in that oh-so-fun musical by Gilbert and Sullivan that you like so well.) Enjoy your adventure.



### Princess Ekaterina "Kat" Ivanova Obolensky

**Goals:** Get in good with the several rich and powerful people here. If a move to England is in order you'll need them to be your fast friends.

Explore the relationship with Howie, whom you barely know, to see if he might also be someone to whom you can hitch your star. He is quite handsome and rich.... isn't he?



### George, Earl of Rocksavage

**Goals:** Ensure everyone has a very nice time at father's palatial country home. Part of this may be to get Major Cook, who was your commanding officer in Africa, to talk about your experiences together in the Army. He saved your life by pistol-whipping an enemy soldier about to bayonet you, and so is your "friend" despite the obvious difference in station.

If there are controversies, try to settle people down. There will be a few people from "another class" here, and an American, so the Good Lord only knows what may happen.



### Captain Arthur "Artie" Hughes-Remington

**Goals:** Meet and impress rich and famous people. The Aethersprite always needs cargos and passengers.

Most especially, impress your date Caroline de Rothschild. She's a beauty, and connected to one of the best families to know in the entire world. And if more happens, well...



### Detective Sergeant Shannon O'Connell

Goals: Figure out whodunit.

Be courteous and considerate, but firm and in control of the situation. If others want to help with your investigation let them (you don't want them causing problems for you with the government), but you have to stay in charge.





### **Major Thomas Cook**

### Archetype: British Army Officer

Age: 44 · Height: 5' 9" · Weight: 14 Stone

Attributes	5:	Skills:			
Might	8	Hell Bent for Leather		Among Strangers	3
Vitality	7	(Motorcars)	5	Leadership/Intimidate	6
Agility	6	Bash & Stab (Sabre)	5	Olympian Spirit	5
_ 0 ,		Up Close & Personal		Stealth & Camouflage	5
Reason	4	(Fisticuffs)	8	Heroic Vigor	5
Willpower	5	Duck & Cover	5	Skulduggery	2
Wit	6	Barking Irons (Pistols)	6	Investigator's Eye	5
Fate	5	Sergeant's Eye	6	Soldiering	6
	0	False Promises	4	-	
		Huckster's Eye	5		

Advantages: Thick Skull (Ignore first consciousness test, +2 thereafter), Conspiracy Theorist (good at spotting plots)



### Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt

Archetype: Very Rich American Age: 28 • Height: 5' 10" • Weight: 12 Stone

Attributes	:	Skills:			
Might	6	Hell Bent for Leather	3	Among Strangers	6
Vitality	7	(Motorcars)	5	Leadership/Intimidate	6
Agility	7	Beast Wrangling (Horses)	5	Olympian Spirit	6
0 ,		Up Close & Personal	4	Stealth and Camouflage	5
Reason	7	Duck & Cover	5	Call of the Wild	5
Willpower	7	Barking Irons (Sport Rifle)	7	Heroic Vigor	5
Wit	7	False Promises	5	Natural Philosophy	4
Fate	5	Huckster's Eye	7	Liberal Arts	4
	5	Buy Low/Sell High	7	Investigator's Eve	6

Advantages: Fame (+2 to social tests where fame is known)



### **Aleister Crowley**

Archetype: Occultist of the Order of the Golden Dawn Age: 31 · Height: 5' 8" · Weight: 12 Stone

Attributes	:	Skills:			
Might	5	Hell Bent for Leather	3	Among Strangers	4
Vitality	7	Beast Wrangling (Horses)	5	Leadership/Intimidate	5
Agility	6	Up Close & Personal	5	Olympian Spirit	6
0 ,	2	Duck & Cover	4	Heroic Vigor	5
Reason	7	Barking Irons (Pistols)	5	Skulduggery	
Willpower	8	Sergeant's Eye	2	(Sleight of Hand)	5
Wit	5	False Promises	6	Liberal Arts	4
Fate	4	Huckster's Eye	5	Investigator's Eye	6

Advantages: Fame (The "wickedest" man in the world), Complicated Person, Student of the Bizarre **Disadvantages**: Obsession with Thelema Spirituality, Mental Malfunction (Convinced that he consorts with spirits)

