

DEAD LANDS



The Great Maze

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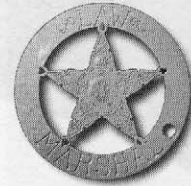
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POSSE TERRITORY

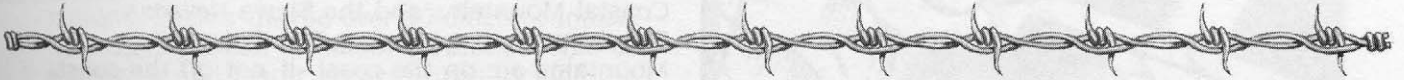


ELEPHANT





CHAPTER ONE: SEEING THE ELEPHANT



Thanks a load, Allan. Here's your report on California. I hope you're happy. Took me a long time to do, you know. I'm no writing man. Which you should know from my opinion of all the paperwork you expect us to file.

The old miners, back in '49, used to have a saying that went, "I've seen the elephant." You know, from the circus; when you've seen the elephant, you've seen the main attraction, and you can head on home. This meant that they'd seen every amazing thing possible, every eye-popping sight that lawless, money-grubbing wilderness had to offer.

So, Allan, here's your elephant: a great whopping load of paper. We lost some good people during the time your little composition assignment had me shackled to my desk in Lost Angels. Beck got it in the neck up in Shan Fan; triad, most likely. Williams and Roske went out to scrutinize a mining operation run by the walking dead; they've been gone for three months. And as far as Austin is concerned, we're not sure what got at her.

If I'd been along, instead of here scratching away on this report, things would have been different. The triads know better than to rile me. I know the tricks and folkways of the undead. And with whatever got Austin... Well, I'm sure I would have thought of something.

Not to speak ill of the dead or anything, Allan, but some of the agents you've been sending out here lately have been greener than grass; plenty

brave, all right, but without the sense God gave a carrot. They're always walking head on into trouble, figuring they're somewhere peaceable and safe, like Deadwood or Tombstone.

There's a lot to know out here in the Maze. You need to grasp your politics and history because politics is just as quick a way for a man to get himself killed as is running into a nest of abominations. The history is important because a lot of blood's been spilled on this land, and these days where there's blood, there's trouble.

All right, all right, you don't have to write back and make the point. I can hear you in my head already. If Williams and Roske and Beck and Austin had a report like this, maybe they wouldn't be plowing the dirt farm today. They could have read it on the train on the way out and maybe started the process with an extra lick of common sense. I just can't help the feeling that you're asking a fish to square dance. I'm a man of action, not a man of letters.

Fine, then, I'm out to the field. There's a certain encampment of undead miners in need of a lesson about messing with the Pinkertons. And you know, I'm not planning on filing a lick of paperwork about it.

Warmest regards,

Samuel Q. Hellman

Samuel Quincy Hellman, Badge #314



ELEPHANT



WELCOME TO CALIFORNIA

So, you've been transferred to—or God help you volunteered for—the California bureau of the Pinkerton Detective Agency. Well, aren't you lucky. Foolhardy is more likely.

I'm Samuel Q. Hellman, and I'm the man in charge out here. I've prepared this little document for all you greenhorns as a sort of primer on this, the most chaotic part of the North American continent. I suggest you read it and take the information in here to heart. This land eats lives like an elephant eats peanuts, and a little knowledge can be all that stands between you and the Grim Reaper.

LAY OF THE LAND

Even before the Great Quake gave us the Maze, California had just about everything in it a man could imagine. In fact, it has a little too much in it for my tastes. There's more folks and things that need killing than there is time to kill 'em.

WEATHER

But before we get to them, let's start with everybody's favorite topic, the weather. You got your flesh-roasting desert areas on the Nevada

border, like Death Valley. I can affirm that they call it that for a reason. Death Valley is not a place where you want to be staked to the earth and left to die by peyote-crazed Mexican banditos. Death Valley isn't merely one of the hottest places known to mankind. It's also one of the lowest parts of California.

And if you go just a bit north, you find Mount Whitney, with its snow-capped mountains, one of the highest places in the nation.

Naturally, there are plenty of in-between temperatures, too. There's beautiful, God's country-type weather on the southern coast. Go north, though, and it gets cursedly damp. And in the winter, it's been known to snow like the sky is suffering from the worst case of dandruff ever known. Especially since the Reckoning, which seems to have made the weather much crueler than when I first came here.

California houses two mountain ranges, the Coastal Mountains and the Sierra Nevadas. They're easy to remember. The Coastal Mountains are on the coast—if not *off* the coast, due to the Quake. The Sierra Nevadas are on the border with the state of Nevada.

FARMLAND

In fact, between the deserts and the mountain ranges, only one out of 20 acres is worth spit as far as farming is concerned. Used to be closer to one out of 10 acres, but it was all the good, habitable land on the coast that sunk into the ocean during the Great Quake. The remaining decent land is in the valleys. You can tell it was good land, because it was the first place we drove the Indians out of. You have to irrigate it, though, to get the land to give you much of anything. This is where things begin to get worrying, speaking in the long range.

All the new, crack-like rivers, the ones that the Great Quake carved into the earth, are reaching their way into the old rivers like pickpockets working the crowd at a hanging. The old rivers, those are ones providing irrigation water. You don't have to be a farmer to know that you can't irrigate a crop with salt water. The number of acres of farmable land is dwindling every year. Soon the Maze is going to find itself in one hell of a mess.

You can bet there's a dozen mad scientists right now working to find a way to reverse this salting of the soil. If one of them cries "Eureka!" he and his backers are sure to get rich. If no one figures it out, we'll be stuck trying to live like the Indians, subsisting mostly on acorns.

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DISPUTED TERRITORY

People have been fighting each other over this land for as far back as anyone can remember. California has always offered riches to the person with the *cojones* to come and grab them. Grab them from some other fellow, that is.

That's the whole history of this place, in a nutshell: one gang of people grabbing from another, then getting it grabbed away in turn. As a Pinkerton in the Maze, you can count on getting in the middle of pretty near every one of these squabbles.

THE INDIANS

The first people here were the Indians. Now, you might think of the Indians as all one category of people, but as far as they're concerned, they comprise countless different nations. There's maybe over 90 different Indian languages spoken in California alone. Some of the larger and better known tribes include the Chumash, Pomo, Gabrielino, Ute, Coastanoan, and Miwok Indians.

Like any group of nations, you could count on them to not get along. They'd fight over acorn groves or salmon streams. They may not have had specialized weapons of war, but that didn't stop them from going at it. These days, they're banding together more than they used to, but there are still some bloody rivalries.

THE SPANISH

The next group to come along and start grabbing was the Spanish. They first set foot here over 300 years back. For a couple centuries after discovering it, they didn't know what to do with it, except give it a name: Alta California.

Still, they were just aching to take it away from the Indians on general principle. They knew there was good fishing up north, and they had an inkling that maybe there'd be gold hiding somewhere. Not that the Spanish ever laid eyes on a land they didn't think was layered with gold from stem to stern. So they figured they had to do something before somebody else got a mind to take it from them. They would have been fit to be tied if the English or the French or the Portuguese made a play for it.

Even so, it wasn't until the last century that they seriously devoted themselves to the business of taking California away from the Indians. In exchange for the land, they offered priests and religion.



At first, the priests were Jesuits. Then there was some kind of Spanish church-and-state huggermugger, and the Jesuits got themselves kicked out of Spain and all its colonies. So the Franciscan priests took over. The Franciscans set themselves up in these enclaves they called missions. Additionally, Spanish soldiers built forts called *presidios*. They founded important towns like Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Diego.

THE MEXICANS

Then, in 1821, came the Mexican Revolution. The Spanish settlers in Mexico reckoned that the new regime back in Spain was maybe a little new-fangled for their liking. Aiming to keep the land and silver they'd already fought and killed for, they decided to put the boots to the lackeys of the Spanish crown. And what they decided to do, they did.

So one day, people in California went to bed Spaniards and woke up Mexicans. And sure as shooting, it didn't take more than a few minutes before they got to feuding over exactly what variety of Mexicans they'd be. I'm happy not to know the details, but in essence there was some kind of big fight over whether Mexico City should be issuing the marching orders or if California ought to run its own affairs as part of

ELEPHANT

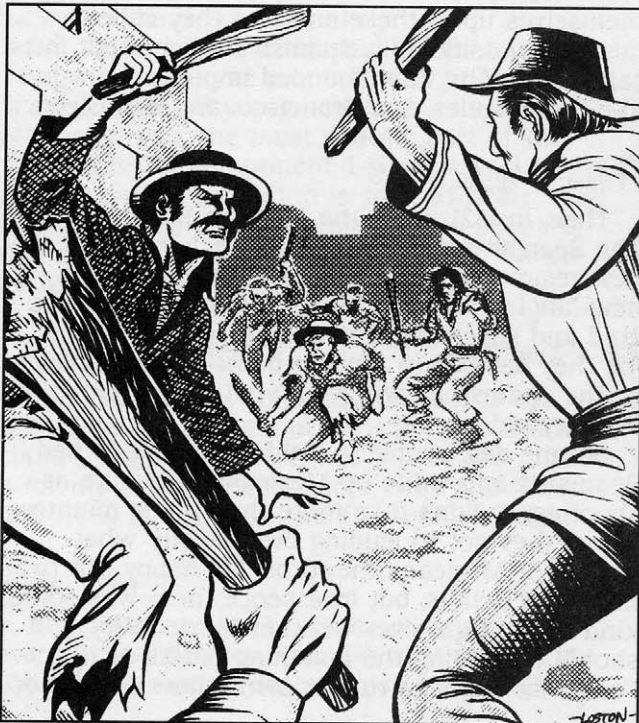
a loose federation of Spanish-speaking states. The folks who wanted to do things locally were called the Californios.

You remember the incident with those— (I suppose this might fall into the wrong hands, so I should be cagey. Report H-102, Allan; I'm sure you remember the incident. They lived in that brandy warehouse just over the border.) Anyway, there was this fellow, Juan de Rivera y Portol was his name, and he knew the stories of that time almost as if he'd been alive back then, if you get my drift. As if he was an amused spectator during the goings-on between the Federalists and the Californios.

Portol said those days were like a comic opera. I'm no opera lover, but his story about the governor who brought his mistress to the fancy dress ball and told everyone she was his niece was certainly funny. In general, the Mexican government seemed to pick its appointees for Governor of California by looking around for the biggest idiot on two legs. Little wonder the locals wanted out from under Mexico City.

THE CALIFORNIOS

The year 1836 ushered in the Alta California revolution. The Californios decided they didn't want to be governed by idiots from Mexico. They wanted to be governed by *local* idiots.



Well, some of them did. The folks of Los Angeles and San Diego liked things the way they were and started a war with the folks declaring independence. This nonsense went on for a couple of years. It was a war, if you consider a series of two-bit skirmishes and parades a war. After the smoke cleared, the Mexicans were still in charge. Which was awfully fortuitous, seeing as the Mexicans had to own it for us to take it away from them.

THE AMERICANS

As this was going on, plenty of Americans were leaking their way into the province. If there's one thing you can say about our countrymen, it's that they'd pack up and move to West Hell if they thought there was a business deal there. It was animal parts that first attracted Americans out here initially; there was big money in whaling and the fur trade.

The Mexicans were less than happy with the arrival of all the *Americanos*, who didn't exactly make a secret of the fact that they liked the look of the place and wouldn't mind borrowing it on a more or less permanent basis. The Mexicans had already lost Texas to the same kind of American influx, but there just wasn't much the Mexican authorities could do given the flood of Americans newcomers.

There were a staggering 700 Americans in Alta California by 1846. They were just squatting on the land, refusing to secure legal title from the government. They refused because they'd have to sign documents agreeing to become not only Mexicans, but Catholics to boot.

You know where this is headed: the Mexican-American War, which caused California land to change hands yet again. For the new agents whose grasp of history doesn't go back 30 years, I suppose I should quickly run this down.

President Polk got himself elected on an expansionist ticket. And you don't get to expand without shedding a little foreign blood. Not that Polk *planned* for an all-out war exactly. He was pushed into it, you might say, by hotheads out here in California. They had themselves the Bear Flag Revolt, wherein an army of 33 bold and red-blooded *Americanos* captured a bunch of horses belonging to the Mexican military. I might have named it a simple case of horse thievery rather than rebellion, but then I have been called a judgmental man.

You could say matters escalated from there. While the *Americanos* and the Californios mixed it up in a series of penny-ante skirmishes, the

ELEPHANT

Mexican-American War rattled its way to a conclusion, with our Mexican brothers getting the brown end of the stick. A treaty sealed the deal: California became US territory.

Conveniently enough, soon as we'd wrested California out of the clutches of Mexico, we struck gold—great heaping gobs of gold just waiting to be scooped out of the nearest stream by anyone daring enough to make the trek here.

And an arduous journey it was back then, as the remaining '49ers will tell you.

Overland meant making it across a treacherous and mostly unmapped continent. If you think that was easy 30 years back, you can just ask a certain group of people called the Donner Party how it turned out for them.

The ocean journey meant going all the way around South America, and the accounts of that journey mostly concern themselves with filth, being sick, being treated worse than dogs, and a general near-death experience. That's why the men from those days, even though they may be codgers now, are tough as ironwood and not to be messed with. They're the strongest of the lot, the ones who survived, and they've earned the right to be contemptuous of tenderfoot types.

Anyhow, I'm not going to talk much more about the Gold Rush days here. Talking to the old-timers, it's clear that the Ghost Rush is just the Second Coming of those days. So, in the next chapter, when I tell you what life is like here now, that's what life was like then, too. Understand? Good. But for this chapter, the point I'm circling around here is this: When the gold first appeared in the miner's pan, the territory of California became the state of California faster than you can say "Winchester rifle."

THE SEA STAKES ITS CLAIM

Well, it wasn't just people who wanted a piece of California. The ocean did, too. The natural world conspired with our Enemy Number One, that enigma of enigmas, the Indian troublemaker named Raven. It all happened in 1868, two decades after the start of the Gold Rush. As part of the weird chain of events we now call the Reckoning, Raven persuaded the earth spirits of California to dump the coastline into the sea.

San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego vanished beneath the waves, along with dozens of other little coastal villages. Thousands of people were killed. The Maze was born.

As they struggled to pull their lives back together, the survivors soon found themselves a silver lining. And a gold lining. The raw slashes

of earth left behind were full of precious metals. And something else: ghost rock.

If the reader doesn't know by now that this is the most strategically valuable substance on the face of the planet, he isn't fit to be a Pinkerton. Ghost rock fetches such a whopping price that it started that whole siren call up again. A second great wave of adventurers and fortune hunters made the Maze their destination.

In the decades after the original rush, California had quickly taken on the characteristics of a regular, civilized American state. However, the combination of the Quake and the new influx of fortune seekers meant kissing the rule of law good-bye. The institutions of state government are gone. Now it's back to miner's law and whatever government you can slap together with a gang of compadres and their guns. For us Pinkertons, it's a bone-hostile environment. Get used to it.

NORTH AGAINST SOUTH

Since you've signed an oath to harry the Confederacy to its collective grave, I don't need to remind you that all our mystical problems began during the War Between the States. The war runs on ghost rock, fueling all the weird





steam contraptions each side throws up against the other.

It was only a matter of time before one of the warring Presidents decided that the Maze would make a fine poker chip in their endless and deadly contest. Jefferson Davis tried it first. He sent his steam-powered gunboats to hammer away at the coastline, demanding surrender from the local government. The problem was that there was no real local government to do any surrendering. The miners of the Maze just nodded at the Reb commander, Admiral Birmingham, and went on about their business of mining and gambling and drinking and killing one another. Satisfied by this token display of fealty, Birmingham declared victory over California.

Up in Washington, our beloved President Grant could be excused for exercising his usual bad judgment. He had no way of knowing that Birmingham's victory existed on paper only. When the Union navy appeared and pounded Birmingham's fleet into floating scrap metal, the miners shrugged again and went on about their business. Same as the next time the Confederates supposedly took over.

Since then, the two navies have been hard at work scrapping away at one another to please their political masters back home. You can be sure *they* get all their paperwork done! North and South keep building expensive armored vessels and getting them sunk in the channels of the Maze. Our boys have set up shop at a place called Fort Lincoln. The Rebs headquarter at Shannonsburg. Each side claims to be winning.

To prove it, both the USA and the CSA have marshals and tax collectors riding throughout the territory seeking to prove that they're in charge. They're as likely to get lynched by the locals as the criminals are. Especially the tax collectors.

If you turned down a job as a federal marshal in favor of the Pinkerton post, clap yourself on the back for your good sense. As Pinkertons, we can expect cooperation from the beleaguered Yankee officials, for what it's worth, and hostility from their Reb counterparts. The Reb marshals don't generally get rough with us, though; they have a full complement of enemies to deal with as it is.

The whole situation is dumber than a sun-baked lizard, which I guess is why Grant and Davis, those great men of state, keep it going. Men like that, they don't admit they're wrong unless they have to.

THE CHINESE

If you ask me to put my money on it, I'd say neither North nor South is set to win the battle for the Maze. Look to the East instead (which is due west from these parts, of course).

Even back in the days of '48 and '49, there were Chinese people here. Most Chinese figure that China is the be-all and end-all of civilization and has been so for over 2,000 years. They don't migrate without good reason. The gold of '48 was just that kind of reason. Ghost rock provides them even more of an incentive. These people are slipping in exactly like the Americanos did when the Mexicans were in charge. They aren't asking for anybody's say-so; they're just coming. Hell, it isn't as if there's anyone to stop them.

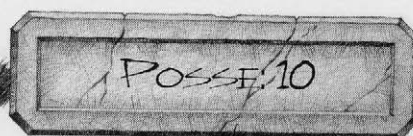
Prejudice against the Chinese runs high among many miners. This can be attributed to the fact that the average Chinese miner works four times as efficiently as our average rotgut-swilling American. The Chinese man doesn't expect wealth to come easily. He works veins and streambeds that other miners have long since given up as dead, and he makes them pay. Naturally, this irritating display of the work ethic provokes pure, distilled, 100-proof resentment on the part of lazier folks.

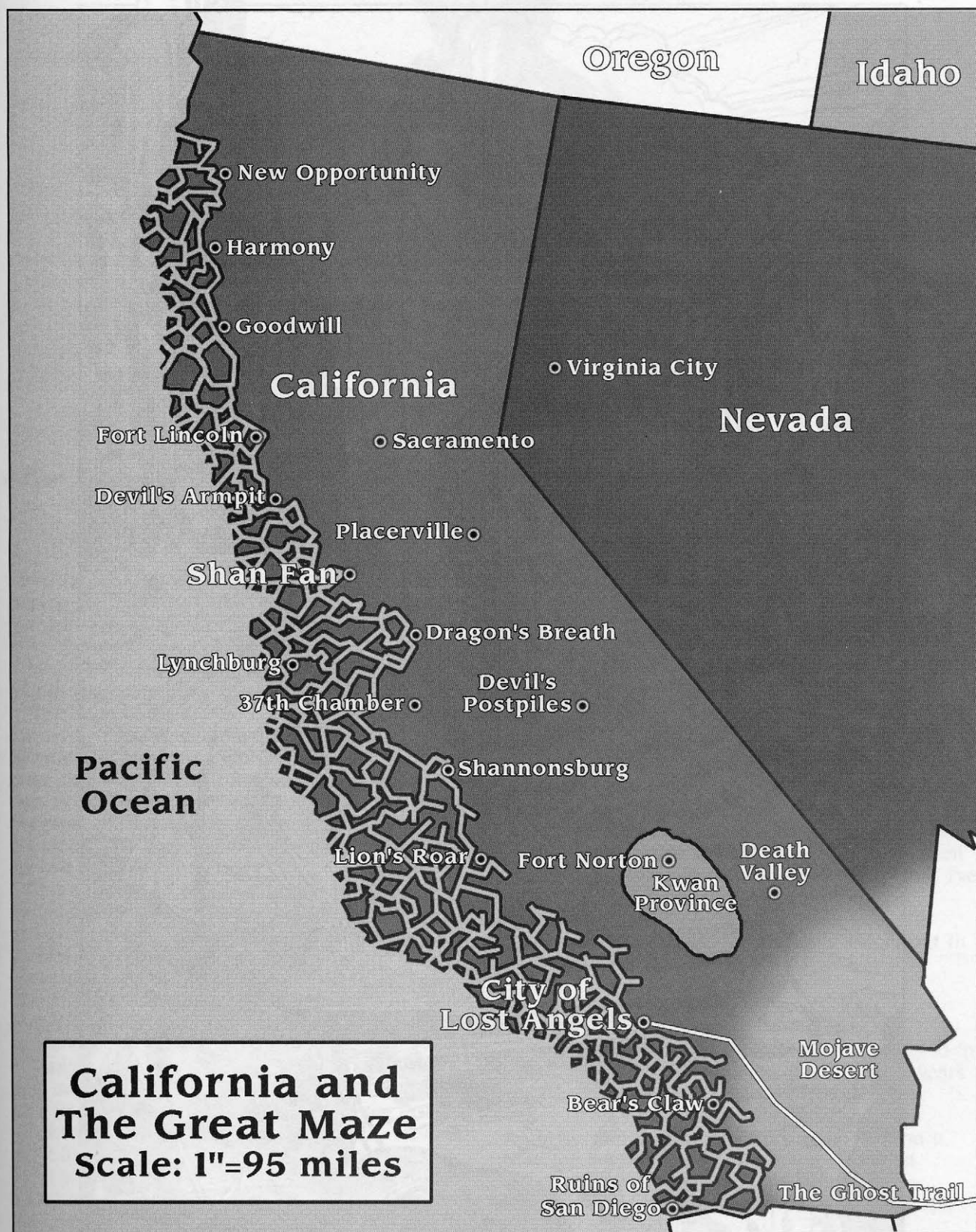
That said, there's plenty of things the Chinese are doing here that should set Head Office to worrying. Triad gangs run the city of Shan Fen. Crazy fighting monks practice strange arts of kung fu in the Shaolin Temple. Warlords gallop about plotting to conquer America. And any number of secret societies are doing God knows what.

From the Pinkerton point of view, the worst problem is that the Chinese brought their own ghosts, undead, demons, and monsters with them. You could say that it's a nice change from western-style werewolves and gremlins, but frankly I can do without the variety.

SCARED IS GOOD

So you're a new recruit coming out to the Maze, and your hand is trembling a little now that you've read what old Sam Hellman has to say? Mission accomplished, then. Scared is good. There's a passel of things waiting out here to bag themselves a Pinkerton. If you don't want to end up a trophy on some abomination's den wall, you'd better read the details that follow, and make little notes in the margins.



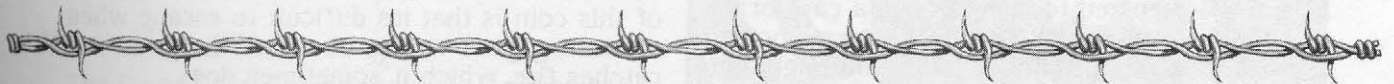


MAZE LIFE





CHAPTER TWO: LIFE IN THE MAZE



The Maze consists of miles and miles of shattered, water-filled canyons. In and among these caverns, you find your numerous small mining settlements. Our friends the Yanks and our not-friends the Confederates both lay claim to it. There are plenty of others who hope to run it in the near future. But the bare fact of the matter is that nobody runs anything out there.

The inhabitants of the countless little mining towns of the Maze manage their own affairs. Hereabouts, the main rule is: There aren't any other rules. As Pinkertons, we have to make our own rules. We do that with our guns, our fists, but most importantly, our brains. Know how to get along in a lawless society, and you might survive your assignment.

The solution to most mundane mysteries in the Maze ultimately comes down to gold, silver, and ghost rock. These things are so often lumped together that there's a term to encompass them: the fundaments. As in, "Shan Fan does well shipping fundaments around the world," or "Are those fundaments in your Levis, or are you just glad to see me?"

Many a man gets killed over the fundaments. Hell, even your more intelligent abominations have uses for them. You can crack cases faster if you know life from the miner's point of view. So think like a miner for the next few passages, won't you? It could make the difference between a nice long career ahead of you, and a spot in the Lost Angels Cemetery.

THE FAST COUNTRY

The Maze is also called "the Fast Country." Living a year here is like living five years anywhere else. A man can go from tycoon to derelict in the space of a week. Or vice versa. I don't have to reiterate all of the ways of getting killed out here.

I suppose that's why people don't form permanent attachments much. It's too heart-breaking to see a friend go from riches to rags. And you never know when a good compadre is going to up and die on you.

I know I've been called a man who gives other cold-hearted bastards a bad name, but I've seen so many partners laid beneath the earth that I've already done all the mourning one man is capable of. If this place doesn't kill you, it'll make you hard inside. If you don't like it, put in for a transfer.

HAZARDS OF MINING

The old image of the '49er panning for gold in a creek bed is a thing of the past. Twenty years ago, the mother lode was up in Desolation Valley. Towns like Placerville, Jackson, San Andreas, and Coulterville sprung up around it. Now the mother lode is all down the coast, although the richest areas are found in the stretch of coastline between Shan Fan and the City of Lost Angels.

MAZE LIFE

You don't find the gold, silver, and ghost rock by sticking a big, old plate in the river. Nowadays, you find yourself one of the great gaping gouges in the coastline put there by the Quake. Or the jagged side of one of the countless islands which are also part of the Maze.

Mining anywhere is a dangerous business. Mining in the Maze presents all types of new hazards. There's the risk of falling into the sea, the risk of falling into the sea and being eaten by a Maze dragon, the danger of being dynamited into the sea, the danger of having the sea fall on you, and, worst of all, there are lawyers.

LIVING CONDITIONS

Nobody is going to mistake the Maze for a four-star hotel. If you want to live there, you have to be prepared to camp out in a cave or live on top of a mesa or maybe sleep in your boat seven days a week. When it rains, you might get yourself washed out to sea in a mudslide. In the heat of summer, you have no trees or anything else to protect you from the pounding sun. And then of course there are the creatures that aren't supposed to exist, who prowl the area waiting to find themselves a chunk of miner to chew on.



CAVE DWELLERS

Many of your smaller settlements, the ones with no more than 100 men, are man-made caves hacked out of the sides of the Maze canyons with dynamite and picks. Essentially these fellows live in their mines. This exposes them day and night to the rumored unpleasant effects of ghost rock, so these fellows can be more than a little ornery or crazy or both. You can count on them to have terrible hacking coughs and rheumy eyes and rough, discolored, peeling skin. Even other miners look down on these fellows, who are known as "cavemen."

Cavemen are used to having their caves raided by pirates, so they're armed to the molars and none too shy about plugging somebody who approaches without adequate explanation. With no back door or other avenues of approach, a cave is not too difficult to defend. The other side of this coin is that it's difficult to escape when something goes wrong, like if all the ghost rock catches fire, which it sometimes does.

Another danger is having the whole kit and kaboodle collapse on your head. These caves are shorn up by timbers and so forth, but they are scarcely models of modern engineering. Every so often, while traveling through the Maze, you'll hear a big crashing sound, like the Good Lord is warming up to Armageddon. Never fear—it's just a cave falling in somewhere. Usually happens so quick the miners don't even get a chance to scream.

BOAT RATS

Then you get fellows who never leave the safety of their boats. They use swivel-mounted ladders to get to ore near the surface of the canyon walls. These fellows are called "boat rats" or "cherry-pickers." The latter term is due to the fact that they can only get at the easiest-to-reach deposits; serious drilling is beyond them.

When they run out of surface, they blast the canyon walls with dynamite to create a new surface. This is not only wasteful, sending sheets of ore-bearing rock into the sea, but dangerous in several ways. It endangers the fellows doing the blasting (more than one boat-rat vessel has been sunk by rock its men were blasting off the side of a canyon). It also endangers other miners higher up on the same mesa, since the blasting goes on at water level. A couple of small mesas have been blasted into the water by boat rats, in once case destroying a small settlement on top of the mesa.

MAZE LIFE

Miners who work the sides and tops of the mesas regard these bottom-blasting boat rats the way that cattlemen see sheep herders: vermin in need of extermination. Sometimes prosperous miners hire regulators to sink the boat rats or just plain kill them. Sometimes they deserve killing, if their irresponsible blasting caused loss of life. Other times, the mesa miners are just engaged in a little preventative medicine, which in the opinion of the Pinkertons is not justice but murder. As we'll get to in a little bit, the line between those two things gets a little blurry out in the Maze.

The "safety of their boats" I just alluded to is naturally a relative thing. In addition to the ever-present fear of pirates and hostile aquatic life, most of which is not officially supposed to exist, the boat rat has himself some pretty odd tidal effects to deal with. I'll mention these a little later on too.

MESA TOWNS

The tops of the canyons used to be regular country, some of it fairly flat. Some of the hunks of Maze are big enough that you can fit a town, or what passes for a town, on the plateau on top. The problem here is getting off the top of the mesa when you want to go somewhere. There are all kinds of ghost-rock-fueled steam contraptions which move people from the water below to the town above.

The most popular of these is an expensive contrivance called Dr. Patashine's Ingenious Elevating Device. These are manufactured by Frank Patashine of the City of Lost Angels. Mesa towns depend on devices like Patashine's; without them, people couldn't get into or out of the towns, which would bring on starvation real quick. Pirates used to specialize in knocking out these elevating devices, waiting for everybody to starve or surrender, and then climbing their way up to loot the places.

Now you can count on the devices to be heavily guarded, their workings kept behind steel walls mounted with Gatling guns. When a town gets wind of a possible bandit, Confederate, or warlord attack, its city fathers scramble to hire on more defenders to protect the elevating equipment. This is yet another mode of employment for the many regulators and freelancers who roam the Maze in search of high-paying trouble.

Most of the mesa towns are fairly small, home to maybe 200 or 300 miners and maybe a general store owner. Only a mesa rich in



fundaments can support a mesa town with a steam-powered elevating device. Others require you to climb up on a rope or a winch. Since these climbs can often be a couple hundred feet, you have to be a special kind of crazy to want to go to these less prosperous mesa towns.

The richest mesa towns are Lynchburg, just southwest of Shan Fan, and Red Rat, in the middle of the coastline.

THE PAINTED LADY

I once had to pose as a miner to flush out a Confederate agent who was doing the same. It's risky work, to be sure. You start out on top of a bluff; the fundamentals are in the cliff face below. You get into a two-man basket attached to some sort of winch. This device is known as the Painted Lady, because she's fickle and you can't ever really trust her. (That's the miners talking, not me.)

Some of these winches are operated automatically, but it's much more common for a small gang of miners to work a cliff wall of the Maze together. It's easier to have someone else lower you up and down than it is to use the one-man apparatus. Plus the winch operator serves as a guard in case someone attempts to sever the cables on you. I've had this happen to me, and I don't recommend the experience.

No matter who lowers you down, it's a tricky thing to keep your balance as you're hacking away at the exposed soil and rock, trying to get the nuggets of gold, silver, or ghost rock out. One wrong move, and you've either dropped your payload in the ocean, or you've fallen in yourself.

DINNER FOR DRAGONS

Once you've fallen, you're going to have trouble getting out of the brackish waters of the Maze alive. The hucksters say the Maze is *aethiferous*, which means it's suffused with supernatural energies. According to the theories of the Pinkerton Supernatural Research Division, abominations are attracted to areas with strong auras of this type. The channels of the Maze are therefore home to many aquatic abominations. Some individual specimens have learned to lurk around the most lucrative mining areas. These opportunists are quick to snap up a fallen miner.

My own fall was broken by the maw of a waiting Maze dragon. If this happens to you, try to leap down its throat if you can manage it. This way it swallows you whole instead of tearing you into bits with its dagger-like teeth.

Once you're in its steamy gullet, you have about 10 minutes to shoot, cut, or burn your way through its belly before the fumes from its

stomach acids knock you out. Concentrate on the floor of the stomach. That's where there's the least flesh and muscle between the beast's stomach and hide.

Be warned that this part of the dragon is underwater; when you finally cut through, water gushes in as if you'd put a hole in the hull of a boat. You have to be strong enough to push through this powerful onrush of water. Then you have to swim to shore without drowning or being caught again in the enraged and dying creature's jaws.

As I said, it's much better not to fall in.

BLASTING THE BLUFFS

No matter how rich a bluff is, the miner eventually cleans all accessible fundament from its surface. Then it's time to make a new surface. Miners must become very skillful with a stick of dynamite. Fact to remember: They use this skill to throw dynamite at pursuers.

The trick is to blow off just as much surface as needed. The more the miner explodes off of the side of his bluff, the more fundament he's blowing into the channel. Eventually, even the most seasoned miner gets careless with his TNT. When you see a man with a missing hand, you can deduce he's a former miner.

THE ROCKIES

Before the miner can do anything with his newly identified chunk of exposed earth, he is morally obligated to determine that his claim to it is clear and legal. If the miner is less than a paragon of virtue, he may calculate that he possesses the wherewithal to defend the claim from its rightful owner. Claim-jumping is not only universally abhorred, but widely practiced.

Like Pinkertons, miners know to look after their own interests. They have a saying: "Be righteous, and keep your pistol by your side."

STAKING A CLAIM

To figure out whether a particular claim has been spoken for or not, the miner needs to seek out a representative of the Greater Maze Rock Miner's Association. This grand commercial organization is known by all and sundry as the Rockies. I suppose the Rockies are as close as the Maze comes to an actual government. You can tell that because the miners are always cursing them and blaming them for their every misfortune.



Despite what their name might lead you to assume, the board of the Rockies isn't made up of miners. The Greater Maze Rock Miner's Association is a cartel of wealthy shipping types. They buy from the miners and sell to clients throughout the world.

They established the Rockies as a way of keeping disputes between miners to a minimum and thus keeping the supply flowing in their direction. They are hard men, often survivors of the '49 Gold Rush. Their money gives them power, and they exercise it without hesitation or compunction.

They are our most well-funded and loyal customers. They often hire us to track down stolen shipments and punish claim-jumpers, bandits, and other impediments to the unfettered flow of cash into their pockets. This becomes awkward at times, because individual Rockies sometimes turn out to be responsible for a piece of villainy we have been hired to investigate.

If your investigations lead you toward a member of the Rockies, proceed with delicacy. The only Pinkerton to take down a Rocky and get away with it is...well, yours truly. Having done it, I wouldn't recommend plugging any fundement magnates between the eyeballs. I prevailed, but it was dicey for a while there. And remember, you aren't Samuel Q. Hellman.

Here's an interesting recent development: The board of the Rockies, generally the most hard-headed group of skeptics you might ever want to meet, called in a spiritualist named Edwina Pope to investigate poltergeist activity at their Shan Fan waterfront headquarters. Parts of Mrs. Pope were subsequently found in a cannery on the city's North side. In a vat of shrimp waiting to be processed, to be precise. The Rockies want to know what's going on, and their gratitude can be a sight to behold.

CONTROLLING THE MINERS

The power of the Rockies' cartel allows them to keep the miners on the straight and narrow. After all, fundaments aren't worth a plugged nickel if you can't get anyone to buy them from you. If you refuse to respect a judgment handed down by a representative of the Rockies, they ban you from selling to any of their buyers.

You can try to circumvent them, but your average miner doesn't need the bother. When he has a nugget in his pocket, he wants to sell it right away. He doesn't want to have to sneak around 12 counties to find some independent buyer and then take a cut rate for his goods.

To stay the right side of the Rockies, the miner has to survey his claim with what passes for precision out here and then find himself a Registrar of Claims. Any mining town worthy of the name boasts a person designated by the Rockies to act as registrar. Usually it's the saloon keeper or sometimes the local sheriff.

The Rockies have divided the entire Maze into districts. There is supposedly a method to the divisions, but miners sometimes find it confusing to figure out which district a claim belongs to—and thusly which town to find to get the right registrar.

There's no fee for registering a claim. To keep title to a claim, the miner has to work at least one day out of every three months. Courtesy demands that he put up some kind of plaque or something on his claim so that others don't waste their time trying to register it.

When there's a dispute over a claim, the disputant protests to the registrar of the district in question. If the registrar can't settle the dispute, the aggrieved party can appeal to the board of the Greater Maze Rock Miner's Association, which meets in Shan Fan on a quarterly basis.

GETTING TO MARKET

Once a miner's started pulling fundement out of the ground, he needs to find a buyer. This is usually a Rockies assayer. Most of the larger towns scattered throughout the Maze have an assayer. This is usually someone in the town the Rockies feel is trustworthy, like a prominent merchant. When this trust has been misplaced is when we get involved. This individual assays, buys, and stores all the fundement brought to him until a Rockies freighter comes by to collect it. At most major towns, a collection ship comes by at least once a month.

Of course, not all miners live close enough to a town with an assayer to cash in their fundement on a regular basis. To address this problem, the Rockies maintain a fleet of ore barges which follow regular routes through the Maze. Each of these heavily guarded barges makes scheduled stops along its route, usually at large towns or major mining camps. At each stop, the area miners converge on the barge with all of the fundement they've mined since the last barge came through. A team of assayers on the ship processes all the sales.

The arrival of a barge is a major boon to the economy of the town at which it stops because it's suddenly up to its armpits with miners who



have money eating through their pockets. Rivalry between towns for a spot on the barge schedule is fierce and often turns bloody. The Rockies use this to play different mining factions against each other.

THE GREAT MAZE WARS



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Of course, the Rockies' monopoly over the miners may soon be coming to an end. The madness that is the Great Rail Wars has made its way to the Maze.

As the conflict between the railroads heats up, their demand for ghost rock increases. The Rockies have used this to drive the price of ghost rock sky high, even though production is at an all-time high.

It seems like the railroads are tired of being gouged. Over the last few months, ships flying the colors of the major railroads have appeared in the Maze. They've been steaming the major channels, buying up all the ghost rock they can find. There have already been a few instances of armed clashes between railroad ships and forces of the Rockies.

The Rockies seem to be taking this challenge to their power seriously. They've issued a warning that the claims of any miners caught selling fundement to the railroads will be revoked. If things continue on their present course, the stage seems set for a major bloodletting. Regardless of which side prevails, I'd say this office will stay busy sorting out the aftermath for years to come.

MONEY MADNESS



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Here's a preconception you need to abandon. Despite what you may have heard Back East, the dangerous and none-too-pleasant work of mining isn't especially profitable. It isn't as if every single bluff in the Maze is filled to bursting with

fundaments.

The man who hits a mother lode is one in 1,000. That man gets his name in the illustrated weeklies, and the 999 other unfortunates toil away in mud-spattered obscurity. Your average miner spends an entire week breaking his back on the Painted Lady and comes up with only enough nuggets to buy breakfast, if that.

That's partly a reflection on the poverty of the average claim, and partly a reflection of the high cost of breakfast. The average Maze resident

might not have any gold, but there's some who do. And since there's so much gold here, and because everything else of use has to be shipped in from other parts, prices in the Maze are crazier than a cultist who's just read the Infernal Book of Preserved Tattoos.

Allan, you really need to do something about the *per diems* offered to us out here. I'm tired of the moaning from accounting over my expense account. I bring in Maze-sized rates, and they should expect me to file Maze-sized expenses. "Irregular," my ass.

The real money in the Maze isn't made by the miners, it's made *off* the miners. If you're a miner, you have to be lucky that day to get a nugget in your pocket. But if you're a blacksmith or a gunsmith, or you run an inn or a livery stable, or if you're a gambler or a lady of the evening, you know there's at least one miner who got lucky that day and you're gonna get a nugget in your pocket every night.

Mining riches are fleeting. The ones who get rich and stay that way do it setting up inns or shipping in food or acting as big-time traders.

EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF

Money fever does something to a place. It makes a man worry about his own affairs without exercising an excess of scruples when it comes to inalienable rights of others. Most folks, even the ones what think of themselves as decent upstanding citizens, don't care two figs who they trample in their hurry to get rich.

You've been assigned to a place where a man can't rely on help of any sort when he's down. And when he's up, he can count on there being some polecats lying in wait to take his hard-earned property away from him. All of the things that keep people behaving back East are nothing but a dim recollection out here.

The average denizen of this land of greed fled the settled East in search of instant and easy wealth. The sane and stable people who keep a community together were either killed in the Quake or left once things began to go mad again. Or they became hard themselves; these sorts are often the bitterest and most unforgiving of all.

When you're walking through the wilderness and you run into a person, ask yourself, "Is he planning to kill me?" You can be certain that the other person is thinking that about you.

A victim of robbery might be able to drum up some sympathy. But it isn't likely. You can expect to get bushwhacked here, just like you can



expect rain on a cloudy day. The usual response to a tale of bloodless robbery is laughter.

This attitude makes our job harder. Mazers don't give a hang about each other and don't see why they should waste their time answering an investigator's questions. "Better him than me," is the Mazer's catchphrase.

MINER'S JUSTICE

That tune changes awfully quick when the miner thinks he might be the next victim. Violent robberies in particular provoke an almost irrational fear. In these cases, the agent can expect *too much* cooperation; everybody wants to chip in an opinion or half-cooked rumor. They take matters into their own hands, whip up a vigilante posse, and try to run your man to ground. If your assignment requires you to bring him back alive, you may find yourself having to protect the weasel's life as a horde of howling miners pursues you.

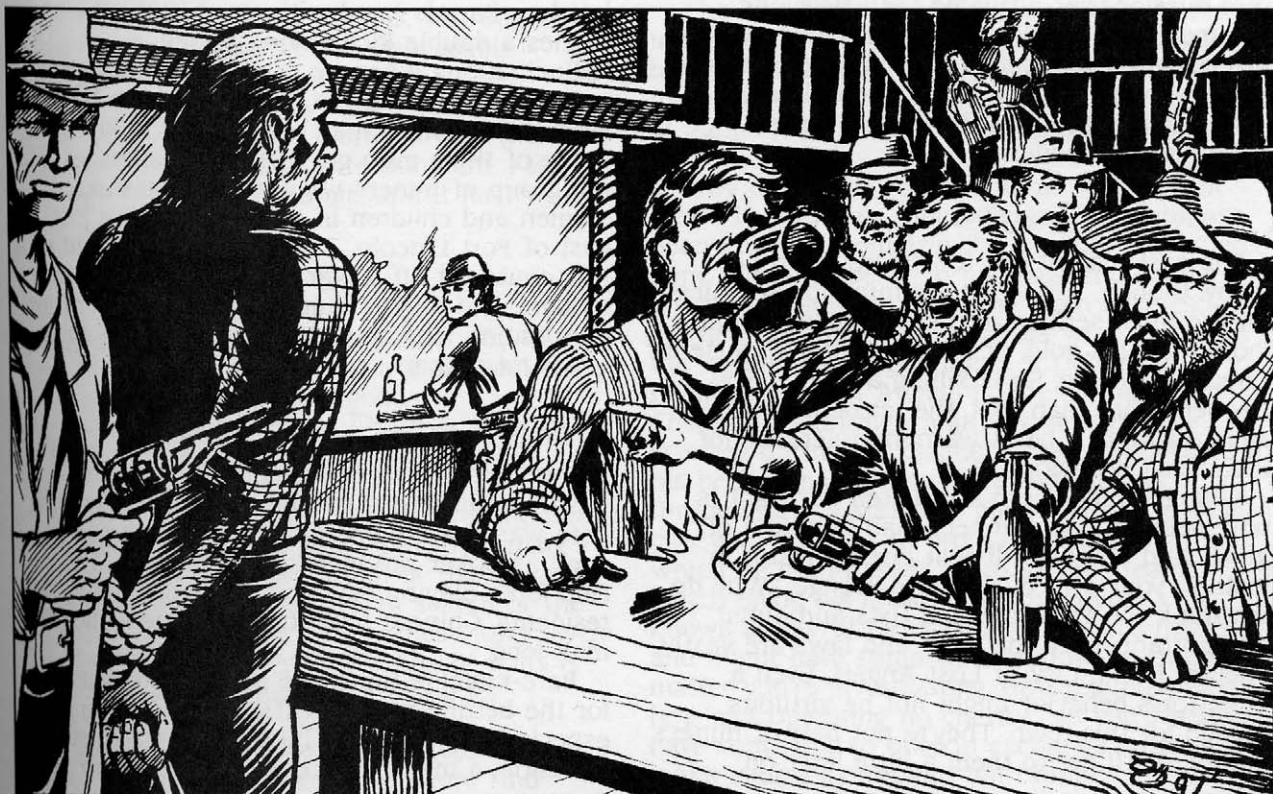
I once had to drop a stick of dynamite on just such a lynch mob and, in so doing, wiped out half the population of Snow Town. The other half didn't get over their grief at their friends' deaths until they considered just how many rich claims were thereby opened up.

Lynching is not just a deterrent; it's an avocation. There aren't too many mining towns where stealing isn't a problem. Murder is another well-known inconvenience. If you're a popular fellow and you fall victim to one of these crimes, your fellow townsfolk might decide to go out and lynch the guilty party. A posse convened for this purpose is commonly known as a "vigilance committee."

Some towns are more rope-happy than others. Some places, like Lynchburg, have a fairly permanent structure to their vigilance committee. Outsiders must be wary of towns that keep a heavy hand on the gallows lever. I have a term for these citizens who've taken one life too many: blood simple. Although our agents have a certain reputation for rectitude, even we have to mind our Ps and Qs in a rope-happy town.

Most miners do generally give a man the benefit of a trial before stringing him up. The trial takes place out in the main street of a town or, should the weather be inclement, in the saloon. If there's a lawyer or retired judge present, he might do the honor of presiding. Otherwise they just select the most respected man in town.

I've attended many of these miner's trials. Evidence doesn't have much to do with the



outcome. It all comes down to the orating abilities of the accuser and the defendant. I've seen cold-blooded, heartless killers leave a courtroom accompanied by the cheers of the men who'd planned to hang them at the outset of the trial. Likewise, I've seen innocent men swing because they weren't much at talking or had the temerity to be Indian or foreign.

THE GUEST CASE

One recent and celebrated case is that of young Wesley Guest, heir to a huge molasses concern in the Caribbean. He came out here to make some deals to ship molasses and other food products overland to the Maze but got himself convicted of murder in the mining town of Placerville. He was hung by the miners there, who were indifferent to his family's wealth. The fact that the fellow thought his money would get him off didn't help him any, I'd have to add.

Supposedly he killed a prostitute who tried to blackmail him, but he denied even having met her. His family was outraged, needless to say, and has offered a reward for the hides of anyone who participated in his lynching. A number of Placerville residents have been kidnapped by freelance regulators, presumably in an effort to collect the Guest reward money. Several of these were missionaries affiliated with Reverend Grimme's Church of Lost Angels, which has in turn offered rewards for the regulators who did the kidnappings. To my mind, the only one getting rich is the Grim Reaper, who's just racking up the bodies.

LESSER CRIMES

The vast majority of towns are not rope-happy, though. You won't get hung for anything but the most serious offenses. Stealing a man's ghost rock, his gold, or his horse, that's cause for a neck-stretching. So is killing a man, if you do it sober. Other than that, the residents of the Maze maintain a heart-warming tolerance for uncivilized behavior.

Killing somebody in a drunken bar fight is more seen as bad manners than any kind of crime. And any assault that doesn't result in death is your own business to avenge. "Why do you think the Lord invented fists and guns?"

Important note: The rules and laws are vastly different in the City of Lost Angels. Even a Pinkerton's behavior might not be virtuous enough for this town. They're not part of miner's culture, so I'll get to them a little later on.

KILLING TIME

There aren't exactly a ton of things to do in a mining town. For sources of entertainment, you have the saloon, the saloon, and the saloon. Of course, there's plenty of variety in that. Why, in your average mining town saloon, you can drink, you can gamble, and you can watch the dancing girls.