# Almira Cook

Archetype: Suffragist Nurse Age: 48 • Height: 5' 3" • Weight: 8 Stone

Attributes	s:	Skills:			
Might	3	Hell Bent for Leather		Huckster's Eye	5
Vitality	4	(Motorcars)	5	Buy Low/Sell High	4
Agility	5	The Big Guns (Signal Guns)		Among Strangers	5
0 ,	5	Beast Wrangling (Horses)	5	Leadership/Intimidate	3
Reason	7	Bash & Stab	3	Olympian Spirit	3
Willpower	7	Up Close & Personal		Stealth & Camouflage	2
Wit	6	(Knee to the groin)	4	Devious Devices	3
Fate	5	Duck & Cover	4	Heroic Vigor (Corsets)	3
		Bows & Bombs (Archery)	5	Liberal Arts	3
		Barking Irons (Pistols)	3	Investigator's Eye	4
		Sergeant's Eye	3	Medicine (First Aid)	4
		False Promises	6		

Advantages: Animal Magnetism (+3 to tests where looks count), Uncanny Savvy (no penalties for strange cultures)

-*C*D



### Ellen "Elsie" French Vanderbilt

Archetype: Rich American Heiress Age: 25 • Height: 5' 3" • Weight: 7 Stone

Attributes	:	Skills:			
Might	4	Beast Wrangling (Horses)	5	Among Strangers	7
Vitality	5	Duck & Cover	3	Leadership/Intimidate	24
Agility	5	Barking Irons		Olympian Spirit	2
_ 0 ,	-	(Sport Rifle)	2	Heroic Vigor (Corsets)	3
Reason	6	False Promises	4	Natural Philosophy	5
Willpower	7	Huckster's Eye	8	Liberal Arts	6
Wit	7	Buy Low/Sell High	5	Investigator's Eye	5
Fate	6				

Advantages: Not Born Yesterday (+3 to resist bluffs, cons), Foreign Language (fluent in French) **Disadvantages:** Fastidious (-3 when in filthy conditions)



### Vera "Lola" Stepp

Archetype: Actress and Model Age: 28 • Height: 5' 6" • Weight: 8 Stone

Attributes	:	Skills:			
Might	4	Up Close & Personal	5	Heroic Vigor	3
Vitality	5	Duck & Cover	4	Liberal Arts	2
Agility	6	Sergeant's Eye	3	Investigator's Eye	5
Reason	5	False Promises	5	Dreamer's Eye	6
	/	Huckster's Eye	6	Lucid Dreaming	3
Willpower	7	Among Strangers	7	Clarity of the Self	3
Wit	7	Leadership/Intimidate	3	Languages of the Spirit	4
Fate	8	Olympian Spirit	4	Morphean Artifice	6

Advantages: Animal Magnetism (Minor, +3 to Social Tests) Disadvantages: Poor Impulse Control





Permission granted to reproduce for non-commercial use.

### Almira Cook

**Goals:** Push your husband Tom to talk to Lord Rocksavage about leaving the army and going into business. At the least His Lordship can help with some contacts. Perhaps he can even partner and provide some funds. Tom did save His Lordship's life after all. This may need reminding if things don't seem to be going well.

ೀಸಿ

You've rarely been in this kind of esteemed company before the Earl and Countess of Rocksavage are friends of your husband's, distant acquaintances to you. You want them to like you and your husband very much. The same goes for anyone else here who is influential, rich or otherwise worth knowing.



### Ellen "Elsie" French Vanderbilt

**Goals:** Enjoy the company of so many interesting people. Get to know those around you. You have an interest in the occult, which is quite fashionable just now, and one of the most famous occultists in the world is here. That could be fun.

If the opportunity arises, subtly and discretely savage your sack-of-dung husband. You won't make a scene, but you do hate the man...



### Vera "Lola" Stepp

**Goals:** Get to know everyone. An actress needs rich friends to reach the top. Be fabulous and fabulous things will happen to you.

It's hard to imagine how it could come up, but if it can somehow talk to Howie about the movies and perhaps getting them back.

Ephemera: Creepy Shadows, Rabid Dog, Wall, Ghostly Spirit, Torch-wielding mob



### Major Thomas Cook

**Goals:** Get George alone and see about his help with getting a business going. Honestly this whole "leaving the army, going into business" idea is mainly your wife's, but it's not a bad plan. It's just that you like the army.

ഷോ

Regale guests with tales of your service in Africa and India. Battles, exotic beauties, incredible locales, rubies the size of lemons...you have many tales to tell, all of which you will have to ad-lib. One tale you don't tell often is the one about "saving Lord Rocksavage's life," since your recollection isn't quite the same as his and you're not sure it happened that way.



### Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt

**Goals:** Meet and greet with the best of them. Glory in your rich Americanism while staying polite and proper.

Get caught up with George; you are equals from across the pond (you think of it that way anyway; the fact that you're nouveau-riche, well, you are American, it's the way of things), and would like to be better acquainted.



### Aleister Crowley

**Goals:** Regale them all with your powerful magicks, talents, and associations with the spirit world. Pull out your Tarot deck and do readings. (You don't have to know anything about this. Just lay some cards down and make up stories about the images.) Name drop about the places you've been, the people you've met, and the spirits and powers you're acquainted with or rule over. Live up to your reputation. You won't insult your hosts by being out-and-out rude, or you will never be allowed in such company again, but something a touch scandalous - maybe a comment to a lady, or perhaps a minor incantation here and there, can help seal your reputation as a master occultist and the (self-styled) Great Beast. Your most famous quote - "Do what thou will shall be the whole of the law." (It's true, no one has talked that way for hundreds of years; that's kind of the point.)

### PHYSICAL DAMAGE

### STAMINA DAMAGE



ത്ത









About the World of Brass & Steel
INTRODUCTION

**Brass & Steel: A Game of Steampunk Adventure**, is a role-playing game set in a very different version of the year 1905. Most of the differences in politics and society stem from three fundamental differences in the way that the world works.

One key area of divergence is in the field of technology. Scientists have discovered several marvelous substances, and these peculiar discoveries have produced whole new branches of industry. Hotaether is something like chemically-enhanced steam, and can store an enormous amount of energy. It is used to power huge mechanical vessels and devices. If Hotaether is left uncompressed and unheated, it is known as Slack, and is both significantly lighter than air and entirely non-flammable. Slack is used in the construction of the airships which cruise through the skies above the world of Brass & Steel. Physicane is a type of healing elixir, which has tremendous restorative properties, and allows for the rapid healing of serious injuries. Diamondpane is a metal alloy that is harder than steel, but as transparent as glass, and is used in airships and submersibles alike. Other marvelous elixirs and compounds exist as well.

A second area of divergence from the real world stems from the indisputable existence of a sort of magic, known as Arcanism. Anyone can spend a bit of time honing his or her arcane ability and learn a few minor tricks, called charms. More dedicated disciples of Arcanism use dangerous chemical solutions to enhance their bodies' ability to manipulate arcane energy, and are capable of fairly substantial feats of power. Users of Arcane power are rare, as the knowledge needed to master the more powerful feats has historically been closely guarded by secret societies which tended to employ their ability to turn trespassers into faintly smoking piles of ash in an effort to keep outsiders from learning too much.

A final area of divergence involves the practice of lucid dreaming. Men and women in the world of Brass & Steel can gain access to the realms of the unconscious with the aid of a drug known as Lucidos. Every man and woman in the world has a small private dream realm, known as a reverie. All these realms are joined together by a vast Dreamscape, and a skilled lucid dreamer can travel into the mind of another, and steal secrets, plant thoughts, or just look around for the hell of it.

In the political arena, Britain in Brass & Steel is much more powerful, and the United States much weaker. The British developed Hotaether technology before the rest of the world, and used this new source of power to further expand their already substantial empire. Britain stands alone as the most powerful nation in the world. Native American societies had access to certain forms of Arcane healing, and were able to fight off the diseases that came across the Atlantic with European explorers. Because of this, they put up a much stronger fight, and held on to much of their territory. The United States has only recently been able to expand to the Mississippi River, and the Aztec and Inca Empires *never* succumbed to European pressure.

In 1905, Britain and France, together with a weaker United States, square off against a large alliance comprised of Germany, Austria, and Russia.









All characters in Brass & Steel are defined by a set of attributes and a set of skills, as well as advantages and gear. Skills range from 0 to 10, and attributes generally range from 1 to 10. A score of "I" indicates an absolute lack of competence, and a "10" is nearly the pinnacle of human potential. A character with a Might of I would have difficulty lifting a small piece of cheese. A character with a Might of 10 could life huge round hunks of cheese with ease (which is not to imply that the lifting of cheese, or indeed of any dairy product, figures prominently in the life of an adventurer in the world of Brass & Steel). A character with a rating of "0" in a skill may still be able to attempt to perform actions associated with that skill, but they're apt to fail amusingly.