SMILING ROTGUT

Forget what Head Office says. I don't want any teetotalling Pinkertons under my command. They stand out like a sore thumb here.

No self-respecting miner proceeds through life with an undamaged liver. You're looked down upon if you abstain, with reluctant exceptions made for women, preachers, and children under the age of 10. "Never trust a man what doesn't drink" is a common motto among the miners of the Great Maze, so you'd better learn how to hold your liquor.

GHOST ROT

Someone has been manufacturing a nasty brew called "ghost rot." Allegedly, the fermentation process for this rye whiskey involves barrels lined with ghost rock. The stuff carries a double kick, giving a man hallucinations when he drinks too much of it.

Folks who develop a hankering for it become even more violent than the usual drunken fool. Some of them even go on bloody rampages, like the group of miners who recently massacred women and children in an Indian village just east of Fort Lincoln. The Rockies are afraid that this could set off a war between miners and Indians, and they've quietly offered a reward for information leading to the unmasking of the ghost rot makers.

GAMES OF CHANCE

Even more than drinking, though, the main pastime out here is gambling. As if just coming here wasn't a big enough gamble. Card games, such as poker, are standard, though you can also find folks playing dice and dominoes. Shan Fan residents, Chinese and otherwise, are addicted to mah jong.

Bare-knuckle fights are another popular event for the betting man. Cockfighting is also beloved, especially among the Chilenos. On a real special occasion, a man might come to town with his

fighting bears and dogs, and charge a commission of bets taken when the bears fight the dogs.

Mazers take their gambling seriously. It isn't considered murder to gun down a man who cheats at cards. It's considered good sanitation.

PROFESSIONAL LADIES

I have nothing against female agents. I find they fill up the graveyards of Lost Angels no quicker than the male agents. However, not everyone in the Maze is as enlightened as me. It all goes back to the old-timers of '49, who sometimes fail to treat women as equals.

They remember the original Gold Rush, when a man could go for months at a time without seeing a woman, and the women they were most likely to lay eyes on were soiled doves. Now that Gold Rush conditions are back, there are plenty of fellows who want to treat every woman like a prostitute. Some of them are dumb enough to treat even well-armed women in this way.

Many Mazers are women seeking their fortunes as miners, gunslingers, tavern owners, and so forth. But the world's oldest profession is still going strong here. It's an ugly truth, but it's still the most efficient way of parting a miner from his fundaments. If you can befriend these steely-eyed, capable professionals, you might find yourself with an absolutely indispensable informant.

Occasionally, one of my more progressive-minded female associates wonders why there are no dancing boys for their entertainment. I think that would be mighty strange, and it hasn't happened yet.

SALVAGERS

Mining isn't the only profitable activity in the Maze. The Great Quake tossed a great deal of valuable items, from luxury goods to construction material, down into the channels of the Maze. Lost bank vaults are particularly prized.

Of course, all the piracy and the treacherous waters of the Maze itself have provided many wrecks to work over also. Much of the salvaging is done by the desperate folks in search of the items necessary for survival. To these folks, even the recovery of a cook-pot or a box of nails is worth the trouble. Others are looking for treasure.

Salvagers have to defend themselves. Wherever there is someone who thinks he might find



something valuable, there's a bandit who will try to steal it.

The more professional salvagers are teams of independent operators. Sometimes it is hard to tell the salvagers from the bandits; there are more than a few teams willing to "salvage" items at gunpoint from their competitors. The more successful teams have been known to put a bounty on the recovery of items stolen from them. The rewards they offer have sometimes been known to outstrip the value of the pilfered item, the point being to publicize the dangers involved in stealing from the team in question.

There are several large firms who specialize in the resale of salvaged items. R.T. Chestnutt's Resupply in Lost Angels is one of these. Chestnutt is a tough man whose legs were crushed during the Quake. Although confined to his bed, he has a network of informants throughout the Maze. He pays them to provide him with leads as to profitable salvage sites, which he then passes on to salvage teams which enjoy his favor. As a consequence, he knows an awful lot of other folks' businesses, and might have some valuable low-down on any matter you're investigating. He'll remind you that he's "not operating no charity," so you'd better have some tips to offer in exchange when you make your appointment with him.

A fellow named Wang Mo in Shan Fan is also a big buyer of salvaged items. He's rumored to be looking for something in particular: a jade statue of a lion brought over from China during the '49 rush. I don't know whether this is simply a priceless work of art or is reputed to have some mystical significance.

SCIENTISTS

Another group which makes up a sizable portion of the Maze's population is the scientists.

As you know, ghost rock is a major component of the construction and operation of many of the devices created with "new science." The Great Maze contains the largest known deposits of the stuff, so it's only natural that every lunatic who ever had an idea for building a better bottle opener has flocked to the place.

The scientists tend to live alone or in very small groups and seem to prefer the more remote portions of the Maze. The ones I've talked to say it's so they can work undisturbed. I think it's because they're all afraid one of the others is going to steal their ideas.

Scientists can be useful when you need a special piece of custom equipment built, but you need to be careful in how you deal with them. Most are, to put it kindly, "eccentric." Others are simply raving loons. Whatever you do, don't refer to them as "mad." They seem touchy about that.

SMITH & ROBARDS

Smith & Robards have a presence here. It seems they've used up most of the ghost rock near their factory in Nevada and have begun importing it from the Maze.

They have a large mining facility located about 75 miles north of Lost Angels. It's well guarded; there's normally a number of maze runners, submersible boats, and ornithopters patrolling the area around it at all times.

They don't ship their ghost rock East in the conventional manner. Instead of using ships, they transport it back to their factory in enormous air carriages—each one has three hot-air bags. These monsters are an impressive sight.

NAVIGATING THE MAZE

Sooner or later you're going to end up on a boat in the course of your duties. It's the nature of the place. In the Maze a three-hour boat trip may translate into a three-day land journey, so you'd better get your sea legs under you.

GETTING AROUND



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If you don't know anything about steam engines, learn! Nearly everything that moves in or on the water in the Maze is steam-powered. Sail-driven ships just can't cut it in the Maze, and about all oars are good for is clubbing some nasty thing back down into the water.

The deep, narrow canyons of the Maze make sailing ships impractical. There is often no wind, and when there is it's usually blowing in the wrong direction—there's not much room to tack.

You also need to watch out for the sudden gusts of wind which can unmast a ship faster than a miner can spend his gold. Sometimes a breeze hits a channel just right and is funneled by the canyon walls. When this happens, a gale force wind can come ripping through a channel on what is otherwise a perfectly calm day. The locals refer to these as wind devils.

Rowboats are fine for getting back and forth to the dock, but that's it. The currents in most parts of the Maze are simply too fast to row against. Even steamships have trouble sometimes. If you're bucking the tide, you may have to run the engine wide open just to hold your position.

THE CHANNELS

There are a few large channels through the Maze. Three of these converge at the harbor at the City of Lost Angels. The denizens of this fair city have imaginatively labeled them the North, South, and West Channels.

The North Channel twists and turns quite a bit, but it's navigable all the way to Shan Fan. If you stick to the channel, this trip takes about three days. Skippers who know the Maze have learned which side passages to take to cut across many of the bends in the main channel, and can make the run much quicker.

The best time I've heard for the Lost Angels to Shan Fan trip—known as the China Run by most skippers—is 10 hours, 3 minutes, and 27 seconds. Independent shippers are constantly competing to make the run faster. News of any new shortcuts can be worth a pretty penny. This channel sees a lot of use because there is no easy access from Shan Fan to the Pacific. Most of the larger freighters come south to Lost Angels, then take the West Channel to the ocean.

The South Channel heads south. This channel doesn't see much traffic, because there's not

much point in heading this way, unless you've got your heart set on running into a lot of Mexicans with big chips on their shoulders about this whole Texas/California thing. Since the French have seen fit to give them big boats with big guns, I don't recommend sightseeing down this channel.

The West Channel leads to the Pacific Ocean. This channel sees the most use, because until the Great Rail Wars has resolved itself, the most reliable way of getting the Maze's mineral riches back East is by ship. Every day, ships heavily laden with fundament steam down this channel to the ocean, and every day pirates wait for them in eager anticipation.

FRESH WATER

Whenever you venture out into the Maze, be sure to bring along a good supply of fresh water. Even if you don't drink it, you may be able to trade it for something you do need.

Fresh water is a valuable commodity out in the Maze, because the water in the Maze is saltwater from the Pacific Ocean. Once you get away from the mainland, the sources of fresh water are few and far between.

Almost all of the inhabitants of the Maze have rigged up various ways of catching and storing rainwater. Some of the larger mesas may have a small pond or spring on them, but unless you have some way to get to the top of the mesa, the water may as well be in China.

Even when the weather isn't as dry as it's been the past few years, rainwater alone is usually not enough—besides drinking and cooking water for yourself, animals like horses are thirsty beasts. People living close to the mainland usually make regular trips to a water source there. Those living farther out have come to depend on the water tankers.

The water tankers are large ships equipped with enormous storage tanks for transporting water. These ungainly monsters steam regular routes through the Maze. Anyone with the money is welcome to pull alongside and take on water through one of the many hoses which dangle like tentacles from the ship's deck. The price of water fluctuates with the amount of rainfall. The current rate is 25¢ a gallon.

These ships are well-armed and armored. Most pirates don't mess with the water tankers. Most folks come to the aid of a water tanker in trouble, and even cutthroats need to drink.





the tide is out, but you don't want to get caught there when it comes roaring back in. Knowledge of the tides is a big part of the salvager's trade. When the channels are bare, it's easy to look for valuable junk left behind by the Quake.

WATER DOGS

When the tide is in, the boater has to deal with powerful and unpredictable currents. This phenomenon is called the "water dog," which is the Indian nickname for the salamander, which they consider a bad spirit.

Old hands at navigating the Maze say that a water dog can come up at any time. It's sort of an underwater current that ripples through the channel. It feels like giant hands are grabbing your boat from underneath and giving it a good shake. If you get caught by a water dog, your boat can get itself smashed up against a canyon wall. The vibrations can be powerful enough to shake a man right off the deck of a boat.

Both the Indians and the Chinese are superstitious about the water dogs, and superstition is catching out here in the Maze. Some say that the water dogs are mischievous and seek out boaters who are having too good a time of things. I'd dismiss this as so much nonsense, except that I've been in boats that were smashed up by water dogs just when I was gaining on a target, and likewise I've been saved from almost certain disaster when enemy boats chasing me were shaken up.

WHIRLPOOLS

In addition to water dogs, rippingly powerful whirlpools are also common in the channels of the Maze. In general, it's best to avoid these things, but in a pinch, they can often help you lose a pursuer. It's possible to ride the edge of a whirlpool and use its energy to slingshot you past it. You had better be confident in your boat-handling abilities, though, because if you make a mistake, you're probably going to the bottom.

LOW BRIDGE

Another hazard to beware while traveling the Maze are the natural arches which span many of the channels. The larger arches are stable enough, but many of the small ones are only waiting for the proverbial straw to land on them before they collapse. The vibration of a steam engine is often enough to topple them. When they go, you don't want to be anywhere around.

TOLLS

You should probably bring some extra cash along on your excursions also. Although the main channels are open to travel by anyone, many of the secondary passages have been claimed by groups looking to make a quick buck. These groups block the passage in some way and then levy tolls on passing ships. These "toll booths" range in sophistication from a chain stretched across the channel to canal locks.

Most of the more sophisticated toll booths are located on well-traveled channels. These charge a reasonable rate of 25¢ to \$1 a head for passage. They have to keep rates low, or people will simply find a way around (or through) the tollgate. Tolls at the less-permanent tollgates range from reasonable to outright extortion.

HAZARDS OF NATURE

The Maze is not a hospitable place to the boater. Its tides and undertows work in a way that baffles experienced seamen. Crazy folk say this has something to do with ghost rock.

The tides are extreme, first of all. A channel that is navigable half the time might be dry as a bone the other half. It may be convenient to be able to walk on the bottom of a channel when

There are some "salvagers" who make work for themselves by rigging these arches to blow. They simply wait for a likely prospect to cruise by and then drop about 30 tons of rock on it.

Although I've never seen it myself, I've also heard stories of pirates who board your ship by swinging down off these arches with ropes.

It takes all kinds.

SPOUTS & SULFUR POOLS

Waterspouts are another of the natural hazards of the Maze. These aren't your normal waterspouts kicked up by a twister over the water, although we do get a few of those occasionally. These monsters erupt up from underneath you, often without any warning. The brainy types around here claim some are caused by tidal action and the others are actually geysers like the kind you'd find at Yellowstone.

According to the scientists, ever since the Great Quake, the volcanic activity in this area has increased tremendously. This has created areas where molten rock is moving just below the surface of the ground. In these areas, the water gets heated up. If the molten rock breaks through the surface, or the water flows through a crack and comes in contact with it, the water changes to steam so quickly that it explodes upwards. If you're around when this happens, you'd better find something to hold on to.

Sometimes it's possible to tell when this is about to happen. If you see the water start bubbling or fish suddenly start rising to the surface belly-up, chances are you are in the wrong place. A sudden smell of rotting eggs is also a giveaway. Not always, though. You should see what some of these miner's eat.

The best thing to do is simply get the Hell out of Dodge. Whatever you do, cover up and *don't* touch the water. When this happens, the water is often hot enough to scald you, and occasionally the gases released from underground turn the water acidic.

SHARKS

Many newcomers to the Maze are so overwhelmed by stories of Maze dragons and other such fantastic critters that they forget to take precautions against a ferocious beast man has known about for centuries: the shark.

Sharks are a fact of life in the Maze. About 10 varieties are common, from Hammerhead to Great White, and with all the killing that goes on out there among those rocky cliffs, they stay

well fed. I've lost track of the number of missing-person cases I've worked out here. There's quite a few I never closed, because although I was convinced the victim was dead, I couldn't find the body. I'd be willing to bet 90% of those souls are residing in a shark's gullet.

You'd think with all the food that gets tossed their way, the sharks would be fat and happy. Nope. They're as mean as ever, and they've got a taste for human blood.

THE GREAT MAZE TOUR GUIDE



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I've compiled a list of some of the places of note in the Maze. Most of these are in the vicinity of Lost Angels and should be marked on the map which accompanies this briefing book.

DRAGON'S TEETH

The Dragon's Teeth are a rock formation atop a mesa northwest of Lost Angels. The formation consists of five large pillars of white quartz, which look for all the world like a set of teeth. The teeth serve as a local landmark for sailors. On all but the blackest of nights, it's possible to pick the formation out against the sky. The formation is also the southern endpoint of the China Run. Whenever someone goes for the record, the clock starts as soon as their ship passes the teeth.

There's something about the teeth which tends to attract lightning. Whenever a storm rolls in off the Pacific, there are some beautiful light shows up on the mesa. You don't want to get caught up there though. The amount of electricity flying around up there is enough to fry a Maze dragon.

THE DRAIN

The Drain is a strong whirlpool just south of the Spouts. It gets its name from the fact that most of the crud thrown overboard by the sailors at the Spouts drifts this way and gets caught in the whirlpool. The stuff eventually gets sucked down to God-knows-where, but until it does it makes the whirlpool doubly dangerous. Boats caught in its currents get pounded with all sorts of debris, and even those just sailing by are sometimes pelted with the occasional foreign object which is flung out.

GROANING MAN CAVE

This is a cave just off the South Channel. The cliff face on the outside of the cave looks like the face of a man moaning in pain. Rumors that some pirate or another hid his treasure there have sprung up recently. Even if the rumors are true, it may be a while before anyone can verify them.

It seems the roof of the cave that forms the groaning man's mouth is lined with ghost rock. A few months ago, someone with more curiosity than brains wandered in there with a lighted torch. This unfortunate soul must have wandered into a trapped pocket of ghost-rock vapors—the resulting explosion was heard in Lost Angels.

The ghost rock in the cave was ignited and is burning slowly. A solid stream of smoke now billows out of the "eyes" and "nose" of the cave, and at night the entrance is lit with a hellish glow. Now, due to the sound of the burning ghost rock, the cave actually *is* groaning.

THE LOG FLUME

There is an area west of Lost Angels known as the Log Flume. I mention it because you'll probably end up there eventually, most likely while pursuing some low life who fancies himself the next Bluebeard.

The Flume is a channel which parallels the West Channel. It's extremely narrow and fairly straight, at least as far channels in the Maze go. These two characteristics combine to create some hellacious currents. When the tide is going out, an unpowered boat can make it to the ocean in half the time it takes a steamship to chug its way down the main channel. Provided, of course, it isn't smashed into tiny little pieces by the many sharp rocks which line the Flume.

There are a few spots where you can cross over from the Flume to the main channel. Pirates being what they are, they've put this to good use. Those who are crazy enough to navigate the Flume (believe me, there's more than you'd think), use it as a means of hunting their prey. They wait until they spot an outbound cargo ship leaving the pier at Lost Angels, then they hop into the Flume, get ahead of it, and lay an ambush. After taking what they want, they chug back into the Flume and make their escape.

Both the Rockies and the shipping magnates in Lost Angels have tried to patrol the Flume, but both were eventually forced to give up the idea. In the first few months this was tried, more

patrol craft were lost to the rocks and the ever-changing currents than to the pirates. Now they simply try to cover the passages where it's possible to cross from the Flume to the West Channel, but even that is a losing battle.

I've been told some pirates actually make the Flume their home. Supposedly, there are spots along the channel where the currents have carved small coves out of the rock. These coves have reportedly become havens for some of the Maze's most notorious pirates.

SERPENT COVE

I really don't know what to make of this place. This cove, just off the West Channel, is the abode of one of the aforementioned Maze dragons. Unlike its brethren, this creature is peaceful, or so claim its handlers. That's right: handlers.

There's a group of people living in nearby Dragonhold, formerly known as Pete's Perch, who watch out for the thing—and make a pretty penny doing it. They've strung chain barricades across the entrances to the cove and charge admission from boats wishing to enter and take a look at the "gentle giant." For \$1 a head, you can putter around inside the dragon's lair and toss fish into its gigantic maw.

I took a ride out there once with a boat full of rubes visiting from Back East. Something about the place made every hair on my body stand at attention. Once the main attraction put in an appearance, I was feeling distinctly uneasy—could be something to do with the way it seemed to be eyeing me up as a midday snack. This "misunderstood leviathan of the deep," to use their words, did not look particularly gentle. Its hide was heavily scarred, and a number of its teeth were broken, as if it had tried to dine on a passing ironclad.

To the best of my knowledge, this particular Maze dragon has never attacked anyone. Until the bigwigs tell me to give a damn, this one remains a riddle.

SKULL CAVE

This cave is a bit of an enigma. I've twice requested a supernatural-studies team to come down and check the place out and been turned down. The higher-ups suggested I send one of my field agents to check the place out. As much as I'd like to know the story behind the cave, this office has too high a caseload to go mucking with things simply out of curiosity.

The entrance to this cave is shaped like the skull of an enormous Maze dragon. The skull has obviously been carved from the same stone as the mesa the cave penetrates. What makes this so odd is that no one knows who carved it. The cave was discovered not long after the Great Quake and the skull was already there.

This and the fact that the skull appears badly weathered suggest it predates the Great Quake. If that's the case, it must have been buried for centuries and only recently uncovered.

The locals give the place a wide berth, and I can't say I blame them. There is a constant breeze blowing out of the cave. If you listen closely, it almost sounds as if it were breathing. A number of intrepid explorers have gone into the cave. None of those who ventured out of sight of the entrance have ever returned.

THE SPOUTS

The Spouts are just south of Lost Angels. They are four large streams of fresh water which jet out from the southwestern side of the mesa. The mesa has no connection to the mainland, so there must be a natural spring of some sort feeding them.

This is a popular spot with sailors. On most days there is a line of ships waiting to sail under the spouts. The crews bring up the ships' water barrels and line them up on the deck. As the ship passes under the spouts, the barrels are filled, and the crew takes the opportunity to quickly scrub themselves and the ship down.

Don't try this with a small boat like a maze runner. The powerful streams can easily swamp a boat that size. You also have to watch out for getting water down your stack. At best it'll put out your firebox; at worst it can seriously damage your boiler.

Usually only experienced skippers run the Spouts, because if you screw up and swamp your ship you can bet the entire Maze will know about it before you can wring out your socks.

ARCHERON BAY

Whatever critter lives in this bay south of Floater's Folly behaves in a conventional manner: It sinks ships and eats people. This isn't a good thing, but it doesn't keep me up at night.

No one has actually seen this creature or, more correctly, the entire creature. The last thing many folks have seen are the beast's enormously powerful tentacles turning their boat into match sticks. It seems to like this spot and guards it

against all intruders. Any ship which wanders into the area is attacked, regardless of size. Few have escaped the creature's suckered grasp.

About a year ago, some scientific types tried to kill the creature with underwater bombs. All this seemed to do was make it mad. If anyone ever does succeed in destroying the beast, there's a small fortune in salvage lying at the bottom of the bay.

LOCAL SETTLEMENTS

There are hundreds of small settlements out in the Maze, most of which don't appear on any map. Here's a rundown on the ones I do know about; most are located near Lost Angels.

BIG M RANCH

The Big M is owned by Dwight Shelton, a cattleman from Texas. When he heard of the food problems in the Maze, he figured he could make some money doing what he does best: raising cattle. He brought stock cattle with him and staked out a mesa with good grazing and a water supply. Things were rough at first, but he's got a small but healthy herd roaming the mesa.

Lately someone's been attacking Dwight's herd, killing and mutilating the cattle. I hear he's looking for folks to help protect his longhorns.





Who knows? Maybe he'll enlist us one of these days. It wouldn't be the first time Pinkertons have dealt with cattle mutilators.

He sells most of his beef across the channel from his ranch at Floater's Folly. If you have \$5 to spare, I heartily recommend you getting a steak in one of the saloons there. It's some of the best eats in the Maze.

CARVER'S LANDING

Carver's Landing is one of the more prosperous towns about and one of the oldest mesa towns. The population is about evenly split between miners and merchants but is beginning to lean more in the merchant direction as the nearby ghost rock plays out. This shouldn't affect the town much; it's a favorite place for miners to spend their hard-earned cash. The town already boasts five saloons and a sixth is under construction. If you need to find out what's up in the mining world, this is the place to go.

DRAGONHOLD

Until a few years ago, this place was a run-of-the-mill mining town known as Pete's Perch. Then they discovered their pet Maze dragon, and everyone in town got a little weird. They changed

the place's name and set up their little sideshow attraction. Nobody in town does much mining anymore. They just rake in the dollars from tinhorns who have more money than sense. Needless to say, the town has prospered.

The place is run by a man named Sutton Thacker. Something about the guy raises my hackles. He never looks at you when he speaks; he always appears to be staring at something six inches above your left shoulder. There's no record of him in any Pinkerton files. Of course, that just makes me more suspicious.

FELICITY PEAK

This lovely chunk of real estate is claimed by Gregor Petrov and is named for the daughter he had with his American wife.

Petrov is a member of the Russian nobility. He came to the Maze in '72 to make a fortune mining ghost rock and selling it to folks back in Mother Russia. To this end, he brought a boatload of serfs with him from his estates back home. These poor sods work the cliffs and mines of the mesa night and day. Many die in accidents, but this is no worry to Petrov because his ship brings a fresh load of serfs with it each time it returns from Russia.

Petrov and his family live high up on the peak with a small army of retainers. His manor house is a virtual fortress. I can tell you from personal experience that he does not like visitors.

FLOATER'S FOLLY

Conventional wisdom said this town wouldn't work. Unlike most towns in the Maze, this settlement is built at the water's edge. Every building in town is built on some sort of floating platform. Some are on log rafts, some are built on ship hulls, and others bob around on barrels—if it floats, it's used. Each of these buoyant buildings is anchored firmly in place by strong chains which have been securely fastened to the rock shelf under the town.

At low tide, the entire town is aground on the rock. As the tide comes in, the buildings are slowly lifted. At high tide, the town has as much as 10 feet of water beneath it.

The majority of the town's inhabitants are merchants or fishermen who make their money trading with the many miners in the area. Being right on the water has caused their business to thrive because it allows their customers to avoid the cost and inconvenience of having to ride a lift up to the top of a mesa to do business.



MAZE LIFE



It has also made them vulnerable to pirates and other unsavory types. The citizens of this town are used to defending themselves from attack on a fairly regular basis. Although the merchants of Floater's Folly are normally friendly, they don't take any guff from anybody.

Most residents carry a firearm and won't hesitate to use it. They've actually plugged enough miscreants to establish a reputation. Most visitors are on their best behavior.

JUNCTION

This town sits at the confluence of the North and West Channels. Some of the inhabitants are miners, but the town's main claim to fame is that it is the site of the biweekly fundement collection. Every two weeks, a Rockies' freighter anchors below the town and collects ghost rock, gold and silver from the local miners. Miners from all over the surrounding area travel down the two channels and converge on the town.

For the next day or so, the saloons and bordellos rake in enough cash to keep them going until the next fundement collection. While normally a quiet settlement, things get pretty wild for after the miners' ship comes in.

MANTOU BLUFF

This is where the dregs of Maze society gather. Considering the general lawlessness of the Maze, that's saying a lot. The only gainfully employed people in the town are the bartenders and ladies of the night. There are few vices which cannot be indulged in here.

Most people in their right mind avoid this place like the plague. If the course of your duties takes you there, don't go alone, keep your gun handy, and whatever you do, don't let anyone know you're a Pinkerton. Slowly torturing Pinkertons to death is a sport in which the inhabitants of this God-forsaken place take great pleasure. It takes second place only to doing worse to a Texas Ranger.

I've gotten some disturbing reports in the last few months that an increasing number of Harrowed have appeared in the town. Be careful.

PROGRESS

Remember the "mad scientists" I mentioned earlier? Progress is a small community comprised almost entirely of them. If you need a device built and don't want to pay Smith & Robards' prices, this is the place to go.

Unfortunately, you get what you pay for. Their reliability leaves a bit to be desired.

They do build quality boats, though. They have some master shipbuilders working for them who construct the hulls without the aid of "new science," so you can be sure the boat will float, if nothing else. Demand for their boats is so high there is a six-month waiting list.

QUARRYTOWN

Quite a bizarre place, Quarrytown. The entire town lives in caves which have been carved into the sides of a deep canyon on top of a mesa. What makes this so strange is that the caves were exposed by the Great Quake, but are man-made. The walls of many of the larger chambers are hand-polished, smooth as silk.

The miners here work deposits of gold and ghost rock deep in the heart of the mesa. Many often go days without seeing the sun, walking from their living quarters to the mines through the maze of tunnels which pierce the rock.

Unlike most mesa towns, Quarrytown has no lift. It's possible to travel through the mesa tunnels to the water-level caves in which the inhabitants anchor their boats.

VAN HORN'S LIGHT

Maarten Van Horn was a man with a vision (aren't they all). He came to the Maze in 1870 to construct an enormous lighthouse to serve as a beacon for the wayward traveler. This light would be such a boon to navigation, shippers would pay him to maintain the lighthouse.

Van Horn arrived at the Great Maze to discover that it was much larger, and the canyon walls were much higher, than he anticipated. He built his lighthouse anyway, hoping that those who could see it would contribute to its upkeep and he could build a taller tower in the future. Few in the Maze were willing to pay for something they got for free, and Van Horn died a penniless old man in '74.

To his credit, the light still works, if somewhat erratically. It's connected to some sort of timing mechanism which turns it on automatically around dusk each night. It must be wearing down though; some nights the beacon doesn't light. On a clear night, you can see the beam sweeping the sky 10 miles into the Maze.

Ghost rock was discovered in the cliffs beneath the light, and a mining town sprang up on the mesa below it. The miners adopted this landmark as the name of their town.

LYNCHBURG

Lynchburg is in the northern part of the Maze near Shan Fan. I mention it because it seems like many of my cases either begin or end here. It's a rough-and-tumble mesa town and a favorite place of miners with gold in their pockets and debauchery on their mind. When your work takes you here (and it will), tread lightly around the likes of Mariposa Lil and H.J. Kent—they're both bad news when crossed. More on these two in a moment.

WELL-KNOWN MAZERS

I'll be describing prominent Mazers throughout this report. Let's start with a couple of legendary inhabitants of the Maze's mining country.

H. J. KENT

H. J. Kent is Lynchburg's assayer, as well as the proprietor of the local general store, named H. J. Kent's. He's a notorious skinflint and miser with nary a good word to say about anyone. The only people who like him haven't met him yet. He continues in business due to a lack of competition and a certain fear factor.

Persistent rumors have it that H. J. Kent consorts with the Devil. These rumors arise from a pair of incidents in which bandits held up his

establishment. Said bandits were found outside Lynchburg the next day, their throats torn out. It's said that H. J. somehow recovered in full the money each group of banditos had stolen.

After word of this incident got around, nobody, no matter how bad, was willing to cross him. Legend has it that even Rabid Rance Hitchcock is afraid to rob H. J. Kent.

Whenever I investigate a case in Lynchburg, Kent starts at the top of my suspect list. Invariably, he ends up in the clear. My gut tells me he's into the dark arts or is a huckster, but I can't prove it.



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Kent pays the going rate for gold, silver, and ghost rock. He knows, even with the sinister rumors that attend him, that he'd have a competitor right quick if he didn't abide by the standard prices. It's on the other prices in his general store where his talent for profiteering truly blossoms.

GOLDNOSE SLIM

Nobody likes a lucky man. So there's hardly any man as hated in the Maze as Goldnose Slim, the luckiest prospector who ever drew breath. Although most Mazers disbelieve wild tales of the supernatural—due mostly to our hard work, I should add—they do believe that Goldnose Slim has hoodoo in him.

Although he now speaks frontier English with the best of them, he's originally from Russia. I've never asked him his Russian name. He showed up just before the Quake and distinguished himself by finding veins of gold in areas which were already reckoned as worked out. In the years since then, he's found four of the six richest veins of gold in the territory. His refusal to get involved in any way with ghost rock is well-known.

Goldnose Slim used to be just a nickname, till March of 1873, when his luck caught up with him. A couple of jealous prospectors captured him and cut off his nose. He replaced it with a 24-carat honker, just to spite his detractors.

I met the man, and he's an odd duck. His is not a rational, deductive mind. He talks a mile a minute about philosophy and Russian literature and all kinds of other nonsense.

He spends money like water and is as apt to give it away as anything else. Unlike any other miner I could name, Goldnose isn't full of lust for gold. Slim can always rely on gold to find him when he runs out of money. Which he always does.



Goldnose has a bad habit of getting himself kidnapped by bandits. The banditos hope he'll lead them to gold, but he keeps telling them his hoodoo doesn't work for the impure of heart. Goldnose's luck always comes through for him, though, usually bringing a posse of gunslingers out to rescue him from the kidnappers.

I've rescued him a few times myself, without even setting out to do so. I'd be heading along on some other assignment and find him just as a bandito was about to execute him. Of course, Slim's legendary generosity pays off for those who rescue him. So be on the lookout for a man with a gold nose; if you see him, he's probably rich and in trouble.

MARIPOSA LIL

Mariposa Lil is the de-facto authority in Lynchburg. She runs a saloon (called Mariposa Lil's) and boarding house there.

Lil came here during the original Gold Rush and has been catering to the needs of roughnecks and wild men ever since. She's a tough old bird, and I don't recommend crossing her. I once saw her shoot off a man's belt buckle at 30 paces—looking in a mirror, to boot.

Lil is extremely protective of the young ladies who work for her. She's equally concerned about fast-talking pimps and grifters who might want to try to smooth-talk her girls into leaving the nest. Lil can and will run a man out of town for interfering in her business; she has plenty of followers willing to get rough on her behalf.

In other words, Lil is the head of the local vigilance committee. Originally it was set up to protect the miners from thieves, bandits, and hornswogglers, but as Lil's gotten on in years, her cruel streak has combined with her mother-hen side to make her nothing more than a dictator in crinoline.

She and her cronies have strung up over a dozen men the past five years. Some of them were deserving of the honor, but others were guilty of nothing more than getting Lil mad. She and her men are especially quick to blame crimes on outsiders and foreigners. If Pinkerton business takes you to Lynchburg, I'm telling you to stay on the right side of Mariposa Lil.

RABID RANCE HITCHCOCK

Rabid Rance was the most notorious bandit of the inland mining towns, and now he's expanding his operation into channel piracy. Nobody knows where his base camp is. My bet



is that he's relocated to an island somewhere north of Shan Fan. If word got out, there'd be dozens of miners descending on it with shotguns and rifles. If anyone ever thought to hire us to bring him in, I'm sure I could find the varmint, but I'd arm myself with a large measure of caution before I went in to collect him.

Hitchcock is infamous for holding up miners just when they've struck it rich. He encourages the rumor that he has second sight, but I know for a fact he relies on a network of spies in the mining towns. Naturally, no one in his right mind is going to own up to being one of his informers.

Rance is 300 pounds of muscle and man. His big, melon-like head can generally be relied upon to be half-shaven around the face and close-cropped up on the scalp. He supposedly has a tendency to drool, especially at the sight of ghost rock. Rance won't kill a man unless he resists, but he derives plenty of pleasure from torturing those who do. He's usually found in the company of six or so scurvy-looking thugs who hope to become as craven and depraved as he is.

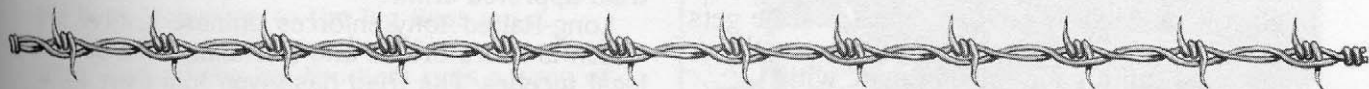
It won't surprise you to learn that there's a \$1,000 price on his head, payable by the Rockies mining cartel in Lost Angels. Any of his gang shot with him is worth a \$100 bonus. There's many a gunman who's set his sights on that reward, but Rabid Rance has proven elusive.

WATER





CHAPTER THREE: WATER OVER EARTH



The Chinese are moving in on the other peoples of the Maze in a serious way. Their weird secrets of the martial arts help them out in this project, but more important is their dedication to hard work and their willingness to sacrifice themselves for the prosperity of their descendants. In a grab-it-while-you-can land, they're the long-range thinkers.

Among these far thinkers are triads up in Shan Fan, warlords in the forests, and Buddhist monks in their monasteries. There's Chinese pirates in the Maze, and all manner of weird folk running about using a powerful type of fighting called *kung fu*. Watch out for these martial artists; your bullets might not mean much to them. To survive in the Maze, a Pinkerton needs to know the folkways of the Chinese. He might even want to learn a smidgen of Cantonese.

THE SHAN FAN TRIAD

When the city of San Francisco was smashed to flinders by the Great Quake, a race ensued to see who would replace it. The discovery of ghost rock made a northern port more important than ever. There was also a need for a gathering place for miners in the area, one where a little whooping and hollering would be tolerated. The City of Lost Angels is not only too far to the south for many miners, but under the censorious thumb of Reverend Grimme, it isn't exactly a place where a man can let his hair down.

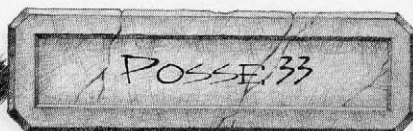
Leave it to the men of Hsieh Chia Jên to solve that little problem. Hsieh Chia Jên, which means "Family of Deliverance," is what the Chinese call a mutual benefit society—a triad. The group is more popularly known as the Shan Fan triad, taking the name of the city they run.

CRIMINAL IS A STATE OF MIND

Now, I'm sure that Head Office would refer to the Shan Fan triad as a gang, and its members as criminals. And since they run brothels, gambling halls, and opium dens, and since their "family" is sometimes torn by violent turf conflicts, I can see how they'd get that idea.

You can't come out here and act like they're criminals, though. They're the law in Shan Fan. Even among non-Chinese, they might be the most popular and accepted authority figures in the entire Maze. You have to give the Hsieh Chia Jên credit for building the city in the first place. They fill a need and do it without apology.

The leaders of Shan Fan know how to please an audience of exhausted miners desperate for entertainment. They allow a man plenty of leeway. It doesn't matter here what you smoke or drink, or if you choose to sock one of your fellow miners in the jaw. On the other hand, when the property or person of a triad member in good standing is threatened, you can be sure that the Hsieh Chia Jên will hammer you down like a crooked nail.



This isn't a new phenomenon. In the old days, San Francisco was pretty much run by a gang of thugs from New York called the Hounds. I mention this because there are rumors that the Hounds are supposedly back. Back from the grave, or so the story goes. Certain informants report having been robbed by the deceased members of that notorious gang. Nobody wants to see the Hounds return, and there are a number of interests in Shan Fan who'd happily pay us if we found out what was really going on here.



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LONG-HAIRED TONY

The sheriff of Shan Fan is Wong Chau Sang, also known as Long-Haired Tony. Long-Haired Tony was born here in California in 1852 to a Chinese mother and an American father. His English is as good as his Cantonese, and he gets along with both communities. He isn't exactly what you'd call a good-looking man, with pockmarked features and close-set, beady eyes. Nonetheless, he is a powerful man, and that makes him popular with the ladies.

When he's riled, Long-Haired Tony can be one crazy-violent son of a bitch. I once saw him bite off the index finger and thumb of a drunken

miner who wasn't responding to reason. I wouldn't recommend that as a restraint technique myself—you don't know where that finger and thumb have been—but it sure worked the time I saw it.



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As long as you're minding your own business, Long-Haired Tony will be as sweet to you as cherry pie. We've swapped favors in the past. He won't go out of his way to help the Pinkertons, but our interests coincide more often than you'd think.

As far as most anglos are concerned, Long-Haired Tony is the face of authority in Shan Fan. They won't meet up with the real triad leaders unless they're doing some kind of business deal with them. But they're going to run across Tony and his deputies patrolling the streets and making sure that the only crime in Shan Fan is triad-approved crime.

Long-Haired Tony enforces Chinese justice, which is swift, brutal, and unencumbered by legal niceties. The triad has given him leave to act as judge, jury, and executioner. If he catches a criminal red-handed, he shoots the man down in cold blood. "Saves on jail cost," he says.

Fortunately, Tony's a fair-minded individual. If the guilt of a suspect is in doubt, Tony doesn't rush to judgment. A smart and methodical investigator, Tony would have made a fine Pinkerton. Even if the townsfolk are clamoring for a man's head, Tony refuses to do him in unless he's absolutely sure he has the guilty party.

Tony hires his own deputies, and they project a whole different attitude than the rascals and regulators directly employed by his triad bosses. He wants deputies who are loyal to him, not the Shan Fan triad. Deputies are expected to remain above the fray of the disputes between the various triads.

Many of Tony's deputies are members of the Mei-te Yumao, a martial arts school headquartered in the Prawn Valley neighborhood of Shan Fan. Their teacher, or *sifu*, is named Chang-Tse Hung. He teaches the style of martial arts they call Tai Chi Chuan.

Chang-Tse is a cranky, old bugger with long, white hair. He takes on any student thick-skinned enough to put up with his constant insults and swats (and many folks aren't that stubborn). Most of the deputies who studied under him are pretty loyal to the old man. Other ex-students, like triad boss Rat-Skinner Hou, are less fond of him. (I'll tell you more about Hou in a moment.)



The Mei-te Yumao school bears an ancient grudge against the Yehsheng-te Liu-shu school. Many of the members of Yehsheng-te Liu-shu are involved in the New Tomorrow triad, which is concentrated in the logging towns up north of Shan Fan. Whenever New Tomorrow members show up in Shan Fan, Long-Haired Tony has his hands full keeping his men from breaking the peace.

TRIAD WARS

The Shan Fan triad is like any other large family: fighting like the dickens. The thing is, they're a heavily-armed family that owns the town, so they suffer no compunctions against fighting their civil wars in plain sight. Five or six people die each a year as innocent victims of triad war crossfire.

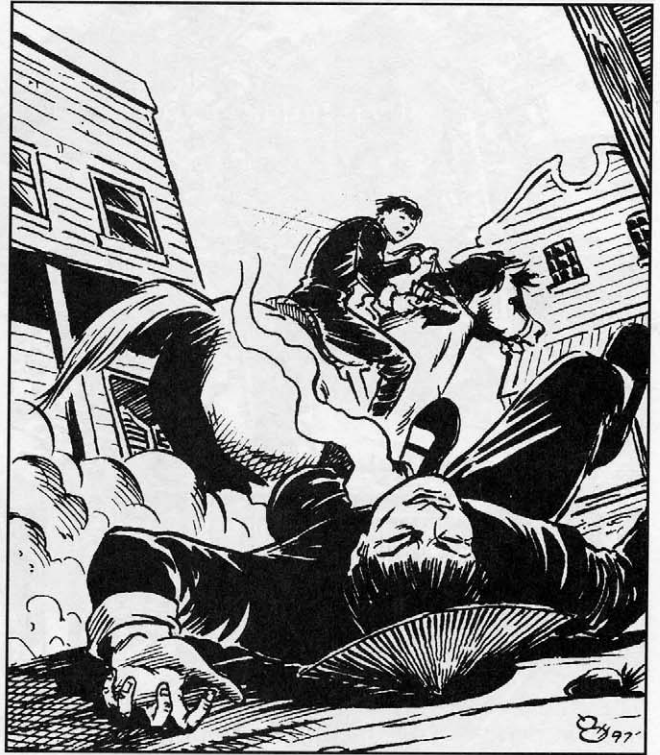
The triad is set up as follows. First, there's the Big Boss. Reporting to the Big Boss are a number of Big Brothers, about six or seven of them. Each of the Big Brothers runs a gang of thugs, known as "rascals." (The term loses something in translation from Cantonese.) They're also called regulators, since they cross the line between vigilante and criminal.

Each Big Brother controls a section of the city. His rascals collect the triad's cut of all activities in the area, kind of like tax collectors. They turn the dough over to Big Brother, who keeps part and gives the rest to the Big Boss.

This is where the killing comes in. The Big Boss fosters a spirit of healthy competition between his Big Brothers and so allows them to encroach on each other's turf at times. If a Big Brother can't protect his turf from his neighbor's rascals, he loses face. And if you're a triad gangster, losing face is the beginning of the end. First, other men's rascals are rude to him. Then his own rascals are shot down in the street. Next thing you know, Big Brother finds himself face-down in a plate of noodles, a blade in his back.

Moving up in the organization is the same kind of deal. The current Big Boss knocked off the old one. He was a Big Brother at the time. He had the support of a couple other Big Brothers, and together they had enough rascals to scare the other Big Brothers into going along with him.

Likewise, sometimes a Big Brother gets knocked off by one of his own rascals seeking to take his place. Sometimes the other Big Brothers admire such a man's initiative. Other times, they have him drawn and quartered and then stick his head on a pike outside the city limits as an example to others.



It's all a matter of politics and making sure you have enough allies to back you when you show your hand. These things get pretty subtle. Even I find it hard to understand exactly what's going on when the rascals start biting the dust, and I've been in and out of Shan Fan for nigh on six years.

OUTSIDERS

Most of the rascals are Chinese, as are all of their superiors. You can't move up into the higher echelons of the triad without being from the home country. But folks of other persuasions are increasingly finding employment as rascals.

Shan Fan is a haven for outlaws. They come here looking to get hired on as regulators. A wanted man who's tired of running can come here and make a decent living doing what he does best: bullying, extorting, and killing. He doesn't have much to fear from the law. Marshals aren't welcome here, whether they're Union or Confederate. My little agreement with Long-Haired Tony allows the Pinkertons to operate freely in Shan Fan, but we can't lay a hand on anybody's regulators.

Despite the safety that Shan Fan offers them, many non-Chinese outlaws have trouble adjusting to the triad way of doing things.



They're forced to learn how to show face toward their superiors. That means no liping back, which is easier said than done for most of these types. They must master innumerable little ceremonies and details of etiquette. Otherwise they end up as shrimp food. Or, if they're on the Pinkerton's wanted list, Long-Haired Tony gives me the go-ahead to clean up the problem ourselves.

THE LEADERS



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The current Big Boss is T'Sang Po Tam, also known as Big Ears Tam. He's a shrewd old coot with more lives than a cat. He personally assassinated the previous Big Boss and has since survived three coup attempts. My contacts in Hsieh Chia Jên say that the Big Brothers are all afraid to challenge him. Instead, they're concentrating their efforts on killing one another, which, no doubt, is precisely how Big Ears Tam likes it.

Tam lives in splendor in a big manor, guarded by more rascals than you can shake a stick at. Only the most remarkable round-eyes is going to get the chance to meet him. I've certainly failed in all of my attempts to make an appointment. Who knows? Maybe you'll succeed where I've fallen down.

Big Ears Tam, like all other Big Bosses of the Shan Fan triad before him, is strictly opposed to

his members dabbling in the occult. By occult, they don't mean honoring their ancestors or ceremonies to the Chinese gods. That rigmarole is all considered strictly normal. "Occult" means fooling with hucksterism or the dark arts or consorting with abominations. Big Ears has a death sentence waiting for any triad member stupid enough to try such a thing.

As of this writing, the two Big Brothers that cause the most trouble in Shan Fan are Thin Noodles Ma and Rat-Skinner Hou. They're both too afraid to take on Big Ears Tam, so they're working on each other instead. The other Big Brothers are lined up on one side or the other. Big Ears Tam allows the two of them to go at it, so long as no one other than rascals gets killed.

No one important, that is. So far there's been a few bystanders wounded and lots of property damage, but Big Ears' edict is mostly being obeyed. Because Ma and Hou are going through rascals like a baker goes through flour, it's an easy thing to get hired on as a regulator by either camp. Just remember that the pay is high because regulators rarely last long in the job.

Ma's noodles might be thin, but he isn't. He's your basic tower of flesh and fat, fueled by an appetite for food, rice wine, and women. He controls most of the brothels in town, even those located in other Big Brothers' turf. If you mistreat one of Shan Fan's professional ladies, Thin Noodles' rascals are going to want to have a not-so-gentle word with you. Ma likes to be seen in public, spending his money, but if you don't know the etiquette, he's no more approachable than any other triad leader.

Rat-Skinner Hou gets his name from the way in which he dealt with an informant who betrayed him to the authorities. This was back when he was smuggling opium into the City of Lost Angels. Just to make it clear what kind of fellow he is, he had that informant's hide tanned and turned into a hat. Wears the thing all the time. Hu's a big, strapping man with a cue-ball-bald head and a big mustache. He's known for his bad temper—which is saying something, considering the poor self-control of the average Big Brother.

The odd thing about Ma and Hou is that they don't really dislike one another. Their rivalry is strictly business. They treat their war like some kind of game. They are often seen gambling and laughing together in one of the town's saloons. The mere fact that one has just massacred a bunch of the other's regulators is no impediment to their jolly, collegial friendship.

Shan Fan

Scale: 1"=1000'



THE CITY

Shan Fan is a big place, and you'll have to get a feel for it yourself. But I should briefly cover the highlights for you.

The streets in Shan Fan kind of fan out, if you'll excuse the expression, from the harbor in Shan Fan Bay. Nice of the Quake to leave a nice, sheltered harbor for shipping. Most of the roughly east-west streets are called avenues. Most of the north-south ones are called streets. Many of the names seem on the odd side, because they were named in Chinese and translated for the benefit of us Anglos.

The city divides itself up into a number of neighborhoods based on what kind of business is done there. These are often called "towns." People in Shan Fan generally live where they work, unless they got plenty of dough. If you work in the red light district or the abattoirs, life in Shan Fan is profoundly unpleasant.

Red Lantern Town is of primary interest to the average traveling cowpoke. This is where all of the hooting and hollering of out-of-towners takes place. Here you find your saloons, gambling parlors, opium dens, bordellos, and

hotels. Many establishments combine all of these functions into one, naturally.

This is also the favorite territory of the triad rascals. No Big Brother worthy of the name fails to own himself a piece of Red Lantern turf. This is their most lucrative neighborhood, and it's also where the rascals want to play. The turf boundaries are worked out down to the last street corner, but they change all the time.

Since this is where crime is often at its worst, Sheriff Tony's main offices are here too.

Stinktown is home to slaughterhouses, auction houses, tanneries, and stockyards. It's the meat capital of the northern Maze. Livestock farmers from all over the territory bring their animals here to be readied for our dinner tables. And since this is a Chinese city, expect to see some unusual animals—like bears and snakes and even dogs—being slaughtered and sold alongside the beef, pork, mutton, and chicken.

The meat here is no less expensive than any other place in the Maze; some of it is more expensive. After all, getting hold of bear is a bit riskier than regular beef.

There's been some downright sinister activity in Stinktown recently. Someone's poisoning meat from the market, and Big Ears Tam isn't happy.



Long Haired Tony has tried to investigate, but I just got word that three of his best deputies were found dead, their bodies professionally butchered. I'm talking chops, steaks, and brisket here, Allan. Needless to say, I'm keeping an eye on the situation.

The Waterfront is where the business of shipping is done. It has warehouses, packing establishments, shipyards, and shipping offices. It's where the stevedores live. Lots of rough saloons if you want your drinks cheap and your hookers cheaper. If you're looking to practice your brawling, this is the place to do it.

For every person who strikes it rich in the Maze, there's a dozen who get washed out like water from a sluice mine. Sooner or later, they all end up in **the Skids**. The people here are destitute. The only folks making money in this neighborhood are the landlords and triad tax collectors. Life is short and cheap here. The saloons make Red Lantern Town look downright opulent. It isn't safe to come there alone at night. The place is crawling with stone killers who'd drop you for the nickel in your pocket, and those are just the juveniles. The Skids is growing; it covers a large part of the southeast side of town.

Taeltown is the financial district. A tael is Chinese for "big bucks." Look here for banks and the like. This is also the place to live if you're

well off but not quite wealthy. The sheriff makes sure this place is well-patrolled, seeing as these people pay the triads good money to keep them safe. Even if you get past Tony's men, you can count on even the tin horns knowing how to defend themselves from a robbery attempt.

Splinterville is the heart of the lumber industry. Lumber is booming in the Maze. Everybody needs wooden things: wood for ships, shipping crates, fences, fuel, and on and on.

Finally, you got **Prawn Valley**, which comes out like a pie slice from the harbor and caps the north side of town. Fishing is just as big as farming around here. If it's living in the sea, there's somebody harvesting it and eating it, and those that harvest it live here. Prawn Valley is also home to factories for draining the oil out of dead whales or for salting fish. On a hot day, it's a real contest between Prawn Valley and Stink Town to see which smells worse.

The big laneways and streets that seem to lead off into nowhere are where the filthy rich live. And, while they're outnumbered by the destitute, Shan Fan has no shortage of them either. Big Ears Tam's estate lies on the Ever-Triumphant trail, the one that runs along the cliffs to the north of the city. Rat-Skinner Hou lives on the hoity-toity Street of Auspicious Omen, which runs along the shoreline to the south. Thin Noodles Ma has a manor on the boundary of **Heavenly Park**, an area of quiet and greenery in the middle of the bustling city.

I nearly forgot the islands. **Angelfish Island** is home to the city's mining community. This particular chunk of Maze is going to be worked to the bone in a year or two, but in the meantime plenty of prospectors live there, prying every last morsel of precious rock from the place. They'll probably move on to **Sweat Island** once they work Angelfish out. A number of big mining concerns make their headquarters on Angelfish Island as well.

The Isle of Ghost's Tears is home to no one but a few crazy hermits. Big Ears Tam refuses to allow any settlement or mining of the island. When the first members of Hsieh Chia Jên arrived in the area, they had a ceremony of thanksgiving to the gods and the spirits of their ancestors. They promised to leave this island pristine, as a corral for the spirits of their ancestors. This decision also has something to do with the Chinese art of geomancy, called *feng shui*. Feng shui—now that's something I know absolutely nothing about, but I do know the name of the island is entirely appropriate.

THE NEW TOMORROW TRIAD



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Chinese folks are quick to tell you that not all triads are criminal gangs. Some of them hold to their original purpose to act as a club for local businessmen. They make deals and come to each other's aid in time of need. Not much different from the Masons. (Regular Masons, that is. I'm not saying they're like the ring of manitou-summoning Masons I broke up in Sonoma.) However, some triads don't fit either the gang or the service-club profile. The New Tomorrow triad is a prime example of something completely different.

THE MISSION

The group's purpose is to integrate the Chinese people with the Anglos, so they're seen as a respected part of the community at large. It's a massive campaign for face, if you will. Although they're careful not to alienate the CSA, I can attest that their sympathies lie with the Union. They want to see California recognized as a US state, but they want full rights and privileges for Chinese within that state.

Given the prejudice against them, this is no easy goal, and they know it. Their plan is to adopt our ways as much as possible. Unlike their countrymen in the Shan Fan triad, they affect western dress. They work hard to speak English fluently. A fair number of them have gone so far as to adopt American-style Christianity. (I say "American-style" to distinguish them from the crazy followers of the King of the Horizon, described further down.)

More traditional Chinese folk, especially those who still imagine that they will someday return to China, regard the New Tomorrow triad with scorn and ridicule. From the traditionalists' point of view, they're traitors discarding thousands of years of civilization in favor of the barbaric practices of the local yokels.

ACCEPTANCE

So the New Tomorrow has put itself in a spot where it's stuck between worlds, mistrusted by small-minded Americans on one side and by their own compatriots on the other. Ironically, the penny dreadfuls that use the "Yellow Peril" as a staple plot element have taken to portraying the New Tomorrow triad as sinister invaders brimming with the "dark secrets of the mysterious Orient."

Not everybody despises them, though. New Tomorrow has won the respect of some broad-minded types and of missionaries pleased to see them bringing Jesus into their hearts. However, it's hard to say that New Tomorrow has converted very many diehard bigots. The man who hates and fears the Chinese just sees New Tomorrow as some kind of trick designed to lull him into a false security.

YEH-SHENG-TE LIU-SHU

By dark secrets, the hack writers mean the martial arts. And it's true that many New Tomorrow members are accomplished practitioners. The founder of New Tomorrow, Tai-Shou Ch'uan, is a follower of the ancient Yehsheng-te Liu-shu school. He teaches his followers the *wing chun* style of martial arts.

The Yehsheng-te Liu-shu school has supposedly existed for 1,000. I've heard other Chinese say that the founders of the school would be appalled to see Tai-Shou Ch'uan trampling over its traditions by trying to remake himself as an American.

TAI-SHOU CH'UAN

Criticism like that just makes Tai-Shou Ch'uan more ornery. I've had occasion to hear the man talk, and he is quite eloquent, in an endless, windbag sort of way. He spent almost as much time denouncing his enemies as he did advancing his cause. Although he has many good ideas, he wears his pride on his sleeve, and he's a hard man to like.

I guess a more sympathetic ear would call him determined and righteous. You have to concede that his followers are almost fanatically devoted to him. There are those who say that he has clouded their minds with his dread Oriental secrets. I'd say it's because he embodies hope for people: hope that they can succeed in a white man's land, on the white man's terms.

ENEMIES AND FRIENDS

Tai-Shou Ch'uan has declared it his sacred mission to fight those he calls "the false bandits." These are the Chinese who, in his opinion, are projecting a bad image of the race. That includes pretty well everybody else I'm talking about in this section: warlords Kwan and Kang, the King of the Horizon, and the Shan Fan triad. New Tomorrow martial artists are famous for getting into fights with Long Haired Tony's



deputies, due to an ancient (and, as far as I can tell, completely pointless) school rivalry.

New Tomorrow members don't actively fight the Shaolin monks of the 37th Chamber, but the monks sternly condemn their anti-traditional teachings.

New Tomorrow members have been known to fight side-by-side with the 108 Righteous Bandits. That's more of an ad-hoc situation, though; New Tomorrow members are too straight-laced to permanently ally with outlaws, even ones with as much Robin Hood in them as the 108.

If you end up in a tangle with any of the other groups detailed in this section, you might want to head on up to New Tomorrow territory for information and maybe even some support in the personnel or equipment areas.

THE SPIRITUAL SOCIETY

Not all of the members of New Tomorrow are Christian converts. Tai-Shou Ch'uan himself is a practicing Taoist. (That might help to explain the bad feelings between New Tomorrow and the Shaolin; the Shaolin monks are Buddhists.)

Tai-Shou Ch'uan's Taoist beliefs coincide in a lot of ways with the spiritual teachings of the various Indian tribes. Both have a reverence for nature, both believe that things are caused by

the actions of good and evil spirits, and both perform rituals for healing and other good works. Tai-Shou Ch'uan has begun to meet with the shamans of certain Maze tribes to explore these connections. Most but not all of these shamans are from the tribes of the northern coast, where many New Tomorrow members have settled. These tribes include the Yurok, Pomo, Hupa, Karok, and Wintu.

This has led to the creation of a second organization: the Spiritual Society. It is made up of Taoist New Tomorrow members and native elders who consider the Reckoning a terrible act of sorcery. From what I hear, Tai-Shou Ch'uan is giving the natives advice on how to win the acceptance of the white man, while they are teaching him some of their ways of power. This alliance is new and strange, and it has its opponents within the Christian faction of New Tomorrow. It should go without saying that those Americans who despise both Chinese and Indians find in the Spiritual Society a mighty object of hatred.

Not everything is rosy with these developing ties, however. T'sung Ching, the spinster daughter of Tseng-Chia Ching, a well-heeled Chinese merchant, recently disappeared, presumably into the arms of a Yurok shaman by the name of Four Directions. She'd been involved in New Tomorrow and the Spiritual Society, you see, and I suppose the old sparks flew across the cultural divide.

Tseng-Chia sees this as an affront to his ancestors and is not only apoplectically seeking his daughter, but he is financing operations against the Spiritual Society and its New Tomorrow sponsors. If you think the New Tomorrow is a good idea, perhaps it would also be smart to find T'sung Ching and Four Directions and somehow reconcile them with Tseng-Chia.

MEMBERSHIP

Depending on how unpopular New Tomorrow is in their area, members might be open about their affiliation or keep it secret. Unlike the Shan Fan triad, New Tomorrow is always looking out for new members. Joining is fairly easy.

The group makes few demands on its casual members. A person's degree of involvement in the group is entirely up to her wishes. The more activist types volunteer for greater duties and travel up the hierarchy. The most dedicated soon find themselves working at Tai-Shou Ch'uan's side.

TERRITORY

There are New Tomorrow members all through the Maze. Most members live alongside other Californians in Maze settlements big and small. They are miners, fishermen, laborers, and cooks. The group draws on folks from all walks of life.

New Tomorrow has founded several fishing communities on the north coast. In keeping with their assimilationist outlook, the villages have English names: New Opportunity, Harmony, and Goodwill. Each is home to about 500 triad members. Some Indians have settled in these towns as well; they are better treated here than in other Maze communities. Tai-Shou Ch'uan lives in New Opportunity. If you go there to find him, though, you're as likely as not to find that he's out touring the Maze and giving speeches.

SUITCASE LEE

The most popular member of New Tomorrow is not its leader, but one of his disciples, the martial arts hero known as Suitcase Lee. His real name is Feichi Li, but no one calls him that. (All right, I call him that. I just can't take seriously a man named after luggage.)

Like his leader, Lee travels throughout the Maze, giving speeches to his countrymen, urging them to adopt to Western ways and seek the rights due to Americans. He is never seen without his tiny, battered suitcase, in which he carries his clothing and copies of Tai-Shou Ch'uan's speeches.

The suitcase also serves as an improbably effective shield and weapon when he's attacked, which happens to Suitcase Lee more often than not. He is possessed of a yen for justice that overcomes even his group's ideology—and constantly gets him into trouble. Fortunately for him, he's not yet found a brand of trouble he can't handle.

Lee's an idealistic fellow without a cynical bone in his body. He's a young man with close-cropped hair, dimples, and a smile that makes the ladies swoon. However, Lee is more than a little shy around persons of the female persuasion. He has sworn to keep himself pure for his bride, whoever that may be. Lee thinks nothing of plunging into a battle with angry pirates or slaving zombies, but the attentions of a grateful woman break him out in hives.

Suitcase Lee's adventures have been fictionalized in a number of penny dreadfuls. Some of them even portray him as a white man!

WARLORDS

Over in China, the control of the Manchu government over its vast country is breaking down. In the provinces, men known as warlords have taken advantage of the lawless situation. Local rulers with their own armies are now calling the shots.



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When order collapsed in California, some varmints familiar with the ways of the warlords smelled an opportunity. They figured that what the Maze needed was some local tinpot generals—i.e., them. So they suited themselves up, rustled some horses, and attracted little armies to their sides. Now they rule their little sections of the shattered California countryside through force of arms.

To most Californians, the warlords are a distant nuisance. You don't want to mess with them in their home territories, though. And Pinkerton business is pretty well guaranteed to take you into warlord territory, given all of the underhanded hijinks they have their fingers into. Somebody's got to keep an eye on them, and we're elected. Otherwise, they'll get stronger and cause real problems for the entire territory, if not the country, in the years to come.



GENERAL KWAN

The recreant most likely to stir up that kind of trouble is General Mu-T'ou Kwan. Kwan is a natural at the warlord business. His daddy was a warlord, too, back in China. Or so the story goes.

Apparently Kwan, who is still a young and handsome man, was one precocious 13-year-old. He developed what you might call too strong an affection for one of Kwan Senior's many wives. On rather short notice, Mu-T'ou found it prudent to high-tail it away from his dear papa's fortress in western China. After kicking around Canton, he came to the Maze, arriving in 1869.

BIG PUL AND LITTLE PUL

Like many ambitious fellows, Kwan quickly realized that the miner's life wasn't much of a way to get rich. He became a bandit, hooking up with a pair of outcasts from the Cahuilla Indian tribe. Said outcasts were twin brothers called Big Pul and Little Pul. With the help of an otherwise rotating roster of scoundrels and killers, this pair of Hellions harried farmers and travelers along the Nevada border from 1864 to 1865.

Like all Indian tribes, the Cahuilla hate sorcerers. On the top of their list of people suspected of congress with evil spirits were Big Pul and Little Pul. Despite their names, these two shamans are indistinguishable in appearance. Rumor has it that they share only one soul between them, and this is why they're so wretched and ornery.

I suspect they're the ones who crucified Barth and Higgins back in '72. I got a couple of bullets inscribed with their names, but if you see them first, you're entitled to the honor. Just don't start something with these two unless you're absolutely sure you can finish it.

KWAN'S VISION QUEST

Big Pul and Little Pul introduced Kwan to their spiritual doctrine. After undergoing spiritual training, Kwan went off on a vision quest, fasting and smoking God knows what to meet his spiritual guardian. Another Cahuilla renegade who was a witness to this incident was later captured by yours truly, subsequent to the Barth-Higgins slayings. After I made it clear to the prisoner that cooperation was his best option, he wove the following tale.

Kwan's totem animal told him he was destined to rule all of "the lands beyond the

mountain." Kwan took this to mean everything north of Mexico. The totem told him, however, that he'd have to rule through a puppet leader, a white man who was destined to be Emperor. This all made sense to Kwan, having been raised in a country where the Emperor was often a figurehead, pushed around by the eunuchs and generals around him.

The totem animal—the nature of which I was unable to ascertain—even drew Kwan a picture of this Emperor. So Kwan's mission was clear. He had to find himself this Emperor and then get to work conquering the continent and fulfilling his spiritual destiny.

EMPEROR NORTON I

Kwan and his posse wandered around the state for about a year. His men spread word of his vision quest and his destiny. The number of cutthroats attracted to his gang grew substantially. They robbed and raided and eluded the authorities.

Finally Kwan arrived in Shan Fan, where he encountered a bizarre and comical figure named Joshua A. Norton. Norton styled himself as the Emperor of America and Protector of Mexico. He strutted about in a bright-blue Napoleonic uniform decked out with phony medals. He wore an outlandish beaver hat decorated with feathers. Some of the good people of Shan Fan avoided him; others thought of him as a figure of fun and merriment. He made his living "taking donations" in Red Lantern Town.

Kwan was thunderstruck when he laid eyes on Norton. You guessed it: This madman was the spitting image of the Emperor he'd seen in his vision. Kwan ordered his men to ask around and learn Norton's story.

They found out that Joshua Norton had come to California back in the Gold Rush days with a fortune to invest in import brokerage and property. He did very well for himself, but in 1853, he took a phenomenal risk. Seeing the tide of Chinese immigrants to San Francisco, he decided to make a killing in rice. He invested everything he had in a big shipment from China.

Unfortunately, just as his ship was arriving, a competitor's showed up as well. The price of rice plummeted, and Norton was ruined. He disappeared for a few years and came back cracked in the head.

I have no idea whether Kwan had doubts at this point. We do know that he scooped Norton up and took him away to his hideout in the Sierra Nevada mountains.



KWAN PROVINCE

Since that day, Kwan has grown in strength. He built his hideout into a small fort and then a bigger fort. He turned his occasional raids on local farmers and ranchers into regular "taxation" visits. In the early days, the locals hired mercenaries to fight him off, but he gathered soldiers and equipment too fast.

There was something about the legend of Kwan's vision and Emperor Norton that brought scoundrels and villains to his side. Many of these new followers were Chinese, unashamed to follow a powerful warlord. Just as many were disaffected miners and other losers drawn to his offer of a warm bed, regular feeding times, and the occasional spate of looting and pillaging.

Kwan's forces now number somewhere around 1,200 fighting men, which is quite impressive for a California army. Sometimes he sends soldiers to fight on behalf of the Confederates or Santa Anna's Army of the Night in exchange for steam wagons or gold. Mostly, though, he concentrates on expanding the boundaries of his "province,"

which is what he calls the area around his fort where he collects his "taxes."

Fort Norton is as advanced as any on the continent, with high steel walls mounted with Gatling guns and steam-powered cannons. Kwan doesn't squander his ill-gotten gains on his own luxury. He reinvests it all in his empire-to-be.

Fort Norton is in the heart of redwood territory, the portion of central California which is home to the largest trees in the world: the sequoias and redwoods. The trees are rapidly being cut down and shipped as lumber to Shan Fan. If you're wondering where Kwan gets all the money for his fancy fort, it's from taxing this lucrative industry.

The lumber barons of Shan Fan are among Kwan's great supporters; his soldiers guard the lumber shipments and protect them from other bandits. With Kwan, the lumbermen know they're going to get clipped a bit, but they aren't going to lose entire shipments, and their men aren't going to be killed. They figure Kwan offers fair value for his services, even if they have little choice but to use them.



Kwan is vicious against anyone who crosses him, but at least he's smart enough not to bleed the farmers and ranchers dry. He's a long-term thinker that way. Or perhaps it's Emperor Norton's influence.

There's two schools of thought on Norton's role as adviser and figurehead to the general. One says that Norton is just as hare-brained as ever, that he's nothing more than Kwan's puppet. The other theory holds that Norton was eccentric, but never a drooling idiot. He actually had some smart things to say back when was pretending to be Emperor in San Francisco. Some informants claim he's exercising a civilizing influence on Kwan, tempering his brutality and encouraging him to think more like a politician than a bandit.

Whether it's Norton or not, Kwan is nowadays showing some restraint. With the size of his army, he could easily overrun the City of Lost Angels. Shan Fan would be a tougher nut to crack due to longer supply lines, but he could probably take it if he really wanted. He's biding his time, waiting for the opportunity to promote himself from local chieftain to ruler of the continent. Perhaps his totem animal has been whispering in his ear again, providing him with inside information.

THE HUNGRY GHOST

Someone—or something—has been attacking Kwan's most loyal lieutenants in the heart of his territory. The few that survived the attack have aged into white-haired, babbling madmen. They claim they were seduced by a beautiful woman, one who eventually revealed herself to be the ghost of Kwan's father's wife. You know, the one he was messing around with.

Apparently papa took a dim view of her adultery with his son and had her trampled by horses as an object lesson to the other wives. The ghost says she killed Kwan's father, and now she's after the sons. Of course, we Pinkertons know not to believe in ghosts. So we'd not be at all interested in this supernatural foe of Warlord Kwan and whether she could somehow be turned to the advantage of our Union masters. Ahem.

KING OF THE HORIZON

Kwan's chief rival for the honor of being the craziest and most dangerous Chinese warlord in the Maze would be the King of the Horizon. Wang Ti-Ping Hsien, as he is called, leads a 500-

strong pack of nomad raiders who stir up trouble all along the Mexico-California border. Like General Kwan, Hsien sees himself as the eventual ruler of North America—or at least a sizable parcel of it. Also like Kwan, he is subject to the orders of a sinister supernatural entity.

HUNG HSIU-CH'UAN

Remember how I mentioned that China has had some civil disturbances that make our own continuing USA-CSA dust-up look like a playground scuffle? Well, the chief bloodbath I'm thinking of when I make this pronouncement is a little matter known as the Taiping Rebellion.

It started at about the same time as the original Gold Rush. There was this small-town, scholar fellow, Hung Hsiu-ch'uan, who tried and failed to pass the big exams that provide a doorway to a cushy government job. He was stricken with a terrible illness and experienced a bizarre vision of Heaven and Hell.

He'd previously been exposed to some Christian missionary tracts, and his ill-informed interpretation of these leaked through into his visions. God spoke to him, told him he was Jesus' brother, and told him to spread the word to the Chinese. Unfortunately, God also told him he should feel free to take the sword to anyone who dared gainsay him.

Hung Hsiu-ch'uan woke up and began to gather followers around him. He declared that his mission was to institute a paradise on Earth, a heavenly kingdom, or *T'ai-p'ing T'ien-Kuo*. He must have been a charismatic fellow, because soon he had an entire army behind him, raising Cain in central China. He styled his various generals as Wangs, or Kings: King of the North, King of the South, and so forth. He took city after city, including finally the great city of Nanking. Somewhere between 20 and 30 million people were killed in the course of his rebellion.

Finally, the tide turned against the rebels, and Hung himself committed suicide around 1866 or so. The Manchus showed no mercy in executing leaders of the Taiping. They chased down Hung's son and the movement's remaining general and lopped off their heads.

DO LENG

One minor rebel was a peasant named Do Leng. He stole Hung Hsiu-ch'uan's head and escaped capture by the Manchus. Like so many of the other troublemakers I've described in this chapter, he figured the Maze was a good place to



hide out, so he brought his gruesome trophy over here with him on his tortuous journey across the waves.

It wasn't until he arrived in the Maze in 1871 that the skull of Hung Hsiu-ch'uan began to talk to him. It anointed Do Leng as Wang Ti-P'ing Hsien, or King of the Horizon.

WANG TI-P'ING HSIEN

Having been to Hell and back, Hung Hsiu-ch'uan was even more sure of himself. The skull said that it had learned from its old errors. The rebellion in China was just a test. You guessed it: The real prize was the Maze and beyond. Since 1871, the skull has been advising Wang Ti-P'ing Hsien, shaping him from a resourceful Chinese peasant into a master of smash-and-grab military raiding tactics. Sort of the Ghengis Khan of California.

The border communities, both Mexican and Californian, live in fear of him. Unlike Kwan, he's perfectly willing to kill the golden goose, razing villages and slaughtering innocents with no apparent provocation. Communities of church-goers are particularly likely to be targeted. The skull believes that it is the only true divinity. According to the tenets of its cult, anyone with the effrontery to worship That Other Son of God is just asking for his wrath.

Wang Ti-P'ing Hsien's forces are about evenly divided between Chinese, Indians, American religious nuts, and "if-you-can't-beat-'em-join-'em" Mexicans. The skull talks to them in big ritual meetings, instilling them with his madness. They maintain no permanent fortress. Mexican general Santa Anna, of whom I am no great admirer, is the only man to seriously try to put a stop to this insanity. He's sent a number of raiding parties after the Taipings, but they move fast.

One rumor the Taipings spread about themselves is that they are able to move in and out of the Chinese underworld, where demons give them sanctuary. This is why they can never be caught. I've seen a number of downright demented things in my day, but even I'm not prepared to believe that there's an entryway to Chinese Hell just north of Tijuana.

THE CHUNG YING SCHOOL

There's a character called White Tipped Cap who's spent time with the King of the Horizon and his pet skull. White Tipped Cap is supposedly a demon from Chinese Hell, and definitely a master of Mantis-style kung fu.



I don't believe he's a demon for a minute, but he must be a good teacher, because he's got the Indians, Mexicans, and Americans under the King's command learning Mantis style as well as the Chinese can. White Tipped Cap also seems to teach them to have chips on their shoulders. They go out of their way to challenge other martial artists, even if they should be doing something else instead.

ASSESSMENT

As far as political trouble is concerned, I'd be worried more about General Kwan than the King of the Horizon. On the other hand, the King of the Horizon is wilder and has much more innocent blood on his hands. You can bet that eventually we Pinkertons will end up tangling with him. Especially since I see him as more of a source of supernatural trouble than Kwan.

Conceded, Kwan has a couple of demented shamans in his corner, but a talking skull and a passel of hopping martial artists trumps that, I should think. If our friend President Grant is ever going to truly reclaim California as a US State, one of the first things he has to do is send troops to wipe out the King of the Horizon and his new Taipings. Maybe we can make arrangements to save him the trouble.

KANG'S PIRATES

The other influential Chinese warlord in the Maze scarcely ever sets foot here. I'm talking about Kang, the head of the Iron Dragon railroad and leading ghost-rock magnate. He spends most of his time in the Black Hills region of the Dakotas, where a unique pact with the Sioux allows him to operate his notoriously lucrative railroading operation.



III

The Deadwood area is a healthy source of ghost rock, and he exercises a virtual monopoly over its transport. That along with the Great Rail Wars is more than enough to command his attention. Rest assured that when Kang *does* show up in the Maze, something big is brewing.

KANG IN THE MAZE

That doesn't mean Kang's opposed to the occasional side operation. In the Maze, his reputation is not that of a respectable but sinister businessman. Here, he's seen as a downright outlaw and thief. He funds a fleet of pirate vessels. Naturally, his main target is ghost rock, though he'll settle for such mundane fundamentals as silver and gold.

Kang started out shipping mostly to China, but his Deadwood operation has become more and more devoted to satisfying demanding customers Back East (by which I mean the east coast of North America). As these new clients demand more and more ghost rock, he's branched out into piracy to satisfy his old customers back East (by which I mean the Orient).

Kang occasionally visits the Maze to supervise the piracy side of his empire and to instill proper fear in his underlings. He doesn't want them to get the idea that they can slip anything past him. Since he's a powerful sorcerer as well as a mighty martial artist—and isn't shy about displaying his power to his lackeys—I believe they get the message.

I once saw Kang tear a man in half with his bare hands and then summon up a giant squid to eat the pieces. Fortunately, I was a guest aboard one of his pirate vessels and never had to tangle with the man. Since that time, though, we've received several contracts obligating us to attempt to bring him in should he once again set foot in the Maze. I have to admit I'm more than a little reluctant to send anyone after him. I lose enough agents out here as it is.

RED PETALS SU

Despite the occasional terror-ingraining excursion, Kang has little to do with the day-to-day administration of his Maze operations. That honor belongs to Red Petals Su, a beautiful and deadly woman who commands his pirate fleet.

Citizens of the Maze have different theories as to her relationship with him. Some say she's his sister; others, that she's his lover. They seemed less than affectionate when I saw them together, but that doesn't mean anything. She certainly showed no fear of him, and having seen her in action, I can see why. She's one Hell of a kung fu wildcat herself, and I wouldn't want to face her on the deck of a ship, in its rigging, or on dry, sweet land.

She commands the flagship vessel in Kang's pirate fleet, *the Abysmal*. It's a metal-plated monstrosity salvaged from a Confederate vessel that sank off the coast of Shan Fan. There are rumors that Kang raised its hull with the aid of water spirits or cannibal mermaids. Pure nonsense.

At any rate, it was refurbished in a Shan Fan shipyard and now plies the open waters off the Maze. *The Abysmal* isn't maneuverable enough to get into the channels of the Maze proper without running aground. Out in the ocean, it's a straight-ahead, bursting-with-cannons threat that's faster and tougher than most cargo ships.

Red Petals isn't exactly cautious in her choice of enemies. She's taken on freighters flying both the Confederate and Union flags.

THE REST OF THE FLEET

These other ships are little more than fancy sampans, big Chinese rowboats stripped down for speed and maneuverability. Rigged out with colorful flags and carvings of dragons and Chinese lions, they're the prettiest vehicles of death you ever laid eyes on.

Kang's sampans are equipped with Gatling cannons, but each relies primarily on a 10-man crew of ruthless killers skilled in the art of boarding and fighting on deck. These perform the bulk of Kang's pirate work for him, striking the small vessels that carry fundement through the Maze to the ports of Shan Fan or the City of Lost Angels for loading onto larger, ocean-going ships.

It's hard to say exactly how many of these sampans Red Petals Su has at her disposal. Our agents have identified at least three separate

vessels: *the Jade Dragon, the Pearl, and the Crab*. I wouldn't be surprised to learn there were more she keeps quiet about.

THE SILVER TIGER SOCIETY

Kang is attended by a coterie of fanatical kung fu warriors known as the Silver Tiger Society. In China, silver is considered a metal of death. And of course the tiger is a fierce and dangerous opponent. These fellows believe in complete obedience to their masters. No other ethic matters to them.

Mercy, compassion, and justice are nothing compared to the grand rule of absolute loyalty. They used to be freelance killers who worked for the Manchus, until Kang bested their master in hand-to-hand combat. The Silver Tigers transferred their loyalty to Kang faster than you can say "Step Back to Ward Off Monkey."

Kang shipped the whole lot of them over here to act as his personal bodyguards and enforcers. There are maybe a hundred of these fellows, but their reputation is such that they do not find it difficult to recruit replacements when Silver Tigers are killed. The ability of individual Silver Tigers ranges quite a bit, from the greenest of students to the most masterful of masters.

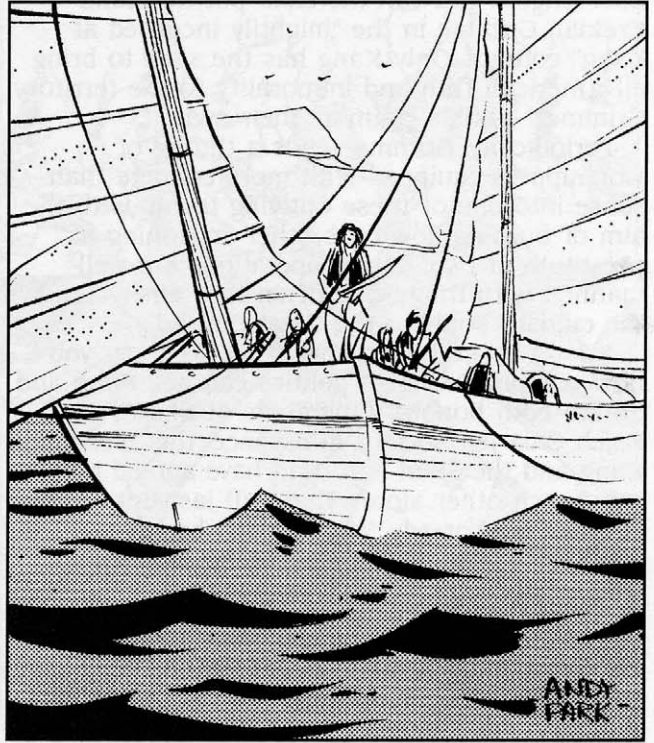
The worst thing about the Silver Tigers is that you can't talk them out of a damn thing. If Kang has told them to do something, they're dang well going to do it. If you know that a Silver Tiger has been ordered by Kang to kill you, the only option you have is to kill him first. They just don't allow for giving up, no matter what stands in their way.

KANG'S TOWNS

Kang's pirates don't live at sea, nor do they practice their piracy only on the water. Red Petals rules over three walled towns spread throughout the Maze. Dragon's Breath is south of Shan Fan. Bear's Claw is south of the City of Lost Angels. Lion's Roar is about midway between the two.

Each town serves as a heavily-defended pirate headquarters. The walls of Bear's Claw once withstood heavy shelling from Union naval forces, and the other towns are similarly fortified. It isn't clear how many pirates live in each fort—probably only a few hundred per town.

The point is to give Red Petals full access to big strikes for the length of the coast. Her spies are everywhere. She hears of a new claim being staked, she sends her men out to swarm the



site, waving legal papers and claiming it as their own. These papers are totally phony, but it's hard for a few miners to muster much of a legal challenge when faced with sword-waving pirates.

Needless to say, Kang and Red Petals aren't highly popular with the Rockies. These businesses have funded plenty of expeditions against the pirates. More than once, they've driven Su's men off a claim belonging to someone else.

Once Kang's forces are installed on a claim, they lose their main advantages. They're not highly mobile any more. Unless Kang or Su are present, their morale isn't anything to write home about; they rout easily in the face of serious opposition. And they aren't the world's hardest-working, most dedicated miners.

But that's no skin off Kang's nose; he's pleased to steal what fundament he can, and then move on to another vulnerable target. Sometimes no one challenges his blatant takeover of a claim, and he gets to keep it. Pure gravy for an already rich warlord.

KANG'S TRIAD

Kang also runs a side operation, a triad that operates brothels, opium dens, and gambling parlors in the mining towns ringing the City of



Lost Angels. You can therefore put Reverend Ezekiah Grimme in the "mightily incensed at Kang" column. Only Kang has the sand to bring all-American filth and immorality to the territory Grimme's cultists claim as their own.

Periodically, Grimme sends a throng of worshippers equipped with more courage than sense into one of these outlying towns with the aim of burning down a brothel or stoning a prostitute or two. Kang's operations are well-manned with thugs, and often they easily send the cultists' souls to the Great Beyond.

Kang's is the Lion's Roar triad. To show you how complicated triad politics can get, Kang and Su are both honorary members of Shan Fan's Hsieh Chia Jên Society. In essence, this means Kang and the Shan Fan triad have agreed to leave each other alone. That will last until one of them gets greedy. Which won't be long.

EFFECTS OF PIRACY

Kang's pirates may be *too* good. They've inspired mining firms to either arm up their Maze-going vessels or switch to land transport.

A man who knows how to fire a gun or fight in close quarters can find himself employment on a transport ship. Ship guards come and go, and it's fairly easy to get hired on. The owners of the transport ships aren't terribly fussy about who they hire, generally having enough loyal, long-term roughnecks on hand that mutiny isn't much of a worry for them.

To a Pinkerton, this means that we always have to be alert to the possibility that a fugitive we're chasing has signed on for pirate-fighting duty. Unfortunately, you can't expect ship owners to help you identify your quarry for you. As long as a man is doing a good job of keeping pirates away, his employer doesn't ask about his past.

Once I had to get employment aboard just such a transport ship myself to determine whether a certain claim jumper was on the crew manifest. I ended up fighting both the crew and Kang's pirates that day. I got my man, though.

THE 37TH CHAMBER

The 37th Chamber, a fortress located on Big Stone Lake (to the north of Shannonsburg) is an offshoot of the Shaolin Temple of China. These people are much more than than a bunch of strangely dressed bald folks peacefully meditating their lives away, but to understand what they are up to, you must endure a little more Chinese history.

THE SHAOLIN TEMPLE



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The origins of the Shaolin Temple are shrouded in mystery. That's precisely how the orange-clad monks who run the joint like it. Their mystique is one of their chief weapons. Those wise to the world of martial arts feel a sense of awe

when they hear that a fighter has trained at the Shaolin temple. (Note that you can fight in the Shaolin temple style without having been personally trained at a Shaolin temple.)

Near as I can figure it, the Shaolin movement started back in legendary times, when a great Buddhist holy man named Daruma (or Bodhidharma, depending on who you ask) visited a temple in Hunan. He supposedly taught the monks there the movements which became the basis of all Chinese fighting. If you believe that, I've got some real estate in old San Francisco to sell you. What's important is that most martial artists believe the story and think that the Shaolin are bursting with secrets.

The monks of the Shaolin temple traditionally held themselves apart from the world. They learned to become the world's best fighters to achieve inner peace by avoiding getting into fights, except for display purposes. There's some kind of big Buddhist message in that; don't ask me to figure it out for you.

This all came to an end when the Manchus ignored one of the great rules of life in the world of martial arts, which is "don't piss off the monk." Manchu soldiers were after a fugitive who'd been given sanctuary in the Shaolin Temple. Just like in our tradition, Chinese authorities are supposed to respect the sanctuary given by priests in holy places.

Well, the Manchus wanted that fugitive, so they waded right in. The monks kicked them from here to Thursday, and then the Manchus showed up in force to burn the temple. The monks were scattered to the four corners of China. After wandering around for a while, some of them decided to come here, where they founded the 37th Chamber.

WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER 36?

Legend has it that, before the Temple was burned, it contained 35 secret chambers in which young monks trained to master Shaolin kung fu. These chambers tested coordination, strength, and speed, as well as proving a man's spirit.



When the monks realized that the Manchus were out to get them, they started what they called the 36th Chamber, which was a school of revolutionary martial artists who went out into the world and taught students to overthrow the Manchus. This Shaolin involvement in political affairs was unprecedented. Like I said, don't piss off the monks. This subversive activity probably precipitated the burning of the Temple, but by then there were mighty warriors working throughout China to undermine the regime.

SO WHY COME HERE?

You are no doubt wondering why an organization which at first was interested only in spiritual affairs, and then in toppling a corrupt regime thousands of miles away, decided to set up shop in the Maze. Well, I have plenty of questions about Shaolin activities in the Maze, and blessed few answers.

Some say that warlords like Kang and Kwan are secretly agents of the Manchus. They've come here to soften up the USA and CSA for conquest by the yellow peril. Note my skepticism.

Chinese emperors have traditionally thought foreign lands to be stinking pestholes not worth thinking about, if they think about them at all. And from what we know of Kang and Kwan, I can't imagine those two miscreants following orders from anyone.

If you believe the hogwash about Kang and Kwan's true allegiance, you might believe that the Shaolin have come here to defeat them, as part of their effort to make the Manchus wish they'd never been born. The Shaolin do sometimes tangle with the warlords' soldiers, but I think there's something else going on.

The Shaolin are known to regard ghost rock as a terrible affront to everything that is balanced and whole in nature and the universe. They are especially opposed to weird science and sometimes send their warriors to disrupt shipments of ghost rock or to sabotage steam engines and new devices that use it. Why is anybody's guess.

The monks themselves remain enigmatic when questioned about their obsession with ghost rock. I've had occasion to fight alongside some of them, particularly Ao-Sang Leung. Whenever I ask him about this ghost rock obsession, he just smiles and tells me that the answer will come to me when I'm ready for it. Sometimes those Shaolin can be intolerably smug sons of bitches.



HEROES OF SHAOLIN

The 37th Chamber of Shaolin is home to a number of impressive Buddhist heroes. There's Chin-Hsueh Wong, who is so holy he bleeds liquid gold. Kuai Yao, also known as "the Goblin," is so ugly that it gives her an advantage in combat, as even her most determined opponent can't stand to look at her face. Then there is Shan Yang the Glutton, who maintains his inhuman strength and endurance by devouring a different inedible thing each day. When he runs out of distinct uneatable items, he will die.

AO-SANG LEUNG

The Shaolin I know best is Ao-Sang Leung, an insufferably handsome fellow with a long, Roman nose and high cheekbones. Alone among the Shaolin, he is not required to shave his head. Back in China, he met the Monkey King in a forest, or so the story goes. (The Monkey King is a holy buffoon and hero in Chinese folk-tales.)

The Monkey King told him to let his hair grow, for one day he would need it in a fight with a giant snake which wants to eat the world. Ao-Sang Leung therefore has silky shoulder-length hair, over which I have seen many a lady swoon.



Unfortunately for his admirers, Ao-Sang has sworn to remain staunchly celibate. If he ever breaks this vow, his hair will fall out and the world will be devoured by the snake. (No, of course I don't believe this, but Ao-Sang does.)

Ao-Sang has a wry sense of humor, unusual in a monk. Although untempted himself, he is knowledgeable about human sins and desires. He has a way of immediately understanding what motivates a person, and he uses this to good effect. Ao-Sang is completely devoted to his sifu, the aforementioned Chin-Hsueh Wong. He does whatever Wong asks of him, without question.

Needless to say, this attitude has led to the odd exchange of words between us, even when we're working toward the same goal. Either way, I certainly wouldn't ever stand in his way.

108 RIGHTEOUS BANDITS



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Robin Hood has nothing on the outlaw heroes of Chinese folklore. In a land where the common man is routinely abused by the authorities, the idea of the people's bandit is a mighty attractive one. In real life, stealing from the rich to give to the poor in China is a good way to get beheaded. But that never stops the classic tales being told.

One group inspired by this tradition is the 108 Righteous Bandits. The rich see them as a scourge on the free conduct of business in the Maze. The fearful see them as nothing more than another pack of warlords. The downtrodden, on the other hand, see them as shining heroes. As usual in the Maze, the truth is another matter.

The real facts about the 108 Righteous Bandits are as follows. First, there aren't 108 of them. One hundred and eight is a lucky number in China, that's all. The numbers of the 108 fluctuate as hangers-on join the gang and are later killed or drift. In fact, the 108 isn't really a gang—more like a bunch of loosely allied gangs.

Second, some are more righteous than others. One of the leaders of the 108, the recklessly charming T'ou-Chi Chow (the God of Bandits), gives the bulk of his criminal proceeds to the poor. Others, like Hao-Te Zui (the Mad Monk) keep most of the gold for themselves.

You don't need to read the dime novels to guess how they're treated; because they satisfy the reader's interest in glorified criminals, they escape the usual villainous role reserved for Orientals. It isn't just the Chinese who love an outlaw, after all.

TERRITORY OF THE 108

Raids attributed to members of the 108 have been reported throughout the Maze. They sometimes range into Oregon, Nevada, and even Mexico. Most of them keep on the move, disguising themselves as humble mining workers. The 108 don't have a single *modus operandi*, but they tend to enjoy hitting symbols of power and authority, such as banks, Wells Fargo steamcoaches, and armories. They strike even-handedly at Union and Confederate targets. The Rockies are another favorite target.

DEVIL'S ARMPIT

Although it's the exception to the rule, some leaders of the 108 maintain more or less permanent bases. For example, the popular God of Bandits dwells in the mining town of Devil's Armpit. He runs the town as a sort of collective.

I've learned from bitter experience that there's no point in trying to apprehend him there. The locals revere him as, well, a sort of god.

Not just anyone can up and settle in Devil's Armpit. You need a special invite from T'ou-Chi Chow. To qualify, you have to be in need of a second chance. Maybe you're a soiled dove seeking an honest life. A Chinese miner who's been run off his operation by a greedy lynch mob. A native warrior thrown out of his tribe for refusing to aid the Rattlesnake Clan. You name a hard luck story, and there's someone in Devil's Armpit who's risen above it. Therefore, there isn't a snowball's chance that these folks are going to help you bring in their beloved leader.

THE GOD OF BANDITS

The town survives mostly on the proceeds of T'ou-Chi Chow's bandit activities. His citizens are encouraged to join the ranks of the 108, but the God of Bandits is famous for never requiring this of anyone.

Never forget that the man is a thief. Sure, he's a charming fellow with a heart a mile wide and a smile even wider. He's also a dangerous political subversive, all hopped up on the anarchistic philosophy he's picked up from European books. A man who has the motto "Property Is Theft" engraved on the barrel of his six-gun isn't a hero. He's trouble.

Unlike many of the warlords and heroes detailed in this section, the God of Bandits isn't a martial artist. He's a gunslinger—albeit a very accomplished one.



THE MAD MONK

Hao-Te Zui is known as the Mad Monk because he's a former Taoist priest and he's crazier than a drunken horny toad. Although he has a rep as a people's outlaw, I haven't spoken to anyone who has actually benefited from his legendary generosity. So although he cloaks himself in the mantle of "the people's bandit," it's reasonable to conclude his righteousness leaves something to be desired.

In contrast to the God of Bandits, Zui and his associates are awful quick on the trigger when they go raiding. They gun down guards and marshals who aren't threatening them, just on general principles. They're also none too cautious about keeping innocent citizens out of the crossfire.

No one knows much about Zui's past, except for the oft-repeated story that he was (or is) a Taoist priest who was banished from China by powerful spirits or demons.

What I do know is that he's a savvy bandit leader who really makes life miserable for some of our clients, he's elusive as all Hell, and he know more than a little kung fu.

Agent Burns and I were once captured by Zui. We'd been minding our own business up in Lynchburg when his men came through to whoop it up. Someone told him we were Pinkertons, and before I knew it, we were trussed up like hogs in his mountain camp. Burns tried to make a break for it and took a shotgun blast to the back of the neck. I expected to meet the same fate but something much odder happened.

Intoning some strange ritual chants, the Mad Monk approached me, hiked up his saffron robes, and—with a silver, serrated knife—sawed a big hunk of flesh off of his thigh. He then threw a skillet on the fire, waited till it had heated up, and tossed the flesh in the skillet. He seasoned it up with salt and then had his men force-feed it to me! The next day I was released. I saw Zui only from a distance that day, but it looked to me as if he walking without a limp.

Since then I've heard other accounts of his miraculous ability to heal up serious injuries. I've also heard of other prominent Mazers who've been fed his repulsive dish: Suitcase Lee, Born in a Bowl, and Admiral Faulkner have all been subjected to this treatment. What this means I don't know, but I'll confess to you that I sometimes bolt up in my sleep, having had a terrible and vivid nightmare of the Mad Monk crawling around inside of me.

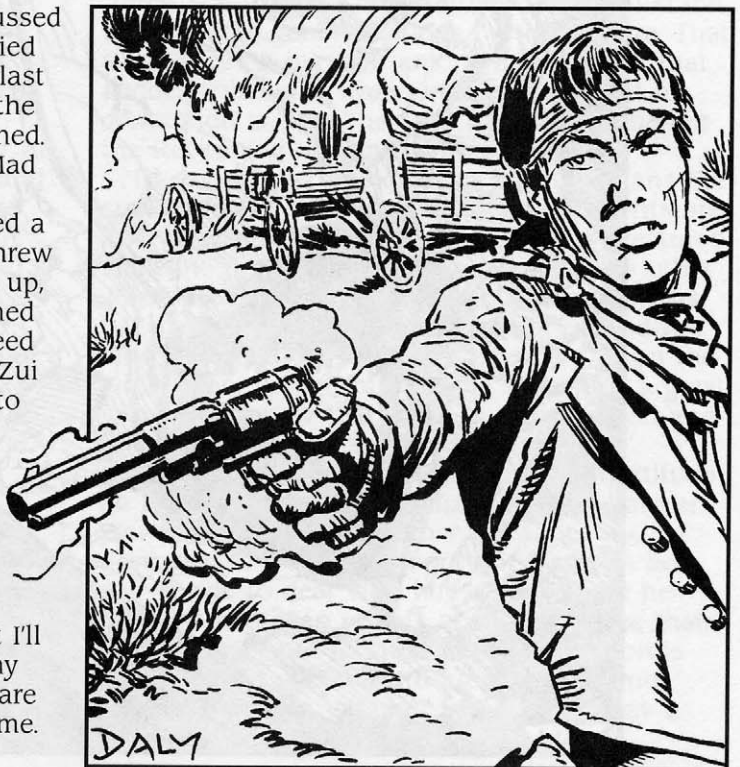
OTHERS OF THE 108

The other bandits of the 108 are somewhat overshadowed by the fame of the God of Bandits and the Mad Monk. They come and go all the time. Here are some rumors I've picked up about the less well-known of the 108.