Whenever a character wishes to take some action, they will be called on to perform a Test. Tests are generally performed by adding an attribute value to a skill value, adding or subtracting modifiers, comparing this total to the number rolled on a single 20-sided die. If the result of this die roll is less than or equal to the modified skill + attribute total, then the character succeeds. If the result exceeds the total, then the character fails. The difference between the total and the number rolled is either the degree of success or the degree of failure, depending on whether the test was a success or not. The degree of success or failure determines precisely how well a character performed, or how badly he or she failed. In cases where two characters are directly opposing one another, each character typically makes a test, and the respective Degrees of Success or Failure determine which character prevails, with all ties being won by the "defender."

In some cases, a major task may require that a character build up some set number of degrees of success over the course of several Tests. A few examples:

Pavel and Bazarov are fighting a duel. They stand a short distance apart from one another and exchange gunshots. Neither, of course, dodges. Pavel makes a test against his Barking Irons skill of 7 (which governs firearms) + his Agility attribute of 8. Unfortunately for Pavel, he rolls a 16, and his shot flies wide of the mark. Bazarov makes a test against his Barking Irons skill of 5 + his Agility of 7, and rolls a 10, which is two less than he needed to succeed, and thus generates two degrees of success, which wounds Pavel.

Marie is attempting to make sense of some intriguing data that has been generated by her experiments. She tests her Natural Philosophy skill of 9 + her Reason attribute of 8, and rolls a 7, which generates ten degrees of success. The experiment is a complicated one, however, and requires a total of thirty degrees of success, meaning that she is only one-third of the way to her goal. If the two men had been dueling in a thunderstorm, or after dark, or while composing extemporaneous poetry, then their Skill + Attribute totals would have been modified downward to account for the increase in difficulty.

If Pavel and Bazarov had met in less honorable circumstances, one or both of them might have attempted to dodge and take cover. If Pavel had been firing at Bazarov while the latter attempted to avoid being shot, Pavel would have made a test using his total of 15, and noted his Degree of Success. Bazarov, in turn, would have made a test using his Ducking and Finding Cover skill of 5 + his Agility attribute of 7. If Pavel rolled a 6, and scored 9 degrees of success, while Bazarov rolled a 10, and scored 2 degrees of success, Bazarov's 2 degrees of success would have been subtracted from Pavel's 9, leaving a net total of 7. In such cases, a defender prevails whenever equal degrees of success are generated.

The table on the following page summarizes most of the modifiers which are commonly applied to Tests.





•				•		
MOD	TERM	RANGE	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	EQUIPMENT	SOCIAL
-10	all but impossible	far far away		paralyzed		seething hatred
-9						
-8	very hard	very long				strongly dislikes
-7						
-6			very dark abominable weather			
-5	hard	long		held down	improvised weapon (impractical)	poor reputation
-4			dark, poor weather slightly off balance	huge		
-3	difficult	medium	off-hand shot or swing			
-2			running, dim light also defending	Open Ground (ranged only)	improvised weapon (practical)	unknown person
- I			attacker moved slightly off balance	big		
0	challenging	short				civil relations
+I			on higher ground (melee only)	poor cover, small		
+2	routine		aimed pistol	good cover moving rapidly		
+3 +4			aimed rifle	moving very rapidly or irregularly		
+5	simple		point blank	excellent cover, tiny		solid friend
+6			defender completly unaware		scoped rifle (aimed)	
+7	elementary					
+8						best friend
+9						
+IO	trivial			complete, reinforced cover		love & affection
•				•		•
	ANGE BANDS e to toe	dirty dancing		TIME PERIOD	<b>S</b> five or so seconds	
	elee	club dancing		scene	a block of time, usual	ly at one location
she	ort	up to a toss away	,	story	a series of related scer	-
me	edium	well in sight, too		campaign	a series of stories, rela	
loı	ng	a good ways awa	y			

very long

far, far away

barely seen

seen only if really looking



Brass & Steel makes use of tarot cards (or ordinary playing cards, if tarot cards are unavailable). Characters receive one fate card for every two points in their fate attribute. At the end of each game session, characters may opt to keep one fate card in their hand to be part of their hand for the next game session (this does not increase the total number of cards that a character may have at any given time, merely allows a character to retain a particularly interesting card).