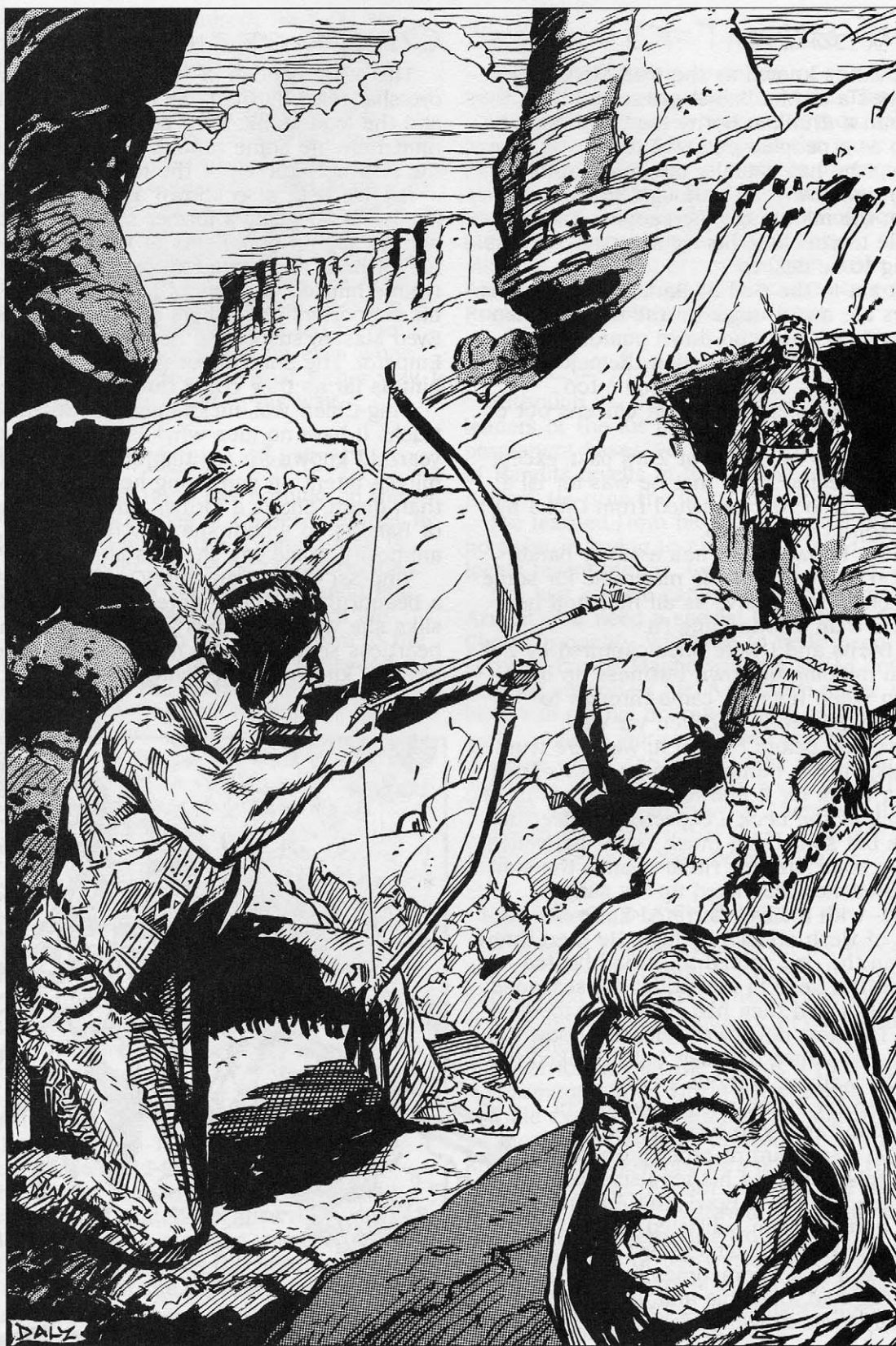
Hsi-Tse Hsia, also known as the One-Eyed Master, is allegedly a former Manchu official sent here to spy on opponents of the regime. When he got here, he became an opponent of the regime himself, as well as a heroic bandit. Or so his supporters say. Others don't trust the One-Eyed Master, suspecting he still serves the Emperor. The Shaolin, for instance, don't trust him as far as they could throw him.

P'ing-Chien Wai, nicknamed the Mistress of Ducks (I have no idea why), is a precocious 16-year-old known for fighting off over a dozen miners intent on subjecting her to a fate worse than death. She is a former sidekick of the God of Bandits, to whom she now bears some animosity. Some say she was jilted by him.

Ying-Ssi Chieh T'ang, the Goddess of Colors, is a beautiful gunslinger noted for the colorful silks she wears. She has a reputation as a heartless seducer and a master of the oriental weapon known as the flying claw.

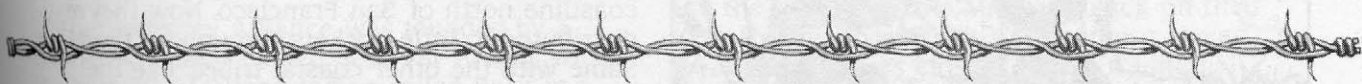


ROCKS





CHAPTER FOUR: ROCKS OF BLOOD



I don't need to tell you that one of our primary missions is to investigate weird supernatural doings, kill everything in sight, and then deny that anything ever happened. I know Allan has some fancy way of putting it, but that's basically how we do it, right?

Well, most of the supernatural doings in the Maze can be attributed to the old ways of the native people. Unsubstantiated but persistent reports say that it was an Indian named Raven who brought the manitous back in the first place. While there's no sign of Raven himself in the Maze, there are plenty who admire him and would like to finish his task of pushing every white man in the territory out into the ocean.

In California, most of these types belong to a loose and shadowy federation known as the Rattlesnake Clan. As Pinkertons, you'll spend much of your time combating their efforts, and it helps to know some of the native lore of the region. Also, most Indians see themselves as deadly foes of the Rattlesnake Clan. If you know who to ask, you might get some help.

Indians, the sane and decent ones that is, make a distinction between sorcery and medicine. Medicine is good magic, the kind that helps women through childbirth, or makes the crops grow, or keeps the hunting plentiful. Medicine benefits the community at large. The natives see no difference between the good of the many and the good of the individual. The worst crime among these people is selfishness.

Selfish people are almost by definition evil magicians. They learn what we call black magic and the Indians call sorcery. That's the kind of magic that you use to afflict your enemies, to give them sicknesses and cause them bad luck.

I said already that it's foolish to talk about "the Indians" as all one culture, though I'll stand by all of the generalizations I've made here. That said, there's a big split among Indians, one that divides tribes and even families. The point of contention is this: They don't agree on whether the Reckoning was medicine or sorcery.

I'd say about three quarters of the Indians I've spoken to see it as sorcery, since evil spirits are now stronger than ever and dangerous creatures stalk the traditional hunting grounds. The other 25%, though, say that although Raven's actions had bad effects, they were necessary to rid the land of a greater plague: us. By "us," I mean the white man, though maybe that isn't such a great assumption, now that Allan is hiring Indian and Chinese agents for special missions.

Anyhow, it's important to know what attitude an Indian has toward "civilization" or whatever you want to call it. Whether he wants you destroyed or not is an important factor in how you decide to deal with him. Chances are he knows some deep secrets about this place that we haven't begun to guess at. The question is whether he'll use them to assist you in your investigations, or whether he's fixing to lay a curse on you.





TRIBES OF CALIFORNIA

California is home to the greatest mishmash of different tribes of any state in the Union. In the centuries before we arrived, its enticing climate attracted natives from all over the continent. There were more different Indian languages spoken here than you could shake a stick at.

To us, their cultures would have looked pretty similar, but as far as they were concerned, they were as different as it was possible to be. Although more peaceful than Indians further East, they still fought one another and so forth.

REPERCUSSIONS OF THE QUAKE

Things have changed since the Quake. The largest tribes lived on the coast, so they were very hard hit by the disaster. Hell, their situation hadn't been what you'd call overwhelmingly wonderful *before* the coast fell off.

They'd already been suffering from diseases we brought over with us, which they had no immunity to. Smallpox and influenza are rough enough on us. For the Indians, illnesses like that used to be 100% pure death. Then there's the propensity of certain white men to exterminate

groups of Indians at the slightest provocation. Indians used to be safe and easy victims for whatever bloodthirsty yahoo had a load on and wanted to prove his manhood.

Like I said, that's all changed now. Although the Reckoning gave the evil spirits—or manitous—access to our world, it also boosted the abilities of the good spirits who provide medicine. Now that they're stronger, they're able to cure smallpox and the flu and measles and the other diseases that had been reducing the population. Second, the Quake taught the Indians that their survival depended on making alliances with each other, even if they'd previously thought of one another as foreigners.

To continue in their traditional ways, the Indians have been forced to merge their different cultures a bit. The old territorial divisions have broken down. For example, you used to see Pomo Indians all together on one piece of the coastline north of San Francisco. Now they're distributed in little pockets throughout the Maze. Same with the other coastal tribes, like the Chumash, the Miwok, the Coastanoan, and Gabrielino.

They've created a sort of pidgin version of the Chumash language which serves as a sort of common language. It is called Necessity Talk after the group that spread its use, the Necessity Alliance. More on them in a moment.

They've forged political alliances, using the old Iroquois Confederacy (Back East) as a model. (A few white men educated in Indian ways have been giving them pointers in how to set all this up.) The result is a mixing together of cultures and traditions. Now the Indians do see themselves as one people, or at least a group of peoples who have a lot more in common with each other than they do with us.

MAJOR GROUPS

In other words, the Maze Indians are now united against their common enemies. Except that not all of them agree on who their enemies are, so there are a number of these alliances. They compete with one another for the support of local clans and tribes.

Most of the struggles are political; that is, they're resolved by talking instead of fighting. Indians are big on consensus and letting everyone have a say. In general, they're better than we are at not letting disagreements turn personal. However, there are hotheads and evildoers in any group you care to name, and

these types can cause the kind of trouble that might involve a Pinkerton in native politics.

Try not to get involved in tribal politics if you can avoid it. We Pinkertons do better the more apolitical we are. If you *do* get involved in native politics, remember to show them respect, to let everyone have their say, and not to appear like the typical arrogant European. If you do those things, you may find them a surprisingly open and kindly people. If you don't, you'll get nothing but a stony wall of silence.

THE NECESSITY ALLIANCE

The biggest native political group is the Necessity Alliance. In my opinion, it's a good thing for the Indians and for the stability of the territory as a whole.

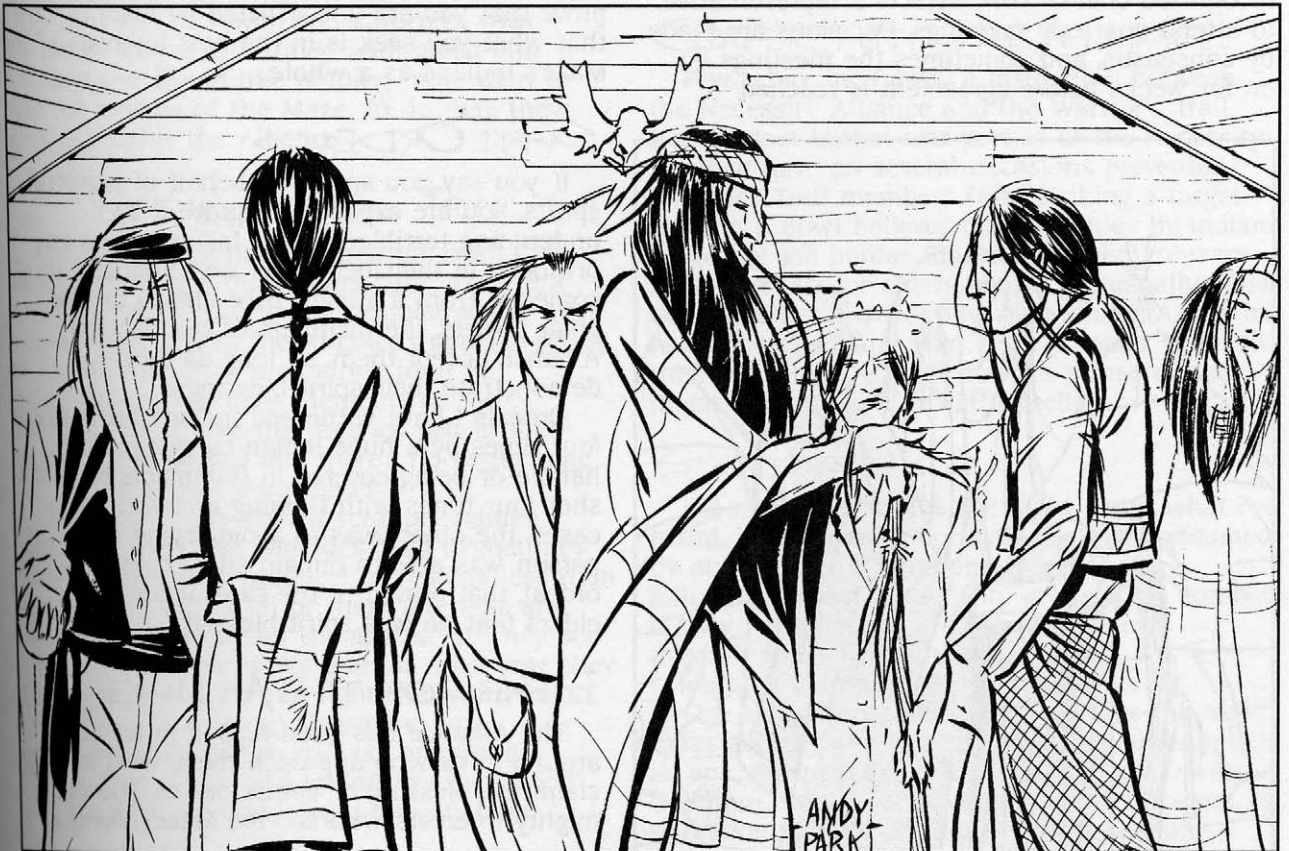
FOUNDING OF THE ALLIANCE

The Necessity Alliance was founded by a Gabrielino Indian named Sees Far Ahead, with the help of a Lusieno Indian called Born in a Bowl and an anthropologist named J. Everett Heizer. Sees Far Ahead participated in the early

rescue efforts of the Reverend Grimme, but soon broke with him after early exposure to the Reverend's fanaticism. What he learned from Grimme was the necessity of cooperation in the face of this terrible disaster.

Sees Far Ahead decided to build a second rescue campaign, one aimed at rebuilding and preserving Gabrielino ways. He met up with Heizer, who told him about the Iroquois Confederacy, an early democracy that united the many Algonquin tribes Back East a couple hundred years back. Heizer convinced Sees Far Ahead to create what he called a "pan-tribal" movement. They named it the Necessity Alliance, their argument being that unity was the only safe path for the Maze Indians.

Right after the Quake, the Necessity Alliance was a single community. People from all of the tribes set up camp on a now-abandoned island just north of where the Lion's Roar Fort is today. As the Indians of the Maze got back on their feet, the members of this community spread back out to areas closer to their traditional homelands. As they did so, they took the new pidgin tongue and the ideals of inter-tribal cooperation with them.





THE ALLIANCE TODAY

Since then, the Necessity Alliance has grown in size and importance. It allows tribal leaders to plan strategy together, share information, and build Indian self-sufficiency. Member tribes trade with one another so that they depend as little as possible on unpredictable white men for survival.

They think that we are afflicted by spirits of madness. Just look at our lust for gold and other inedible minerals, they say. Look at how quick we are to resort to violence when things don't go our way. Indians see these things as symptoms of madness caused by little demons. They know that some white men, like the respected J. Everett Heizer, are wise and just and free of this taint, but in general, the Necessity Alliance now exists to defend Indians from us.

Unprovoked slaughters of Indians by miners and bandits are much rarer than before the rise of the Necessity Alliance. People know that the entire Alliance will rise up against them, exacting terrible justice. In unity, the Indians have found strength. The Alliance represents anywhere from 50,000 to 75,000 Indians.

Technically, the Alliance has no leader. Each recognized clan or tribe selects a representative to attend quarterly meetings. Decisions are made by consensus, and sometimes the meetings go on for weeks before agreement is reached.



However, some representatives are more respected than others. When Sees Far Ahead was still around, the representatives would talk and argue for a long time. Then Sees Far Ahead would speak, and almost everyone would suddenly agree with him.

Sees Far Ahead left the Maze several years ago. Some say he went on an ocean voyage to find the Great Turtles and persuade them to come back. (I'll talk about the Great Turtles a little ways down.)

BORN IN A BOWL



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Taking Sees Far Ahead's place as unofficial leader is his old colleague Born in a Bowl. She is a great shaman as well as a shrewd observer of earthly ways. She is an elderly woman with a deeply creased face and thinning, white hair. She's

also a rather lusty old lady. I think I still have handprints on my thigh from the last time we talked.

Her rather crude advances aside, she regarded me with careful neutrality. If you ever want anything from her or the Alliance, you have to prove that you are not afflicted by madness and that what you seek is in the best interests of the Maze's Indians as a whole.

SPIRIT ORDEALS

If you say you speak on behalf of powerful spirits, you are expected to prove it by undergoing terrible ordeals. Indians aren't as orthodox in their beliefs as we Christians are. If someone from a foreign tribe claims to have great powers, the members of the Necessity Alliance accept them, so long as they demonstrate their spirit blessings.

Ordeals I have witnessed include being struck four times by a huge Indian carrying an ax handle or being covered in flammable pitch and shot four times with flaming arrows. In both cases, the object was to avoid crying out. If the person was able to remain silent throughout the ordeal, that proved to the satisfaction of the elders that he was spirit-blessed.

ENEMIES OF THE ALLIANCE

The Alliance has good reason to be careful around folks who approach them, whether they claim the blessing of spirits or not. There are mighty interests who see the Maze Indians as



nothing more than an obstacle standing between them and a great stack of money.

Members of the Alliance occupy some prime islands in the Maze, and they defend them vigorously. Naturally, this prevents them from being mined. Consequently, the Alliance gets some mighty bad press. Plenty of miners will tell you that Born in a Bowl is an underhanded snake in the grass or a bitter harridan out for revenge.

As far as I'm concerned, that's nothing but greed and fear talking. My judgment is that Born in a Bowl is entirely sincere, which is more than you can say about most of our own so-called leaders.

It isn't just white men who dislike the Alliance, though. There are a number of smaller groups which split off from the Alliance because they didn't like the direction they were headed in. And then there's possibly the worst threat to the Alliance: the evil Rattlesnake Clan. As allies of Raven and cavorters with manitous, they're consumed with greed and jealousy and would like nothing more than to rule the Indians of the Maze. To do that, they seek to destroy the Alliance.

THE WARRIOR'S TRAIL

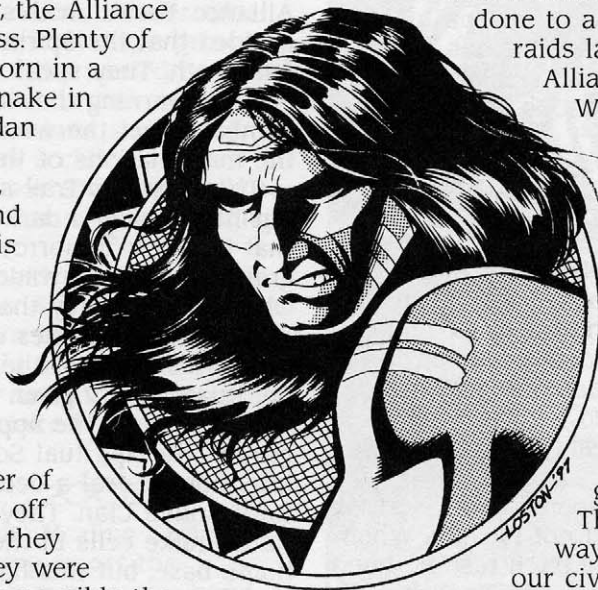
The Warrior's Trail splintered off from the Necessity Alliance three years back. They're a contingent of hotheads and troublemakers who weren't interested in the Alliance's general policy of leaving the white man alone until he threatened the red man. Members of the Warrior's Trail figure the time for peaceful co-existence has passed and there's no better time for vengeance than immediately.

Led by an accomplished scrapper named Stalks the Night, the Warrior's Trail (sometimes called the Warrior's Alliance) represents less than 1,000 people. Almost all of them are men, and most of them are under the age of 30. They see the presence of the white man as a scourge they must fight. If they do not fight the white man, they are worth nothing. They have long memories for all of the crimes committed against their people and intend to exact blood vengeance for each and every one of them.

TACTICS

The Warrior's Trail launches at least a dozen raids a year, always against a small settlement where some kind of harm has been done to a native person. Unlike the raids launched by the Necessity Alliance, the attacks of the Warrior's Trail may take place a generation after the original offense.

The Warrior's Trail strikes with unrestrained ferocity. They kill every adult they can get their hands on. Children under the age of eight are usually taken back to the warriors' various tribes and raised as Indians. Buildings are burned to the ground whenever possible. The warriors follow the old ways and hate the trappings of our civilization. They destroy everything, and take nothing.



CONFLICT WITH THE ALLIANCE

Few white men draw a distinction between the Necessity Alliance and the Warrior's Trail. But the fact is that war parties of the Necessity Alliance have on several occasions prevented Warrior's Trail members from striking a target. Born in a Bowl believes that atrocities by Indians make her job harder. Stalks the Night, contrary to the respect for elders his people usually show, considers her a doddering, old woman. As far as he's concerned, any plan more complex than "kill them now, kill them all now" is a case of too much thinking and too little feeling.

STALKS THE NIGHT

I've never met Stalks the Night. From what I've heard, he's a man in constant motion, consumed by anger and the compulsion to act. His followers respect his ferocity and skill in combat. If they get killed on a damn, fool suicide mission, that's fine with them; they'll be celebrated forever in the glorious afterlife.

One thing in his favor is that Stalks the Night hates sorcery and the Rattlesnake Clan as much as any decent Indian. He allows no truck with manitous, and he attacks hucksters, sorcerers, and abominations at the drop of a headdress.

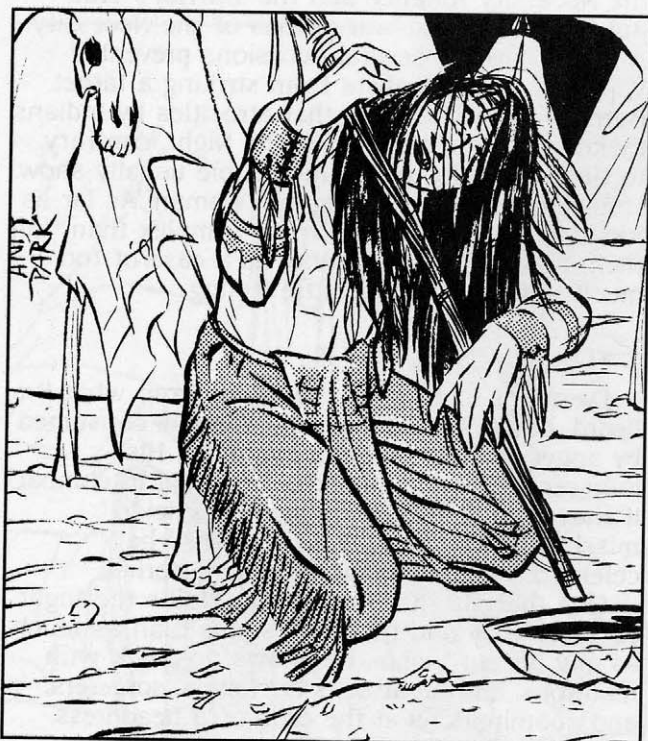
THE SPIRITUAL SOCIETY

I talked about the Spiritual Society already in the last section. This is a group affiliated with the New Tomorrow triad. They seek to find the connections between Chinese Taoist spiritual practices and those of the Maze Indians. Oddly enough, there are a lot of broad similarities between the two distant traditions, though many of the details are different.

SHOCKS WITH A FAN'S ORDEAL

The native element of the Spiritual Society once made overtures to the Necessity Alliance. Their unofficial leader is Shocks with a Fan, an eccentric Yurok shaman with a taste for liquor. The Necessity Alliance considers addiction to firewater to be a variety of demonic possession, so they weren't too impressed with him. He offered to undergo their ordeals to prove that he was blessed by the spirits.

During the club test, he capered about so that the wielder of the club could not hit him. When hit by the fourth arrow in the pitch test, he burst into flame and cried out, cursing in English, Cantonese, and Yurok. Consequently, the Necessity Alliance decided to have nothing to do with Shocks with a Fan, the Spiritual Society, or the New Tomorrow triad.



RELATIONS WITH OTHER GROUPS

Word of Shocks with a Fan's failure reached members of the Healing Society, who still maintain some connections to the Necessity Alliance. Based on this incident, they also decided that the Spiritual Society represents a false path. They speak out against the Spiritual Society, warning that its medicine is too weak to combat either the white man's hucksterism or the machinations of the Rattlesnake Clan.

The Warrior's Trail also heard of the incident but have drawn a darker conclusion. They think that the New Tomorrow triad is just another group of foreign invaders trying to corrupt the Old Ways. Not only that, they're dabblers in the dark arts. War parties of the Warrior's Trail attack members of the New Tomorrow triad or Spiritual Society given half a chance.

To win back the approval of the other Indian groups, the Spiritual Society has proclaimed its intention to deal a decisive blow against the Rattlesnake Clan. They have exposed several Rattlesnake cells in their northern California home base, but this has yet to win them the respect they seek.

THE HEALING SOCIETY

The Healing Society is separate from the Necessity Alliance, but their relationship isn't so much hostile as distant. It's more a matter of their having separate purposes than of their acting against one another. Although there are many shamans serving as representatives to the Necessity Alliance, its focus is on the earthly needs of the people and of managing relationships with outsiders.

The Healing Society is more concerned with spiritual matters. In fact, you could see it as sort of a native version of our Pinkerton organization, at least in terms of our anti-supernatural duties. They have sworn to keep the Rattlesnake Clan and other sorcerers in check. They track down and destroy abominations. They say that this is all preparation for something more important. They're honing their spiritual powers for what they say is a great battle looming ahead.

They feel that we insane, demon-ridden foreigners will be worse than useless in this battle, so they're rather close-mouthed about their prophecies. I haven't been able to glean anything about them, except that we should be worried. Biblically worried.

FEARS NO OWLS

The Healing Society is small, consisting of maybe 30 or 40 powerful shamans. Members come and go, of course. Unlike most Indian organizations, they have a distinct leader who makes most decisions herself. She is a grim woman of the Coastanoan tribe named Fears No Owls. The local Indians consider the owl to be an evil spirit, so her name means she wasn't scared of manitous, even as a child.

She is not what I'd call sociable, especially to white men. The time I met her, she kept telling me I was full of demons.

She's just as imperious with her own people as she is with a white man like me. This sort of high-handedness goes down even worse in Indian society than it would in ours. The fact that her colleagues let her boss them around shows how seriously they take her mission.

FOUNDING OF THE SOCIETY

Fears No Owls formed the Healing Society after getting frustrated trying to get the Necessity Alliance to take a more active hand against the Rattlesnake Clan. Her totem animal, a sea otter, told her that something very bad is going to happen very soon, and the Rattlesnake Clan is going to be right in the middle of it. However, Sees Far Ahead was more interested in political matters than magical ones and gave only partial attention to Fears No Owls' predictions. So, Fears No Owls went off and formed a group with other like-minded shamans. Come the crisis, Fears No Owls will be ready.

HEADQUARTERS

The Healing Society draws members from all of the tribes of California and the Maze. In fact, there are members from Oregon, Nevada, and Mexico as well. They don't meet all in one place or gather on a regular basis. Instead, they come together when they get wind of Rattlesnake Clan or other manitou or abomination activity.

A typical team consists of two or three shamans guarded by a group of warriors and scouts who are absolutely trusted by the Healing Society. These bodyguards are often close relatives of the shamans involved and are considered auxiliary members of the Society. Helping the shamans track down evil doings is dangerous work, but it wins them great status in their tribes. There is no greater service in Indian society than to risk your life for the good of all.



THE RATTLESNAKE CLAN



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The gaping hole in this section is information on the Rattlesnake Clan. They're among the chief arcane varmints of the Maze, and we know next to zero about them. In our efforts to gather intelligence on them, it shames me to admit that they've whipped our Pinkerton behinds. Prine, deCarle, and Flohil are all missing and presumed horribly dead thanks to the fact that I sent them out to follow up leads on the Rattlesnake Clan.

The Clan's activities span a wide spectrum of despicable acts. I'm fairly sure that they were responsible for conjuring up several of the nastier abominations we've had to put down in the last couple of years, but their more mundane activities are just as dangerous. The Clan tries to weaken the Necessity Alliance whenever it can. Sometimes they try to play one Indian group against another, or spark incidents between the Indians and miners. In general, chaos and fear seem to be the Clan's stock and trade.

All we know about the Rattlesnake Clan is that their leader is nicknamed Papa Rattlesnake. No one knows who he is, beyond the fact that he's an Indian. The Indians theorize that the members of the clan are all sorcerers (what we

would call black magicians) whose totem spirits are "evil" animals such as owls, rattlesnakes, bats, salamanders, scorpions, and spiders. Presumably the Clan, if it is any size at all, also includes various lackeys and henchmen who are not full-fledged sorcerers.

One thing I can say for sure about the Rattlesnake Clan is that whenever we come into conflict no quarter is asked or given. These sons of bitches have far too much Pinkerton blood on their hands for me to waste time negotiating. That may seem a bit extreme, Allan, but if you'd seen what the last Rattlesnake Clan shaman I encountered was doing to those children... I don't think they'll ever find that particular Indian's body. Not all of it, anyway.

Where are they headquartered? I wish I knew. Some say they have a lair under Mount Shasta or Mount Whitney. Others say they live under a river and that a magical gate allows access to their underworld headquarters. The most popular theory has the advantage of being the most likely one: It holds that the Clan members live among the Indian tribes of the Maze, keeping their identities a secret.

The Indians certainly fear this; sometimes the Rattlesnake Clan knows as much about the Necessity Alliance, or even the Healing Society, as the members of those groups do, which

suggest to me that they've been infiltrated. Any seemingly virtuous Indian could be a member of the Rattlesnake Clan. For all I know, they've recruited white men, Mexicans, and Chinese into their ranks.

How many of them are there? Another major unanswered question. We could all be afraid of a small handful of miscreants. Or they could be a huge group with tentacles entwined all through the Maze.

I don't need to say that any information you root out as regards the Rattlesnake Clan will be gratefully received not only at the City of Lost Angels office, but at HQ. Just be careful in rooting; I don't want to lose any more agents to the fangs of the rattlesnake.

INDIAN MYSTERIES



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Supernatural things come as no surprise to the Maze Indians. They may be a lot more prevalent now, and the bad spirits might be more powerful than they used to be, but as far as the Indians are concerned, the world has always been magical.

You can learn all sorts of strange things by listening to the elders talk. Chances are, if it stalks the Maze or the forests of California and it rips folk's heads off, the Indians have legends about it that predate the fall of Rome.

Here are a few examples of Indian legends that might prove useful to you in the field.

THE ROCK PAINTINGS

One of the real imagination-provoking mysteries of the Maze are the Rock Paintings which are found all over the coastline. The most impressive group of paintings is at a place called Painted Rock; it's on the Carillo Plains, just to the west of the pirate encampment of Lion's Roar.

This is in the original territory of the Chumash Indians, although the Chumash claim that the paintings were here even before there were people. They do admit that they from time-to-time add to the paintings or spruce them up to placate and contact the spirits. The paintings range all the way from random swirls and lines to simple but oddly powerful creatures, monsters, and spirits.

Other tribes have different legends about Painted Rock. One story holds that the rocks were painted in human blood by a shaman-chief. Supposedly he sacrificed his beautiful only



ROCKS

daughter when messengers came to him with word of the Spaniards killing Montezuma. Although he was far from Cortez's reign of terror, the shaman-chief foresaw that the white men would overrun his land too. He used his daughter's blood to paint magical symbols on the rocks. One day, if the shaman's terrible visions proved correct, the magic in the symbols would be released and the white men turned back.

Well, it isn't hard to see why this legend has gained credence since the Great Quake. People say that Raven came out here and was very interested in learning about the magic of the rock paintings. Many of the best rock painting sites are right on the new coastline. In other words, they were at the Quake's fault line. The Quake exposed many more rock paintings, often situated where ordinary men couldn't have reached them before.

Is there still powerful magic lurking in the remaining paintings? If so, who will take advantage of it: the Healing Society or the Rattlesnake Clan? If there's ever answers to those questions, I suppose we Pinkertons will find ourselves in the middle of them.

THE GIANT TURTLES

There's an alternate legend of the Quake. After all, before the Great Quake, there were lots of little quakes. Some of the coastal tribes had a legend to explain that. They said that California was built on the backs of four giant turtles. The turtles are sleeping. They're brothers who share the same bed. The earth, that's their blanket. Used to be, they'd jostle one another in their sleep, fighting for more room in the bed, like brothers do. That's what would cause earth tremors.

Since the Quake, the legend has been embellished to include Raven. He supposedly went to the turtles and convinced a couple of them that they should swim away. The stories differ on exactly how. Maybe he turned the brothers against each other. Maybe he persuaded them that they should hate the white men. Maybe he told them there was some good seaweed to be eaten out in the ocean.

People are afraid now that the other two turtles might get a hankering to find their brothers, and swim off, too. That would put the rest of the territory in the ocean too, killing pretty nearly every one of us in the process. The old leader of the Necessity Alliance, Sees Far Ahead, is reportedly off on a voyage on the



"spirit ocean" (whatever that means), hoping to find the two lost turtles and convince them to come back.

Do I really believe that the earth's crust is underlaid by a layer of turtles? Of course I don't. But then, in the past few years, I've seen a lot of things I don't believe in get up and walk around.

COYOTE AND THE MONKEY KING

An informant of mine in the Necessity Alliance reported a new bit of strangeness. The shamans of the Alliance, and many other Indians of spiritual bent, have been having dreams of Coyote, a trickster spirit from Indian religion.

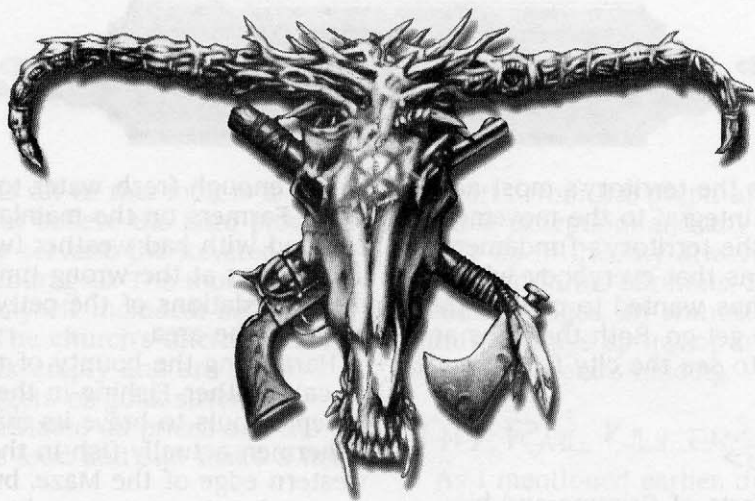
In these dreams, Coyote speaks of returning to the world to help his people in time of need. Coyote never makes it clear when this particular "time of need" will be or even what signs will presage his return. From the legends I've heard about Coyote, he's one fickle spirit, and this is about par for the course for him.

I wouldn't think much of this if it wasn't what I've been hearing from my contacts in the Chinese communities. Many folks there have been having almost identical dreams of a spirit called the Monkey King. I mentioned him in the last chapter. He's a trickster type as well.

What does this all mean? I have no earthly idea, but I'm keeping my eyes and ears open.

LOST ANGELS





CHAPTER FIVE: THE CITY OF LOST ANGELS



If you thought Shan Fan was a strange place for a Pinkerton to ply his trade, wait till I tell you about the City of Lost Angels.

THE FOUNDING



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Everyone knows the story of Grimme and how he was the first to sort people out after the Quake hit. There were other mass mutual rescue movements at the time. Sees Far Ahead broke from Grimme to form the Necessity Alliance. Up north, the Hsieh Chia Jên cooperated with other Chinese groups to rescue people. Countless smaller communities pitched together to pull themselves out of the rubble and start a new life.

Still, it was Grimme's rescue that was the most remarkable because he was able to keep his people fed even during the darkest days of the Quake. If you want to call it a miracle, go ahead.

According to his followers, he could turn salt water to fresh, clean drinking water. He could attract deer and other animals to the Lost Angels' encampment, ready for the slaughter. (By that time, he'd already taken to calling his band of survivors the Lost Angels.) And though you might think me blasphemous to say it, he could occasionally take a few fishes and turn them into a great lot of fishes.

One thing he never did, though, was turn water into wine. Drunkenness is an abomination unto the Lord, or so says the Reverend.

I guess the kind of wild loyalty Grimme inspires becomes more understandable when you think about this story. He saved the lives of thousands of people through mysterious, supernatural means. If the man who stopped you from dying in 1868 asks you to risk your life for him in 1876, what are you going to do? Go right along unless you're an ungrateful bastard.

To make a long story short, Grimme had a vision of this particular piece of coastline where perfection of the soul was possible. He trekked his people through the ruined landscape of the Maze and plunked down roots on what is now the City of Lost Angels. Grimme ran the whole building effort, ordering that the streets be built in a pattern resembling an image of celestial harmony he'd seen in a dream. He saw a big circle with spoke-like lanes radiating outward. He supervised the building process, making sure everybody adhered to the mathematical perfection of his plans.

CHOKEPONT

Whether Grimme actually had a vision or he just has a good eye for terrain, he chose well. The city's location at the convergence of the Maze's three major channels has made the City of Lost Angels one of the major strategic points





LOST ANGELS



of the whole Maze. It's the territory's most active shipping port, and it's integral to the movement of more than half of the territory's fundament.

Of course, this means that everybody who's anybody in the Maze has wanted to control the city virtually from the get-go. Both the Rebs and the Union would like to see the city firmly under their control.

LIFE IS CHEAP

Despite the best efforts of Grimme and his faithful (more on that in a moment), an air of debauchery and uncivilized behavior clings to the place like a damp and mildewed blanket. Even though its chief rival, Shan Fan, is run by gangsters, it is the City of Lost Angels which reverberates with sin and the horror of what one man can do to another. I've been in a lot of boomtowns during my stint with the Pinkertons, and I've never seen a place where less value was placed on human life.

In Lost Angels, a man may kill another just because he's annoyed. Children are as likely to murder as hardened criminals. Even though there isn't enough food for people, somebody raises packs of dogs and lets them loose to fight one another on the streets for scraps of food. Even seemingly-respectable folk stop to watch these starving curs battle one another, and either laugh or take bets on the result. Disease is rampant.

In addition, you have a sense of credulity here that makes right-thinking folk believe all manner of crazy nonsense about monsters and supernatural powers and so forth. Now, you and I know that this happens to be *true* nonsense, but we also know that it's useful for folks to believe otherwise—or at least to be told tales in which these “imaginary” menaces are dispatched to the Hells they came from.

In Lost Angels, it's easy to believe in evil forces, and it's hard to believe that anyone can vanquish them except Grimme.

This is a bad place.

HUNGER PANGS

One of the things which contributes to this atmosphere is the constant threat of starvation which hangs over the Maze.

The Great Quake dropped a lot of good farmland into the Pacific. That which remained atop the area's many mesas is hard to get to and often too small to be useful for anything other than subsistence farming (not to mention there's

barely enough fresh water to drink, much less farm). Farmers on the mainland have had to contend with bad weather (we get plenty of rain, just always at the wrong time), crop blights, and the depredations of the petty warlords who lay claim to the area.

Harvesting the bounty of the sea is no piece of cake, either. Fishing in the Maze itself requires intrepid souls to brave its many hazards. Most fishermen actually fish in the waters off the western edge of the Maze, but the sudden geography changes wrought by the Quake have caused the fish to move elsewhere—the yield of these waters is not what it was in years past.

Overland shipments of food are “taxed” so heavily by every bandit, warlord, and chieftain through whose “territory” they pass that a number of caravans have rolled into Lost Angels with empty wagons.

The end result of all of this is that nearly all the area's food is imported and arrives by sea. Food prices are four to five times higher than anywhere else in the country, and even if you have the money there's often not enough food to go around. In highly populated areas like Lost Angels or Shan Fan the loss of a single ship to a storm or pirates can cause serious food shortages. Here in Lost Angels, I've seen otherwise civilized people tear each other to pieces over a loaf of bread.

THE CHURCH OF LOST ANGELS

This, of course, helps explain the popularity of Reverend Grimme and his Church of Lost Angels. Those who worship in his cathedral on Sundays can be assured of going home with a full belly at least once a week.



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Grimme delivers a weekly harangue to his congregation each week on the evils of alcohol, the flesh, and the railroads. This normally takes an hour or two, during which time the church elders place an enormous spread of food out on the tables lining the front of the cathedral (some of the “elders” are big, beefy types who keep the faithful in their pews until the Reverend has wrapped up his message). Once Grimme has said his piece and the plate has been passed, the flock is invited to help themselves to this feast. The food disappears quickly, but as fast as it goes down people's gullets, the elders bring out more.



LOST ANGELS

Where Grimme gets all of this food is a bit of a mystery. The faithful believe the Lord provides it through His earthly servant, the Reverend (a belief he heartily encourages). The more skeptically inclined (myself included) believe he simply hoards food. The church's offering plates are rarely passed back empty and are often overflowing with nuggets of gold, silver, and ghost rock. Even as inflated as prices are, the church could buy the food and still make a hefty profit.

Regardless of where the food comes from, Grimme's ability to keep his congregation's bellies full has won him a large number of diehard supporters who take his every word to heart. These faithful followers of his teachings make up about a quarter of the city's population. When you add in Grimme's more casual supporters, his reach extends to over half of the city's inhabitants.

This broad support in the Maze's most influential city makes Grimme an extremely powerful man. He claims not to covet worldly power, holds no public office, and yet he runs the City of Lost Angels as surely as if he lived in the mayor's house. The candidates which he

supports from the pulpit always win (with one notable exception) and any problems which spring up in the city always seem to be addressed in his sermons. Shortly after one of these messages, an enthusiastic group of the faithful always spring up to do what they regard as the Reverend's bidding.

THE RAIL KILLERS

As I mentioned earlier, one of the recurring themes of Grimme's sermons is the coming of the railroads. According to Grimme, the City of Lost Angels is to be the site of the Second Coming (sometimes, listening to him, I wonder whose) and the faithful must do what they can to make the place as much like a celestial city as possible. This duty includes keeping undesirable influences out of the city.

The way Grimme describes them, the railroads are about as undesirable as you can get. They are the bringers of immorality and sin. They are a blight upon the land, poisoning the earth with their foul smoke and spreading greed and corruption like a cancer across the face of this continent. The death and violence of the Great Rail Wars is racing toward Lost Angels in a



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locomotive crafted in the forges of Hell with Beelzebub himself at the throttle. The faithful must be prepared to resist the railroads' corrupting influence at all costs—speaking in spiritual terms, of course.

Some of his congregation must have missed that last part of his message, because rarely a week goes by without news of an attack on one of the railroads by a group of fanatics. Time and again, groups of vigilantes armed with dynamite and a complete disregard for their own survival have swarmed over railway crews, destroying track and killing or driving off the workers.

Grimme emphatically denies that his church is in any way involved in these attacks. He points to the reports of the odd religious symbols the fanatics wear and the fantastic stories of the gruesome creatures which sometimes accompany them as evidence of another party's involvement. I'm not sure I buy it, but there is no evidence to connect Grimme directly to the attacks—the few fanatics who have been taken alive aren't talking. The Reverend has publicly admonished his flock against attacking the railroads, but the sabotage continues.

The rail companies aren't just sitting there waving reward posters. They're hiring gunslingers, hucksters, martial artists, and other freebooters-

at-large to protect their workers and equipment from these mysterious suicide cultists. They pay handsome rewards for advance warnings against attacks. The rewards get even handsomer for those who stop the mystery vigilantes before they do any damage. Rewards may equal 10-15% of the estimated cost of damage averted, or the guards may be paid for each cultist mown down.

Most of the railway barons are too cultivated to insist on bloody proof of the death toll. Kang's men, however, take a different approach. When they put a price on a man's head, they want to see that head, no matter how many flies are buzzing around it by the time you get it to them. The going rate for a snuffed-out cultist is \$25, same as a Winchester '73.

Once they kill themselves a pile of anti-railers, the rail barons pay investigators to figure out who they were, in hopes of locating their unknown commander. So far the corpses have had little in common, except they were residents of the City of Lost Angels. These people come from all levels of society, from gunslingers to 80-year-old former schoolmarms.

THE LAWN LOST ANGELS

Despite the virtuous behavior of many in Grimme's flock, Lost Angels has all the crime and vice typical of your average boomtown. Luckily for the inhabitants of the city, they have not one, but two groups looking to maintain law and order on their streets.

THE MARSHAL

Lost Angels' current marshal is Job "Hogleg" Dunston. He's unique in that he's the only elected official in the city who has been able to beat one of Grimme's candidates.

Job, or Hog as his friends call him, is a retired US Marshal who came to the Maze to stake a claim and share in the wealth he's spent most of his life guarding. Once he got out here and saw how lawless the place was, he decided to run for town marshal. Or at least that's how he tells it.

I'm not too sure about that "retired" bit. He made quite a name for himself as a Marshal in Colorado, and I know for a fact he's well connected with a number of US Senators. It wouldn't surprise me if he's out here at their behest to keep an eye on things in the Maze.

He ran against Michael Coulter, the leader of Grimme's Guardian Angels (more on them in a moment). The election was close and, as far I can tell, fair. How'd he win? Grimme's hardcore

faithful didn't vote for him, but I think nearly everyone else in town did because they wanted someone in the Marshal's office who might have the sand to stand up to Coulter and his robed avengers.

Grimme didn't take this defeat very well. One of the first actions the mayor and town council took after the election was to reduce the salaries of the Marshal and his deputies to a mere pittance. This doesn't seem to have bothered Hog one bit.

Hog (don't dare call him that unless he tells you to) is a good man, and I've worked with him on a number of occasions. If you need some help while you're working in Lost Angels, he's the man to turn to.

GUARDIAN ANGELS



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These jokers are little more than a lynch mob with a little theology. They were formed in the early days of the city before it had a marshal and have persisted on to this day. In those days, they served the same purpose as most citizens' vigilance committees: to string up anyone who gets out of hand.

Now that the city has a marshal, they have begun enforcing what they call "spiritual law." What's that? As near as I can figure, pretty much whatever they say it is. The Guardian Angels claim they are responsible for maintaining the spiritual cleanliness of the city in preparation for the Second Coming. To that end, they arrest anyone who shows evidence of having "trafficked with Satan or his minions." This includes hucksters, shamans, Harrowed, the occasional scientist, and anyone they or Grimme take a dislike to.

They don't normally waste their time with lesser sins like drunkenness and gambling unless it suits their purposes. The exception to this are their occasional "public morality" raids into the seedier parts of town. The Angels swoop down on a saloon and round up everyone inside on charges of "moral and spiritual laxity." These raids usually involve large numbers of the moral crusaders and are led by some of the higher-ranking Angels. Anyone arrested by the Angels is dragged before the Court of Angels (most people refer to it as Church Court). As you'll hear in a minute, the Court is a place to stay away from.

All Guardian Angels are members of the Church of Lost Angels in good standing. They

generally patrol the city in "flights" of five Angels. You can tell the rank of an Angel by the color of his robe. Rank-and-file wear white, flight leaders wear brown, captains wear red, and the "Archangels," Michael Coulter and Gabriel Fannon, wear gold. I've heard rumors of a black-robed Angel but have not seen him myself. I've also been told by Marshal Dunston that on at least one occasion he witnessed Coulter blast an adversary with a bolt of white light.

Since Hog took office, there have been a number of run-ins between his deputies and the Angels over jurisdiction. There is little he can do, however, because the Angels are recognized as officially deputized law officers in the city's original charter.

CHURCH COURT



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The Court of Angels is maintained by the Church of Lost Angels to try the cases of the spiritual criminals brought before it. A trio of church elders preside over the court and are both judge and jury (they farm out the executioning). The Reverend himself sometimes hears important cases.

In most cases, the Angels present their evidence, the accused makes a statement, is found guilty, and then sentenced. In cases where there is little or no evidence, the accused is often tested in ways which went out of style in England a few hundred years ago. The most popular methods are Trial by Ordeal, Trial by Eating, and Trial by Oath. I'm sure it's only a matter of time before Trial by Combat comes back into vogue.

There's only one person I know of who has stood before the Church Court and escaped sentence. About a year back, the Angels hauled in some minister who had been preaching outside the cathedral and charged him with "possession." The preacher had been telling anyone who would listen that Grimme was a spawn of Satan and was going to lead the entire city into damnation. Grimme himself presided over the trial. This preacher passed every test they gave him, and after the final test, he delivered a 10-minute tirade in which he damned Grimme and all of his supporters to the lowest depths of Hell. Then, before the stunned crowd could react, he simply turned and walked out the door without a soul moving to stop him.

There are only two sentences given in Church Court, death or incarceration in the Rock Island Prison. There is no appeal.

MEN OF THE GRID



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Obviously, not everyone in Lost Angels is a rabid supporter of the good Reverend. A good case in point is the Men of the Grid. These men broke with Grimme early on in the city's history. This group, led by one Phineas Pascal, rebelled against

Grimme's plans for the city's layout. They were willing to bow to him in matters of the spirit but figured the pattern of roads was their own damn business. They wanted a normal grid-pattern-type city, easy to navigate around in.

It sounds like a foolish cause for a fight, but it was just the pretext for an old-fashioned power struggle. Pascal had been a government official before the Quake and wanted a separation of church and state in Grimme's great new city. Or he wanted power himself, depending on who you hear tell it.

Pascal called his group "the Men of the Grid." Grimme called them the Sodomites, after the Biblical city of sin. The Men of the Grid armed themselves and fought a pitched battle against Grimme's followers. They were driven off in 1869, but returned to raid the city in 1870 and 1871. During the final raid, Pascal was allegedly torn

to shreds in front of his horrified supporters. It was either a flash of blinding light or a sharp wind that did it, or so the story goes. The remaining Men of the Grid fled, and everyone assumed that the group had dispersed forever.

Last year, however, a wave of bombings started on the piers of the City of Lost Angels. Docks and ships have been destroyed. Originally these incidents were blamed on the Rebs or Santa Anna, but then the local newspaper received a manifesto signed by Pascal's son Ansel. The Men of the Grid were back, demanding the mayor cease consulting with Grimme on all public matters. If their demands weren't met, they'd continue choking off shipping out of the city, threatening its livelihood.

Well, Grimme hasn't budged, and every now and then a great booming noise comes from the docks. When you hear it, you know the Men of the Grid are back in town. They concentrate on commercial targets. Their plan is to enrage the rich folk of the business community sufficiently that they hire regulators to usher Grimme and his flock to their final reward.

The flaw in their thinking is this: The business magnates see Grimme as a bigger and tougher target than the Grid. They're hoping to outlast Grimme; he can't live forever, and without him, his movement will be easily dispersed. The Grid, on the other hand, is a perfectly affordable target. Hence, they've been hiring local regulators to find the Grid's hiding places and wipe them out. They pay rewards to people who prevent the Grid Men from destroying their property, and they have a \$1,000 price on Ansel Pascal's cranium. That price goes up every time he blows up a ship full of cargo.

OTHER INFLUENTIAL TYPES

Naturally, the Reverend isn't the only person of interest in the City. Other powerful sorts include the mayor and some business magnates.

THE ROCKIES

The headquarters of the Greater Maze Rock Miners Association is located in Lost Angels. The building itself is in the Golden Circle on the wedge of land between 4th and 5th Streets. Copies of all claims filed in the Maze are kept here. A small staff works there daily, logging new claims and processing shipping records.

The Rockies are a group of shipping companies which allied together to reduce the chaos that raged through the Maze in the early



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days of the mining rush. Over the years they have gradually consolidated their power and today control nearly 70% of the Maze's commercial shipping. Most of the City of Lost Angels' waterfront is owned by Rockies members, as is a good portion of Shan Fan's.

All Rockies members contribute a portion of their income to the group. In return, they receive a steady supply of cargoes to fill their ships, they can expect protection and assistance from the small fleet of patrol ships the association maintains, they may pass through all Rockies-run toll channels free of charge, and they pay no extra fees to use Rockies-owned docks. All in all, a pretty sweet deal.

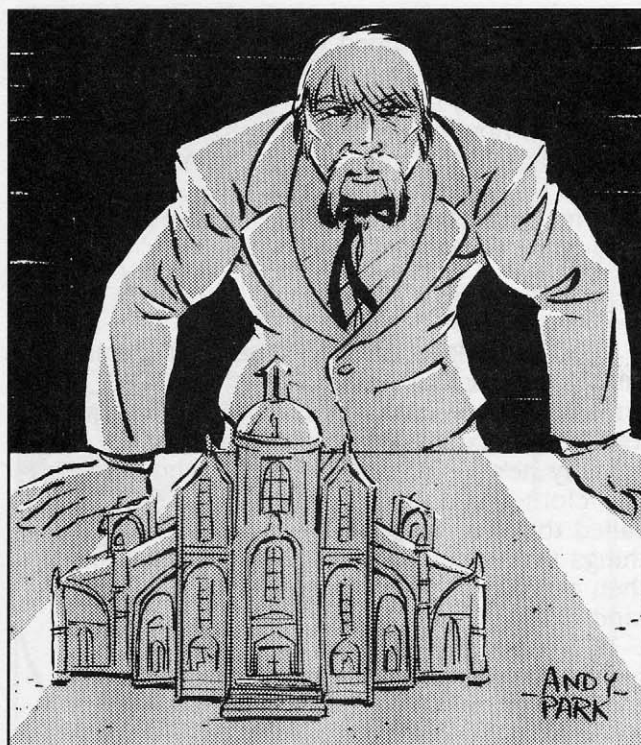
The Rockies are run by a council of twelve. These council members are elected, but the seats usually end up going to the owners of the twelve largest shippers in the group. The council controls the Rockies' fleet and is using it in an aggressive campaign to persuade independent shippers to join the association. This ranges anywhere from minor harassment to Rockies run toll channels to the occasional shooting incident. Independent shippers must also pay a 10% tariff on all cargoes moved over Rockies' docks.

The council is currently split 9-3 on how to handle the railroad issue. The majority are hard-liners who want to force the railroad ships from the Maze, by force if necessary. The minority want to negotiate. A few of those on the majority side may quickly change their tune if things go badly, however.

COUNCIL LEADERS

The three richest men in Lost Angels are members of the Rockies council: Paul Deauville, Joshua Lumme, and Leo "the Bear" Popoff. All three are part of the hard-line anti-railroad faction. None of them are avid supporters of Grimme; many of his policies are bad for business. Together they might have a chance of dislodging Grimme, but they spend most of their time fighting one another. If any one made a move against Grimme individually, he'd end up before the Church Court faster than you can say "heretical doctrine."

They're locked in a three-way hate dance that every now and again claims a life or two. It's suspected that they sometimes blow up each others' cargoes and let the Men of the Grid take the blame. A freelance regulator digging up dirt on one of them can expect a tidy reward from the others.



Each has a few bodyguards on permanent call, but they do hire freelancers to protect their claims or ships from attack or to work against the agents of the others. The magnates pay well, but they expect considerable bootlicking from their hirelings. Only those adept at groveling remain in their employ for extended periods.

JOSHUA LUMME

Lumme is a hulking Finn with 12 equally hulking children and two dead wives. In addition to being a mean and powerful rich man, he's a sentimental drunk who's on occasional good terms with the Reverend Grimme. That's because Grimme claims to be in contact with dead wife number two. When her messages to Lumme are flattering, he supports the Reverend. When her shade gets into a nagging frame of mind, Lumme is Grimme's most vocal opponent.

Lumme believes that Grimme has angels doing his bidding, and when he's angered the preacher, he fears their wrath. He also believes that there's a holy relic sunk somewhere in the channels of the Maze: a piece of the cross that the Son of God was crucified on, no less. He thinks that this will protect him from angelic attack or even allow him to control the Lost Angels, if someone finds it for him. He'd pay a pretty penny for this relic or something he believes to be it.

He's been hoodwinked once already by an English con man named Rupert Darke-Lytton. Darke-Lytton sold him a piece of ship's hull, claiming it was the relic.

Lumme now has a \$500 reward out for anyone who brings him Darke-Lytton. The reward only applies if you bring him to Lumme intact. The Finn no doubt has a detailed program of vengeance all worked out.

LEO "THE BEAR" POPOFF

Popoff is a Russian who started as a miner during the original Gold Rush and worked himself up to tycoon status. His moniker might lead you to expect a big, bruising man, but actually he's a skinny little fellow who dresses in fine clothes and exhibits refined manners. He's called the Bear because he has a habit of buying things when they're going down in value and then cashing in when they go up again. Some kind of financial reference, I suppose.

He does have a bearish appetite for other peoples' property, however, and like a rabid grizzly, you plain don't want to tangle with him. He has a habit of financing the projects of explorers, mad scientists, and fortune hunters, and then bushwhacking those who lead him to the wealth. Accordingly, there are a number of

folks who've been burned by him that might pony up a little something to see the Bear finally caged.

Openly thumbing his nose at Grimme's followers, Popoff possesses the Maze's finest collection of occult artifacts. He claims they're of mere scholarly interest and that the supernatural is all a mess of hogwash. You and I know different, of course. Popoff's collection has made him a target of thieves. Robbers sneak in, but don't sneak back out again; his 4th Street mansion is said to be filled to the roof with traps and hoodoo spirits.

I can attest to the fact that Popoff has quite the selection of talismans and other protective gewgaws. He's the fellow to petition for a loan if you find yourself in need of such things—and as Pinkertons you will, sooner or later. Remember, though, that any deal made with Popoff has a catch, and he'll probably obligate you to undertake a mission against Grimme, Lumme, or Deauville in exchange for his largess.

PAUL DEAUVILLE

Deauville is a Frenchie, but by way of New Orleans, which isn't quite as bad. Because he's from New Orleans, he's widely assumed to be a practitioner of voodoo. Actually, he's a dedicated foe of the occult, and a particular enemy of Simone LaCroix, head of the Bayou Vermillion railroad.

Deauville is a former Catholic seminarian, and he supposedly knows LaCroix's most deadly secrets. Deauville wears an eye patch, and the story goes that he lost the eye in a fight with LaCroix. He came out here only four years back and quickly rose to business prominence through a series of incredibly lucky deals. The Catholic minority of Lost Angels sees Deauville as a community leader; they say his good fortune is from Mary, mother of God, smiling down upon him.

Grimme, on the other hand, is of that variety of extreme Protestant that believes the Pope to be a manifestation of the Anti-Christ. He persecuted Catholics fiercely until Deauville showed up and hired some guns to protect them. Last year, Deauville and Grimme reached a truce of some kind, and Deauville is now building a new cathedral unmolested by the cultists. Still, their peace is a rickety one, and tensions could easily explode into a street war.

Deauville's purse opens for folks who fight unholy powers or have a good plan to undermine LaCroix's railroad or Grimme's anti-



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Catholic cult. He's no hero, though; I'd say his luck in business is more ruthlessness than holy favor. Given a choice between fighting the supernatural and protecting his financial empire, he'll take the empire every time.

MR. MAYOR

Although I don't think he's doing as much as he could, Grimme does tell his flock who to vote for, and his candidate usually wins the elections. The problem is that he shows little discretion in deciding who wins.

The current office-holder, John Miller, became mayor in an interesting manner. He's a former gunslinger for hire who shot the last mayor in the back. You see, he was under the mistaken impression that his predecessor was shuffling around on the wrong side of the grave from which he belonged, an impression that had been fraudulently conveyed to him by an agent of the warlord Kang, and—well, it's a long story.

The point is, his punishment for killing the mayor was that Grimme forced him to replace the fellow. The reasoning behind this decision escapes me completely. There must be something going on behind the scenes here, and I'd be very interested to know what.

Miller is a sorrowful fellow who desperately wants to get out of his predicament in particular and Lost Angels in general. But somebody has some kind of hold over him, and he can't or won't leave. He's a downright ineffectual mayor, having done nothing to encourage public morality or create an effective force for law and order.

THE CITY TODAY

That brings us up to the current day, pretty much. The city makes its living through shipping. Its worst problem is that food-supply dilemma I talked about before. What fresh produce and crops the land does allow are viciously expensive. The city imports what non-perishable food it can, and there is much reliance on salted pork, beef, and fish. Perhaps much of the sour disposition of the folk of Lost Angels is due to this awful food.

LAYOUT

The city is laid out according to the Reverend's celestial vision. Grimme is obsessed with numerology, so you can bet that every street has its number.



There are six circles. The numbering starts at the first ring from the plaza surrounding Grimme's immense cathedral. If you live on this circle, your address is 108 First Circle, or whatever.

Spoking out from the circles are 12 avenues. So you might live at 315 Ninth Avenue, or at the corner of Third Circle and Sixth Avenue.

Then there are the Streets, which are situated in the western half of the city. Each of them terminates in a pier. There are six of these as well.

Zoning regulations are strictly enforced and arbitrarily determined. When you want to build in the City of Lost Angels or apply for a change in the by-laws which say what kind of business you can do where, you need to know that the rules were drawn up by Grimme according to obscure numerological principles. He says that the city has to be in absolute balance for the Second Coming.

Grimme doesn't like too much of one sort of business in any one area, which can be mighty inconvenient. But the city isn't set up for the convenience of earthly business. It's a spiritual place, you see. If a shipping or mining magnate wants to take advantage of the port, he has to play by Grimme's rules. The tycoons are very jealous of their competitors up in freewheeling



Shan Fan, where the power of a rich man is still respected. Here, the wealthy are continually being reminded of that camel and eye of the needle.

DISTRICTS

Despite these laws, the real world has influenced the city's growth and a few notable districts exist in the city.

The **Waterfront** covers the area between 1st and 6th Streets back as far as the 4th Circle. This area consists mainly of shipping warehouses, saloons, and cheap boarding houses. Most of the city's houses of ill repute can be found here also. This is by far the roughest part of the city, because it's where all the sailors and most of the local miners come to spend their pay and kick up their heels. Most of the law enforcement in this area is handled by Marshal Dunston. His office sits at the corner of 3rd Street and 4th Circle. This is a common area for one of the Guardian Angels' public morality raids.

The **Spanish Quarter** sits in the southwest portion of the city between 10th Avenue and 1st Street. It's home to many native Californios and Mexican immigrants. This is another area the Angels like to raid frequently.

The **Golden Circle** holds the homes and shops which sit within the innermost ring of the city closest to the cathedral. This area is home to the richest and most influential inhabitants of the city. Most of the Rockies' council have houses here. This area is patrolled almost exclusively by the Guardian Angels.

It also contains the centerpiece of Grimme's "celestial city," the Cathedral of Lost Angels. This massive stone monstrosity looms over the center of the City like a tombstone over a grave. The Cathedral is visible from almost everywhere in the city, and there are zoning regulations to ensure this. Grimme's church is a constant reminder of just who's really in charge here and to whom the city owes its existence.

Aside from the central chamber where all the religious activities take place, the Cathedral also contains offices dedicated to the day-to-day running of the Church organization. The Guardian Angels' headquarters are directly across the street from the Cathedral, and as you might expect there are Angels (the human kind) present in the church at all hours of the day and night.

The large kitchens for the Sunday feasts are in the basement, along with storage rooms for all of the food. Grimme's quarters are somewhere in the structure as well, but I don't know where.

Allan, there's just something about that building that keeps me up at night. I can see it right now as I sit writing this, and I just can't shake the feeling that for all its supposed "holiness," the Cathedral of Lost Angels isn't the safe haven that it purports to be.

Maybe it's the carved reliefs of the struggles of Grimme and his followers, rendered in almost grotesque detail. Maybe it's the almost zombie-like state of the congregation during one of Grimme's sermons. Lets just say you won't find me there on Sundays. I'm not *that* hungry.

The **Traders' Quarter** is the area between the Waterfront and the Golden Circle. It's bounded in the south by the Spanish Quarter. This area has the largest concentration of shops and businesses—including some upscale saloons and hotels—in the city. Many of the smaller shippers, merchants, and mine owners have homes in this area.

No tour of Lost Angels would be complete without mentioning **Ghost Town**. A shantytown constructed along the south side of the Ghost Trail and the east edge of the city, Ghost Town is home to the desperate and destitute. This is the most dangerous part of the city, no mistake.

The name of the place refers in part to the way folks just seem to drift in and out of town, like ghosts. The law has little sway in Ghost Town, but even the roughest residents know better than to stray into the city itself. Grimme seems willing to tolerate the squatters, as long as they don't attempt to soil his "city of God" with their presence.

ROCK ISLAND PRISON

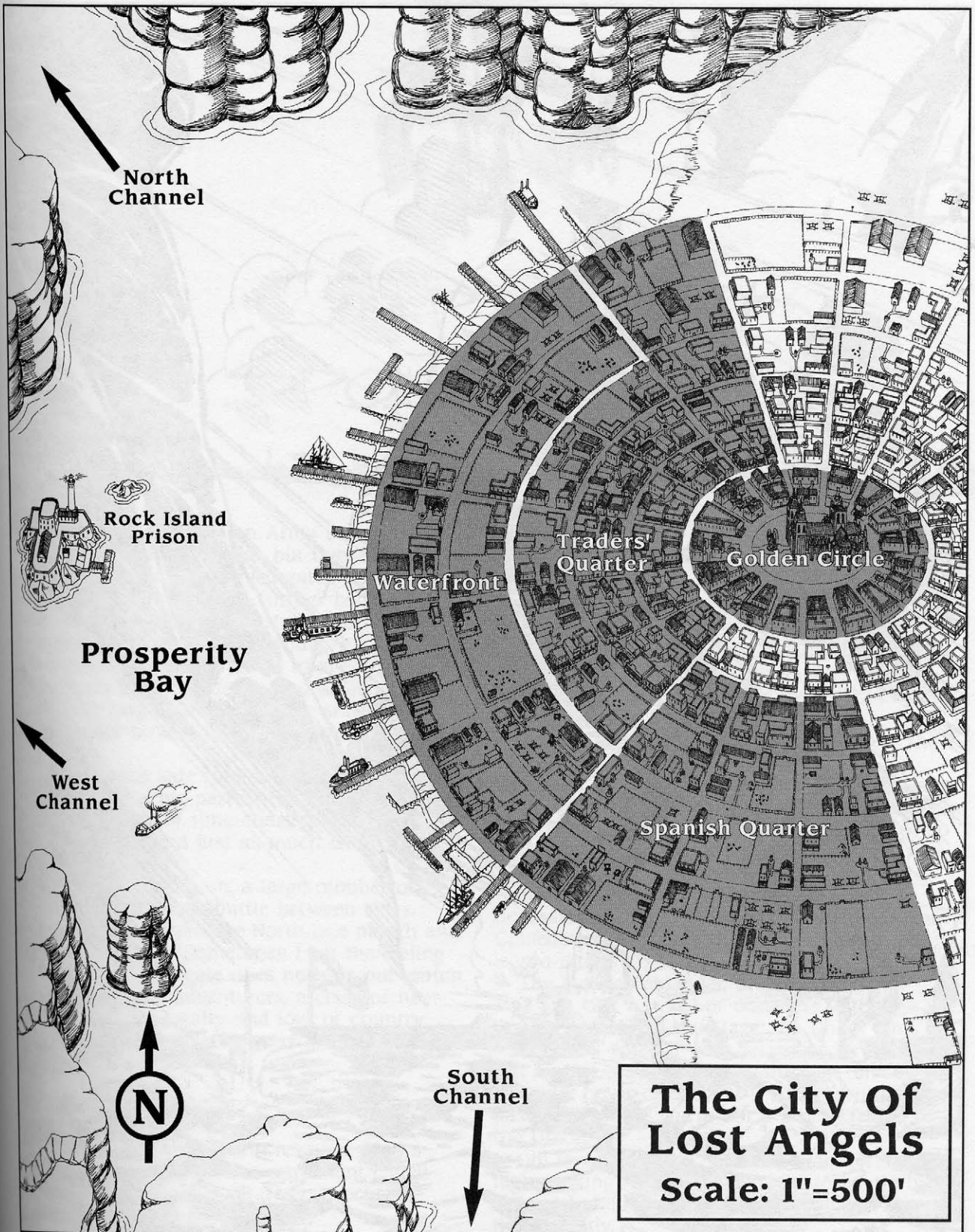
Rock Island Prison (known simply as "The Rock" by locals) is an imposing, fortress-like structure which sits on a large rock plateau in the middle of Prosperity Bay. Anyone sentenced by the Court of Angels and still drawing breath is sent here to serve out their sentence. All sentences to the Rock are for life or until the sinner truly repents and cleanses his soul of all evil influences.

The prison is heavily guarded. Armed guards walk the walls, and patrol boats cruise the nearby waters.

Once a week, Grimme and some of his assistants visit the prison to preach to the lost souls inside. The inmates must all be hardcore sinners, because very few people have returned from the prison. The few I know of who *have* repented and been released have gone on to high-ranking positions in the Guardian Angels.



LOST ANGELS





SPOILS



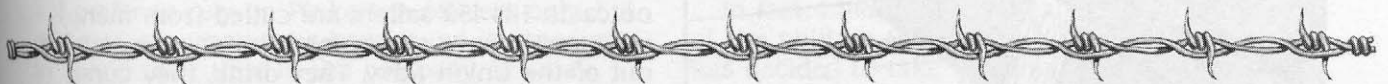
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POSSE 74



CHAPTER SIX: SPOILS OF WAR



Our friends in the Union Army say they have a firm foothold in the Maze, but they don't. The good news is that the Confederates don't either and the Mexicans are even further behind. I think we're in for a lengthy stalemate mostly distinguished by petty skirmishing.

Primarily it all comes down to sheer piracy. Union boats board Confederate ore-carriers, offload the cargo, and scuttle the ships. The Rebs sponsor pirates to do the same to Union vessels.

On land, each side runs a spy operation. We Pinkertons are a big part of the Union effort. We spend a great lot of time chasing down Reb agents, and they put just as much effort into interfering with us.

While this is going on, a large number of freelance gunslingers shuttle between sides, taking a mission from the North one month and the South the next. Sometimes I get the feeling that this whole struggle does nothing but enrich these disreputable adventurers, a class of near-bandits to whom loyalty and love of country mean nothing. They seek thrills and cash, and not in that order.

THE FEDS

The Union has three main resources in its fight to claim the Maze: the settlement called Fort Lincoln, the soldier-pirates of Locke's Raiders, and us, the Pinkertons.

FORT LINCOLN

There are many small Union mining towns scattered throughout the landward side of the Great Maze. Sacramento is the largest, with about 500 infantry and about 150 cavalry garrisoned there at Fort Sacramento. However, Sacramento's distance inland keeps these forces from exercising much power in the Maze itself.

To the Union leadership, Fort Lincoln is the most important of the Mazeward towns (although its usefulness sometimes seems more symbolic than practical). Fort Lincoln is actually a fairly sleepy little outpost, home to 300 or so infantrymen and 100 or so naval raiders. Locke and his raiders use the place as a base of operations, and they retreat here when necessary. It's deep in the Maze, sheltered from Confederate ironclads that might want to pound it into dust.

The base commander, Brigadier General Malcolm Gill, is wary of outsiders. Although like any other force in the Maze, the Union hires freebooters when it gets desperate for good help, Gill almost never parleys with them directly. He certainly never does so at the fort. You don't get past the gates if you're not a proven friend of the Union.

Gill is a good man, stiff and standoffish as a high-ranking Army officer ought to be. He has a wife and child back home and probably misses them greatly.





RANK STRUCTURE

Army rank structure can be confusing to us civilians. From top to bottom, it goes: general, lieutenant general, major general, brigadier general, colonel, lieutenant colonel, major, captain, and first lieutenant. Many of these ranks are missing at Fort Lincoln, where the list reads: brigadier general, major, captain, and first lieutenant. The ranks of enlisted men are: sergeant, corporal, and private.

The top-ranking Navy officer in the Maze is Lt. Commander Oswald Locke. He's supposed to follow General Gill's orders, but in fact he's his own man.

LOCKE'S RAIDERS

Locke is an anti-social and unpleasant man who commands a force of similarly-inclined outcasts. His 150 sailors are culled from men who would have otherwise been court-martialed out of the Union Navy. They drink, they curse, they don't take care of their uniforms, and they live to fight. If they aren't fighting the Rebs or other Maze pirates, they start fighting among themselves. Locke keeps them out in the Maze as much as possible, because they inevitably end up in the stockade if they spend more than a fortnight at Fort Lincoln.

These foul-smelling brawlers may be the dumb kind of brave, but they're fearsome. They skim over the waves in 15-foot open boats driven by steam propellers. These vessels, nicknamed knifeships, are not gunboats. They exist for one purpose and one purpose only: to quickly move dozen-man teams of cutthroats around the Maze. The object is to bull headlong into an enemy vessel and board it for close-quarter fighting, at which Locke's Raiders are unparalleled.

Locke's men stay away from the heavily armored pirate vessels of the Confederate side, instead preying on cargo ships. By the time one of the behemoth Rebel ironclads steams into sight, the maneuverable knifeships are long gone, their victims denuded of ghost rock and run aground.

Although they're justly feared, the average life span of Locke's men is not long. Sometimes they run out of Union Navy rejects and have to recruit local mercenaries to round out a crew. Those who stay for a short while can gain considerable wealth, as well as combat experience and bragging rights. Those who stay for a long while end up as fish food.

I feel sorry for the man. The size of the force at Fort Lincoln warrants a Colonel at best. The Brigadier General is here for political reasons, to assure the miners of the Maze that the Union takes its claim to the territory seriously.

The liaison between Union forces and the Pinkertons (and the man who most often deals with mercenaries and freelance posses) is Major Farrell Brick, a young and energetic fellow from a blue-blood family. His exuberant determination to take the fight to the Rebs seems a little childish sometimes, as if he thinks it's all a big fox hunt or something. But don't let his upper-crust mannerisms fool you; his killer instinct is as long as your arm.

Brick is a frequent visitor in Shan Fan, where he conducts most of his business. While a more cautious man would come incognito, he flashes about in full dress uniform. He's been assaulted more than once while pulling this routine and so far has always made his attackers regret their folly.

Brick offers rewards for information about the movements and plans of Confederate forces in the area. He often places bounties on the heads of particular Confederate-backed buccaneers and can provide armaments, maps, and logistical support to those who want to bag themselves a pirate or two.



Once I had occasion to pose as one of Locke's Raiders, to flush out a Reb spy among them. Next time, I'll turn down the invite. Maybe I'll assign you, reader, to go in my place.

THE PINKERTON ROLE

Among our many other duties, the Pinkertons of the Maze are the spearhead against the Confederate spy operation here. Ultimate responsibility for this assignment, like so many others, rests with yours truly, Samuel Q. Hellman. I am as reasonable and open-minded an individual you would ever want to meet, and the most truly benevolent superior you will ever serve under. Don't let all of my little references to the colleagues who have fallen in the line of duty disturb your sense of morale. Some new recruits survive for as long as three years without going mad or getting themselves killed.

I prefer to rely on Pinkerton officers only, but some of our operatives have found it expedient to spend their time in the company of small bands of freelance regulators. It's not a policy I'm precisely comfortable with, but I will concede that their acquaintances with hucksters, mad scientists, martial artists, and Indian shamans has on occasion yielded positive results which an all-Pinkerton detail could not hope to match.

Unfortunately, some who embark on this course develop a greater loyalty to their motley posses than to the organization. Perhaps that is something that superiors in less dangerous areas of the West tolerate, but if you try any nonsense here, you can expect yours truly to yank your leash so fast you'll cough up your breakfast.

THE REBS

The Union vs. Confederate dustup in the Maze sums up like this: We got the manpower; they got the boats. Specifically, they have a fleet of outlandish and experimental steam devices which are half ironclad battleship and half waterborne fortress.

They'd be halfway to making good on their claim for the Maze if they had good officers and crews to operate their contraptions. Instead, all they have are buccaneers: a mangy group of pirates to whom they've given letters of marque and a mission to loot and destroy all Union vessels they come across.

The buccaneers are good at the destroying part, but they aren't too diligent in going after Union ships. They attack anything unlucky enough to appear in their sights. Unless,

naturally, it's bigger than they are. They tend to get downright circumspect in the presence of vessels from the dreaded Mexican armada.

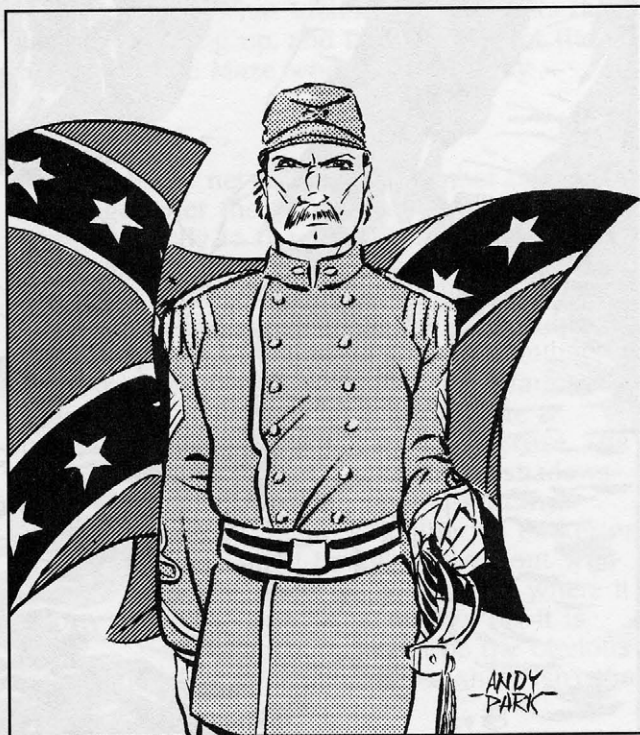
ADMIRAL BIRMINGHAM

The poor sap charged with responsibility for these operations is Admiral Allen Birmingham, who led the first Confederate attempt to capture the Maze and has been stuck here ever since. Back when he came here, he commanded a *real* Navy flotilla. Our intelligence indicates that he's an honorable enough fellow. He and Malcolm Gill have much in common; they're both conservative family men from well-to-do families.

Birmingham is in his late 50s, bearded, carries himself with dignity, and wears a monocle. I've turned down proposals from junior officers to kidnap Birmingham or put him permanently out of commission several times.

In fact, I hear tell that Stalks the Night, leader of the militant Indian group the Warrior's Trail, has decided to take Birmingham's scalp as a message to all white men in the territory. If you get wind of this, I want you to stop Stalks the Night from getting anywhere near Birmingham.

I know, I know. On paper, Birmingham is a worse threat than any Indian, warlord, or religious fanatic. That's not the way I see it. Birmingham is a moderating influence.



CONFEDERATE STRATEGY

See, Birmingham is often disgusted by the actions of the pirates who carry his letters of marque. We've intercepted communiques he's sent to Jefferson Davis, pleading for real Naval officers and seamen. We've also managed to get communiques from Davis' yes-men fobbing Birmingham off with long lists of excuses. Fact is, they just don't have the men to spare.

Reading between the lines, I figure the Reb leadership realizes that a decisive grab for the Maze is out of the question and their limited resources are better aimed somewhere else.

I'm still afraid that some bright candle on Davis' staff will try to blockade the Maze's food supply and just starve everybody out. This might even have been suggested and Birmingham not agreed. He identifies with the Mazer and hopes he can win them with persuasion, not gunboats.

As Pinkertons, we have a bit of a tightrope to walk here. We don't want Birmingham to be replaced (dead or alive) by someone less restrained. On the other hand, we don't want his attempts to curry favor with the locals to succeed. We have to keep his efforts in check without getting him recalled.

SHANNONSBURG



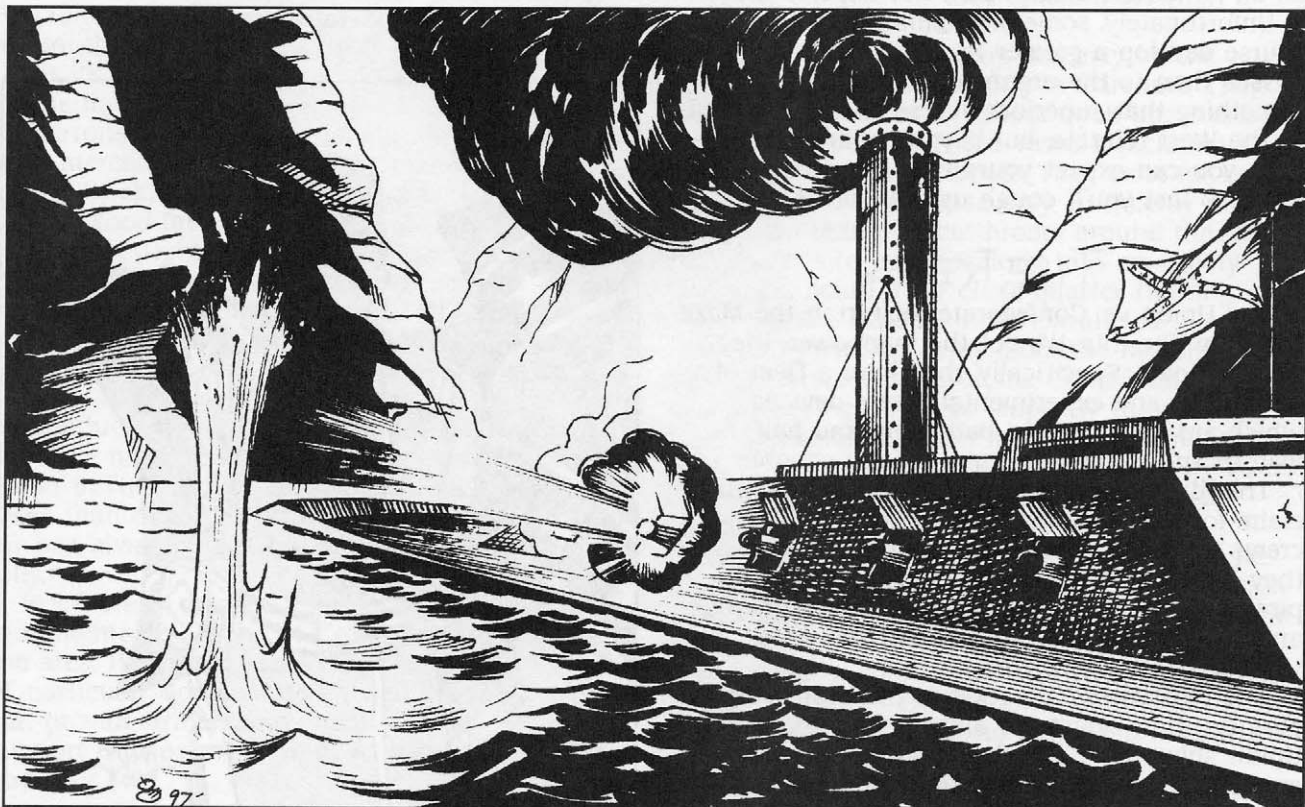
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The key to Birmingham's effort to win the hearts and noggins of Maze residents is Shannonsburg, a town he's setting up as an alternative port to Shan Fan and the City of Lost Angels. Its main attraction is cheap prices on goods. Cheap by Maze standards, that is.

The Confederate government underwrites this operation. We Pinkertons do our best to prevent supply trains from getting to Shannonsburg, to discourage people from going there, and generally to make their friendship initiative as costly as possible. So far, our success has been limited. Low prices are a powerful statement of solidarity with the common folk.

LEVIATHANS

The Reb pirate fleet consists of five leviathans, those bizarre floating fortress things I mentioned above. The lead vessel is called the *C.S.S. Leviathan*; hence the name. It's manned by Confederate Navy regulars; it's too much of a showpiece to give to mere pirates. Would you



trust a bunch of cutthroats with that much firepower? Talk about loose cannons.

It's a big, square boat abounding with heavy artillery. It's huge, slow, and about as maneuverable as the circus fat lady in an outhouse. Problem is, the reach of their guns is such that you don't have to be slower than they are to get blown out of the water.

The *Leviathan* is 120 feet long and 40 feet wide. Its four sister vessels, manned by the aforementioned pirates, are the *Ourobouros*, the *Wyrn*, the *Wantley*, and the *Grendel*. These are a mite smaller at 70 feet long and 25 feet wide. It goes without saying that the *Leviathan* has more room for huge guns than the others.

These things are too big to leave the main channels of the Maze, but they have one unusual advantage: they're submersible. You heard me right. When in trouble, they can duck underwater. Of course, it takes time to get everyone off the deck and all the guns safely stowed in watertight housings. As I said, speed is not an advantage these experimental vessels can rightly lay claim to. Rather than chase their prey, they simply lurk on the bottom and surface in front of them.

BUCCANEERS

You never met a scurvier bunch of killers than the crews of these vessels. They make Locke's Raiders look like solid citizens.

Captain of the *Ourobouros* is Frances Dinan, also known as the Widow Woman. She's a former schoolmarm, believe it or not, and keeps her crew in terror of her, as if she's going to spring a surprise mathematics test on them at any moment. I've met this dried-up but deadly old prune, and I'm only halfway kidding.

Most of the other senior crew members are women as well, leaning heavily towards spinsters and widows. It's Frances who leveled those two mining towns, looking for the ex-crew member who deflowered her 16-year-old daughter Prudence. That man still hasn't been caught; maybe if you lay hands on him, you can snare yourself an invite aboard the *Ourobouros*.

The *Wyrn's* captain is Victor Schlitz, a gluttonous Bavarian who fancies himself some kind of Viking. He's decorated his Reb-supplied vessel with ancient Icelandic runes in hopes of summoning up the aid of Thor and Wotan. He runs his ship like a Viking chieftain, practicing his version of ancient Viking law. He's investigated reports of Norse-style magic, which might be the key to meeting him.

The *Wantley* is helmed by one Chaim Cohen, a tailor's son who found piracy more to his liking than a lifetime sewing hems. He's not as flamboyant as the other buccaneers; this is just a business to him. Among the pirates, he's the most reliable subordinate to Admiral Birmingham. He looks up to Birmingham as a substitute father; apparently his own papa was about as warm and outgoing as a salmon.

I don't think Cohen has much interest in the Rebel cause, and he might defect if something happened to Birmingham. Legend has it that he's buried a huge cache of gold in something called a "water vault" on an island near to the Oregon border. There are plenty of men who dream of finding his treasure, but fewer who'd want the *Wantley* chasing them afterwards.

The *Grendel* is run by Johann Viehauser, a sadistic SOB who was cashiered from the Confederate Navy for being too hard on his crew. He drives his current men relentlessly, and the *Grendel* has caused more havoc than any other two Reb raiders combined. Viehauser has been known to execute the crews of ships which resisted him.

My informants tell me that Stalks the Night has been seen aboard the *Grendel* a couple of times in the last few months. This is funny business, considering that the Warrior's Trail leader is also said to be gunning for Viehauser's commander, the Admiral. I'd be mighty happy to find out exactly what Viehauser and Stalks the Night are brewing up, and I'm sure I'm not the only one in the Maze who feels that way.

REB SPIES

The Reb spy network has a number of advantages over the Pinkerton operation. One, it answers directly to the Confederate government so information reaches the bosses faster. (Apologies, Allan.) Two, it isn't at all concerned with suppressing incidents of the unexplained. Three, it operates in secrecy.

Everyone knows who the Pinkertons are and that we fight the Reb spy network. We're a business, after all, and we have to advertise. The Reb network sticks to the shadows.



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choice, but whoever's running this show isn't the obvious sort.

Here's where I confess to my biggest failure as California Pinkerton chief: I still haven't figured out who heads the Reb spy network, where it is headquartered, or how big it is.

Shannonsburg would be the obvious



Sometimes I have the nagging feeling that my opposite number is working right under my nose. Certainly, we've put the hand on a number of low-level agents, but even under tough interrogation, none of them have revealed the identity of their controller. This has to be our principal goal, and if informants come forward on this matter, we should be prepared to reward them in a manner commensurate with the great value of such information.

THE MEXICANS

Although we Pinkertons spend most of our time keeping the Rebs in line, I personally think we're more likely to be driven out of the Maze by the Mexicans. They have an actual army on the ground, and their French-backed pirate fleet dominates the sea. If General Santa Anna takes the Maze, French Emperor Maximillian is going to reward him with the troops necessary to retake Texas. If California and Texas go south, we can forever forget our dream of a unified America.

Although their military might outstrips ours and the CSA's combined, the Mexican-French intelligence network has to have asked itself how one conquers a territory where there is no central authority to conquer. They have to sweep from mining village to mining village, knocking them over one town at a time. The miners are just as likely to flee until the troops have gone and then come back. The Mexicans also have to somehow deal with General Kwan and his fortress, along with the various bandits and outlaws that make life so difficult here.

In short, overrunning the territory will be difficult; occupying it, near impossible. Surely this is why the Mexicans have yet to move. Despite this, Maximillian no doubt expects a good, simple, European war strategy to work out here, which it won't.

As Pinkertons, it is your duty to keep an ear to the ground for any signs of a Mexican invasion. Although they're bound to fail, they'll cause untold damage in doing so, and we'd all be better off if they didn't try in the first place.

Although here's an odd thought for you: Maybe a genuine threat from the Mexicans might unite the Americans, at least those in the Maze, at least for a while.

THE MEXICAN ARMADA

The Mexican Armada is the most-feared navy in the region. It makes our puny raiders and the

small, bizarre fleet of the CSA look positively unprofessional. It consists of two parts.

CAPTAIN BLOOD

The ocean-going fleet is a pirate operation that dwarfs the fleet of all other Maze pirates put together. The ships are paid for by the French and mainly manned by Spaniards. (However, they are heavily salted with outcasts from every corner of the world.) The Spanish pirates are undisciplined, though not as crazed as the pilots of the Confederate Leviathans.

At any rate, they're numerous enough not to need discipline. At last count, their fleet numbered 15 fast clippers. Individually, a clipper is no match for a Leviathan or even the flagship of Warlord Kang's fleet, but in formation they can muster enough guns to make even those feared vessels head for the open seas.

Not much is known about the head of the fleet, Capitan Sangre, also known as Captain Blood. He's said to boast a smile that can faint a woman at 20 paces and is also reputed to personally lead any boarding actions run from his ship, the *Conquistador*. It might be wise to capture or kill this fellow. I wonder if a trap might be laid for him, putting freelance regulators on a vessel to gain his attention.

With Blood's fleet as the number one hazard of shipping in the area, it wouldn't be hard to find fundement magnates willing to fund such an operation. Removing Captain Blood from the picture won't break the Spanish fleet, but it might hurt its morale and lessen chances of an all-out invasion.

RODRIGO COBO

Sailing ships can't navigate the Maze easily, so the channels themselves are patrolled by a fleet of small, maneuverable ironclads. The fleet is led by Grand Admiral Rodrigo Cobo, a strutting peacock of a man well-connected to the Mexican government. Cobo patrols the the southern parts of the Maze, just waiting for some fundement-heavy ship to appear on the horizon. Those traveling the South channel are advised to keep an eye out, especially around the Sunken City (that's San Diego for you greenhorns; the Quake sent the whole city to the bottom).

Cobo has an inflated sense of his importance and tactical skills, but he's not quite the fool his flamboyant uniform marks him out to be. His captains are careful fighters who choose their engagements well, rarely risking their ships or



men. Their careful, unimaginative approach reaps rewards; Cobo's pirate fleet probably takes in more fundament than any other.

So, how does any fundament get shipped out at all, what with Cobo, Captain Blood, Locke's Raiders, the Leviathans, and Kang's pirates all competing to capture ships? Simple. Cobo and Blood are willing to leave the ships of particular owners be for a hefty annual fee. It's nothing but a waterborne protection racket.

The Mexicans are in bed with the Rockies' cartel, so Cobo and Blood concentrate their attacks on Union, Confederate, and independent vessels. This arrangement grants the Rockies a competitive advantage. They still have to fear Kang, the Leviathans, and various unaligned pirates, though.

The fact that the richest ore dealers of the Maze are basically paying taxes to support the Mexican Navy should alarm our patrons in Washington. They'll never recapture the territory with the Mexican Navy lording it over them.

Is there a way to convince the Rockies to underwrite a beefed-up Union naval presence and switch from the Mexicans? Maybe they'd be more amenable to a new, independent anti-pirate fleet—though I don't know who might run such an enterprise.

SANTA ANNA'S ARMY

Not that we can rest easy with Santa Anna gathering an army from the south. Our people have observed his army by day. They have pretty uniforms, but don't seem all that impressive. However, they've launched a number of night raids over the border, attacks of devastating speed, precision, and ferocity. That's when they seem to deserve the fancy nickname they've been given, *el Ejercito de los Muertos*, or the Army of Death.



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Santa Anna, whose full name is Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna Perez de Lebron, is a legendary figure in Mexico, suddenly brought out of mothballs by French Emperor Maximillian for one final tilt at the *gringos*. He fought the Spaniards,

became President of Mexico in 1833, and fought the Texan rebels in 1836. It was he that took the Alamo.

Unfortunately for him, the tide turned against him, and the Texans handed him a major defeat in 1838. He ruled as a hero for a while, but after losing the battle of Veracruz to the French in 1848, he was deposed and exiled. The American



government brought him back to power once, but he betrayed them and was bounced again. Maximillian's arrangement is the second resurrection for this dangerous old penny. From all reports, he's determined to win this time.