Fate cards are used primarily to allow characters to repeat failed tests. Each type of skill or activity is associated with a specific suit:

•	- 🚓
SKILL CATEGORY	APPROPRIATE SUIT
Dream	Cups/Hearts
Vehicle	Pentacles/Diamonds
Combat	Swords/Spades
Social	Cups/Hearts
Adventuring	Swords/Spades
Intellectual	Wands/Clubs
Arcane	Wands/Clubs
Crafting	Pentacles/Diamonds
	- @ • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

Any fate card may be used to call for a re-roll on any test made by a character, but cards associated with the appropriate skill are more effective. This table illustrates how fate cards function. Note that using fate cards of the correct suit is particularly helpful when trying to improve a marginal success into a spectacular success, as the original, marginal success is never lost.

Number Card of a non-matching Suit	Roll again, must take second result
Number Card of a matching Suit	Roll again, take better of the two results
Face Card of a non-matching Suit	Roll up to two additional times, must take last result
Face Card of a matching Suit	Roll two additional times, take best result of the three

Brass & Steel: A Steampunk Adventure





Each character has ratings between I (laughably bad) and IO (the peak of ordinary human potential) in the following seven attributes:

### MIGHT

This attribute represents raw physical power. Might is helpful in bashing and stabbing foes, and factors into a character's ability to absorb physical damage.

### VITALITY

Vitality represents a mixture of toughness and aerobic conditioning, as well as general health. This attribute determines how much stamina damage a character can sustain before falling unconscious.

### REASON

This attribute represents a mixture of raw mental processing power and affinity for structured mental activity. It is useful for arcanists, dreamers, engineers and academics.

### AGILITY

The attribute of Agility represents a character's deftness, dexterity, and reflexes. This attribute is very useful in combat situations, and is critical for anyone planning on working with delicate mechanical instruments or investigating the contents of other people's pockets.

### WILLPOWER

Willpower denotes mental focus, determination, and the ability to concentrate. Willpower is helpful in enduring both physical and stamina damage, and is crucial for success as an arcanist or a lucid dreamer.

### WIT

The Wit attribute indicates a character's ability to think and react quickly. It is useful in social situations, and is also crucial in determining the order of action in combat situations. It is of use to lucid dreamers as well, for certain specialized tasks.

### FATE

Fate indicates a character's luck, karma, fortune and destiny. It limits the number of fate cards that a character can have and is sometimes used in tests to determine the effects of luck or fortune, good or bad. A character may normally hold one fate card for every two points in this attribute. (With odd points allowing an extra card).



The following skills are used in Brass & Steel:

### VEHICLE SKILLS

Hell Bent for Leather\* - used to operate motorized vehicles

The Big Guns - used to fire large, heavy weapons

Beast Wrangling - used to ride and to otherwise manage beasts of burden

### COMBAT SKILLS

Bash and Stab - using bludgeons and medium-size or large blades in combat

Up Close and Personal - using fists or small weapons

Duck and Cover - used to dodge attacks or to position oneself behind cover in a gunfight

Bows and Bombs - used for any muscle-powered ranged weapon

Barking Irons – skill with firearms of all types Sergeant's Eye – combat perception, helps to spot ambushes and with initiative

### SOCIAL SKILLS

False Promises - lying convincingly with panache

Huckster's Eye – social perception, used to spot lies, read an audience, or spot seduction

Buy Low, Sell High - governs haggling, banking, and so forth

At Home Among Strangers - ability to blend in and act appropriately in unfamiliar settings

Leadership and intimidation – allows a character to frighten or command others







### ADVENTURING SKILLS

Olympian Spirit – determines a character's athletic abilities

Stealth and Camouflage - ability to hide and sneak

Devious Devices - skill with locks and traps

**Skulduggery** – *skill with other sorts of nefarious activity, including picking pockets* 

Call of the Wild – ability to survive in the wild, camp, and generally be outdoorsy

Heroic Vigor - aids characters in enduring hardship and injury, and in avoiding death

### INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

Natural Philosophy\* - various types of science

Artifice\* - skill with particular types of machine and technology

Investigator's Eye – general perception skill, used in many different circumstances

Liberal Arts - history, sociology, folklore, that sort of thing

Medicine - helps with surgery, first aid, and identifying the contents of sausages

Law\* - skill in interpreting different legal codes and associated activities

### CRAFT SKILLS

Soldiering – military nomenclature and procedures Airship Crewman– knowledge of basic airship systems and procedures Forgery – making false coins, bills, and documents Still Mastery – distilling and flavoring spirits Monasticism – the skills needed to live as a monk