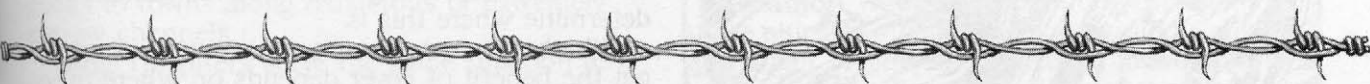
We don't have the manpower to keep the kind of eye on Santa Anna that we ought to. Maybe we should hire some freelance regulators to get down there and stir the pot a bit. Maximillian has to know that he can't trust Santa Anna, given his record of betraying his foreign puppet-masters. It would greatly profit both the Union and the Confederacy if Maximillian's spymasters could be convinced that Santa Anna was going to turn on them. Whether this is accomplished with genuine proof of betrayal or trumped-up evidence is no skin off my *nariz*.

Another matter I'd like to see investigated is a strange crop Santa Anna has been growing near Mexico City. It's a variant of the coca plant called the *plantagrato*. I've spoken to a number of botanists and no one knows what it is or what Santa Anna might be doing with it. Rumor has it that these plants scream like frightened children when harvested. I know this sounds like an insignificant matter, but ever since I heard of it I've thought that the *plantagrato* is the answer to some great mystery. Maybe it could even be the break we need to eliminate Santa Anna.





CHAPTER SEVEN: SHIPS OF THE GREAT MAZE



So, now that you've read Samuel Q. Hellman's primer on the Great Maze, we suppose you're all raring to go exploring there. But how are you going to get around, pardner?

If your heroes plan to venture out into the Maze, they're going to need a ship. Listed below are the most common types of watergoing vehicles available.

GETTIN' ABOARD

The only way to get a ship is to buy one or charter one with a crew. For some reason, no one seems keen on the idea of renting boats to the scum of the earth in the most dangerous waters in the world.

Buying a boat in the Maze is expensive. Demand is high, and supply is limited. We've listed the prices for buying these craft *outside* the Maze, so that you can use these vehicles in other parts of the *Deadlands* world. In the Maze, multiply the prices by 4 or 5 to get the true cost.

Used boats are available, but you get what you pay for. Cheap boats generally have weird quirks and a lower Reliability than a new craft.

CHARTERS

Chartering a ship complete with crew is cheaper, but it's still going to cost the heroes. Plus, they have the crew sticking their noses into whatever business the posse is up to.

The normal fee is 1% of the ship's cost per day (just whack off two zeroes) plus fuel costs. (So a steam launch costs \$20 a day to charter.) Good skippers can get as much as twice this. Sleazy types may work for less, but you need to watch them a lot more.

FERRIES

There are ferry services in both Lost Angels and Shan Fan which make the rounds of all the nearby settlements. They usually leave the docks every two hours and charge \$10 a head. They don't run after dark.

THE SHIPS

If you plan to have a lot of ship-to-ship combat in your campaign, you'll want the vehicle combat rules in *Smith & Robards*. For those of you who don't have that invaluable tome, here's a quick rundown on the ships' statistics and what they mean.

Durability: The first number is the maximum amount of damage the vehicle can withstand. All small-arms damage is divided by 10 before being applied. The second number is the craft's Reliability threshold. Each time the craft's accumulated damage reaches a multiple of this number, the boat must make a Reliability check. Add +1 to the roll for each forced check after the first.





Passengers: This is the number of passengers and crew which can fit aboard comfortably. At least twice this number can be squeezed on in a pinch.

Pace: This is the vehicle's normal Pace. It can move at least twice this fast, but this makes maneuvering more difficult. The pilot can push the ship to go even faster.

Turn Number: A measure of the ship's maneuverability, it's the base TN for all *drivin'* rolls made to maneuver the boat.

Travel Speed: This is the ship's normal cruising speed. It's mainly used for figuring out how long it takes to get somewhere.

Fuel: This is the number of one-pound Smith & Robards' ghost-rock cores needed to travel 100 miles. If using other fuels, multiply by 2 for raw ghost rock, by 50 for coal, and by 100 for wood.

Reliability: Roll against this number when making Reliability checks. Ships with a 20 Reliability are not products of weird science and only need to check each time they have taken damage and passed a Reliability threshold. Then they must check as normal.

Hit Modifier: All shots not targeted at a specific part of the craft are modified by this number.

Pumps: This is the amount of flooding damage the ship's pumps can repair each turn. Ships with a number rating have automatic pumps which handle the listed amount each round. The others have pumps which must be operated manually and are rolled for each turn. Flooding damage can also be reduced by 1d4 points a round by anyone with a bucket.

Price: The cost to purchase the ship outside the Maze. These prices do not include any weapons. Remember to multiply this by 4 or 5 times in the Maze.

Hit Tables: Use these to determine where a shot hits the ship. The modifiers listed on the table are for called shots to the particular location. If a ship suffers a malfunction due to damage, the malfunction occurs at the last damaged location.

Entries which read Hull (crew) mean a portion of the ship containing crew was hit. Randomly determine where this is.

Whether or not the affected crew member(s) get the benefit of cover depends on where they happen to be on the boat. Someone standing on deck might only get cover from the waist down, while a gun crewman manning a cannon in the ship's hull may be completely covered. If the target does receive cover from the hull, apply damage to the ship normally and then, if the shot penetrates the ship's armor rating, to any targets behind it.

BARGES

Barges are used to carry large shipments of bulk cargo like fundament. Barges are unpowered and must be pushed or towed by another ship. They are not very maneuverable nor particularly seaworthy, so they are normally only encountered in the relatively calm waters of the main channels.

In combat, treat all hits as Hull (crew/cargo). The hull acts as Armor 3.

Common Weapons: Most barges are unarmed when carrying cargo. Empty barges can be fitted with nearly any weapon imaginable. The Rockies have a number of "war barges" they use in areas with pirate problems. The walls have been built up to resemble a small, floating fortress complete with firing parapets and cannon ports. Even the boldest Maze pirates think twice before tangling with one of these vessels. Heavily armed and armored barges are also used by many toll booth operators, to ensure that they actually collect the money that they're charging.

SHIPS

BARGE

Durability	Pass	Pace	Turn	Travel
50/10	100	0	+2	-2 mph
Fuel	Rel	Mod	Pumps	Price
+50%	20	+6	1d6	\$1000

FREIGHTERS

These are ocean-going ships used to carry all sorts of cargo. The freighters which ply the waters of the Maze normally arrive filled with food and merchandise and leave with a heavy load of fundamnent.

Many of the smaller freighters are maneuverable enough to leave the main channels and service many of the more remote mesa towns. Most carry a steam launch to ferry goods to towns along dangerous or extremely narrow channels.

Large freighters serve the same function as their smaller cousins, but lack the speed and maneuverability to safely leave the main channels. These ships call on Lost Angels and Shan Fan and trade with some of the major towns along the West and North channels.

Common Weapons: Most small freighters carry at least a Gatling or two for protection; a 6-pound cannon is common. Large freighters carry at least a pair of Gatlings. Matched pairs of port and starboard 12-pounders are common, as are a set of fore and aft 6-pounders.

Ships which spend a lot of time away from the main channel are usually better equipped—Gatlings are standard, and the larger ships may have a number of side-mounted 12-pounders. They are usually not reluctant to use them.

SMALL FREIGHTER

Durability	Pass	Pace	Turn	Travel
50/10	20	20	7	15 mph
Fuel	Rel	Mod	Pumps	Price
2	20	+5	1d6	\$30,000

LARGE FREIGHTER

Durability	Pass	Pace	Turn	Travel
70/14	40	15	9	10 mph
Fuel	Rel	Mod	Pumps	Price
3	20	+6	1d8	\$75,000

d20	Hit Location	Armor	Mod*
1-7	Hull	3	+5/+6
8-14	Hull (cargo)	3	+5/+6
15-17	Cabin (crew)	2	+4/+4
18-19	Boiler	4	+1/+1
20	Rudder/Screws	2	-1/-1

* The number before the slash is for small freighters; the numbers after for large ones.

GUNBOATS

These armed patrol ships are common among the three navies fighting for control of the Maze. There are also quite a few in civilian hands as well—both the Rockies and the various railroads own a number.

Though they can't match the Maze runner in speed and maneuverability, gunboats are rugged and reliable.

Common Weapons: Minimum armament for these ships is a pair of wing-mounted Gatlings and a pair of port and starboard mounted 6-pounders. Most have an additional stern mounted Gatling and 6-pound bow chaser.

It's not uncommon for the side-mounted 6-pounders to be replaced with 12-pound cannons—this makes the ship top-heavy, so increase its Turn Number to 7. If the ship's pilot fails his *drivin'* roll on a turn, the boat takes water and suffers 1d6 flooding damage.

A few gunboats have been seen with jerry-rigged torpedo tubes from Smith & Robards.

GUNBOAT

Durability	Pass	Pace	Turn	Travel
45/9	12	30	5	20 mph
Fuel	Rel	Mod	Pumps	Price
2	20	+4	1d6	\$40,000

d20	Hit Location	Armor	Mod
1-6	Hull	4	+4
7-12	Hull (crew)	3	+3
13-18	Boiler	3	—
19-20	Rudder/Screws	3	-1

HYDRO-GYROS

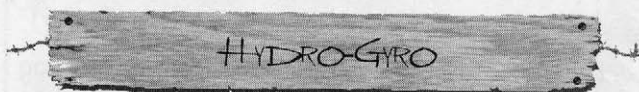
The hydro-gyro is a standard Smith & Robards' auto-gyro, heavily modified for use in the Maze. The gizmo's standard landing gear has been replaced with a flat-bottomed boat hull, it has been fitted with an oversized air screw, and the lift fans are hinged to fold back for storage.



These changes allow the device to be used as a standard auto-gyro which can take-off or land on water, or with the lift fan folded back it can travel the Maze as an air boat.

The scientists at Progress have constructed a number of these whirligigs.

Common Weapons: Most are armed with only what the passengers carry, although an occasional Gatling is not unheard of.



Durability	Pass	Pace	Climb	Turn
25/5	2	40	2 tol	5
Travel	Fuel	Rel	Mod	Price
20 mph	2	16	+3	None

d20	Hit Location	Armor*	Mod
1-4	Hull	2	0
5-7	Passenger	0/1	0
8-12	Air Screw	1	+1
13-16	Boiler	3	0
17-20	Lift Fan	1	+2

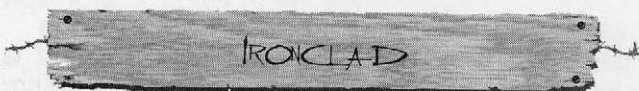
* Armor only applies if the vehicle has enclosed seats.

IRONCLADS

These ships were designed for use in the Maze and are much smaller than a standard ironclad. Their heavy armor and low freeboard make them vulnerable to the currents of the Maze.

The vast majority of these ships are in the service of one of the three navies in the Maze—but a few have been seen flying railroad colors.

Common Weapons: The most common weapon configuration for these ships is three 32-pound, muzzleloader cannons mounted port and starboard and a 6-pounder mounted fore and aft.



Durability	Pass	Pace	Turn	Travel
70/14	30	25	9	10 mph
Fuel	Rel	Mod	Pumps	Price
3	20	+6	1d8	\$100,000

d20 Roll	Location	Armor	Mod
1-9	Hull	5	+6
10-17	Hull (crew)	5	+5
18-19	Boiler	5	+1
20	Rudder/Screws	4	-1

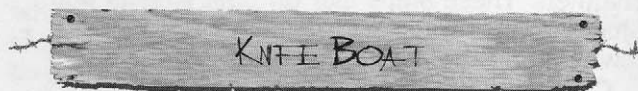
Weapon	Speed	Crew	Range	Cost
32-pounder	4	4	200	\$10,000

Rounds	Damage	Cost
Solid	8d20	\$8
Fused	7d20	\$30

KNIFE BOATS

This is the favored mount of Locke's raiders. It is a fast and maneuverable ship capable of quickly closing with the enemy for a boarding action. It is little more than a hull and an engine; the boarding party waiting on the rear deck of the boat is fairly exposed.

Common Weapons: Locke's boys are always well-equipped for close-in fighting. Most carry a number of pistols, a sword or knife, and the occasional scattergun. Some crews like to have a sharpshooter or two aboard to pick off any enemy gun crews they can put in their sights. The knife boats have a two-man crew which stays aboard during the fighting. One man drives while the other mans a Gatling gun mounted on the starboard side.



Durability	Pass	Pace	Turn	Travel
30/6	15	50	5	40 mph
Fuel	Rel	Mod	Pumps	Price
2	19	+4	1d4	\$5,000

d20	Hit Location	Armor	Mod
1-6	Hull	3	+3
7-12	Passengers	0	—
13-18	Boiler	3	—
19-20	Rudder/Screws	2	-1

MAZE RUNNERS

The Maze runner is a ship specifically designed for use in the canyons of the Maze by Smith & Robards. It's a speedy number with independently geared side paddlewheels. These can rotate in opposite directions, allowing the ship to pivot in place.

The Maze Runner has an open rear deck with bench seats and a partially enclosed driver's cockpit. There's room for cargo or bunks in a small bow cargo hold.

The Maze runner is one of the ship templates included in this boxed set. The Hit Location Table is for a stripped-down version. For a more comprehensive table, see *Smith & Robards*.



SHIPS

Common Weapons: Those who can afford one of these babies usually like to protect their investment—a Gatling gun or two is the norm. A fully tricked-out Maze Runner direct from the Smith & Robards factory mounts two torpedo tubes, a mine rack, a 6-pound cannon, and a trio of steam Gatlings.

MAZE RUNNER

Durability	Pass	Pace	Turn	Travel
40/8	8	40	3	30 mph
Fuel	Rel	Mod	Pumps	Price
2	18	+4	4	\$15,000

d20	Hit Location	Armor	Mod
1-5	Hull	2	+4
4-9	Hull (crew)	2	+3
10-15	Paddlewheel	2	+2
16-19	Boiler	3	+1
20	Rudder	2	-1

STEAM LAUNCHES

These are the most common boats encountered in the Maze, the real workhorse of the everyman. They are lifeboat-sized craft powered by a small steam engine (think *African Queen*).

Most mining towns have at least one of these boats around for supply runs and taking mined fundement to the Rockies' collection ships. Many larger ships carry one as a lifeboat, and the majority of the ferry services also use these useful little boats.

Common Weapons: Usually only the personal weapons carried by crew and passengers. In a pinch, you could fit a Gatling in the bow.

STEAM LAUNCH

Durability	Pass	Pace	Turn	Travel
25/5	8	20	5	15 mph
Fuel	Rel	Mod	Pumps	Price
1	20	+3	Your hat	\$2,000

d20	Hit Location	Armor	Mod
1-6	Hull	1	+2
7-12	Passengers	0	—
13-18	Boiler	3	+1
19-20	Rudder/Screws	2	-1

STEAM SLEDS

One of Smith & Robards' latest offerings, the steam sled has gained instant popularity in the Maze. The sled is a small ghost-rock boiler mounted on a large pontoon. Two high-speed screws propel the sled through the water. The crew sit on the pontoon in front of the boiler.

Common Weapons: Normally only the driver's personal weapons, but there's an option which mounts a torpedo tube on each side of the pontoon.

STEAM SLED

Durability	Pass	Pace	Turn	Travel
15/3	2	50 (40)*	3 (5)*	40 (30) mph*
Fuel	Rel	Mod	Pumps	Price
1	18	+1	None	\$3,000

d20	Hit Location	Armor	Mod
1-10	Hull	2	—
11-16	Crew	0	—
17-18	Boiler	3	-2
19-20	Rudder/Screws	2	-2

* Values in parentheses are for sleds with torpedo tubes.





SUBMERSIBLE BOATS

A number of the scientists who inhabit the Maze have found the best way to avoid trouble is to not be seen. To this end, they've developed a variety of submersible boats. These statistics are for the standard Smith & Robards model.

Common Weapons: The most popular weapons for these underwater craft are Smith & Robards' clockwork torpedoes. Many supplement this with a deck-mounted Gatling or 6-pounder.

SUBMERSIBLE BOAT

Durability	Pass	Pace*	Climb
50/10	7	20/10	10
Max Depth	Turn	Travel*	Fuel
50 yards	5	15/8 mph	2
Rel	Mod	Pumps	Price
18	+5	4	\$20,000

* Surfaced/submerged

d20	Hit Location	Armor	Mod
1-10	Hull (crew)	4	+4
11-13	Conning Tower (driver)	4	+3
14-16	Hull (clockwork)*	4	+1
17-19	Hull (boiler)*	4	+1
20	Screws/Rudder	4	-1

* May only be targeted if gunner is familiar with sub's layout

OPERATION

Operating the submersible requires the Aptitude *drivin': submersible*. Under normal conditions, an Aptitude roll (and a Reliability check) is required when the vessel submerges or surfaces. This is a Fair (5) roll. If a malfunction occurs during normal operation, roll hit location to see what part of the submersible is affected.

A failed roll indicates the driver strained the submersible in some way. It takes 1d4 damage. If the driver goes bust, he has had a major accident and the sub takes 3d6 damage.

The boat's climb rating is the number of yards by which it can change its depth each round. The submersible can operate down to a depth of about 50 yards. Beneath this depth, the hull begins to buckle. The boat takes 1d4 damage every round it spends below this depth. Maximum depth for periscope use is 10 yards.

The submersible's hull contains 20 man-hours of oxygen. Divide this number by the number of people on board to determine how long the submersible can stay submerged. For example, if the sub is carrying five people, it could stay underwater for about four hours before it needed to come to the surface for fresh air.

If the sub's air supply is exhausted, characters on board take 2d4 wind each hour the vessel stays submerged. This Wind may only be recovered by getting to a source of fresh air.

Surfaced, the sub uses steam for propulsion. Submerged, power is provided by a powerful clockwork mechanism. In an emergency, the boiler can be used underwater, but it consumes oxygen at the rate of two man-hours a round.

TUGBOATS

Tugs are short, stubby craft with oversized engines. They're not fast, but they are powerful. They usually have a small cabin on deck for the crew and are maneuvered from a tall conning tower which allows visibility all around the ship.

Tugs are used to push ore barges through the Maze and occasionally to help heavily-laden freighters away from the docks. Whenever a tug is encountered, roll 1d6-3. The result is the number of ore barges the tug is pushing. Each full barge adds +2 to the tug's Turn Number and reduces its travel speed by -2 miles per hour. Halve this penalty for empty barges.

The Rockies have a few tugs dedicated just to towing the war barges mentioned earlier. No one likes to see one of these steaming toward their town. It's a sure sign that trouble is brewing.

Common Weapons: Most tugs carry some weapons to defend the barges. Gatling guns mounted on the roof are the most common, and a bow and stern 6-pound cannon are usual. The crews of most tugs are well-armed too.

TUGBOAT

Durability	Pass	Pace	Turn	Travel
45/9	12	20	7	15 mph
Fuel	Rel	Mod	Pumps	Price
2	20	+4	1d6	\$10,000
d20	Hit Location	Armor	Mod	
1-7	Hull	2	+3	
8-12	Hull (Crew)	2	-	
14-18	Boiler	3	+1	
19-20	Rudder/Screws	2	-1	

MARTIAL ARTIST

TRAITS & APTITUDES

Deftness 2d6

Bow 2

Nimbleness 4d10

Climbin' 1

Fightin': Wing Chun 4

Horse Ridin' 1

Sneak 1

Quickness 2d12

Strength 4d6

Vigor 3d6

Cognition 2d10

Knowledge 1d6

Native Tongue: Cantonese 2

Language:
English 1

Mien 2d6

Overawe 2

Smarts 1d8

Spirit 3d8

Guts 2

Ch'i 4

Wind: 14

Edges:

Martial Arts Training 3

Enlightened 2

Hindrances:

Curious -3

"My Kung Fu Is Superior" -2

Style Vulnerability: Eagle Claw -1

Heroic -3

Kung Fu:

Closing the Gate 4

Ten-Foot Punch 2

Gear: Bow and arrows

PERSONALITY

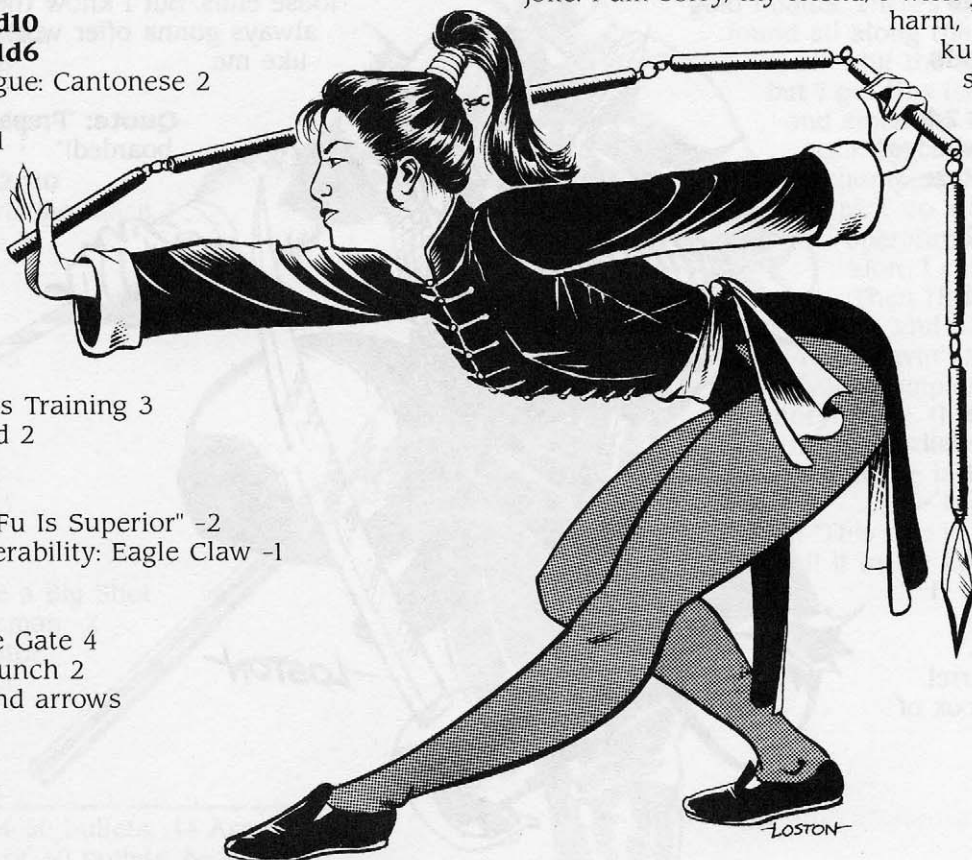
Do not test me. I merely wish to be left alone. What do you say to me? I do not threaten you, I carry no gun. Ah, you say you have heard of me. You know my reputation, and you wish to fight me? No, it is against the principles I was taught by my sifu; I must not fight without cause. "When peace and harmony rules—"

Pardon me? You say your kung fu is superior? It is not good to joke with me—. You say it is no joke. I am sorry, my friend, I wish you no

harm, but my kung fu is superior. I'll give you one last chance to retract—. You will not retract? Heeee-yahhh!

Quote:

"My kung fu is stronger than your kung fu!"



ARCHETYPES

MAZE PIRATE

TRAITS & APTITUDES

Deftness 2d10

Shootin': Shotgun 2

Nimbleness 2d12

Climbin' 3

Drivin': Boat 2

Fightin': Sword 4

Sneak 2

Swimmin' 3

Quickness 4d10

Strength 4d6

Vigor 3d6

Cognition 3d8

Search 2

Knowledge 2d6

Area Knowledge:

Great Maze 3

Mien 2d6

Overawe 2

Smarts 1d8

Gamblin' 2

Spirit 1d6

Guts 2

Edges:

"The Stare" 1

Tough as Nails 5

Hindrances:

Big Britches -3

Greedy -2

Hankerin':

Tobacco -1

Poverty -3

Gear:

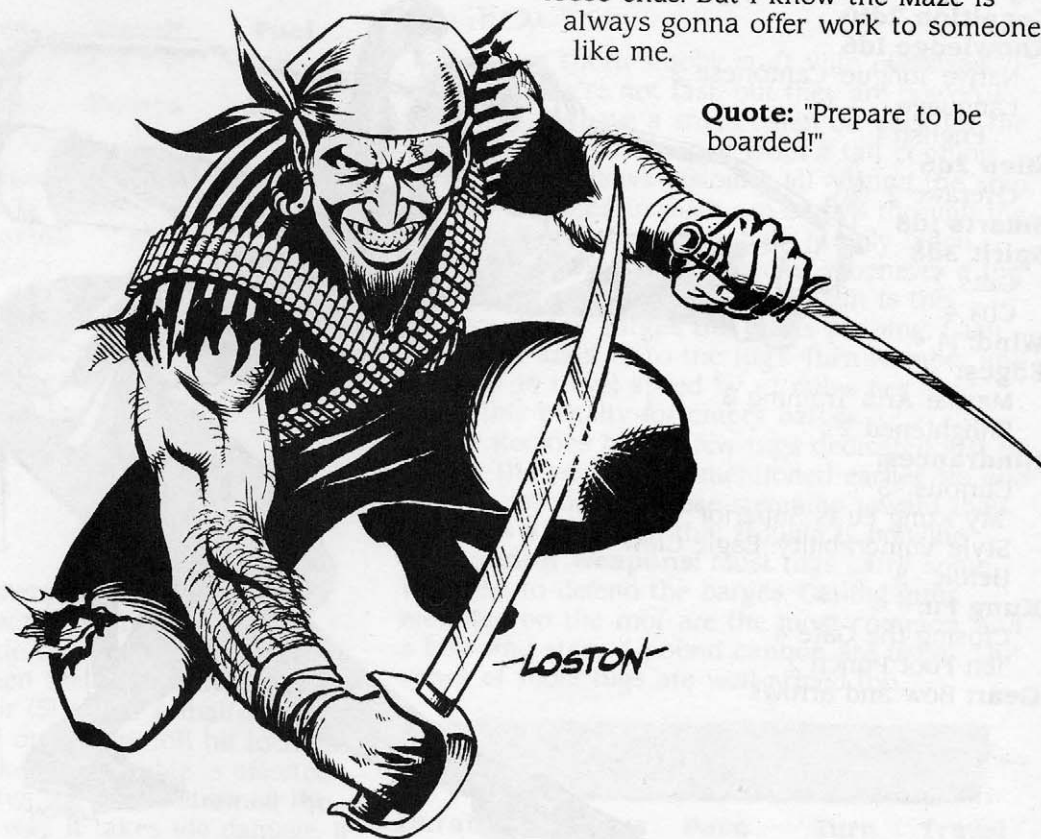
Saber,
double-barrel
shotgun, box of
20 shells.

PERSONALITY

Yeah, I'm a pirate. First one says "yo ho ho" gets a shotgun shell up the back 40. Came out here to strike it rich as a miner, but I found it easier work takin' fundament from the miners instead of chippin' it outta the rock.

As a pirate, you need to be fast, willing to mix it up, and not much interested in the other fella's well-being. I worked for Kang, for the Rebs, and for some independent operators. Now I'm at loose ends. But I know the Maze is always gonna offer work to someone like me.

Quote: "Prepare to be boarded!"



SALVAGER

TRAITS & APTITUDES

Deftness 4d10

- Filchin' 2
- Shootin': Pistol 2
- Shootin': Rifle 4

Nimbleness 3d8

- Climbin' 2
- Drivin': Boat 3
- Fightin': Brawlin' 2
- Sneak 2
- Swimmin' 2

Quickness 2d12

Strength 4d6

Vigor 2d6

Cognition 3d6

- Search 4

Knowledge 2d10

- Area Knowledge: Maze 3
- Demolition: 2

Mien 2d6

Smarts 1d8

- Bluff 1
- Scroungin' 3
- Survival 2

Spirit 1d6

- Guts 2

Hindrances:

- Bad Ears -3
- Curious -3
- Greedy -2
- Yearnin': Be a Big Shot
- Businessman -2

Gear: Detonator

- and plunger,
- box of 25
- dynamite
- sticks, .45
- Winchester
- rifle, box of 50 bullets, .44 Army
- Pistol, box of 50 bullets, bedroll,
- selection of water-damaged maps.

PERSONALITY

Speak up, I cain't hear ye! These past few years blowin' big holes in the Maze with dynamite, I caught one too many explosion in the ear hole.

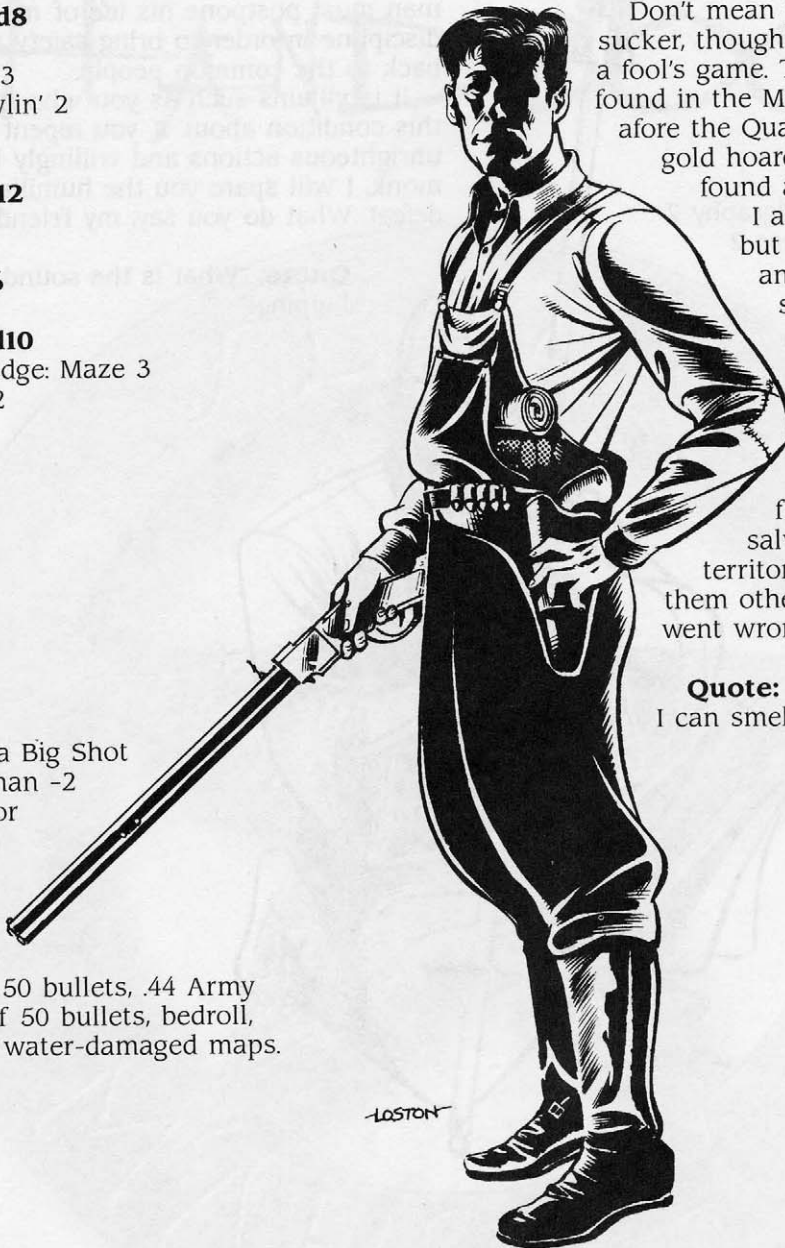
Don't mean you can take me for a sucker, though. Lookin' for gold, that's a fool's game. The real riches to be found in the Maze is what was there afore the Quake: bank vaults, jewelry, gold hoards. There's treasure to be found all along the coast.

I ain't hit the big strike yet, but I got this lead, you see, and since my boat was sunk by channel

chompers, I just need to pick up a little operating expenses afore I can get to it.

Then I'll be a hop, skip, and a jump away from havin' the biggest salvage company in the territory! Nope, this ain't like them other times when something went wrong at the last minute.

Quote: "This one is the big one. I can smell it in my bones!"



SHAOLIN MONK

TRAITS & APTITUDES

Deftness 1d8

Nimbleness 2d12

Climbin' 1

Fightin': Shaolin 4

Sneak 1

Quickness 4d10

Strength 4d6

Vigor 3d6

Cognition 2d6

Knowledge 3d8

Academia: Buddhism 3

Academia: Chinese Calligraphy 2

Native Tongue: Cantonese 2

Language: English 1

Mien 2d6

Overawe 2

Smarts 1d6

Spirit 2d10

Guts 2

Ch'i 2

Edges:

Martial Arts Training 3

Enlightened 2

Hindrances:

The Cup Overflows -3

Oath: Serve

Shaolin Temple -3

Pacifism -5

Style Vulnerability:

Drunken,

Mantis -2

Kung Fu:

Palm of

Prevention 3

Step Back to Ward

Off Monkey 3

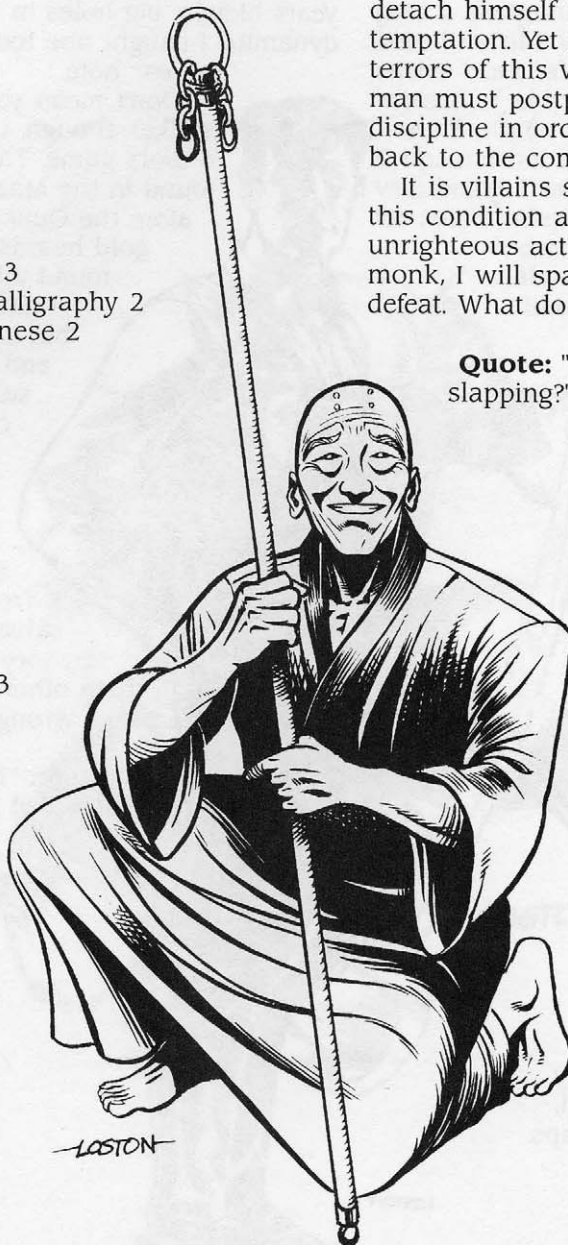
Gear: None

PERSONALITY

The true seeker of enlightenment seeks to detach himself from this world of confusion and temptation. Yet sometimes the injustices and terrors of this world are such that the righteous man must postpone his life of meditation and discipline in order to bring safety and harmony back to the common people.

It is villains such as you who have brought this condition about. If you repent of your unrighteous actions and willingly become a monk, I will spare you the humiliation of total defeat. What do you say, my friend?

Quote: "What is the sound of one hand slapping?"



THE MARSHAL'S HANDBOOK

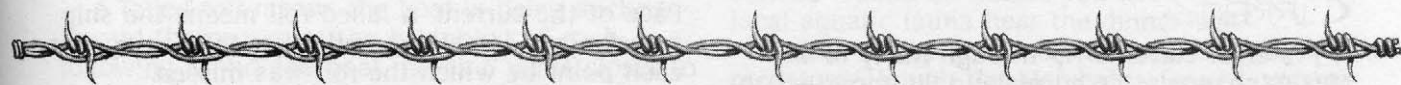


MAZE GUIDE





CHAPTER EIGHT: THE MARSHAL'S GUIDE TO THE GREAT MAZE



Howdy, Marshal. So, your heroes think they're ready for the Great Maze, do they? They'd best be quick on their feet, because they're about to enter territory where life isn't worth the bullet that ends it and Mother Nature's on the warpath.

Despite the dangers, hundreds of people arrive in the Maze every month. Most are looking to strike it rich, some are looking for a new start, and some are here to add to the mayhem. Let's dig in and see what the posse is up against.

FEAR LEVELS

Due to all the fighting and paranoia, the general Fear Level in the Maze is 2. This leaps to 3 within five miles of any settlement Santa Anna's army razes. Lost Angels is always at a 3.

THE GREAT MAZE WARS

The railroads *are* tired of being gouged. The constant conflict between them has caused their ghost rock needs to skyrocket. Never ones to pass up an easy buck, the Rockies have raised the price of ghost rock almost as fast.

As this happened, Iron Dragon began to make up lost ground. Between the deposits in the Black Hills and what his pirates can mine or steal in the Maze, Kang's railroad has all the ghost rock it needs.

Union Blue was the first other railroad to take action. Chamberlain learned about the Rockies' gouging by way of reports from the Pinkertons and the Union Navy. His railroad has always been cash poor because he refuses to rob banks to supplement revenues. He'd be damned if he was going to be ripped off for ghost rock.

To set things right, he bought some armed steamers and sent them into the Maze to buy ghost rock. Union Blue's ghost-rock costs dropped faster than a Mojave rattler off a cliff. It wasn't long before the other railroads got a case of the "me-toos."

ROCKN' THE BOAT

The Rockies are not taking this challenge to their monopoly lying down. They've already used the Great Rail Wars as a pretext to raise prices for their overseas customers. If they cut a deal with the railroads, they'd have to lower those too.

Although some of the Rockies want to negotiate with the railroads, the hardliners are in control, and they're ready for a showdown. They figure the railroads have enough on their plates dealing with each other; they won't have the resources to stop the Rockies. So far there have been only a few skirmishes between the railroad ships and the fundament monopoly, but things are going to get worse before they get any better.



MAZE GUIDE

PRICES

Prices in the Maze are much higher than those given in the *Gear* section of the *Deadlands* rulebook. Prices vary sharply even from town to town in the Maze. This variance depends on how much gold, silver, and ghost rock has flooded into the local economy of late. If there have been no big strikes in the area around a town in the last nine months or so, double the prices in the *Gear* section. If the last big strike was between three and nine months ago, triple the prices. If the last three months has seen a big strike, multiply prices by 5.

NAVIGATING THE MAZE

There are plenty of ways you can make your posse's life miserable once they're silly enough to head out into the Maze.

CURRENTS

Powerful currents rip through many of the Maze's channels. It's normally only important to keep track of them in situations which need to be played out in rounds, like combat or a disabled ship drifting toward rocks. Even then, if everyone is affected equally by the current, don't worry about it unless there is some reason to keep precise track of the posse's location.

When it is important, simply assign a Pace to the current. At the end of each round, everything and everyone in the current moves this many yards in the direction the current is flowing.

WIND DEVILS

These powerful winds occur when the steep walls of the Maze channel an existing breeze and create a wind tunnel-like effect. They are dangerous to more than just sailing ships. People have been blown overboard and never seen again.

When one of these powerful gusts occurs, anything which is light and not nailed down goes overboard. Things which aren't so light may go too, so everyone exposed to the wind had better grab onto something.

Roll 1d6 to determine the wind devil's duration in rounds and 2d6 to determine its force. At the beginning of each round, anyone caught in the wind must make a *Strength* roll against a TN equal to its force. Anyone who fails the roll is lifted up and flies 5 yards times the wind devil's force. Once caught up in the wind, a hero flies

this distance each round until the gust ends or he slams into something. When the gust ends, any airborne characters fall from a height equal to half the distance they flew.

RIFTIDES

Riptides are to currents what wind devils are to a pleasant spring breeze. They are usually triggered by a change in the tides, but they can also be caused by earthquakes, a connecting channel being suddenly blocked, etc. They tend to appear in narrow canyons; the main channels hardly ever experience these things.

Whatever the cause, roll 2d6 to find the riptide's duration in rounds. Roll 5d20+30 to determine the tide's Pace. Each round, anything caught in the tide is swept along at this Pace. The pilot of any ship caught in such a tide must make a *drivin'* roll each round to keep her craft centered in the channel. The TN for the roll is equal to the ship's Turn Number, +1 for every 10 Pace of the current. A failed roll means the ship smacks into something and takes 1d6 damage for each point by which the roll was missed.

Swimmers caught in a riptide must make an Incredible (11) *swimmin'* roll each round to keep their heads above the raging current. If a roll is failed, the hero takes the difference in Wind. If a character goes bust on a roll, he hits a rock and takes damage as if in a collision.

WATER DOGS

Water dogs are mischievous water spirits who enjoy throwing a wrench in the works. They are attracted to any sort of conflict or competition on the water, always siding with the underdogs.

The water dog attacks the vessel(s) of whoever has the upper hand in the conflict. Everyone aboard the target ship should make a Hard (9) *Cognition* roll on the round the water dog makes its appearance. Anyone who makes the roll feels a slight shudder go through the boat as the spirit rises up beneath it.

It attacks on the following round, shaking the boat like a dog's chew toy. Roll 2d6. The craft takes this number of d6s in damage, regardless of armor. Anyone on deck must make a *Nimbleness* roll against a TN equal to the 2d6 roll to avoid being pitched overboard. They get a +3 to this roll if they have advance warning. Once it has given the boat a good shake, the water dog leaves.

Water dogs can be driven off by a *protection* miracle. They have a 3d8 *Spirit*.

MAZE GUIDE

WHIRLPOOLS

Most people give whirlpools a wide berth. Unfortunately, it's not always possible.

If your posse has a close encounter with a whirlpool, roll 1d10 and multiply this by 5 to determine the pool's radius in yards. Anything which moves within 10 yards of the pool's edge is sucked in. Roll 2d20+20 to determine the Pace of the pool's current.

The only way to get past a whirlpool is to ride its edge and try to slingshot your way out of it. Once the posse's boat reaches the edge of the pool, the pilot must make a *drivin'* roll against a TN equal to the ship's Turn Number plus 2 for every 10 yards of Pace of the whirlpool's current. If the roll is successful, the heroes' ship whips along the edge of the pool and is flung out on the opposite side. On the following round, the pilot may add half the whirlpool's Pace to the boat's.

A failed roll means the boat is being sucked toward the center. At the beginning of each following round, the boat moves 5 yards closer to the whirlpool's center. The pilot's first action of each round must be a *drivin'* roll against the same TN as the first roll. Each success and raise on the roll moves the boat 5 yards further from the center. If this takes the boat outside the pool's radius, it has escaped.

If a ship reaches the pool's center, it takes 2d6 flooding damage each round until it sinks or escapes.

WATERSPOUTS & ACID POOLS

Waterspouts are a dangerous and unpredictable part of water travel in the Maze. There are a number of regular spouts which are as reliable as Old Faithful. The Maze inhabitants know of these and avoid them. Most, however, are erratic and can appear nearly anywhere.

Any encounter with a waterspout is just as it's about to blow. Whether any of the warning signs mentioned in the player's section are visible is up to you. Both boiling water and acidic water can only occur in areas where there is little to no current.

If your posse is traveling in the vicinity of a waterspout when an eruption occurs, have the pilot draw a card.

If a Joker is drawn, the spout actually erupts directly beneath the posse's boat. Small boats like Maze runners are thrown (1d6 x 5) yards in the air. The boat takes normal falling damage. Larger ships take 3d20 damage.

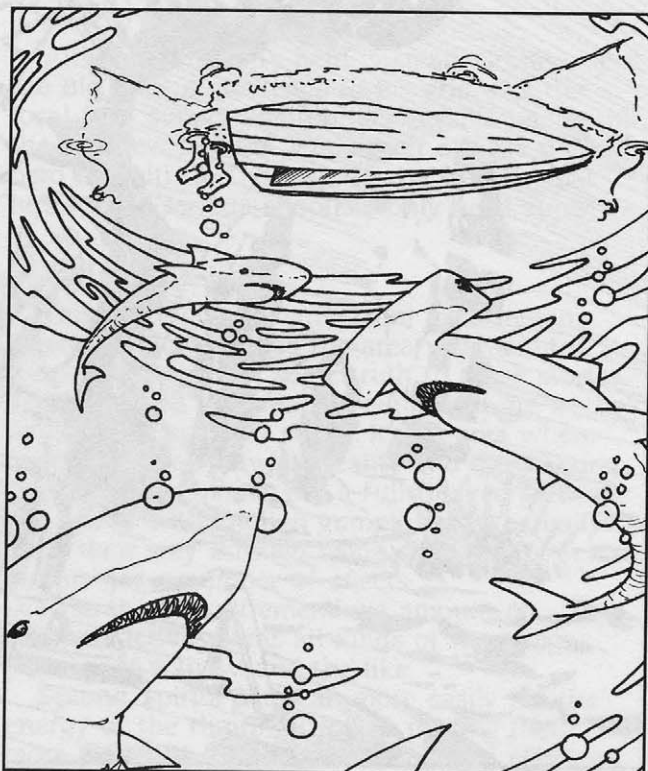
On any other card, the spout misses the boat but everyone on deck gets their yearly bath early. Not a big deal, unless, the water's been turned to sulfuric acid or is scalding hot. In this case everyone who gets doused takes 5d12 damage. After figuring the number of wounds caused, distribute them randomly by rolling on the Hit Location Table.

Ships in acidic water take 1d4 damage each minute (regardless of armor). If the damage causes a Reliability check, the hull's Armor is reduced by 1. This can only be repaired by a complete careening and overhaul. If the Armor is reduced to 0, the ship begins flooding at 1d6 damage a round.

DINNER IS SERVED

With all the ways there are to get hurt in the Maze, it's only a matter of time until an injured hero ends up in the water. If he's bleedin' (has a serious wound or worse), you need to see if the local aquatic fauna hear the dinner bell.

Sharks are by far the most common predators—though the Marshal is free to conjure up whatever beastie he feels appropriate to the area. Roll the sharks' *Cognition* (see below) against a Fair (5) TN. Add 2 to the roll for each bleeding character in the water beyond the first.



MAZE GUIDE

If the roll is successful, 1d4 sharks show up 1d12 rounds later. Add one to the number of sharks for each raise on the *Cognition* roll.

SHARKS

Sharks are an aquatic terror from long before the Reckoning, and they are just as dangerous as ever. They're a common sight in the twisted canals and channels of the Maze.

The sharks in the Maze have grown used to a steady diet of human flesh—it's a rare day someone doesn't die in the water. This hasn't sated their appetite; it's only allowed them to acquire the taste.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:3d8, N:2d8, S:3d12+2, Q:4d8, V:3d10
Fightin': jaws 5d8

Mental: C:2d6, K:1d4, M:2d4, Sm:2d4, Sp: 3d6

Size: 10

Terror: 5

Special Abilities:

Armor: 1

Jaws: STR + 1d8

THE LOST ANGELS AREA

Even in the "civilized" area around the City of Lost Angels, the posse has got to stay on its collective toes. All the Maze's dangers aren't out in the wilderness.

THE DRAIN

The Drain is an enormous whirlpool. It has a radius of 50 yards, and its current has a Pace of 60. It's possible to navigate past the Drain without being sucked in, but the pool occasionally belches up a piece of one its many previous victims. Draw a card. If a Joker comes up, the posse's boat is struck by a piece of flying debris for 1d12 damage.

Boats caught in the Drain are battered by debris for 1d12 damage each round. This is in addition to any flooding damage caused the the whirlpool itself. Needless to say, boats sucked to the center of the Drain usually don't last too long.

The Drain has an identical cousin named Whirligig just south of Skull Cave.



MAZE GUIDE

GROANING MAN

There actually *is* a treasure stashed away in the back of this cave: about \$10,000 worth of gold. Unfortunately, the intense heat of the ghost-rock fire has turned this treasure into a molten slag. Anyone who can find a way past the smoke, exploding pockets of ghost-rock vapors, and inferno-like flames is going to need a bucket to carry the treasure.

THE LOG FLUME

The posse can use the Log Flume to speed any trips to the Pacific—provided they don't mind dealing with the pirates. All human encounters the posse has here are with pirates. See the *Travelin'* section below for all the gory details.

THE SPOUTS

Maneuvering a ship under the Spouts without swamping it takes some skill. If a hero attempts this, she needs to make a *drivin'* roll. The target number depends on the size of the boat.

Failure results in the ship taking 1d6 flooding damage for each point the roll was missed by.

SPOUT RUN

Boat Size	TN
10' or less (rowboat)	11
11'-20' (maze runner)	9
21'-40' (tug, gunboat)	7
41'-80' (small freighter)	5
81'+ (large freighter, ironclad)	3

ARCHERON BAY

Many people have given their theory as to what exactly resides beneath the waters of Archeron Bay (named for the first ship known to have gone down there). Most believe it to be some sort of giant squid or octopus. The bay is deep, and few are foolhardy enough to enter it, so the truth may remain hidden for a while.

The truth is stranger than anyone has guessed. There is not a single giant beast lurking in the bay. There are many. The tentacles which attack the ships are actually individual strands of kelp which have taken on a life of their own.

When the *Archeron* sank there during a particularly nasty storm, the kelp absorbed the souls of the drowned sailors. This awakened a thirst for more.

The kelp now attacks any living thing which enters the bay. The bay is extremely deep, so only a small portion of the strands can actually reach the water's surface. Ships which enter the bay are normally attacked by 1d12 strands. The strands attack exposed individuals on deck, or if the ship is small enough they try to pull the ship under and then pluck the sailors down one at a time.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:3d8, N:2d8, S:3d12+4, Q:3d6, V:3d10

Fightin': brawlin' 5d8

Mental: C:2d6, K:1d4, M:2d4, Sm:2d4, Sp: 3d6

Size: 20

Terror: 7

Special Abilities:

Slap: STR + 1d6. Does full damage against vehicles.

Grapple: STR + 1d8. Does full damage against vehicles. If a strand gets a raise on a slap attack, the target has been grappled.

Anyone grappled by a strand must win an opposed *Strength* roll (good luck!) to avoid being pulled into the water. Once in the water, the victim must win an opposed roll—his *swimmin'* vs. the strand's *Strength*—to keep his head above water.

BIG M RANCH

Although Shelton's herd is small, Grimme sees the Big M as a challenge to his grip over the local food supply. Shelton has had his hands full the past few months, fending off attacks on his herd by cultists. The word in the Maze is that he's hiring—serious shootists only need apply.

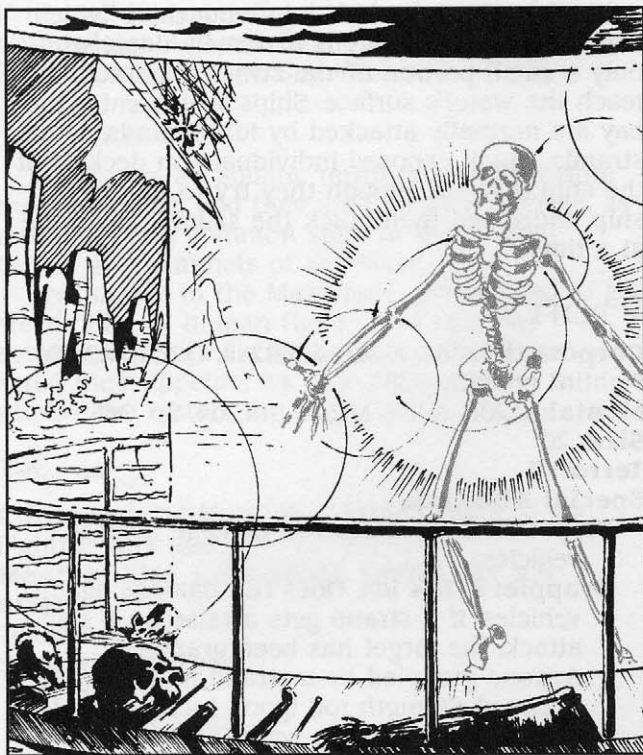
MANTOU BLUFF

This place got its name from local Indian legends which claimed the area was haunted. It turns out there was some truth to these stories. The town and the area surrounding it are in the middle of a spiritual nexus. It's an area where the boundaries between reality and the Hunting Ground are weak. It's not a full-fledged gateway, but spirits with enough gumption can actually force their way through using sheer willpower.

This has a number of effects:

First, there is a tremendous amount of spiritual activity here, all kinds of hauntings, poltergeist activity, and the like.

Second, spirits here can more easily tap the energy of the Hunting Ground, making them more powerful. This has a tremendous effect on



VAN HORN'S LIGHT

Maarten Van Horn died a sad and broken man, his grand scheme in tatters. His spirit now lingers on amid the ruins of his life's work.

The mechanism which activates and rotates the light no longer works; the salty air rusted it solid years ago. The light is now powered by Van Horn's ghost. He lights it every night there is someone lost in the Maze (which is most nights), hoping to guide them home.

Van Horn does not bother visitors to his lighthouse unless they attempt to harm it. In this case, Van Horn becomes violent and attacks by pushing them off the spiral staircase leading to the light or by flinging pieces of rock or broken machinery at the intruders. The bones of a few interlopers lie scattered about the ground floor of the lighthouse.

There are only two ways to lay his soul to rest. One is to complete a successful exorcism of the lighthouse—Van Horn resists this strenuously. The other is for one of the lost people who was guided home by the light to come and thank him and leave some form of token payment.

a huckster's hex-slinging. While in town, if a huckster gets at least the minimum hand required to cast a hex, treat the hand as if it were one level higher. The downside to this is, if the huckster draws a Joker, the manitou can adjust the roll on the Backlash Table by 2 points in either direction.

Last, and most certainly not least, is the effect the place has on the Harrowed. While in town, all powers possessed by a Harrowed are increased by +1 level (maximum is 5). The most insidious effects are that the manitou receives +4 on all *Spirit* rolls for Dominion, and the duration of any takeovers by the manitou are doubled.

Anyone who dies in Manitou Bluff gets two extra draws to see if they return as a Harrowed. Unfortunately, if this happens, the manitou has total Dominion when the body rises.

The town has become a magnet for many of the Harrowed in the area. The manitous drag their carcasses there, hoping to hang around for a while and gain total dominion.

All of these malevolent vibrations filling up the air have made Manitou Bluff the roughest town in the area. Only a handful of the town population is Harrowed, but if you judged by pure meanness, you'd swear at least half was. Most living inhabitants are as bloodthirsty and depraved as their undead drinking buddies.

VAN HORN'S GHOST

Van Horn can make himself visible when he cares to, but he prefers to remain unseen. He normally only materializes to make an *overawe* attack. He'd rather frighten than kill.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:3d8, N:2d8, S:3d8, Q:3d6, V:2d6
Fightin': brawlin' 4d8, throwin' 3d8

Mental: C:2d10, K:3d6, M:3d8, Sm:2d10, Sp: 2d10
Overawe 4d8

Size: 6


Terror: 7

Special Abilities:

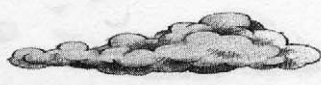
Weapon Immunity: Van Horn may not be harmed by normal weapons. Magic affects him, but he cannot be killed—only banished for 24 hours.

DRAGONHOLD & THE ANCIENT ONES

Hellman's instincts haven't failed him on this one. Sutton Thacker is a huckster who has delved deeper into the mystical arts than most of his hex-slinging brethren—and he's got the black magic to prove it.



MAZE GUIDE



In the course of his studies, Thacker came across an ancient manuscript which referred to a group of dragon-worshipping cultists living on the edge of a far off sea. When he heard the first reports of the Maze dragons, he booked passage on the first ship to California.

Using the manuscript as a guide, he quickly located the remnants of an ancient civilization which had occupied the area centuries before any Indian swam in the California surf. This group made its homes in the high cliffs which made up the shoreline at the time. Quarrytown is one of these ancient villages.

They were an extremely warlike people, and each village constantly feuded with the others. They were also extremely capable magicians and found ways to bend the mighty Maze dragons to their will. They used the gigantic creatures as beasts of war, using them to tear their enemies right out of their cliff dwellings.

Their civilization was wiped out by a cataclysmic tidal wave. The Maze dragons were sealed in underground caverns, and what remained of the ancient settlement was buried when the earth spirits covered the many rock paintings which adorned the coastline.

SKULL CAVE

Thacker discovered Skull Cave was a site of power at which the ancient ones performed the rituals needed to bind the dragons to their service. He performed these rites for the first time in over three millennia.

He gained control over a Maze dragon, but learned that in exchange for its service, he was bound to care for the creature's offspring. Skull Cave is more than a temple to the dragons, it is also a nursery. Large underwater caverns extend far back into the mesa behind the cave. It is here that many Maze dragons lay their eggs. The hatchlings take shelter here until they are large enough to hunt the Maze themselves.

The caverns beyond the cave entrance usually contain 2d6 young Maze dragons. They attack and eat anything that doesn't look like a cultist.

PETE'S PERCH

Thacker recruited some lackeys into his new dragon cult and used them to muscle his way to power in a mesa town known as Pete's Perch. Shortly thereafter, Jericho, as the dragon has become known, showed up. Thacker led the first tour the next day. Since then the town has been renamed Dragonhold for the tourists' benefit.

Although there are still a few who harbor grudges, most of the townspeople have gotten over the way Thacker strong-armed his way to power. The waves of money rolling in from the Maze have soothed their pain.

THE CULT OF THE DRAGON

Thacker has initiated a number of people into his secret dragon cult—mainly because he got tired of hauling bodies around by himself. These people assist him in maintaining the rituals which keep Jericho bound and help find the sacrifices for the young dragons in Skull Cave.

The most common victims are individual travelers who make the mistake of spending the night in Dragonhold. When these aren't available, Thacker and his goons make a short boat ride to Lost Angels and grab a few drunks off the street.

YOUNG MAZE DRAGON

These creatures are little more than a roving appetite.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d4, N:3d8, S:3d12+2, Q:1d10, V:3d10

Fightin': brawlin' 4d8, sneak 4d8, swimmin' 5d8

Mental: C:2d10, K:1d4, M:1d12, Sm:1d6, Sp: 1d4

Size: 12

Terror: 7

Special Abilities:

Armor: 1

Teeth: STR+2d10

SUTTON THACKER

Thacker is a heartless charlatan who cares only for lining his pockets with as much money as possible. If a few locals have to end up in the belly of a Maze dragon for him to get what he wants, he's willing to pay that price.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d6, S:2d12, Q:3d10, V:2d6

Bow 3d6, climbin' 2d6, fightin': brawlin' 2d6, horse ridin' 2d6, throwin': bolts o' doom 4d6

Mental: C:1d6, K:1d8, M:2d6, Sm:2d6, Sp:4d12

Guts 6d12, medicine: 2d8, trackin' 2d6, overawe

Edges: Arcane background: black magic

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, mean as a rattler

Special Abilities:

Black magic: Bolts o' doom 3, cloak of evil 2, dark protection 2, spook 2

THE RICH & FAMOUS OF THE MAZE

The names of these individuals are known to nearly everyone in the Maze.

H. J. KENT

H. J. Kent isn't in league with the devil. He is, however, a huckster of some ability. He got out of the hoodoo business because being a middleman for the Rockies cartel pays better.

He doesn't want his supernatural abilities to be widely known, because they'd conflict with his desired image as a respectable businessman and attract undesirables like Texas Rangers.

As long as he can remain undetected, he uses his powers on anyone who crosses him. A few whispered rumors about him are good for business, he reckons.

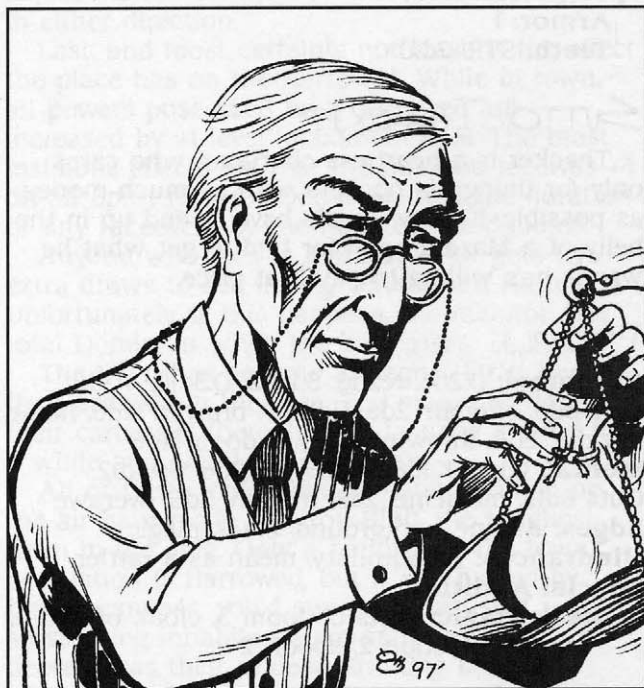
PROFILE

Corporeal: D:1d8, N:1d10, S:1d12, Q:4d12, V:1d8
Shootin': pistol 4d8, sleight o' hand 4d8

Mental: C:3d8, K:2d8, M:2d6, Sm:4d8, Sp:4d12
Academia: occult 2d8, guts 2d12

Edges and Hindrances: Arcane background:
huckster, miser

Special Abilities: Corporeal twist 4d8, earshot
2d8, missed me 4d12, soul blast 6d12



GOLDNOSE SLIM

Goldnose Slim has a curious form of good luck; it just never seems to benefit him in the long run. He is forever stumbling across a fortune, but never manages to keep it.

Although a friendly and trusting fellow, his mood swings between unjustified optimism and self-lacerating despair.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:4d6, N:1d6, S:1d6, Q:3d4, V:2d8
Dodge 4d6, fightin': fencin': 3d6, shootin': pistol
2d6

Mental: C:3d8, K:2d10, M:2d12, Sm:2d8, Sp:3d12,
Academia: Philosophy 4d10, academia: Russian
literature 4d10, guts 2d12, language: Russian
3d10, trade: Mining 4d10

Edges and Hindrances: Curious, dinero 5: finds
gold easily, gift of gab, loco: manic-depressive,
pacifist

MARIPOSA LIL

Mariposa Lil is a public person; what you see is what you get. Cross her on her home turf of Lynchburg, and you just may catch a fatal case of hemp fever.

Or worse.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d6, S:2d6, Q:3d8, V:2d6
Pistol 5d6, shotgun 4d6

Mental: C:4d8, K:2d8, M:2d6, Sm:4d8, Sp:2d6
Area knowledge: Lynchburg 4d8, leadership 4d6,
overawe 4d6, persuasion 4d6

Edges and Hindrances: Obligation: employees,
self-righteous, vengeful

RABID RANCE HITCHCOCK

Rabid Rance is just as unsavory as Agent Hellman's description suggests.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d10, N:2d8, S:4d8, Q:4d6, V:4d8
Dodge 4d8, fannin' 4d10, fightin': brawlin' 5d8,
fightin': knife 3d8, filchin', horse ridin' 3d8,
quick draw 4d6, shootin': pistol 5d10

Mental: C:3d6, K:2d4, M:1d8, Sm:3d6, Sp:3d4,
Area knowledge: Great Maze 4d4, guts 2d4,
leadership 2d8, overawe 4d8, survival 3d6

Edges and Hindrances: Big 'un, greedy,
illiterate, keen, renown, ugly as sin

MAZE GUIDE

TRAVELIN'

Traveling in the Maze can be a real chore. You normally can't see beyond the channel you're in, and after a while they all start to look alike. You can only see the sun and stars to navigate by when they're directly overhead. To make matters worse, compasses occasionally get squirrely out there. Of course, it nearly goes without saying that you never, ever travel anywhere in a straight line.

This section lets you figure out how long it takes your posse to get where they're going and what they run into along the way. These rules are intended for groups who are traveling long distances in the Maze. Don't use them if the group is just chugging around the bend to get a drink at Carver's Landing.

HOW FAR IS IT?

As you've probably noticed, the map included in this set doesn't detail the entire Maze. Why? Well, for one, we wanted to get this to stores before the new millennium, and two, if we showed every little nook and cranny of the Maze, you'd have no place to throw in all the neat stuff you've come up with (plus, you'd never convince the posse they were truly lost).

Of course, that doesn't really help you figure out how long it takes your posse to get someplace. To do that, you need to figure out the distance to their destination. We're talking as the crow flies, so just figure out roughly where the two places are on the map on page 11, and measure the distance between them. The actual distance the posse travels is usually much greater.

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

In the Maze, there are almost as many routes as there are travelers. Each skipper travels the route he knows, not always the best one.

Once you've determined the base distance to the posse's destination, you need to figure out how far they actually travel. Have the skipper of the posse's boat make an *area knowledge: Great Maze* roll. Add +2 to the roll if the posse intends to use one of the main channels for the trip. This may not be possible, but that's up to you.

Compare the roll to the chart below and multiply the base distance by the listed multiplier. This is the actual distance traveled (the really large multipliers represent making a few wrong turns and backtracking).

Some destinations can be reached without leaving the main channels. These are listed below on the Channel Travel Table. The distances listed are the actual travel distances. There's no need to roll on the Route Distance Table. The North Channel is an extremely circuitous route, but the only one clear enough for large freighters.

ROUTE DISTANCE

Roll	Multiplier
3-4	3
5-6	2
7-8	1.5
9-10	1.4
11-15	1.3
16-20	1.2
21+	1.1

Modifiers: Sticking to main channel +2

CHANNEL TRAVEL

Starting Point	Destination	Distance
Lost Angels	Shan Fan	700 miles
Lost Angels	Pacific Ocean	100 miles
Shan Fan	Pacific Ocean	800 miles

LOOK, A MAZE DRAGON!

This section helps you generate some interesting things for the posse to run into in the course of their journey. To see what your heroes encounter as they travel the Maze, draw a card for every 50 miles, or portion thereof, they intend to travel. If the card's suit is red, the encounter is some sort of natural hazard. If the card is black, they've run into some sort of human encounter. Roll on either the Hazards of Nature or the Two-Legged Hazards Table and modify the roll by the card's value. The d20 rolls on these tables are open-ended (if you get an ace, roll it again).

Don't actually run the posse through any of these encounters until you've generated all of them. If you know the heroes are going on a trip, roll up the encounters before the session begins. Once you see everything in their path, look for ways to combine or make connections between them. This gives the encounters more flavor. Also, the players won't feel like they're running through an encounter off a table. It also lets you plan ahead and slip in any adventure-related encounters at the appropriate times.

MAZE GUIDE

CARD MODIFIERS

Card	Modifier
2	-2
3-10	0
Jack	+2
Queen	+4
King	+6
Ace	+8
Joker	+10

HAZARDS OF NATURE

Open

d20 Result

- 1-10 **No Encounter:** One lucky posse.
- 11-12 **Fog:** A thick fog rolls in for 5d20 minutes. Visibility is 10 yards, and Pace is halved. The ship may travel at normal speed with an Onerous (7) *drivin'* roll every 10 minutes to avoid a collision.
- 13-14 **Sharks:** A group of 1d6 sharks arrives.
- 15-16 **Riptide:** The ship is caught in a riptide.
- 17-18 **Minor Critter:** A lesser abomination, like a channel chomper, shows up.
- 19-20 **Storm:** The storm lasts 1d4 hours. Pace is quartered, and the pilot must make a Hard (9) *drivin'* roll each hour. If failed, the boat takes 1d6 flooding damage for each point the roll was missed by. If anchored, the TN is Fair (5) instead.
- 21-22 **Water Dog:** The posse is noticed by a water dog (that keeps quiet—for now).
- 23-24 **Waterspout:** The boat passes near a waterspout as it's about to blow.
- 25-26 **Whirlpool:** A whirlpool blocks the posse's path. They can try to ride it or backtrack and go around. Backtracking requires a Fair (5) *area knowledge: Great Maze* and 5d20 minutes. A failed roll doubles the time.
- 27-28 **Wind Devil:** Hold on to your hats! A gale force wind blasts the heroes' ship.
- 29-30 **Arch:** The posse's craft passes under an unstable arch. Draw a card for each 10' of length the boat has. If a Joker comes up, the arch collapses, doing 10d20 damage to the ship. Anyone on deck takes 3d20 damage—determine number of wounds and distribute randomly.
- 31+ **Major Critter:** Something big and mean, like a Maze dragon or killer kelp, takes a dislike to the posse's boat.

TWO LEGGED HAZARDS

Open

d20 Result

- 1-10 **No encounter:** People know better than to get in the posse's way.
- 11-14 **Lost:** The posse really should have taken that left turn at Lynchburg. The group has become lost. Becoming found requires a Hard (9) *area knowledge: Great Maze* roll and an hour. Reduce this time by 10 minutes for every raise on the roll. A failed roll eats up an hour, and the skipper must give it another try.
- 15-18 **Ship:** The posse encounters some fellow travelers. Roll on the Ship Encounter Table and the Ship Affiliation Table on the next page to determine the newcomers' affiliation and ship size.
- 19-20 **Town/Encampment:** The posse steams past a settlement of some sort. Roll 1d6: 1-3= mining town, 4-5= trading town, 6= scientist settlement. This can be a good opportunity for trade or information.
- 21-24 **Toll Booth:** Someone has blocked the channel and is charging tolls to get past. The rates and sophistication are up to you. The posse can backtrack as described under **Whirlpool** on the Hazards of Nature Table.
- 25-30 **Pirates:** Aaarr! Roll on the Ship Encounter Table to determine the size of the pirates' ship. It's bristling with guns and packed to the gunwales with the scum of the Maze. Roll 1d6; on a 5 or 6, the posse is tangling with Kang's men. These cutthroats have *fightin'*: martial arts instead of *brawlin'*.

PIRATES

Attack:

Rifle/pistol/shotgun 3d6
Knife/sword/brawlin' 4d6

Defense:

Fightin' 4

Hits: 30

- 31+ **Special:** The heroes have encountered something unusual. Come up with something on your own, or roll on the Special Encounters Table on the following page.

MAZE GUIDE

SPECIAL ENCOUNTERS

1d10 Result

- 1 **Water Tanker:** The heroes encounter a water tanker. They can stock up on fresh water and maybe get some information. Treat the tanker as a large freighter with a Turn Number of 11.
- 2 **Submersible:** The heroes encounter a submersible boat. Roll on the Ship Affiliation Table to see who owns it.
- 3 **Treasure:** The group comes across a clue to the location of a great treasure.
- 4 **Wreck:** The heroes encounter a ship in distress. The crew needs rescuing, but is all as it seems?
- 5 **Scientist:** The posse runs into a scientist traveling the Maze and peddling his wares. Who knows what strange devices he has for sale?
- 6 **Ancient Place of Power:** Other temples of the race which lived on this coast in centuries past have been exposed. The posse has found one of them.
- 7 **Smith & Robards Team:** The heroes encounter a team from Smith & Robards field-testing some new equipment in the Maze. They may enlist the posse's help or shoo them away.
- 8 **Pinkerton/Texas Ranger Team:** The posse happens upon a mysterious group of men looking over the hulk of a deserted ship or mesa town. They are told, "There's nothing to see here."
- 9 **Chinese Temple:** A strange temple emerges from the mist. The sound of training warriors echoes from inside. The heroes may get some training, or they may get their kiesters kicked.
- 10 **Ghost Ship:** Many sailors have met their fate in the Maze. For some reason, this group wasn't content to stay in Davy Jones' Locker.

SHIP ENCOUNTER

1d12

- 1-2 or less
3-4
5-6
7-8
9-10
11-12
13+

Ship Type

- Steam launch
Maze runner
Tugboat/barge
Small freighter
Large freighter
Gunboat
Ironclad

SHIP AFFILIATION

1d10 Faction

- 1- **US Navy:** A US Navy ship. Both the ship and crew are armed. Add +1 to the roll on the Ship Table.
- 2-3 **Merchant:** The ship is just a trader.
- 4 **Railroad:** The ship belongs to a railroad other than Iron Dragon. Roll 1d10: 1-2=Wasatch, 3-4=Union Blue, 5-6=Black River, 7-8=Dixie Rail, 9-10=Bayou Vermillion. These ships are here to buy ghost rock from whoever's selling. Add +1 to the roll on the Ship Table.
- 5 **Rockies:** The posse finds an ore barge or one if its escorts as it makes its rounds of the mining camps. Subtract -1 from the roll on the Ship Table
- 6 **Miner:** The ship belongs to a miner going about his business. If the ship is a tugboat and its barges, the occupants are probably boat rats. Subtract -2 from the roll on the Ship Table.
- 7 **CSA Navy:** A CSA Navy ship. Both the ship and crew are armed. Add 1 to the roll on the Ship Table.
- 8-9 **Merchant:** The ship is just a trader.
- 10+ **Mexican Armada:** A Mexican Armada ship. Add +2 to the roll on the Ship Table. Crew and ship are heavily armed.

Modifiers: Take -1 from rolls in northern Maze. Add +1 to rolls in southern Maze.

ARE WE THERE YET?

The amount of time it takes the heroes to reach their destination depends on the speed of their ship and any adventures they have along the way. To figure this out, simply divide the actual distance traveled by the ship's travel speed and add in any delays caused by encounters.

Heroes in a hurry can try to boost their travel speed. This requires a *drivin'* roll against a TN of 3 plus the vehicle's Turn Number. Each success increases the ship's speed by 10%.

THE LOG FLUME

Ships traveling the Log Flume double their travel speed if they are headed west, and halve it heading east. Each hour spent in the Flume requires a *drivin'* roll against a TN equal to the ship's Turn Number plus 2. Failure means the ship takes 1d6 collision damage for each point by which the roll was failed.

THE CHINA RUN

The base distance that must be covered from Lost Angels to Shan Fan is 385 miles. The only way to cover that distance in ten hours or less is to know the area well and lock the throttles forward (in other words, get huge totals on both the *area knowledge* roll and the *drivin'* roll to boost your speed).

A SAMPLE JOURNEY

The heroes are hired to carry a package from the City of Lost Angels to Shan Fan. One of the posse, "Wake" Grafton, owns a Maze runner, so they decide to travel by water and take a shot at the China Run record.

Wake gets a 9 nine on his *area knowledge* roll. The base distance for the China Run is 385 miles. This is multiplied by 1.4, so the posse must cover 539 miles to get there. Wake obviously doesn't know the way as well as he thought.

Since the group is going to cover almost 550 miles, the Marshal draws 11 cards from the deck. He pulls:

Red Cards: 2,3,5,8,10,A.

Black Cards: 3,6,9,10,A.

This translates to six rolls on the Hazards of Nature Table and five on the Two-Legged Hazards Table. He gets the following results:

Hazards of Nature: Riptide, fog, sharks.

Two-Legged Hazards: Lost (twice).

The Marshal thinks about these for a moment and comes up with the following sequence for the posse's trip.

Not long into the trip, an early morning fog rolls in, causing Wake to miss a channel he was watching for and leading the group into unfamiliar territory. Later on, the posse's Maze runner gets caught in a riptide. A group of sharks is caught in the powerful current with them—bad news if the boat wrecks! The riptide washes them down an unknown channel, and they are lost once again.

So how do the heroes fare?

Wake makes a *drivin': Maze runner* roll to boost their travel speed. The TN for the roll is 6 (3 + the Maze runner's Turn Number of 3). He gets a 12. The success and raise give him a 20% speed boost, so the group's average speed for the trip is 36 miles per hour.

The fog lasts for an hour. Once it clears, it takes Wake 40 minutes to get his bearings and get underway again. The posse is just polishing

off lunch when the riptide hits. Wake manages to keep his boat from harm, but he blows his first roll to figure out where they ended up. He does better on his second attempt, but it takes the posse 1 hour and 50 minutes to find the right channel. The rest of the trip is without incident, and they arrive in Shan Fan.

So, what about the record? The posse covered only 18 miles the first hour due to the fog. The rest of the distance, 521 miles, takes them roughly 14 and a half hours. When you add in the delays for getting lost, the entire trip took 18 hours of continuous steaming. The record's safe, but they got there 4 hours quicker than if they had taken the main channel.

THE CHINESE

The flood of Chinese immigrants into the Maze continues. Although they still face discrimination in many quarters, their strong work ethic and growing familiarity has lessened the prejudice they face. In places like Shan Fan, where they are a majority of the population, they have truly prospered.

Unfortunately, not everyone is willing to live and let live.

THE NEW HOUNDS

The notorious gang called the Hounds is not as much a memory as some would like. There's a secret society of tough Easterners—from the Eastern United States, that is—who are plotting to dislodge the Hsieh Chia Jên from power in Shan Fan. These ambitious (some would say foolhardy) men call themselves the New Hounds.

Right now, they're testing the waters with the occasional bushwacking outside of town. When engaging in these activities, they've taken to whitening their faces with ash and shambling about as if they're walkin' dead, pretending to be the original members of the Hounds, back from the grave. They've found this a good way to rob people, who are more afraid of revenants than they are of regular bandits. It also conceals their identities.

The New Hounds are all well-respected members of the Anglo community in Shan Fan. They play their hostility towards the Hsieh Chia Jên close to their vests. Naturally, not everyone believes in zombies, even in the triad society, so there are folks trying to piece together the real identities of the New Hounds. The Hounds are being very careful and are willing to wait for the right time to strike.

MOVERS & SHAKERS

You need a scorecard to keep track of the major players in Shan Fan. Here's a quick rundown on the people who call the shots in this new city by the bay.

LONG-HAIRED TONY

Tony's pretty much who he seems to be. This man has little to hide.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:4d10, N:2d8, S:3d6, Q:3d12, V:2d8
Dodge 4d8, fightin': brawlin' 4d8, horse ridin' 2d8,
quick draw 4d12, shootin': pistol & shotgun
4d10, speed load 4d10

Mental: C:3d8, K:1d6, M:4d8, Sm:2d12, Sp:2d4
Area knowledge: Shan Fan 4d6, guts 4d4, overawe
4d8, scrutinize 2d8, search 2d8, streetwise 3d12

Edges: "Don't get 'im riled," law man 3, the stare

Hindrances: Hankerin': cigars, obligation: sheriff

BIG EARS TAM

Big Ears Tam began his life as a scholar from a small village in Canton. He passed the government's notoriously difficult civil service examinations and became a tax collector in Shanghai. There, he was initiated into that city's chapter of the Hsieh Chia Jên. Soon, he was moonlighting as a minor crime lord. Forced to flee the city when his Manchu superiors became suspicious, he made the arduous journey to Shan Fan. He has since found the Maze to his liking and has no plans to return to China.

Big Ears has realized his every ambition, having great wealth and possessing the respect of his fellow violent men. He has no big political or supernatural agenda; he just wants to die at a ripe old age, in his sleep, with his fortune and power intact. That's quite the goal for a triad chieftain, but if anyone can do it, it's Tam. The man speaks virtually no English, relying on lackeys for translation. He would be considered a *ferner* outside of Shan Fan, but he rarely leaves his estate, let alone the city he commands.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:1d12, N:1d8, S:2d6, Q:3d4, V:2d6

Bow 2d12, fightin': tai chi 2d8

Mental: C:2d10, K:3d10, M:3d12, Sm:4d12, Sp:1d8

Academia: classical Chinese texts 3d10, academia:
Chinese antiquities 3d10, arts: calligraphy 6d10,
arts: poetry 2d10, bluff 4d12, gamblin' 5d12, guts



2d8, language (native tongue): Cantonese 4d10,
language: Mandarin 3d10, overawe 4d12,
persuasion 3d12, scrutinize 3d10, streetwise:
Chinese triads 6d12

Edges: Dinero 5, martial arts training

Hindrances: All thumbs, bad ears, greedy,
obligation: Hsieh Chia Jên

THIN NOODLES MA

Thin Noodles Ma and Rat-Skinner Hou are simple men, uncomplicated by benevolence or scruples or any of the other basic kindnesses found in most folks.

Ma is an imperturbable sybarite; Hou, hot-tempered and insecure.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d6, S:4d8, Q:3d4, V:4d10

Fightin': brawlin' 4d6, shootin': pistol 4d6

Mental: C:2d6, K:1d8, M:3d8, Sm:2d12, Sp:1d6

Bluff 2d12, gamblin' 6d12, guts 3d6, language
(native tongue): Cantonese 2d8, language:
English 1d8, leadership 4d8, overawe 4d8,
persuasion 2d8, ridicule 4d12, scrutinize 4d6,
streetwise: Chinese triads 5d12

Edges: Dinero 5

Hindrances: Big 'un, bloodthirsty, enemy: Rat-Skinner Hou, ugly as sin

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RAT-SKINNER HOU

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d8, N:2d10, S:3d12, Q:4d12, V:3d10

Fightin': shuai chiao 4d10, shootin': pistol 4d8, speed load 3d8,

Mental: C:2d6, K:1d6, M:2d10, Sm:1d8, Sp:3d6

Ch'i 3d6, guts 3d6, language: English 1d6, leadership 4d10, native tongue: Cantonese 2d6, overawe 4d10, streetwise: Chinese triads 5d8

Edges: Dinero 5, martial arts training, enlightened

Hindrances: Big 'un, bloodthirsty, the cup overflows, enemy: Thin Noodles Ma, style vulnerability: drunken

Special Abilities:

Kung Fu: Closing the gate 4, thunder strums the pipa 3, wind blows over the earth 3

TRAD RASCALS

A bit more competent than your average thugs, these are the foot-soldiers of the Hsieh Chia Jên. Not all are Chinese; many Anglos and a few Indians fill out the ranks of the regulators.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d8, S:2d8, Q:2d8, V:2d6

Fightin': wing chun 3d8 (if Chinese), fightin': brawlin' 3d6 (if non-Chinese), shootin': pistol, rifle & shotgun 3d6, sneak 2d6

Mental: C:2d6, K:1d6, M:1d10, Sm:1d4, Sp:1d6,

Area knowledge: Shan Fan 2d6, bluff 2d4, gamblin' 3d4, guts 2d6, language: Cantonese 2d6, ridicule 2d10, streetwise: Chinese triads 4d4

TAI-SHOU CH'UAN

Tai-Shou Ch'uan is the kind of leader who inspires admiration in some and contempt in others. He genuinely believes in his cause and doesn't understand that others of good faith could oppose him. He is a man of enormous personal rectitude, but his absolute confidence in himself could lead him to take actions that are harmful to his movement or to others.

On the other hand, Ch'uan would never knowingly sacrifice any of his followers needlessly. Most of his followers sense this, and most of his men are extremely loyal. If Ch'uan leads his movement into a dangerous situation, it will be by accident, not intent.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:1d6, N:1d10, S:3d12, Q:2d8, V:1d12

Bow 4d6, disarm 4d6, fightin': wing chun 4d10, throwin': bullet 3d10

Mental: C:2d6, K:2d6, M:2d10, Sm:2d6, Sp:4d10

Arts: calligraphy 6d6, ch'i 4d10, guts 3d10, faith 4d10, language (native tongue): Cantonese 4d6, language: English 3d6, leadership 6d10, overawe 4d10, tale-tellin' 3d10

Edges: Martial arts training, enlightened

Hindrances: Obligation: New Tomorrow, school rivalry: Mei-te Yumao, self-righteous

Special Abilities:

Kung Fu: Closing the gate 4, seize the pearl of death 2, step back to ward off monkey 4, river flows uphill 3

SUITCASE LEE

Suitcase Lee is currently being dragged into an internal struggle within New Tomorrow. The Christian converts are fighting with the Taoists who are interested in native spirituality. Each group wants to force the other out. The leaders of the two factions are afraid to announce their intentions to Tai-Shou Ch'uan until they have Suitcase on their side. Suitcase belongs to neither faction, and he is deeply disillusioned by the break in the ranks. He doesn't know what to do and is running away from the problem by staying out on his lecture tour.

You can use Suitcase Lee in your campaign as an example of a heroic character. If the posse is acting a mite too unsympathetic for your tastes, have Suitcase arrive and show them up. He can also arrive on the scene in the nick of time and save them if they've gotten in over their heads through no fault of their own.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d10, N:2d12, S:4d12, Q:3d8, V:2d6

Bow 4d10, fightin': wing chun 6d12

Mental: C:2d6, K:2d6, M:3d8, Sm:2d6, Sp:3d6

Ch'i 5d6, guts 4d6, language (native tongue): Cantonese 2d6, language: English 2d6, persuasion 4d8

Edges: Martial arts training, enlightened

Hindrances: Heroic, oath: remain virginal, obligation: New Tomorrow

Special Abilities:

Kung Fu: Abundance of pecking birds 4, closing the gate 4, crane steals the arrow 3, step back to ward off monkey 3, weapon of opportunity 5

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THE WARLORDS

Not all of the Chinese newcomers to California share the enlightenment of the ancient kung fu masters. Many are perfectly satisfied with the living in the physical world—as long as they're calling the shots.

MU-T'OU KWAN

Kwan's totem animal is an owl. That's a big secret, since California Indians consider the owl an evil spirit. Kwan wants to be popular with the Indians, so only his closest advisers know about this. If it got out, he might lose most of his native followers, which comprise a quarter of his army.

Kwan is secretly afraid of his great destiny but feels it is too late to back out. He'd much rather be a simple man than a great warlord. The owl totem has told him he'll be destroyed if he walks away now. Despite his misgivings, Kwan has inherited many of his father's skills and knows how to run a fiefdom. He has taken a liking to Joshua Norton and often heeds his advice.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d8, N:2d10, S:3d10, Q:4d6, V:2d6
Bow 2d8, fightin': brawlin' 4d10, horse ridin' 2d10, shootin': pistol and rifle 2d8

Mental: C:2d6, K:1d4, M:3d12, Sm:2d6, Sp:2d6
Artillery 4d6, faith 2d6, guts 5d6, language (native tongue): Cantonese 2d4, language: English 1d4, leadership 6d12, overawe 6d12

Edges: Dinero 5, rank: general

Hindrances: Illiterate, superstitious, vengeful

EMPEROR JOSHUA A. NORTON

Norton was a harmless eccentric until General Kwan swept in from the mountains to take him to his destiny. The shock of having a heavily-armed warlord take him seriously as a potential Emperor of America has forced Joshua Norton back into the real world.

He is afraid of Kwan, who he considers much crazier than himself. He is even more afraid of Kwan's Cahuilla advisors, Big Pul and Little Pul. Kwan he sees as a deluded idiot savant, but Big Pul and Little Pul are downright evil. Now he's half afraid he *will* end up as some kind of figurehead Emperor of America.



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He's too frightened to run away, so he does what he can to soften the harm Kwan might do. Having won Kwan's trust, he gently advises him to be a kind and just ruler.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d4, N:2d4, S:2d6, Q:2d4, V:2d4
Dodge 6d4, fightin': brawlin' 1d4, horse ridin' 1d4
Mental: C:3d10, K:3d6, M:2d4, Sm:2d6, Sp:2d6
Guts 2d6, persuasion 5d4, scrutinize 2d10, trade:
import brokerage 3d6, trade: real estate 3d6
Edges: Friends in high places 5
Hindrances: Bad luck, pacifist

THE HUNGRY GHOST

Kwan is being stalked by the ghost of his father's wife. She hasn't decided whether she wants to see him dead or not. For now, she enjoys watching him squirm.

Treat her as a crying ghost (see page XXX) with the additional power of madness.

Madness: Just before she attacks, the ghost reveals herself as she was after being trampled to death. Roll a contest of *Spirit* between the ghost and her victim. For every success the ghost achieves, the target ages 5 years and must roll once on the Dementia Table.



BIG PUL AND LITTLE PUL

Unknown to General Kwan, these sinister twins are members of the Rattlesnake Clan, the group of California natives allied with Raven. It was Papa Rattlesnake who told Big Pul and Little Pul to take General Kwan on a vision quest. They don't know it, but Papa Rattlesnake was acting on instructions from Raven himself. General Kwan's role in Raven's grand plans remains to be seen.

Big Pul and Little Pul have been trouble since before they were born. Their mother committed violations against the spirits, and in revenge the spirits decided to claim Little Pul's soul for their own. Although Little Pul was meant to be stillborn, he was too stubborn to die in the womb. He stole half of his brother's soul, so each Pul was born with only half a soul. Rather than dividing the brothers, this bound their fates inexorably together.

As soon as the Puls could talk, their neighbors in the Cahuilla tribe could tell they were meant to become sorcerers. They were shunned and despised; by the time they could fend for themselves, they were more than happy to leave their home.

It wasn't long before the Reckoners appeared to them in dreams and fulfilled the grim foretellings of their neighbors by making them dark sorcerers. They were more than ready to do the Reckoners' bidding. They feel they've both been cheated by life and want to make everyone else's existence as miserable as their own. That's why they joined the Rattlesnake Clan. Papa Rattlesnake is glad to have them.

Big Pul and Little Pul have the same game statistics. They are practitioners of the Dark Arts, as explained in *The Quick & the Dead* sourcebook.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d6, S:2d12, Q:3d10, V:2d6
Bow 3d6, climbin' 2d6, fightin': brawlin' 2d6,
horse ridin' 2d6, throwin': ax 2d6, throwin':
bolts o' doom 4d6

Mental: C:1d6, K:1d8, M:2d6, Sm:2d6, Sp:4d12
Guts 6d12, medicine: 2d8, trackin' 2d6, overawe
4d6

Edges: Arcane background: black magic

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, mean as a rattler

Special Abilities:

Black magic: Bolts o' doom 3, cloak of evil 2,
dark protection 2, spook 2

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KING OF THE HORIZON

Do Leng was an impressionable peasant when he made the mistake of hijacking the skull of Hung Hsiu-ch'uan, but he had no intention of becoming a raider warlord. The skull had other ideas. Hung's spirit possessed Do Leng's body soon after the supernatural energies of the Maze reawakened him.

If Hung was crazy *before*, you should see him after a several-year sojourn in the Chinese underworld. He is now convinced that his "brother" Jesus betrayed him and arranged for his stint in Hell. Any Christian is in for trouble as far as the King of the Horizon is concerned.

Hung's new body is healthy and muscular, and he has taken advantage of this to master Mantis-style kung fu.

Hung doesn't need the skull anymore, but he keeps it around as a sort of decoy. The talking-skull trick does impress the fools who come to sign on with Hung. He can throw his voice into it and, by concentrating on his former noggin, cause it to give off an unearthly glow.

But if someone were to swipe or smash it, nothing bad would really happen to him. In all likelihood, Hung would find himself another skull and pretend that it was originally his.

When playing the "King of the Horizon," think over-the-top, supernatural villainy. Hung's crazy, he's inhuman, and he thinks he's God.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d10, S:3d12, Q:4d8, V:3d6
 Fightin': mantis 6d10, shootin': shotgun 4d6,
 throwin': bullet 4d6, throwin': flying guillotine 4d6

Mental: C:2d6, K:2d6, M:2d6, Sm:2d6, Sp:4d12
 Ch'i 4d12, guts 4d12, language: English 2d6,
 leadership 4d6, overawe 4d6

Edges: Martial arts training, enlightened

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, intolerance: Christians, loco

Special Abilities:

Kung Fu: Flying guillotine 5, Hell's thunderclap 3, monkey goes to the mountain 2, seize the pearl of death 4, ten-foot punch 4

WHITE-TIPPED CAP

White-Tipped Cap is not a demon from hell. He's just a very skillful, completely amoral martial artist. His name is Shen Wan. He was kidnapped from his home in rural northern

China by a wandering bandit who abused him terribly and taught him the ways of Mantis-style kung fu. He swore to kill his tormentor one day and pursued him all the way to Shan Fan.

Wan found it far too easy to kill his kidnapper, by then a drunken old man. Knowing only how to make a living through violence, he sought out the King of the Horizon, whose ruthless raids were already making a name in the territory. Shen Wan hates powerful bosses, but he doesn't know how to live without one.

Wan fears the talking skull and feels his usual mixture of admiration and contempt for the King of the Horizon. He does not know that the two are one and the same. He goes along with the demon routine, which involves the wearing of a hood and mask, because he sees a possible future advantage in not having his real name widely associated with the most hated band of cutthroats in the territory.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d8, N:1d12, S:4d12, Q:3d10, V:2d6
 Bow 4d8, fightin': mantis 5d12, fightin': flying crescent 3d12

Mental: C:2d4, K:2d4, M:2d6, Sm:2d6, Sp:2d10
 Bluff 2d6, ch'i 4d10, guts 4d10, language: English 2d4, overawe 3d6, ridicule 4d6

Edges: Martial arts training, enlightened

Hindrances: Big britches, greedy, mean as a rattler, outlaw

Special Abilities:

Kung Fu: Closing the gate 4, flying crescent 4, mantis pinch 4, step back to ward off monkey 4, thunder strums the pipa 4, venom punch 3

KANG

In a land of tough customers, Kang is the toughest. Attended by loyal and accomplished killers and supremely capable both as a Chinese sorcerer and a martial artist, you can count on him to seriously outclass any player character.

Kang has a number of admirable traits. He's brave, determined, and smart. In conversation, he seems to be a calm and reasonable man. He doesn't go in for gloating, isn't subject to the hubris that afflicts most villains, and is secure enough not to fly off the handle when insulted.

This doesn't mean he's a pussycat though. The rights of others mean nothing to him. He is resolved to become the most powerful man in the world and refuses to let anything stand in the way of that. He doesn't care what others

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think of him, as long as they get out of his way. There's many who'd wish they'd been smart enough to do so—if they were still breathing.

Like many other powerful personalities in *Deadlands* (like Grimme or the Prospector), we're not providing any stats for him. He's not meant to be killed. If you want to let your heroes take him down, that's entirely up to you, but you'd better have someone waiting in the wings to replace him right away.

RED PETALS SU

Kang's pirate crews are actually more frightened of Su than they are of Kang, because Su may lash out at them without provocation. They're also afraid to leave, seeing as she has a reputation for tracking down and eviscerating deserters. She takes desertion as a personal insult, you see. She's serious about "face."

Su has a love-hate relationship with Kang. Its one of those, "can't live with him, don't have powerful enough kung fu to kill him" deals. In truth, she's not enough of a thinker to strike out on her own. She relies on Kang for strategy and for orders to the Silver Tigers. Without him to tell her what to do, she'd probably be kicking men's behinds at some two-bit rodeo. Working for him, she's the most feared woman in the Maze.



PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d8, S:4d6, Q:3d10, V:2d8
Bow 4d6, dodge 4d8, fightin': flying claw 3d8, fightin': eagle claw 4d8, horse ridin' 2d8, quick draw 4d10, shootin': pistol 2d6

Mental: C:2d6, K:1d10, M:2d6, Sm:2d6, Sp:2d8
Bluff 2d6, ch'i 3d8, guts 3d8, language (native tongue): Cantonese 2d10, language: English 1d10, leadership 4d6, medicine: Chinese traditional 1d10, overawe 3d6, trackin' 2d6, scrutinize 2d6

Edges: Martial arts training, enlightened

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, mean as a rattler, obligation: Kang, stubborn

Special Abilities:

Kung Fu: Crane guides the arrow 3, closing the gate 2, flying claw 4, righteous reversal 2, weapon of opportunity 2

TYPICAL PIRATE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d8, S:2d8, Q:2d6, V:2d6
Fightin': eagle claw 3d8, shootin': pistol and rifle 2d6, sneak 2d8

Mental: C:1d4, K:1d4, M:1d4, Sm:1d6, Sp:2d6
Gamblin' 2d6, guts 3d6, ridicule 2d6, search 2d8, streetwise 3d6

Edges: Fleet footed

Hindrances: Randy, vengeful

SHAOLIN & GHOST ROCK

Chin-Hsueh Wong, the impossibly virtuous head of the 37th Chamber, has concluded that the appearance of ghost rock has upset the cosmic balance of the universe. While ghost rock exists in the physical world, the cycle of death and rebirth at the heart of Buddhist teachings is suspended. Souls of the dead are not reborn, but go somewhere else.