### MAGICAL SKILLS

Channelling - governs raw arcane power

Precision - ability to control arcane power swiftly and with great accuracy

Focus - ability to sustain one or more arcane effects at any time

Arcanist's Eye - arcane perception skill, also determines ability to use arcanism to perceive

Arcane Memory – limits the number of patterns an arcanism may know

### DREAM SKILLS

Dreamer's Eye - perception in the dream realms

Lucid Dreaming - skill at actively shaping the substance of dream realms, including in attacks

Clarity of the Self - defensive dream skill

Languages of the Spirit - aids in interpreting images found in the dream realms

Morphean Artifice - used to create semi-permanent artifacts in the dream realms, and to manifest ephemera

A character can purchase special advantages, known as familiarities, with skills. In many cases, these simply confer a +2 bonus to tests using the appropriate skill. In some cases, however, a character must purchase an appropriate familiarity before being able to use a skill. For example, the Hell Bent for Leather skill governs the ability to operate motorized vehicles. A character with a high rating in this skill has excellent reflexes and a good understanding of inertia, mechanics, and so forth. In order to operate any given class of vehicle, however, that character must be familiar with the specific controls and systems involved. A skilled airship pilot will make a great steam truck driver, but only after she has learned which levers make the truck operate.

In some cases, the rules call for a test to be made against a specific combination of one skill + one attribute. In many other cases, however, different skills and attributes will be paired together in specific situations, as dictated by the GM.

# Advantages and Disadvantages

Characters may have a wide variety of advantages and disadvantages which confer specific special abilities, bonuses, or penalties. Two special types of advantages exist. Familiarities, discussed earlier, aid in the use of specific skills. Background advantages represent both the resources that characters can draw on and the connections that characters have to different social groups. In a larger campaign, they are used to purchase items, gather information, and establish networks of contacts and informants, as well as to wrangle invitations to gallery openings, airship launchings, and arcane golf tournaments.







# About the World of Brass & Steel COMBAT, DAMAGE & HEALING

Actuarial tables unambiguously show that combat is the most significant cause of character injury. Combat in Brass & Steel consists of a rapid series of very short rounds, each lasting only a few seconds of game time. In each round, each character can:

- Move a short distance, and take another action
- Move a greater distance
- Manipulate an object in the environment or in their inventory
- Communicate very briefly, and take another action
- Communicate in detail

- Observe casually, and take another action
- Observe carefully, and in detail
- Take one offensive action, take one defensive action, or take one offensive and one defensive action, each at a -2 penalty

At the start of a combat, all characters make a **Wit + Sergeant's Eye** test to determine initiative order. Only characters who succeed on this test may act in the first round of combat. The net degrees of success or failure on this test determine the order in which characters declare their actions in a round. Characters with the worst result (most degrees of failure) declare first, and the character with the highest degree of success declare last. Characters who tie re-roll until all characters have a unique position in the initiative order. One initiative order is used for an entire combat. All actions are resolved simultaneously. Having a better initiative score allows a character to act on better information, but not at super-human speed.

A character who chooses to use **Duck and Cover** (instead of parrying) can defend against any number of attacks in a round. A character may only parry one attack, or two if he or she takes no offensive action. A defender makes a new defense test against each incoming attack.

Offensive and defensive uses of arcane and dream abilities count as offensive or defensive actions.

To attack another character, a character makes a test using the appropriate attribute (Agility for all conventional attacks) + skill. If the target character is defending against an attack, he or she makes an appropriate test (Agility + Duck and Cover to dodge or get out of the line of fire, Agility + a combat skill to parry an attack). If a defender has more degrees of success, or in the event of a tie, the attack fails. If the attacker has more degrees of success, then the attack may inflict damage equal to the weapon's base damage value + the net degrees of success - any armor worn by the defending character.

All characters have two damage tracks. The Stamina damage track charts a character's level of exhaustion, bruising, fatigue, and ennui. The physical damage track charts potentially life-threatening injury. Each track consists of four rows of boxes. The number of boxes in each row varies, and is based on **Willpower + Vitality** for Stamina damage and **Willpower + Might** for physical damage. Damage in the second and deeper rows of damage tracks confers penalties to all tests, and damage in the final row requires a test to avoid unconsciousness or death. Any stamina damage inflicted on a character whose stamina track is completely filled becomes physical damage.