Therefore, he gathered together his followers and traveled to the Maze, the place on Earth with the highest concentration of ghost rock. He has vowed to learn the secret of ghost rock in order to banish it from this realm before the binding threads of the universe unravel forever.

So far the 37th Chamber is still studying the matter, but they're doing their best to prevent the use of ghost rock from expanding. Until he knows what's going on, Chin-Hsueh Wong isn't declaring full-scale war against any one particular power group in the Maze. The Shaolin of Bear Lake are powerful, but there aren't that many of them yet. Wong suspects that the answer will come when Ao-Sang Leung battles the snake the Monkey King told him about.

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BEYOND THE VEIL

The monks are onto something. The normal flow of the spirit world *has* been disrupted. Ghost rock does trap the souls of the dead within it. When a person dies and isn't chosen to become Harrowed by a manitou, there is a chance his soul is absorbed by ghost rock.

The greater the amount and proximity of the ghost rock, the higher the chance. The biggest determinant is how the person lived his life. Evil and self-absorbed characters have the greatest chance of becoming trapped in the rock. Those who have actively done good have the lowest.

Why is this happening? The answer to that must wait a bit longer.

AO-SANG LEUNG

Sam Hellman's description of Ao-Sang Leung's personality is on the money. He is so virtuous that he seems otherworldly to most Maze denizens he meets. If your posse encounters him, play him as blissful and somewhat distracted, as if he's in communion with higher powers.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d12, S:4d6, Q:3d8, V:3d8
Bow 3d6, fightin': Shaolin temple 6d12

Mental: C:2d6, K:2d6, M:3d6, Sm:2d6, Sp:4d10
Academia: Buddhism 2d6, ch'i 4d10, faith 5d10,
guts 3d10, language (native tongue): Cantonese
2d6, language: English 2d6, medicine: Chinese
traditional 1d6, overawe 3d6

Edges: Arcane background: blessed, martial arts
training, enlightened

Hindrances: Heroic, loyal: Shaolin temple, "sifu!
sifu!"

Blessed Miracles: Exorcism, protection,
sacrifice, smite, succor

Special Abilities:

Kung Fu: Closing the gate 4, the leaping eel 4,
monkey goes to the mountain 2, palm of
prevention 4, righteous reversal 3

THE BANDITS

The Manchus get grumpy with people who help themselves to other people's wealth. That's *their* job, you see.

Many of the bandits who terrorized the Chinese hinterlands have come to America in search of easier pickings. With all the scattered settlements and suddenly-wealthy miners about, they do well.

T'OU-CHI CHOW, GOD OF BANDITS

T'ou-Chi Chow's father, a Christian convert, moved to Germany as manservant for a celebrated, aristocratic missionary when T'ou-Chi was a young boy. Although Tou-Chi was mistreated by the missionaries' children, he didn't get bitter. He got smart. He saw how society was organized in favor of the rich and well-born.

T'ou-Chi also developed a yen for the American frontier as described in works of fiction which were all the rage in Europe. He came to the Maze in his teens, determined to right wrongs with a six-gun at his side.

T'ou-Chi has matured since then but has not abandoned his ideals. He's stayed in touch with a few friends in Germany. Through them, he found a copy of a still-obscure German political text called *Das Kapital* by a man named Karl Marx. Inspired by Marx, he decided to turn the mining town of Devil's Armpit into a collective of the proletariat. He sees his community as the first step toward creating a land of justice and freedom in the Maze.

T'ou-Chi's life was recently darkened by the death of his wife, who accompanied him on bandit raids. She was shot by a bank guard. T'ou-Chi considered avenging her death, but instead has decided to honor her memory by making Devil's Armpit a place she'd be proud to be buried in.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:1d12, N:2d6, S:2d6, Q:4d10, V:3d8
Fannin' 4d12, fightin': brawlin' 2d6, horse ridin'
2d6, quick draw 4d10, shootin': pistol, shotgun
6d12, speed-load 2d12

Mental: C:2d6, K:2d6, M:3d12, Sm:2d6, Sp:2d6
Academia: radical politics 4d6, bluff 2d6,
demolition 2d6, disguise 2d6, guts 3d6,
language (native tongue): Mandarin 2d6,
language: English 2d6, language: German 2d6,
leadership 4d12, streetwise 2d6, tale tellin' 2d12

Edges: Renown 3, sand 5

Hindrances: Heroic, loyal: residents of Devil's
Armpit, obligation: Devil's Armpit

HAO-T'E ZUI, THE MAD MONK

Hao-T'e Zui was a traveling exorcist who rid Chinese townsfolk of evil spirits in exchange for small change and hospitality. Finally he met his match in the form of the Blue-Haired King, a

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three-eyed demon who had just escaped from Chinese Hell. Hao-T'e Zui was devoured, and the Blue-Haired King took on his form.

Like many other Chinese demons and spirits, the Blue-Haired King sensed that important things were soon to occur in North America. He came here to further his grand scheme of evil. Using the pretense of being a heroic outlaw, he is systematically capturing prominent and remarkable individuals and infusing them with his own demonic essence.

When his victims sire children, those children will be half-demonic. They will also possess the greatness of their parents. The Mad Monk will then call these half-demons to his side and use them to descend to Chinese Hell and conquer it. Once he rules Hell, he'll launch an invasion of demons into the earthly plane.

The Blue-Haired King has the abilities of an accomplished martial artist and practitioner of black magic.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d6, S:4d12+4, Q:4d12+4, V:3d10
Bow 4d6, dodge 6d6, fightin': tan tui 5d6, horse
ridin' 2d6, quick draw 2d12+4, throwin': bolts o'
doom 3d6, throwin': bullet 3d6

Mental: C:2d6, K:2d6, M:2d6, Sm:2d6, Sp:3d12+2



Academia: occult 2d6, area knowledge: Chinese
hell 5d6, ch'i 3d12+2, guts 4d12+2, language
(native tongue): demonic 3d6, language:
Cantonese 2d6, language: English 1d6,
leadership 3d6, overawe 4d6, ridicule 2d6

Edges: Arcane background: demon, martial arts
training, enlightened

Hindrances: Big britches, outlaw, vengeful

Special Abilities:

Black Arts: Bolts o' doom 3, forewarning 2,
scrye 2, stun 3

Healing: The Mad Monk's wounds heal at one
level per hour. Only a mortal wound to the
noggin can kill him.

Kung Fu: Closing the gate 5, fangs of the
serpent 5, venom punch 5, mantis pinch 4,
monkey goes to the mountain 4, seize the
pearl of death 3

THE INDIANS OF THE MAZE

The Great Quake has meant many changes for
the Indians of California. The devastation it left
in its wake has made life difficult, but it has also
presented them with new opportunities to
improve their position in the scheme of things.

BORN IN A BOWL

Sam Hellman's assessment of Born in a Bowl
as a sincere leader interested only in protecting
her people is dead-on correct. She recognizes
that the white man is in California to stay, but
she is determined not to give up any more of
her peoples' ancestral lands. And she's willing to
fight.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D: 2d6, N: 2d6, S: 1d6, Q: 2d6, V: 2d6
Bow 2d6, fightin': brawlin' 2d6, horse ridin' 3d6

Mental: C: 3d6, K: 2d10, M: 4d12, Sm: 2d8, Sp: 2d10
Area knowledge: Maze 4d10, bluff 2d8, faith 3d10,
guts 3d10, leadership 4d12, scrutinize 3d6,
survival 4d8, tale tellin' 2d12, trackin' 2d6,
language (native tongue): Lusieno 4d10,
language: English 2d10, language: Necessity
Talk 3d10, medicine: general 2d10

Edges: Arcane background: shaman, gift of gab

Hindrances: Bad ears, geezer, obligation:
Necessity Alliance

Special Abilities:

Rituals: Dance 4d6, fast 4d10, paint 4d6,
pledge 3d10

Favors: Medicine, soar with eagles, vision
quest, wilderness walk



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SHOCKS WITH A FAN

Shocks with a Fan is a lewd, crude liar and drunk. He is also an incarnation of Coyote, the trickster spirit celebrated in the myths of the Maidu Indians, among other tribes. Coyote is mightily displeased at the shaman named Raven, especially since he's discovered the evil shaman is planning to assassinate the Great Chief of the Coyote Confederation and take his place.

The real Coyote may be lustful and foolish, but he isn't evil and doesn't aid manitous. He's decided to teach Raven a lesson for even thinking about stealing his name. Unfortunately, Coyote does things in roundabout ways; so far all he's done is manifest in Shocks With a Fan.

In the myths, Coyote ultimately wins when his heart is in the right place, but he must endure many humiliations before this happens. Whether the Spiritual Society and his discovery of Taoist magic will bring him victory remains to be seen.

Tai-Shou Ch'uan is taken aback by Shocks with A Fan's erratic behavior but sees him as an avatar of the Monkey King, a Chinese trickster figure much like Coyote.

While inhabiting Shocks with a Fan, Coyote only enjoys a fraction of his full spirit power.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d6, S:3d8, Q:2d6, V:2d8

Bow 1d6, climbin' 2d6, dodge 4d6, fightin' brawlin' 1d6, filchin' 4d6, horse ridin' 1d6, sleight o' hand 4d6, sneak 4d6

Mental: C:3d6, K:2d6, M:4d10, Sm:5d8, Sp:4d12
Bluff 4d8, faith 6d12, guts 2d12, scrutinize 2d6, language (native tongue): Maidu 2d6, language: Cantonese 1d6, language: English 1d6, leadership 4d10, ridicule 3d8, tale tellin' 4d10

Edges: Arcane background: shaman, gift of gab, luck o' the Irish

Hindrances: Big britches, curious, hankerin': alcohol

Special Abilities:

Rituals: Dance 4d6, paint 3d6, pledge 3d6

Favors: Medicine, shapeshift, speed of the wolf, vision quest

FEARS NO OWLS

The reason that Fears No Owls refuses to share the details of the upcoming disaster she's preparing for is that she doesn't know the details herself. Her otter totem often provides useful information to her, but it gets specific only in regard to the immediate future.

Fears No Owls is completely dedicated to her cause. It has completely consumed her, making her forget the traditional courtesies of her people. If her allies lost confidence in the truth of her totem's words, she would quickly be abandoned as an unpleasant and even somewhat foreign person.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d6, S:2d6, Q:3d8, V:2d6

Bow 2d6, fightin' brawlin' 2d6, horse ridin' 1d6, sleight o' hand 1d6

Mental: C:2d6, K:1d10, M:2d4, Sm:2d6, Sp:3d12
Faith 4d12, guts 2d12, language: Necessity Talk 2d10, language (native tongue): Coastanoan 2d10, language: English 1d10, leadership 4d4, medicine: general 2d10, overawe 4d4, scrutinize 4d6, search 4d6, survival 2d6, tale-tellin' 2d4, trackin' 4d6

Edges: Arcane background: shaman

Hindrances: Heroic, oath: destroy Rattlesnake Clan 5, stubborn

Special Abilities:

Rituals: Fast 5d12, maim 2d6, paint 2d6, pledge 2d10

Favors: Earth speak, guiding wind, pact, strength of the bear, wilderness walk

PAPA RATTLESNAKE

When Raven came to California to trick the earth spirits into causing the Great Quake, he sought the aid of other black magicians as cold-hearted as himself. One of them was Sings in Moonlight, a Serrano Indian whose secret name was Papa Rattlesnake. His totem animal is the dreaded rattlesnake. Papa Rattlesnake was a former mentor to Raven; he once taught the younger man crucial secrets of sorcery.

After making pacts with many powerful manitous, Raven returned to California and challenged Papa Rattlesnake to a duel of dark powers. Raven won, and Papa Rattlesnake was forced to serve him. Although unhappy to be eclipsed by his apprentice, Papa Rattlesnake's wizened heart leapt when told of the great tribulations that Raven planned to bring to the land. Since then, Papa Rattlesnake has been devoted to Raven's cause, if not to Raven himself.

Rattlesnake has assembled a clan of about 30 black magicians served by abominations, manitous, and various human dupes and servants. He carefully maintains an atmosphere of dread and mystery around his name. Fear of the Rattlesnake Clan accomplishes as much as



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its actual deeds, allowing the Reckoners greater access to our world.

The Clan does not have a headquarters (as Hellman suspects). They live among the Maze Indians, guarding their secret lives as sorcerers.

While awaiting further instruction from Raven, the clan members' mission is to create as much fear as possible among the Maze Indians, to disrupt the Necessity Alliance, and to increase their powers as sorcerers. Papa Rattlesnake and his followers are more than happy to comply.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d6, S:2d8, Q:4d8, V:2d6

Fightin': knife 2d6, shootin': pistol, shotgun 2d6, sneak 2d6, throwin': bolts o' doom 4d6

Mental: C:2d6, K:2d6, M:3d10, Sm:3d6, Sp:3d8

Disguise 4d6, faith 4d8, guts 4d8, language (native tongue): Serrano 2d6, language: Necessity Talk 1d6, language: English 1d6, language: Spanish 2d6, leadership 4d10, medicine: general 2d6, overawe 4d10, ridicule 2d6, scroungin' 2d6, survival 2d6

Edges: Black magic, "the stare"

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty

Special Abilities:

Black Magic: Bolts o' doom 4, dark protection 3, pact 4, zombie 3



THE ROCK PAINTINGS

The rock paintings are indeed what Raven used to topple California into the sea. These massive drawings were made by the same ancient race which built Skull Cave and Quarrytown. Each of these paintings was made as part of an elaborate ritual—usually involving entire villages—to appease the nature spirits.

Those along the coastline were dedicated to the spirits of the earth and were wards against the earthquakes which rocked the area then. Once the ancient ones' civilization was destroyed, the earth spirits caused the land to rise and hide these symbols of power. Raven tricked the spirits into returning the paintings to the surface with promises that he and his followers would restore and maintain them.

They've done nothing of the sort, and the spirits are angry. The results are frequent minor earthquakes and increased volcanic activity all along the California coast. If these warnings are not recognized by the local shamans and some action taken, things are going to get worse.


GRIMME REALITY

Marshals who have read *The Quick & the Dead* already know what Sam Hellman does not: that the Reverend Ezekiah Grimme really died during the Great Quake and was then cannibalized by hunger-crazed survivors. The Reckoners put flesh back on his bones, replacing the good Reverend with a cannibal abomination intent on sowing the Maze with the seeds of fear. These cannibals became the inner circle of his cult. The other survivors who soon flocked to his side became the pantry. The population of the City of Lost Angels is growing so quickly that no one really notices the unusual number of disappearances each year.


To maintain his control over the "herd," Grimme maintains artificial food shortages in the Lost Angels area. His dark powers blight crops and sicken livestock. He fights the railroads and the growing triad villages in the area not out of religious fanaticism, but because he's afraid that they might make food too available and reduce the suffering that the Reckoners so delight in.

THE CELESTIAL CITY

Grimme maintains a public front as a good Christian minister. Actually he despises all religions and sincere worshippers.



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The mystical layout of the city allows Grimme to mask the true nature of his powers within the city limits. Rather than appear diabolical, his powers (and those of his inner circle of cultists) seem to flow from Heaven. A *bolt o' doom* appears as a beam of pure white light, *cloak of evil* surrounds him in a beatific glow, and bloody ones appear as angelic messengers.

This effect only works within the boundaries of the city. If Grimme steps an inch outside the 6th Circle, his powers appear as the Hellish black magic that they are.

Grimme is following otherworldly instructions in creating and enforcing his strange city layout. The city streets form a mystical design crucial to the Reckoners' plans. It gathers fear energy from the entire Maze and much of Mexico and channels it to the Reckoners.

The pattern of streets and the general atmosphere of the city give it a Fear Level of 3.

IN SERVICE TO GRIMME

The Reverend Grimme has two groups of followers to draw upon in his war to maintain control of the Maze's most important city.

THE SLACK-JAWED

Grimme holds sway over an outer group of slack-jawed cultists who swoon at his every eccentric utterance and spend their hours doing nothing but hoping for him to crook out his bony finger at them and assign them to martyr themselves for him. If he wants to derail an approaching railroad, he just sends out as many expendable believers as he needs.

A popular tactic of these folks is to swarm onto the scene wearing vests knitted from live dynamite. Even if 49 out of 50 get shot down as they swarm toward a target, the 50th one can still cause enormous damage when she reaches it. These are ordinary people who have no idea Grimme is a cannibal abomination.

Grimme keeps a careful eye on his casual followers. When he spots someone susceptible to fanaticism, he draws her into a secret cell of similar crazies. Not wanting the rail barons to link him to these attacks, he orders these people to keep away from him and his church in public. He may keep them in a state of readiness for months, so that no one can connect them to church activities by the time he orders them to act. Since almost everyone in Lost Angels has attended his ceremonies in hopes of being fed, it is not a difficult pretense to maintain.

THE INNER CIRCLE

The church hierarchy, on the other hand, is well aware of Grimme's true nature and goals. They saw him turn into an abomination before their eyes. He taught them a thing or two about evil, and they follow him without question.

As his flock grows, Grimme keeps an eye out for promising candidates to induct into this inner circle. When offered a choice, most of these sacrifice their faith to their hunger for power. Those that don't end up in the stew pot.

Most members of the inner circle hold prominent positions in both the church and the community and lead exemplary lives (if you don't count their weekly cannibalistic feasts).

THE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

Hellman hit this one on the head. Marshal Dunston is there at the bidding of none other than U. S. Grant himself. Grant realizes that to control the Maze, the US must control the City of Lost Angels. Dunston is there to keep an eye on things and determine what groups, if any, might be able to dispose of Grimme.

The Reverend suspects Dunston is more than he seems, but he wants to know who's holding the Marshal's leash before he makes any moves.

Anyone arrested by Dunston goes before Judge Scanlon in the municipal court. Lately, however, under pressure from Grimme, Scanlon has been sending an increasing number of cases to the Court of Lost Angels for review.

The Marshal is using this to supplement his office's income. He offers minor criminals the chance to pay a fine for their crime, avoiding the risk of going to Church Court.

THE GUARDIAN ANGELS

The Guardian Angels are a delicious piece of irony for Grimme. He couldn't care less about public morality, but he's discovered that he can whip up as much fear in the city with his squads of crusading do-gooders as if he unleashed a horde of bloody ones in the streets. The capricious way in which the Angels mete out "justice" makes even the most truly pious members of Grimme's flock examine their consciences on a regular basis.

Besides inspiring fear, Grimme uses the group to root out those who might be interested in destroying him. Anyone with supernatural powers of any kind is immediately suspect in his eyes. This makes the City of Lost Angels a risky place

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to be for hucksters, shamans, and the like. The Angels only act against men of the cloth if they openly speak out against Grimme.

Most of the low-ranking officers and the rank-and-file are composed of the Reverend's devout followers, convinced they are doing the right thing. Mixed in among them are those who see the Guardian Angels as an opportunity for power or as a chance to bury some hatchets with (or in) their neighbors.

Most Angel flights are equipped with a variety of firearms. Some of the more Biblically inclined members have taken to carrying swords which they refer to as their "swords of righteousness."

The upper ranks, including Michael and Gabriel (not their real names), are members of Grimme's cannibal cult. Many of them have black magic powers. Like Grimme, they can use them within the city limits without anyone the wiser.

TYPICAL GUARDIAN ANGEL

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d8, S:2d8, Q:2d6, V:2d6
Fightin': brawlin' 3d8, shootin': pistol, rifle & shotgun 2d6, sneak 2d8

Mental: C:2d8, K:1d6, M:1d8, Sm:2d6, Sp:2d6
Guts 3d6, faith 4d6, overawe 2d8, search 2d8, streetwise 3d6

Edges: Law man 1

Hindrances: Self-righteous

THE ANGEL OF DEATH

There is a black-robed Angel. His name is Garret Black, but other Angels normally only refer him in hushed tones as the Angel of Death. He is a Harrowed that Grimme recruited from the dungeons of the Rock.

The Reverend uses Black to make problems go away. These are usually people who for one reason or another cannot be dragged in front of the Church Court and shipped off to the Rock. If the heroes ever become a major thorn in Grimme's side, they may receive a visitation.

Black thoroughly enjoys his role, sometimes too much. His black-hearted soul competes with the manitou to see who's more evil. Some of the things he has done in the course of his duties have almost shocked Grimme himself.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:3d8, N:3d6, S:2d8, Q:3d10, V:2d6
Fightin': knife 3d6, shootin': pistol 4d8, sneak 5d6, throwin': bolts o' doom 4d6

Mental: C:3d8, K:2d6, M:3d10, Sm:3d6, Sp:3d10
Guts 4d10, overawe 4d10, search 4d8, trackin' 4d8

Edges: "The stare"

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, degeneration 5, mean as a rattler,

Special Abilities:

Harrowed

Black Magic: Bolts o' doom 2, cloak o' evil 2, dark protection 2


Harrowed Powers: Charnel breath 3, death mask 2, eulogy 4, marked for death 2

CHURCH COURT


While the Guardian Angels inspire fear, the Court of Lost Angels causes terror in all those brought before it. With the one notable exception which Hellman mentioned, the only verdict ever given by the three elders who preside is "guilty."

Evidence means little to this court. In most cases it is "left to God to render a verdict." To do this, the court has revived a number of old English Common Law tests of guilt. The rationale behind these is that if the accused is innocent God will protect them from harm. In the case of truly pious individuals, this is true. Who gains this protection is the Marshal's call, but most blessed characters won't fall into this category unless they lead exemplary lives.

Trial by Eating: The accused must bite into a loaf of bread in which nails and broken glass have been baked. If the criminal can chew and



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swallow the mouthful without cutting himself, he's innocent. For heroes, draw a card. Only on a red joker does the character pass the test.

Trial by Ordeal: A red hot stone is placed in the accused's palm (causing a serious wound; Fate Chips cannot prevent this damage). The wound is then bound up with rags and left for a few days. If her wound doesn't get infected (requires a *Vigor* roll, TN of 15), she is innocent.

Trial by Oath: The defendant is read a lengthy portion of scripture and then must recite it back without missing a single word. This requires a *Knowledge* or *theology* roll of 15.

Anyone found guilty is sentenced to death or sent to Rock Island Prison. There is no appeal.

THE ROCK

Church Court has been busy. This fortress-like prison already houses over 200 inmates. Heavily armed guards patrol the walls, and a small fleet of heavily armed Maze runners patrol the waters around the island. A number of Gatling guns and 12- and 10-pound cannons are mounted on the prison walls.

No visitors are allowed to the prison. Any boat approaching closer than 200 yards to the island is given one warning, then fired upon.

Conditions in the prison make the Spanish Inquisition look like a Sunday school picnic. All guards and members of the staff are trusted servants of Grimme.

The prison serves a number of functions for the Reverend—kind of a retreat/recruiting center/abattoir. Grimme and a number of his inner circle take a boat over to the prison at least once a week. There, they perform the secret rites of their cannibalistic cult—with the prisoners as the main course. Grimme enjoys these little interludes on the Rock; he can safely drop his righteous facade.

Grimme also interviews any of the prisoners who possess special talents and a streak of evil. Those he finds worthy are given a choice: serve Grimme or spend what's left of their short life on the Rock. The few Grimme has recruited have become high ranking members of the Guardian Angels or behind-the-scenes enforcers.

The remainder of the inmates are cattle to Grimme. Each week, a number of them are selected at random and (along with those on Death Row) are slaughtered and butchered as part of the next Sunday feast. The abattoir is located on the lowest level of the prison and drains into the bay. There are plenty of sharks in the water if anyone tries to escape.

MEN OF THE GRID

No great secrets here. The Men of the Grid are precisely who they seem to be: civic-minded rebels intent on dislodging Grimme from his perch. They have no idea that he's an abomination or a cannibal.

If the posse discovers Grimme's secret, it might find allies among the Men of the Grid. They are, after all, already prepared to risk their lives to destroy their enemy. There are about 20 members in the group, and they hide out in Bear's Claw, to the south.

MAYOR MILLER

Miller is a good man in a bad situation. He doesn't know about the cannibalism or that Grimme is behind it, but he knows the Reverend is not what he seems and has supernatural capabilities. Miller secretly wants to improve the lives of his citizens, but he doesn't dare do anything without Grimme's say-so.

That's because Grimme has a chunk of Miller's soul hidden away somewhere in Rock Island Prison. Miller is too afraid to cross Grimme to go looking for it. But if someone found it for him, he'd surely be grateful. That would allow him to act against Grimme or maybe just escape. Miller may be a puppet, but he still has valuable favors to dispense to those who might help him.

THE HUNGER SPIRIT

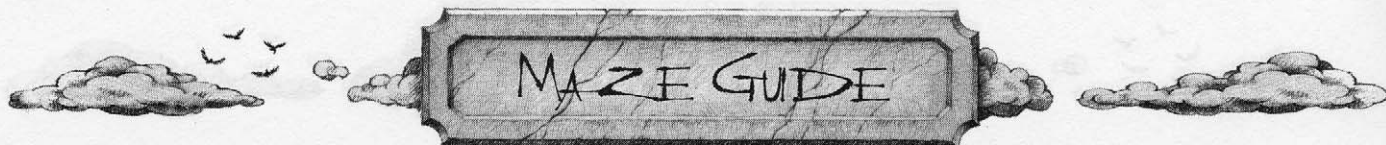
The world has always had its fair share of monsters. One of them was a living embodiment of hunger. After the Reckoning, supernatural energy made the "hunger spirit" stronger than ever. It ran rampant in China and the Far East, destroying entire villages and killing hundreds.

Recently, the hunger spirit smelled something on a foreign ship, the *Gien*, in a Cantonese harbor. The spirit caught the delicious scent of evil and starvation all wrapped into one delicious smorgasbord of power. It smelled the City of Lost Angels.

The hunger spirit possessed one of the crew and made its way to America. The *Gien* became a ghost ship as the crew starved to death during the long trip back across the Pacific. The ship crashed on the western edge of the Maze a bit south of the City of Lost Angels.

The hunger spirit went to work again.

The spirit makes its lair in the shattered hull of the *Gien*. It lives in the dessicated corpse of a sailor's body, now stretched to enormous



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proportions with gangly arms and legs and a huge pot-belly. It looks as if a groaning, wide-mouthed face is coming through its stomach.

Not a creature of far-reaching plans, the spirit merely wishes to spread as much misery as possible. Its faminite minions are the spirit's primary tool for this (see page 126).

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:1d4, N:2d10, S:3d12+2, Q:3d10, V:2d6
Fightin': brawlin' 5d10

Mental: C:3d10, K:2d8, M:3d12, Sm:3d10, Sp:3d8
Overawe: 4d12

Size: 7 (for the crewman); 4 (for called shots to the hunger spirit or any shot that hits the lower guts). Damage to the rest of the crewman's body affects the spirit, but only by targeting the lower guts can the hunger spirit truly be killed.

Terror: 11

Special Abilities:

Fists: STR

Induce Hunger: The spirit induces extreme hunger in its victims. This is an opposed *overawe* roll versus everyone within 50 yards. Roll once for the spirit on its first action of a round. Those who roll lower than it take the difference as Wind damage. Those reduced to 0 Wind become faminites.

Coup: Absorbing the hunger spirit's essence allows a Harrowed to attempt healing rolls even without food—though at a -4 penalty. Strangely, when not trying to heal her own wounds, the Harrowed finds herself with a nagging hunger that never quite goes away. It's not harmful, but the character might want to pack some extra jerky for the next trip across the desert.

THE WAR EFFORT

The forces of the North, the South, and Mexico all lay claim to the Maze. The sad truth is none of these groups control anything other than the land or water they are sitting on at the time. The number of ships and troops each faction has are simply not enough to exert any kind of control over the Maze's shattered landscape.

The Maze's ultimate fate rests with the outcome of the Great Rail Wars. If the railroads are slow to reach the Maze, then Santa Anna and his French backers could seize the area. If not, the first American nation to have reliable rail access to the area will mass the needed troops and settle the question.

PRICES IN SHANNONSBURG

Prices of goods in Shannonsburg aren't inflated as they are elsewhere in the Maze. They're the same as those given in the *Deadlands* rulebook or other supplements.

THE CSA SPY NETWORK

Sam Hellman is right; Confederate spies are operating right under his nose. Heading the Maze spying effort is Eva Beaugrand, who runs a hat-making factory in Lost Angels' Traders' Quarter.

Eva's a plain, middle-aged woman with a quiet and unassuming manner. Her sons were killed in the early fighting against the North, and she has vowed to carry on their name. She has never met Admiral Birmingham and only communicates with him by leaving messages in hat boxes she ships from her factory to Shannonsburg.

Eva is so intent on honoring her sons' memory that she's willing to deal with the supernatural. Through intermediaries, she coordinates activities with the Rattlesnake Clan. Whenever she's ready to mount an important operation, she contacts the Clan. They trump up some kind of occult menace to distract the attention of the Pinkerton organization.

Hellman is much more interested in the supernatural than in mundane political spying and can be counted to fall for this repeatedly. Pinkertons promptly head off into death traps set up by Papa Rattlesnake, and Beaugrand's agents complete their assignments unchallenged.

SANTA ANNA

As you'll recall from the Marshal's section of *The Quick & the Dead*, Santa Anna's army isn't just an Army of Death, it's an Army of *the Dead*: brain-hungering, cannibal zombies under the command of an ancient Aztec sorcerer-liche named Xitlan. He's fudged the truth with Santa Anna a mite, admitting only to being a shaman descended from an ancient sorcerer.

Santa Anna maintains a human army as a front. He's afraid that Maximillian would disown him or that his own people would revolt if it became widely-known that he's assembled a force of scores of drooling zombies.

On the other hand, any right-thinking posse of heroes should also want to keep this a secret should they discover it. This is the sort of widespread supernatural happening that could knock the continent's Fear Level off the scale if it wasn't dealt with directly.



THE SECRET OF PLANTAGRITO

This specially bred version of the coca plant was created by Xitlan to overcome a critical problem of running a zombie cannibal army. If you don't feed them human brains—and lots of them—they go on a rampage. If you do keep them fed, people start wondering why their friends and neighbors have been disappearing.

Plantagrity neatly resolves this dilemma. It's dope for zombies; feed it to them mixed with hamburger and they forget their cannibalistic urges, going all docile to boot. Xitlan needs a week's warning of any military action, during which time he weans his zombie warriors off the drug and gets 'em hungry and kill-ready once more. Plantagrity also has a convenient preservative effect which slows the rotting of the zombies' corpses and keeps the smell down.

Plantagrity is grown in a large, heavily-guarded plantation outside of Mexico City. Xitlan's apprentices synthesize the drug in the city and ship it by wagon train out to the army's stomping grounds south of the California border. Plantagrity can only exist in the heightened supernatural energies of the post-Reckoning world. It really does scream when harvested.

If the heroes discover the secret of Plantagrity and somehow prevent it from getting to the Army of the Dead, the effect is dramatic. The zombies suffer withdrawal symptoms and rebel against Xitlan, going on a carnage-filled rampage throughout the region. That could be the end of Santa Anna's third chance in Mexico (and a number of innocent Mexicans as well).

CH'I POWER

So how do these newfangled ch'i powers fit into the *Deadlands* world? It's simple. All spirits, including the human soul, can tap into the mystical energies of the Hunting Ground and use them for their own purposes. But the human soul is seriously hampered by its connection to the physical world. Most humans find it easier to summon up a spirit and force or persuade it to tap into the Hunting Ground for them. This is exactly what shamans and hucksters do. The blessed receive the energy from their Divinity.

This is the primary reason a manitou traps the deceased's soul in a body when it raises it as a Harrowed. Through the human soul, the manitou can control the physical body. When the manitou is in charge, it uses the Harrowed's soul like a set of marionette strings.



THE ENLIGHTENED

The extreme mental and physical discipline needed to master (*master*, not just *learn*) the martial arts allows those souls who achieve it to tap the power of the Hunting Grounds directly.

Although these enlightened ones can do what others can't, they are still limited by their connection to this world. Raw power from the Hunting Grounds is extremely difficult to channel and control, especially through a physical body. The unskilled are more likely to harm themselves as they are to harm their enemies.

The ancient kung fu masters solved this by developing and teaching certain sets of formalized mantras and katas which channeled the energy through the body in predictable patterns. Each ch'i power is a spell which uses the body as a giant tuning fork.

Does that mean that a martial artist/huckster could use her Ch'i Points to power huckster spells? No. The channeling methods are too different. Hex-slinging is just too unpredictable and undisciplined for ch'i energy to flow into safely. There *might* be some ancient sorcerers who could pull it off, but by and large, manipulating raw magical energy without training is a sure way to self-cremation.

A BOMNATIONS



MARSHAL 122



CHAPTER NINE: ABOMINATIONS



Your fellow humans aren't the only thing to fear in the depths of the Great Maze. A whole host of supernatural beasts makes its home here as well. In the Maze, the Weird West often gets even weirder.

In addition to the "normal" abominations of the Weird West, the Maze features not a few unique creatures unleashed by the Great Quake. To top it all off, a few Chinese critters have decided to accompany their countrymen to America. Put it all together, and the Maze is a Hell of a menagerie.

BLOODY ONES

The Cult of Lost Angels has a very special variant of the Zombie black magic spell they call "*Bones of the Bloody Ones*."

To summon a bloody one, a cultist takes a specially enchanted bone and throws it to the ground. When the bone hits, a bloody one forms over the next 1d6 Action Card segments. Until it fully forms, it cannot defend itself.

The bloody one follows its summoner's orders to the letter, provided that the summoner is a bona fide member of Grimme's cannibal cult. An hour after the summoning, the creature melts into a pile of steaming gore.

Only Grimme's original cultists carry these prized bones on them at all times. Lesser cultists are only granted them for use on special missions.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:3d6, N:3d10, S:3d8, Q:3d10, V:3d8
Dodge 2d10, fightin': brawlin' 4d10, sneak 4d10
Mental: C:4d8, K:1d4, M:2d8, Sm:2d8, Sp:3d6
Overawe 4d8, ridicule 4d8, search 4d8, trackin' 3d8 (by scent)

Terror: 9

Special Abilities:

Undead: Can only be harmed as if they were Harrowed.

Claws: STR+1d6

Bite: STR+1d6

Notes: Bloody ones do not speak, though they do sometimes emit a slurpy laugh (hence the high *ridicule*).

CHINESE OGRE

Chinese ogres are huge, tough fellows with a generally human shape and a generally mean disposition. They're a junior type of demon from Chinese Hell. Chinese Hell is a big bureaucracy, and ogres are low on the totem pole there. They're the foot soldiers, dogsbodies, and enforcers of the underworld. The Reckoning allowed a bunch of them to escape from this servitude to the freedom of the surface world.

Although the best of them are smart—smart enough to use the black arts themselves—even most ogres are simple creatures who want nothing more out of life than vast supplies of



ABOMINATIONS



food, garish and obvious wealth, and the joy of frightening the weak and vanquishing the brave. Despite their desire for independence, they often end up in the service of powerful abominations or sorcerers. Old habits die hard.

Ogres are eight to twelve feet tall, weigh about half a ton, and have bizarre facial features. Their hair is usually green, red, or blue. Their skin is most often deathly white, but might be some other bright color. Most of them have eyes on their foreheads; for some ogres, that single eye is their only eye. Their mouths are large and full of sharp teeth.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d4, N:3d10, S:4d12+2, Q:1d8, V:3d10

Fightin': sword 4

Mental: C:1d6, K:1d4, M:1d6, Sm:1d6 (2d6 in rare instances), Sp:2d6

Guts 6, Overawe 5

Size: 8-10

Terror: 5

Special Abilities:

Big Weapon: Ogres carry enormous swords or pole arms too big for a human to use; They do STR+4d8 and have a Speed of 1.

Black Magic: A really smart ogre might have black magic abilities.

CHANNEL CHOMPERS

The Reckoning has awakened the members of this ancient aquatic race. Only a few folks have seen them, and only at a distance. They have nicknamed these creatures the "channel chompers," because they hide in the channels and chomp on your head, given the opportunity.

The creatures dwell in the depths of the Pacific Ocean but capture humans in order to meet the demands of their gigantic, ravenous god. The channel chompers believe that this god lives in the Marianas Trench and must be fed a steady diet of humans or it will burst up through the trench and eat every fish in the ocean.

The chompers' claws inject a chemical which allows captured humans to remain alive but comatose underwater, so that they can survive the long trip to the Marianas Trench, which is just south of Guam. (Their legends tell them that their god likes its prey live.) A captured victim can therefore be revived even after spending a couple of days underwater.

The chompers have a sonar-based language, and are incapable of communication with humans. One miner who was briefly captured by them now has dreams of a great coral city under the waves and of a vast, alien,



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hungering presence deep beneath the ocean floor. He wrote a pamphlet about his experiences, but of course he is dismissed as a lunatic. He has a number of contradictory theories as to why the channel chompers come all the way to the Maze to gather up victims.

Channel chompers are motivated primarily by fear of their god and show little feeling for one another. For example, if one is harmed or captured, the others do not bother to protect it.

Channel chompers have luminous bulbs of flesh suspended from their foreheads; they use these to attract prey and to navigate in the extreme depths of the ocean. They have big, clumsy claws, fish-like tails, and large mouths full of sharp teeth.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d4, N:3d10, S:2d4, Q:4d12, V:2d6
Fightin': brawlin' 3

Mental: C1d6, K:1d4, M:1d6, Sm:1d6, Sp:2d6
Guts 2

Size: 6

Terror: 7

Special Abilities:

Claw: STR+2d4

Bite: STR+2d6

Poison: The chompers' poison can keep people alive but comatose underwater for weeks at a time. If an intact channel chomper corpse can be recovered, about 1-3 doses of this toxin can be extracted from it. This takes an Onerous (7) *medicine* roll.

CRYING GHOST

Romantic ghost stories are a staple of Chinese lore. According to Chinese belief, the spirits of the dead are supposed to reincarnate—after a flesh-flayingly awful stopover in Hell, that is. However, a wayward soul or one with some sort of unfinished business or vendetta can get itself permanently stuck to this mortal plane.

Unfulfilled longing is the number one way to turn into a ghost. One has to especially beware of female ghosts mourning for lost love. A crying ghost, as they are called, latches onto menfolk and leeches the life out of them. She's taking vengeance on the entire male species to get back at the cad who jilted her. Sometimes you encounter a crying ghost who entered a suicide pact with a lover only to arrive in the world beyond and find out that the lover chickened out on her.

A crying ghost is usually a heartbreakingly beautiful Chinese woman. There might be some male ghosts with stage-idol good looks lying in wait for the ladies among the posse—who knows? The ghost passes herself off as a regular human and snares her victim into falling in love with her. That's when she attacks him, eats his soul energy, and dispatches him to an eternal, no-reincarnating-allowed stint in Hell.

While some crying ghosts are able to negotiate the complex ways of life in a civilized environment, the majority of them live hermit-like existences in the wilderness. They usually pick solitary places which are as beautiful as they are. Moonlit grottoes are a special favorite.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:3d6, S:2d6, Q:4d8, V:2d6
Filchin' 2, fightin': brawlin' 4, sneak 5, throwin': dagger 3

Mental: C:2d6, K:2d6, M:4d12, Sm:2d6, Sp:3d8
Bluff 3, persuasion 4

Size: 6

Terror: 7

Special Abilities:

Deadly Hair: A crying ghost can control her long hair and use it as a weapon. She can engage up to four opponents per action with her hair, even if they're up to 15 yards away. She uses *fightin': brawlin'* when



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fighting with her hair. If she hits, she deals 2d6 damage the first time. Each time she gets an action after that, she gains 1d6 damage. So the third squeeze is 3d6, the fourth 4d6, and the fifth 5d6. After that point in time, the damage stops increasing. The only way to stop this progressive damage once she's hit is to cut the hank of hair that's doing the constrictor number on you. Doing so requires a successful *fightin'* roll with an edged weapon, which must score damage greater than 11. It also takes an action.

Incorporeal: Ghosts are already dead, so you can't kill them. When reduced to 0 Wind or dealt damage that would kill a normal person, they disappear. They return to this world on the first full moon.

Nocturnal: Crying ghosts only manifest on this plane from dusk to dawn.

Vulnerable to Holy Powers: A crying ghost can't enter an area that has been *sanctified*, no matter what. An *exorcism* performed on her favorite spot forces her to move on.

Spirit Extinction: A character killed by a crying ghost is D-E-A-D. No returning as one of the Harrowed, a ghost, or even the soul of a housefly. His soul has been eaten, end of story.

FAMINITE

As mentioned earlier, the living embodiment of hunger, the horrible hunger spirit, has taken up residence in the Maze.

Once the ship that carried the hunger spirit over from China finally piled itself on the rocky shore of shattered California, it didn't take long for a band of adventurers to find the wreck and get themselves infected by the hunger spirit's touch. The victim staggered away into a nearby mining camp and spread the evil plague.

The victims of the plague become "faminites." These piteous creations eat anything. They will eat human flesh, but most prefer regular food if given a choice. Unfortunately, no matter how much they wolf down, their hunger is sated for only a very short while. Under no circumstance will faminites eat another of their kind, though they'll chow down on someone they've infected (before that person becomes a full faminite).

Grimme's Guardian Angels and numerous adventurers hunted down scores of the things during an outbreak in '75, but now and then an outbreak still occurs. Such cases usually start in an isolated boomtown and then spread toward Lost Angels.

Faminites are at least partially under the control of the hunger spirit, but it seems that the spirit rarely exercises this control. The mayhem and chaos that the faminites cause on their own seems to suit it just fine.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d6, N:2d6, S:3d6, Q:2d6, V:2d10

Fightin': club 2d6, shootin': (any) 2d6, sneak 2d6

Mental: C:1d6, K:1d4, M:2d4, Sm:1d4, Sp:1d6

Hits: 25 (Scrawny)

Gear: Most have clubs (2d10+1d6), but a few carry firearms.

Special Abilities: Faminites look like starving humans. They are alive but are infected with an evil taint and can be kept at bay via a blessed's *protection* miracle.

Infection: Anyone so much as nicked (Wind or wound by bite or claw) by a faminite joins their ranks in 24 hours. During this time, the victims become increasingly hungry and thin. Their fingernails lengthen and turn into sharp, infectious claws. Only death or the miracle *lay on hands* can stop the disease. Of course if the blessed laying on hands fails the roll, she becomes a faminite instead of the patient.

GYONSHEE

This Chinese variant of the walkin' dead is commonly known as a hopping vampire. Unlike their western cousins, the gyonshee don't rot away, are dumb as a bag of nails, can move forward only by hopping, and are infectious. If you get clawed by a hopping vampire, you're going to turn into one yourself. Unless, that is, you're lucky enough to know someone schooled in Chinese occultism who can perform the necessary folk remedies on you.

Hopping vampires don't think. They have only one impulse: to hop forward and attack any living thing they can see. They never retreat.

Gyonshee can be controlled, sort of. A hopping vampire can be stopped in its tracks by sticking a piece of yellow rice paper to its forehead, provided that the paper is inscribed with the right occult formula, written in Chinese characters. Chinese sorcerers often have gyonshee in storage. When enemies show up, they rip the rice paper off the hopping vampires' foreheads and watch 'em go to it. The sorcerers have to get out of the way quickly, though, because a gyonshee can't distinguish between friend or foe. To a hopping vampire, everything exists to be attacked and turned into another gyonshee.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:1d4, N:2d6, S:4d6, Q:1d6, V:2d6
Fightin': brawlin' 6

Mental: C:1d4, K:1d4, M:1d4, Sm:1d4, Sp:1d4
Guts 6

Size: 6

Terror: 6

Special Abilities:

Claw: STR+3d6

Immunity: To Wind or physical stress. They are affected by other forms of damage just like Harrowed.

Infectious: Anyone wounded by a hopping vampire transforms into a hopping vampire in 2d4 days, unless cured according to ancient Chinese folk practice. Any character making a Hard (9) *academia: occult* roll might know one of the versions of this cure. The roll is Fair (5) if the character is Chinese or has already been established as an expert in Chinese occultism. The cure generally involves sitting inside a circle and eating a great deal of sticky rice. This poses a problem to the Maze adventurer; sticky rice can only be reliably found in Shan Fan



and a few other places with large Chinese populations. (Even then, you have to make sure you've got genuine sticky rice and not cheaper, regular rice substituted by some unscrupulous merchant.) The forewarned posse should head into gyonshee territory with several sacks of sticky rice on hand. Victims transformed into gyonshee can't normally be turned back and should be treated as dead. As Marshal, though, you may wish to make the cure of an active gyonshee the basis of a story, so it's possible that extraordinary measures can reverse the curse. Just don't wimp out every time, or your posse may learn not to fear the legendary hopping vampire.

HOODOO

Miners whisper that sections of Maze canyon wall sometimes come to life, walk right out of the rock, and try to rip their heads off. This is especially likely to happen to miners working alone at night, or so the legend goes.

One version of the legend says that these things are a man's fears of the night come to life. Others say that they're Indian nature spirits out to avenge the damage done to the earth by dynamiting white men. The stories generally

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agree that the oversized, man-shaped, monstrous manifestations appear only briefly and then melt back into the rock, perhaps waiting for another victim of opportunity.

The attack of a hoodoo is not subtle. The things swing their club-like fists, battering the victim until he is dead. If a hoodoo knocks a person into the water though, it won't follow the hapless fellow down.

The legend of the hoodoo is known only in the Maze.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:1d4, N:2d6, S:4d12+6, Q:1d4, V:4d12
Fightin': brawlin' 4

Mental: C:1d4, K:1d4, M:1d4, Sm:1d4, Sp:1d4

Guts: 6

Size: 10

Terror: 8

Special Abilities:

Armor: 2

Punch: STR+2d6

Vulnerability to Water: Hoodoos' first problem with water is that they are far too heavy to swim and in it they sink like the walking hunks of stone they are. In addition, a hoodoo that is fully immersed in water for more than about 5 minutes begins to dissolve. The hoodoo loses 1

Strength die type for every full 5 minutes immersed in water. If the hoodoo's *Strength* die type goes below d4, it is destroyed.

TOMB GUARDIAN

These ceramic statues are often created by Chinese sorcerers to guard things they don't want disturbed. After enchanting it, the sorcerer can give such a statue detailed instructions as to who may enter the area it is set to guard. When someone unauthorized person enters the area, the tomb guardian attacks.

Most tomb guardians look like bizarre hybrids of deer, human, and lizard. They exist only to obey instructions. They aren't smart enough to follow orders other than "attack anyone who comes in here who isn't me or my henchmen."

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:1d4, N:2d10, S:2d6, Q:4d10, V:1d4

Fightin': brawlin' 4

Mental: C:1d4, K:1d4, M:1d4, Sm:1d4, Sp:1d4

Size: 3

Terror: 6

Special Abilities:

Antlers: STR+2d6



The Great Maze