Characters heal damage slowly over time. Stamina damage may be recovered quickly, by making a **Vitality + Heroic Vigor** test every ten minutes, and recovering a number of boxes equal to the degree of success. Physical damage takes longer to heal. A **Vitality + Heroic Vigor** test is made daily, and each three degrees of success or fraction thereof heals one point of damage. Medical attention improves the rate at which physical damage can be healed. A special healing elixir, known as Physicane, is available. A dose of this elixir allows a **Vitality + Heroic Vigor + 10** test to be made, and restores one point of physical damage for each three degrees of success immediately, and a further point per degree of success over the next 24 hours.



Brass & Steel: A Steampunk Adventure





Characters in Brass & Steel may enter different levels of dreaming. Each person has a private dream realm, known as a Reverie, and a skilled dreamer may sneak into another person's Reverie to steal secrets and plant suggestions. These Reveries are more vivid when their owners are asleep, but exist in the subconscious at all times. All humans are connected by a larger dream world, called the Dreamscape, in which elements of the collective unconscious are made manifest, and which serves to allow travel between Reveries. Special types of Dream Realm exist deep within the Dreamscape, are not associated with any particular subconscious mind, and vary widely in their content and character.

Lucid dreamers have one other important ability. They may capture images from dreams, and make them appear to others in the waking world by manipulating the collective unconscious. These dream images, known as Ephemera, are illusions of a sort. A lucid dreamer must make a Willpower + Morphean Artifice test to manifest an Ephemera, and observers may make a Willpower + Dreamer's Eye test to avoid believing in an Ephemera. Larger and more peculiar or out-of-place Ephemera are easier to disregard. An Ephemera has a basic form, such as fire or a seductress, and may be manifested in the specific form that it was captured (a particular fire or a specific seductress) or as a more generalized version of that archetypal dream image. An Ephemera persists so long as someone is paying attention to it, and for one round per degree of success on the Test to manifest it is unobserved.

About the World of Brass & Steel



Arcanists in the world of Brass & Steel have an innate ability to draw on the contents and physical laws of the infinite neighboring dimensions in order to influence the world. They may conjure matter, draw forth or dismiss energy, move objects, and otherwise manipulate the physical structure of the world.

Arcanists come in two varieties. Minor Arcanists rely solely on the innate arcane potential of the human body, and are limited to fairly minor, though still quite useful, arcane effects. Inoculated Arcanists have taken special substances, known as Alchemical Salts, into their bodies, and been changed by the experience. These changes gradually distort and warp the human form, but also allow Arcanists to store and expend much greater amounts of energy.

Two types of arcane effect are possible. Free-Form effects are generated on the fly, and are limited in both power and duration, but are very versatile. Charms (used by Minor Arcanists) and Patterns (used by Inoculated Arcanists) produce more rigidly-structured effects, but can have longer durations and channel more raw power. Charms and patterns are also easier to invoke than are Free-Form effects. Free-Form effects are invoked by testing Reason + <an appropriate Arcane skill>. Chams are invoked using Willpower + <an arcane skill>. Some arcane effects and Charms/Patterns might require several Arcane skills. In such cases, the lowest applicable value is used. All arcane effects have a cost associated with them. Minor Arcanists pay for their powers with Stamina. Each pattern or charm has a specific set of effects. The table on the following page shows what can be accomplished using one point of stamina to power a Free-Form effect.





### **One Point Free-Form Effects**

For one point of Power, a free-form effect can:

Conjure a modest quantity of a common material — one gallon of water, five pounds of soil Break apart a small amount of ordinary material — punch a three inch hole through a wooden door Conjure a pleasant amount of light, equivalent to one electric bulb Heat a person-sized area by 40 or so degrees Conjure a small fire for twenty seconds Sense simple electrical or thermal forces (see heat, sense if a wire carries current) Sense arcane manipulations of great power (8+ power expended) Inflict about as much damage as a knife or a punch, once, to a single target (8 physical, 12 Stamina) Provide about as much defense against attacks as a small shield Manipulate small objects — lift a gun from a table and pull it to the arcanist's hand, aid in picking a lock or opening the catch on a window.

All human beings have some innate level of arcane power, and use this power instinctively to defend themselves. Effects which target a person or his or her personal effects must overcome this innate resistance. In such cases, the target of an arcane effect makes a test using Willpower + Heroic Vigor, and successes directly subtract from a hostile arcanist's degree of success.







